

PHAENOMENOLOGICA
COLLECTION FONDÉE PAR H.L. VAN BREDA ET PUBLIÉE
SOUS LE PATRONAGE DES CENTRES D'ARCHIVES-HUSSERL

106

DAVID CARR

INTERPRETING HUSSERL

INTERPRETING HUSSERL

Critical and Comparative Studies

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1987 **MARTINUS NIJHOFF PUBLISHERS**
a member of the KLUWER ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS GROUP
DORDRECHT / BOSTON / LANCASTER



K
 d23/4761
 93/24076/87
 SP

Contents

Distributors

for the United States and Canada: Kluwer Academic Publishers, P.O. Box 358,
 Accord Station, Hingham, MA 02018-0358, USA
for the UK and Ireland: Kluwer Academic Publishers, MTP Press Limited,
 Falcon House, Queen Square, Lancaster LA1 1RN, UK
for all other countries: Kluwer Academic Publishers Group, Distribution Center,
 P.O. Box 322, 3300 AH Dordrecht, The Netherlands

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Carr, David, 1940-
 Interpreting Husserl.
 (Phaenomenologica ; 106)
 Includes bibliographies and index.
 I. Husserl, Edmund, 1859-1938. I. Title.
 II. Series.
 B3279.H94C29 1987 193 87-5641

ISBN 90-247-3505-X



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Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, P.O. Box 163, 3300 AD Dordrecht,
 The Netherlands.

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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Preface

Edmund Husserl's importance for the philosophy of our century is immense, but his influence has followed a curious path. Rather than continuous it has been recurrent, ambulatory and somehow irrepressible: no sooner does it wane in one locality than it springs up in another. After playing a major role in Germany during his lifetime, Husserl had been filed away in the history-books of that country when he was discovered by the French during and after World War II. And just as the phenomenological phase of French philosophy was ending in the 1960's, Husserl became important in North America. There his work was first taken seriously by a sizable minority of dissenters from the Anglo-American establishment, the tradition of conceptual and linguistic analysis. More recently, some philosophers within that tradition have drawn on certain of Husserl's central concepts (intentionality, the noema) in addressing problems in the philosophy of mind and the theory of meaning.

This is not to say that Husserl's influence in Europe has altogether died out. It may be that he is less frequently discussed there directly, but (as I try to argue in the introductory essay of this volume) his influence lives on in subtler forms, in certain basic attitudes, strategies and problems. If analytic philosophers now take seriously some important accomplishments of Husserl's early and middle years, the central theme of his late work, the interplay between lifeworld, history and rationality, seems to be reappearing as a problem in recent German and French thought.

One way or another, it is clear that Husserl has long since ceased to be merely the founding father of phenomenology, or the forerunner of this or that philosopher, or the precursor of certain

for
LESLIE CARR
with love and thanks

trends. He has joined the ranks of those great thinkers whose thought seems inexhaustible in its richness, to whose works we are repeatedly returning, and whose ideas we are continually trying to understand and appropriate.

The essays in this volume, previously published in different places, have been brought together in the hope that in collected form they may contribute to that work of appropriation. They were written between 1972 and 1986, and thus represent various stages in the project of 'interpreting Husserl' in which I am still engaged. I have not attempted to eliminate any inconsistencies which may have resulted from changes in my interpretations or criticisms over the years. Only minor and superficial revisions have been made. Certain themes and concerns persist: the problem of conceptual relativism, the relation of phenomenology to history, the concepts of intentionality and of the lifeworld. While the essays might have been arranged according to such themes, or in chronological order, a third principle of arrangement in the end seems most appropriate.

Part one is entitled simply 'Husserl' to indicate that I am dealing here primarily with problems internal to the philosopher's work. The emergence of history as an important concept in Husserl's late writings, and the problems it poses for his phenomenology, are matters which began to interest me when I translated Husserl's *The Crisis of European Sciences*¹ and which led to a book on the topic.² Two of the papers in this section deal with the same themes, one in connection primarily with the *Crisis*, the other dealing chiefly with *Experience and Judgment*. A third is related to them, and deals with the problem of intersubjectivity in the *Cartesian Meditations*. Husserl's phenomenology seemed to me to be threatened from within by a form of conceptual relativism in these late works, but it subsequently occurred to me that the roots of this threat could be traced to earlier works as well. 'Phenomenology and Relativism' tries to show this, and since it deals with the early Husserl I have placed it first in this group. The chronology of Husserl's work then leads me to follow it with the essay on the Fifth Meditation and to conclude with the two discussions of the late works.

The essays in Part Two, 'Husserl and Others', attempt to relate Husserl to other philosophers and currents of thought, each in

connection with a particular topic: certain analytic philosophers on intentionality, Dilthey and Heidegger on temporality, Kant on the transcendental ego, J.N. Findlay on realism, idealism and the *epoché*, hermeneutical philosophers on self-evidence, etc. To the original titles of these essays I have in some cases added subtitles which help identify their contents. Two of these essays were originally written in German and appear here for the first time in English.

The third section is entitled 'Husserl and Beyond'. In these essays Husserl serves as a point of departure for the development of ideas he might or might not have found congenial. They were written as preparatory studies for a book on the philosophy of history in which the concepts of temporality and of the social subject play an important role.³ The book is not about Husserl and in some respects departs even from phenomenology, but it owes much to Husserl and would not have been possible had I not been trying to think through and beyond him. The same is true of these essays, and it is for this reason that I have chosen to include them here.

NOTES

1. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans., with an introduction by David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).
2. *Phenomenology and the Problem of History* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974).
3. *Time, Narrative and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

Husserl's Lengthening Shadow: A Historical Introduction

In the 1950's Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote an essay called 'Le philosophe et son ombre'.¹ It was devoted to Husserl, and the title was well chosen for paying homage to a philosopher who so often spoke of the *Abschattungen* (shadings, profiles) through which perceived things present themselves to us. Shadows, of course, have a long and noble metaphorical history in philosophy; one might be put in mind of Plato's shadows which, unreal though they are, resemble and can lead us to the real entities which cast them. Merleau-Ponty had something else in mind, however: he linked the shadows cast by objects to the spaces between objects, and both in turn to what Heidegger called *das Ungedachte* in a thinker's work. Shadows, spaces, reflections, like the silences and pauses in and around segments of discourse, are not themselves objects or sentences. But they are openings and occasions for perceptions and thoughts which would not have been possible without them.

Everyone knows, of course, that Husserl is a giant of our century who indeed casts a long shadow. Shadows also change their length and direction as the day wears on. Merleau-Ponty, in this and other writings of the same period, was contributing to the *second* great wave of Husserlian influence in 20th century European philosophy, the one which began after World War II and was so greatly facilitated by the *Husserliana* editions. ('Le philosophe et son ombre' was primarily a meditation on *Ideen* vol. II, which had been published in 1952). In the *first* phase, Husserl had inspired various schools of close disciples in Germany, but the greatest fruits of his thought were the original and brilliant works of Scheler and especially Heidegger. Neither

is a Husserlian or even a phenomenologist in Husserl's sense, yet neither can be imagined or properly understood without Husserl.

So too, the second phase saw a torrent of scholarship and commentary, ranging from the important mediating work of great teachers and interpreters (Spiegelberg, Landgrebe, Gurwitsch and others) to the most dreary and pedestrian academic exercises. But again Husserl's spirit was better served by those less concerned with the letter: Sartre, Merleau-Ponty himself, and Paul Ricœur (though the last also has an honored place among the great teachers and interpreters). Another wave of influence at this time, alike in not being wedded to texts and orthodoxy, was that felt in the social sciences (especially sociology, thanks to Schutz) and literary theory and criticism. It was at this point, too (and I am thinking now of the 1960's) that phenomenology, both inside and outside academic philosophical circles, crossed the Atlantic and established itself in North America, no longer as a 'school' or even a 'movement', as Spiegelberg called it, but now more soberly and sedately as a 'tradition'. As such it challenged the Anglo-American mainstream, sometimes appearing so broad as to include almost everything *but* Analytic Philosophy, sometimes identified more with (early) Heidegger, sometimes more with Merleau-Ponty than with Husserl. Nevertheless, Husserl somehow presided over this tradition, at the very least as the figure who, in the manner of a mythical divinity, founded it and gave it its name. Only recently has the term 'phenomenological' given way to the more neutral term 'continental', since many feel that in the last fifteen years, the most vital and interesting work coming from Europe has its sources outside phenomenology and is in many cases directed against it.

How can we properly characterize Husserl's influence on subsequent 20th century thought, first on the continent and then in North America? Is there a basic concept or cluster of concepts which has been decisive for Husserl's successors? Certainly we can identify concepts that are central to his own thought that have *not* been decisive: his neo-Cartesianism, for example, conceived as a quest for certainty founded on an 'absolute' subject; his apriorism and intuitionism; his idealism, often hard to distinguish from a metaphysical subjectivism à la Berkeley or Leibniz, in spite of his

disclaimers; his conception of phenomenology as a *method* of arriving at the truth, another vestige of the influence of Descartes. Nothing is more broadly characteristic of 20th century philosophy (including in this case Anglo-American philosophy) than its rejection of idealism and Cartesianism. Nor would anyone argue that Husserl's influence is chiefly negative because of these traits of his thought, as if he embodied them so purely that he served primarily as whipping-boy for his successors. No, most would agree that Husserl's contribution was *positive* and that it is not located in the concepts just mentioned but elsewhere. Where then?

I contend that the decisive concept is that of *world*, together with its later variant, *lifeworld*, both closely tied to the notion of intentionality and together linked to a certain philosophical attitude, that of the *epoché*. Such a thesis may seem uncontroversial if one considers solely the influence of Husserl on the early Heidegger and on French existentialism and phenomenology, even on sociology. But I want to make a stronger historical claim. I believe that Husserl's position on the world marks a significant turning-point in the history of the appearance-reality distinction, and that this position has been widely accepted even outside the sphere of Husserl's successors. It is a position of ontological neutrality beyond realism and idealism. It is partly expressed in the language of popular culture when people refer to the 'world' of the child or the 'world' of a particular cultural group. But it is also taken for granted, I shall argue, even among professedly post- or non-phenomenological philosophers of our time. In some cases it is not a question of Husserl's direct or even indirect influence, to be sure; and he may not be the only philosopher to have facilitated this conceptual shift. But he certainly gave it its most explicit formulation and thematization.

Further, the *problems* raised by this approach to the world, which Husserl already saw, are among the central problems of philosophy today. Thus as we approach our own fin-de-siècle in philosophy, Husserl's world is very much our own – as are the problems that go with it.

Let us look briefly at the appearance-reality distinction and its treatment at the hands of Husserl's predecessors.

The world is, *at* it is and as *what* it is, independently of us and of how we think of and perceive it. Of this we are all firmly convinced, at some very deep level. The world does, of course, include us, but in our absence it would, apart from the detail of our absence from it, remain as it is. But it does sometimes appear to be other than it is. Distinguishing the merely apparent from the real is first of all a practical and cognitive problem which we need to solve in particular cases, and though we may acquire general practical and social skills for doing this, we have no need for a general theory. But philosophers in our tradition have been drawn to this distinction, feeling the need to provide a theoretical account in general terms. Many have held that 'the appearances' are *something* about which we can talk and with which we even directly deal in our experience and practice. They are not simply nothing. But that raises the question of where these appearances belong in the order of things. They cannot be part of the world, it seems, since it is their difference from the real world which gives them whatever status they have. It was suggested (first in the *Theaetetus*) that they arise in the interaction between us and the world. But that left them in an ambiguous place, somehow homeless, hovering between us and our surroundings and even between being and non-being.

This is the problem for which the modern period, as is well known, has found what seemed a satisfactory solution: the appearances do have being, and while their place is not where it seems (in the world) they do have a place after all: in the mind of the perceiving and knowing subject. It may even be said that the modern concept of mind was fashioned just in order to accommodate these previously errant and homeless entities. The 'way of ideas' is inaugurated: the mind contains and deals directly with ideas, now conceived as occurrent impressions (as on wax or paper), pictures, images, representations. Indeed this is *all* the mind deals with in a direct way, and this has two important consequences: one is that the appearances are not necessarily all false: even our veridical grasp of the world is mediated by the

appearances. But how do we decide which appearances correctly inform us about the world? The second and more serious consequence of the 'way of ideas' is that we have no way of comparing them with the real things they purportedly represent. At best we can sift and compare the ideas themselves, arriving at predictive judgments about *them* which can be confirmed if they occur as predicted. But then this does not confirm our belief that they represent or resemble or are caused by the world, or indeed that there is anything at all to which they correspond or from which they derive. Thus the way of ideas raises more problems than it solves: while it finds a home for appearances it cuts us off from reality, even depriving us of what were thought to be the grounds for believing it to exist at all.

But if we have no grounds, then why do we continue to be convinced of the existence of a world beyond our ideas? Indeed, why did anyone ever believe in it in the first place? Few were persuaded by Berkeley's attempt to show that this belief was simply mistaken. And while some lesser lights have gone on doggedly trying to answer the skeptic and solve the modern problem of appearance and reality, more original thinkers tried to dissolve the problem by attacking its assumptions.

Kant's attempt is a compromise. He retains the conception of a self-enclosed mind directly conversant only with its own ideas, set over against a reality outside and indifferent to it. But he reasons that the mind must do more than merely receive the ideas it has, more even than make judgments and predictions about *them*. It refers them to objects, which it distinguishes from itself and its representations, by means of *a priori* concepts of those objects and of relations among them. That is, it does not *arrive* at the notion of such external objects and relations, for if it started without such a notion it could never arrive there. Rather, it *begins* with this notion of an objective world in general, together with categories or rules for relating our representations to objects and the objects to each other. We all share these rules, and this permits us to fill in our general idea of an objective world with a science which tells us in detail what objects there are and what actual relations (laws) obtain among them.

Two well-known facts about the Kantian compromise set the stage for what follows. One is that the objective world (nature)

is an *a priori* notion that gets filled in by means of scientific theory. Representations are still 'in the mind' and only science is able to get us beyond them. The second is that the whole appearance-reality distinction is now doubled: the *a priori* concepts which take us beyond the subjective realm are nevertheless applicable only to what appears in that realm, and to apply them to what does not so appear (the world as it is in itself) is, according to Kant, illegitimate. Thus what seemed a philosophical strategy for reuniting appearance and reality in our experience seems to keep them apart after all and to leave us where we were before.

Hegel attacks Kant on both these points. He affirms that the appearance-reality distinction has its home in our actual experience and that it makes no sense to use it for referring beyond all possible experience. In his *Phenomenology* he returns us to the origin of the whole distinction: 'natural consciousness', our concrete, everyday experience of grappling with the merely apparent and distinguishing it from what is in truth. Further, he conceives of this grappling much more broadly than Kant: it is not only in our dealings with nature, with a view to science, but also in dealing with each other, and even in knowing ourselves, that this struggle with appearance, this 'pathway of doubt and despair', is traversed. He insists too on a multilayered development, in which the reality so painfully attained at one stage may become the appearance to be transcended at another.

But for all his concreteness, how does Hegel actually conceive of our relation to the world? In his dynamic and even heroic conception, the 'real world' figures almost exclusively as a distant goal to be attained, the remote purpose and aim of the struggle with appearances. Without it the struggle would make no sense; its attainment (which we will necessarily recognize as such if and when it happens) will put an end to the struggle. But at no stage short of that are we actually *with* the world itself.

II

Husserl sometimes speaks of the world in a very similar way. At the beginning of *Ideas I* he defines the world as the 'sum-total of objects of possible experience and experiential cognition, of ob-

jects that, on the basis of actual experiences, are cognizable in correct theoretical thinking'.² The emphasis is thus on a completed theory which embodies the knowledge of all there is. Similarly, in the *Cartesian Meditations* the world is defined as an '*idea* correlative to a perfect experiential evidence'.³

But there is a strong counter-current in Husserl's thought which suggests that there is something radically wrong with these formulations. They portray a consciousness engaged in an experiential struggle with appearances, but related only by aspiration to a world indefinitely, perhaps even infinitely distant from it. In relation to that goal, every 'reality' achieved in the course of experience, since it is not yet integrated into that ultimate theory grounded in perfect evidence, is only provisional and tentative; however hard-won and stable it may be by contrast to the appearances it supercedes, it maintains nevertheless the status of mere appearance. In the end this view repeats the classical split between reality on one side and appearance on the other, the latter finding its home in the mind. Or, alternatively, we could say that the mind finds its home only in appearances, at least until the ultimate science is achieved. Indeed, we could say that in a sense, since the time of Plato, little has changed: the soul wanders in a non-world of unreal shadows until such time as it arrives at the true and all-encompassing philosophy.

This tendency to demote our ordinary experience to the status of mere semblance is the result of superimposing philosophical or scientific standards on it, not an accurate account of how it is lived. Husserl sees in natural consciousness the conviction that it is in direct and intimate contact with the real. The things we see and touch, the space in which we move and the persons with whom we interact are not shadowy (mere) appearances but the real itself. They may not be all of it, but through them our contact with the world is direct and immediate. The world is not the end-point or goal of our activities but the starting-point and scene of them, the pre-given background of our strivings, the underpinning whose reality and stability we take for granted in whatever we do. This tacit 'thesis' of the natural standpoint, which Husserl is at pains to express in some of the most famous passages of *Ideas I*, is itself never expressed in the course of experience; it lies so deep and is so fundamental to everything else that it remains unexamined. But

it is there and Husserl attempts to articulate it in detail. It involves more than the idea that 'what is, is', i.e., it is more than just our *Urglaube* in the reality of the real. It is further specified, if only vaguely, in terms of space and time, the distinction between persons and things, between consciousness and world, and indeed between appearance and reality. What is more, and perhaps most important, natural consciousness is at bottom convinced that its relation to the world, while indeed partial, is nevertheless direct: the world is given.

Husserl believes that the philosopher's or scientist's commitment to a reality in itself, corresponding to a perfected theory, has led to a misunderstanding of natural consciousness or experience. It is for this reason that he proposes bracketing that commitment in order to bring into view the world as it actually figures in our ordinary life. His 'phenomenological' approach is not to compare ordinary experience with a prior standard of reality, either already arrived at in science or ideally achieved at some future time, but to let ordinary experience speak for itself. As he says, in a passage Merleau-Ponty was fond of quoting, 'The beginning [of phenomenology] is pure and – so to speak – still mute experience, which has to be brought to pure expression of its own sense'.⁴

This is not to say that Husserl identifies himself with the natural attitude. In fact, it is traditional philosophy which does this, pursuing in a theoretical direction the commitment of the natural attitude itself. Husserl speaks of the sciences of the natural standpoint and even includes (pre-phenomenological) philosophy among them. It is sharing in the deep commitments of the natural attitude which has prevented traditional philosophy from appreciating their nature or even their existence. Only the attempt to extricate ourselves from them can bring them into our view. Consequently, letting the natural standpoint speak for itself involves putting oneself philosophically in a position to hear and understand what it says. That position is what Husserl calls the phenomenological standpoint, the attitude of the *epoché*.

From that standpoint a conception of the world of natural consciousness emerges whose outlines we have already begun to trace. As natural subjects we are in direct contact with a world whose solidity and reality we take for granted and which functions as the starting point for our activities. Nor are these activities

merely the theoretical ones of achieving greater knowledge of this world. They include practical, aesthetic and other activities as well. While it is true that Husserl, like many of his predecessors, gives a certain privilege to theoretical activities, he admits that they stand alongside others, and he does not make the Hegelian mistake of subsuming them all to the quest for a theoretical knowledge of the whole. Thus he keeps a sense of the distinct spheres of operation in which we are engaged. All such spheres, however, are within and presuppose the world as their field of operations.

While Husserl's concept of intentionality draws our attention to particular mental acts and the objects to which they are necessarily directed, he does not consider the world to be an object or even to be the totality of such objects – except in those passages from *Ideas I* and *Cartesian Meditations* which seem to me exceptional rather than typical. Instead, the world is the ultimate 'horizon' or background from which any object or figure stands out. The concepts of object and world are strictly correlative: no object except as part of the world, no world except as background for objects, collections of objects, domains and spheres of objects.

How then does the world stand in relation to intentionality? Certainly it is not itself an intentional object. Yet it is unthinkable except in connection with objects. Conceptually, in itself it is nothing.

Something similar must be said if we ask after its relation to consciousness or subjectivity. It is nothing in itself, nothing apart from its relation to an intentionally directed experience. Yet it is not collapsible into that experience either, not interior to it, no more *reell enthalten* in consciousness, to use Husserl's term, than are the objects that belong to it.

And consciousness, in turn, is nothing without it, nothing that could be considered apart from its 'worldliness' or relatedness to a world in the ways just described. The doctrine of intentionality must in this sense be reformulated: it is not just that consciousness is consciousness of something but also that, in being conscious of something, it is always *also* conscious of the world. And here it is understood that the world is not just *another* something of which it is conscious. For being conscious of the world is different

from being intentionally related to any particular thing, no matter how large and multiform. It is what Husserl calls a horizon-consciousness, just as the world itself is not an object but a horizon.

One can speak of a decisive shift in the history of the appearance-reality distinction in this sense: while the particularity of the struggle with appearances, in the sciences and in practice, is given its due, henceforth the world is no longer conceived philosophically *either* as a reality independent of and indifferent to our experiential approaches to it *or* as the ideal end-point of these approaches. And correlatively, the mind is no longer held to be conversant only with ideas, to be a container for appearances. The revolt against these conceptions, begun but not, as we have seen, successfully completed by Kant and Hegel, is achieved by Husserl.

But is this not, after all, just a renewed version of idealism? Certainly it involves the philosophical abstention from ontological commitment to a reality independent of and indifferent to mind. On the other hand, it is not a denial of such reality or the claim that the only reality is in the mind or a construct of mind. Husserl's official position, as dictated by the *epoché*, is neutrality on the 'metaphysical' issue of external reality, and he often describes this as 'transcendental' idealism which presumably can be combined, à la Kant, with an empirical realism. It would be better to say simply that Husserl correctly describes natural consciousness as being committed to 'external' (i.e. non-mental) reality, but that as philosopher he will neither endorse nor contest this commitment.

It is true that Husserl speaks of consciousness as 'constituting' its objects in the sense that it bestows meaning (though of course not existence) on them. At the hands of the existentialists (such as the early Heidegger and Sartre) this became the view that the individual constitutes (or perhaps could or should constitute) his or her world. While a pre-constituted world is in fact the state in which most of us live, it is a state of inauthenticity or bad faith from which we can (or should) rescue ourselves by re-constituting it *in toto* in an act of resoluteness. To be authentic is to take charge of my own existence, recapture it from the anonymous *das Man* and remake it *ex nihilo* or from my own existential resources; and to remake myself in this way is to remake my world as well.

This view was never in keeping with Husserl's notion of the

world as pre-given horizon for the mind's sense-giving operations, and when Merleau-Ponty contributed to the Husserl-revival of the 1950's he was in part reacting against the excesses of the existentialists on just this point. The world as anonymous, pre-given horizon is a constant condition of all our activities and self-understandings, and it is one we can never fully escape or overhaul by and for ourselves; nor is there any reason to think that we should. The same is true of the intersubjective character of this pre-given world, a character the existentialists had recognized only in devaluing it as inauthentic.

Intersubjectivity is in fact one of the most important new features to be noticed when Husserl begins to speak of the *lifeworld* in his late work. And the latter is a concept on which Merleau-Ponty draws in his own turn to Husserl and his own version of phenomenology. If our experience is always already enmeshed in a world, it is a world we share with others. The objectivity of its objects is really their public character; our conviction that they are not ours alone is a function of our interaction with others and our sense that we all experience and are part of the same world. Its structures and basic categories, its possibilities and impossibilities, are taken for granted not just by me but by all of us in what we do and think, individually and together. Needless to say, it was this aspect of Husserl's later world-concept that was developed by the phenomenological sociologists and ethnomethodologists.

To insist on the intersubjectivity of the lifeworld is, of course, no small matter. A crucial feature of the concept of world, as we have described it so far, is its subject-relatedness. That is, as we saw, it is nothing by itself but stands in necessary correlation to a subject. Now Husserl is saying that it is just as wrong to think of the world of a single subject as it is to conceive of a world by itself. The world is indeed a horizon, rather than an object or collection of objects; and it still has this status for each individual. But the very sense of this status is that it functions thus for a multiplicity of subjects in common.

But this raises an important question, one which troubles Husserl himself in his last years and which is decisive for everything that follows: what is the nature of this 'multiplicity of subjects' to which the world is correlated and to which the individual stands

related by sharing the world? Husserl's rationalist tendencies initially lead him to conceive of it simply as the universality of all subjects, an open-ended totality with shared world-structures. But he was able to see that such a notion did not square with his insistence on concrete description and with his notion of the world as the tacitly taken for granted. He saw that while individuals may indeed assume that the structures of their world are universally valid, in fact their shared and communal character is a function of the particular cultural and historical communities to which they belong.

This poses a dilemma for Husserl's later work because it challenges his rationalism and universalism. It seems to raise from within his own thought the spectre of conceptual relativism against which he had argued since his earliest writings. He had gradually come to appreciate the historicity and traditionality of *thought* by examining mathematics and science and their effects on philosophy in the early modern period. But the cultural and historical specificity of thought was supposed to be traced back to the universal structures of the lifeworld from which it springs. Finally he became aware that conceptual thought leaves its deposit in the culture to which it belongs and becomes sedimented as the pre-conceptual lifeworld of those who follow. The lifeworld of one generation, one historical period, one culture, may thus differ markedly from that of another. Not only thought but experience too, not only the objective world of science but the lifeworld itself, must be considered variable as a function of tradition and history. Every expression of conceptual thought, including science and philosophy and indeed even the very phenomenological philosophy Husserl was formulating, would thus be rooted in the taken-for-granted lifeworld of its historical and cultural community. The claim of such philosophy to any sort of universal validity seems seriously undermined.

III

The sense of ambiguity which pervades Husserl's last work on this important point foreshadows, it seems to me, some of the most important issues that face late 20th-century European philosophy

long after its specifically 'phenomenological' phase has passed. But before we can appreciate this ambiguity in its present-day form we must consider which Husserlian conceptions survive and remain rooted, even in philosophical schools and strategies which seem on the surface far removed from phenomenology.

The most important currents of thought in France and Germany – hermeneutics, neo-Marxism (critical theory), and structuralism – can be seen in part as rejections of the sort of subjectivism and individualism associated with the existentialists and, through them, with the phenomenology of Husserl. What is attacked is primarily the view that the individual, existing subject can be the 'permanent source' (in Sartre's expression) of meaning and value.⁵ If Merleau-Ponty (as we have noted) and later Ricoeur themselves questioned such extreme formulations, even they have been regarded by many as too subjectivistic. A wide-spread attack on the very concept of the subject was launched, urging the priority of historical, economic, social and linguistic structures.

It is to be noted, however, that these attacks on the subject's autonomy are very different from the reductionism associated with scientific realism which begins with a commitment to a physical reality existing in itself. For the forces and structures to which individual consciousness is supposedly subjected are themselves, in a larger sense, still human structures, complexes of meaning, unthinkable apart from their interaction with human beings as 'meaning-bearing' entities. However else these post-phenomenological theories may differ from each other, they all operate with a concept of 'reality' which is closer to that of a 'world' than that of a mind-independent reality-in-itself. While it is true that the term 'world' itself has largely vanished, along with many other elements of phenomenological terminology, the fact remains that the 'reality' of even the most anti-subjectivist post-phenomenological philosophers is still a tissue of meanings, something which has no status or standing except by reference to human experience. It seems clear that this is one legacy of the Husserlian approach which has been unquestioningly retained.

But there is a great deal more than this. The relation of such meaning-structures to the individual is conceived in terms that can also be traced back to Husserl. Because they begin by questioning the autonomy and the self-transparency of the consciously think-

ing and acting subject, these theorists stress what is tacitly taken for granted by such a subject, what renders his thought, action and speech possible without being noticed. This stress on the hidden and taken-for-granted background of explicit conscious thought is, as we have seen, an important aspect of Husserl's notion of the horizon-consciousness which is correlated with the world. It is true that, under the influence of Freud and certain structural-linguistic conceptions, one should speak rather of the *unconscious* than of *horizon-consciousness*. But the relation between hidden structures and conscious thought is not one of causal determinacy and their hiddenness from the subject is not absolute.

The ultimate human experience, of course, to which the hermeneutic, the Marxist, or the structuralist 'worlds' are related, is social rather than individual experience. In spite of the universalist tendencies of structural linguistics and anthropology, it is well known that at the hands of philosophers, in the transition to post-structuralism, the purported universality of the structures of thought gives way to a particularism and pluralism of conceptual forms associated with societies, historical periods, or even whole epochs. This is indeed another attack on the primacy of individual subjectivity: the latter is found to depend on pre-existing social and linguistic structures and, through them, on the society to which it belongs. But this too is a train of thought already found in the late Husserl: the idea that the world is a shared world which refers itself to the community or group that shares it.

In spite of this particularism or pluralism of worlds, universalism still has an important role to play. The world is still regarded in holistic terms, as befits a nexus of meanings or meaning-structures. A cultural or linguistic form or 'epistémè', a historical period or epoch is regarded as a world unto itself, a self-enclosed whole which gives sense to each of its constituent parts or elements, rather than an aggregate or collection. Correlatively, anything particular – an action, an utterance, a text or work of art – depends on this whole for its meaning; it actualizes possibilities already contained in the whole. While the perceptual metaphor of foreground and background is out of fashion, the idea of a similar conceptual dependence remains. As for Husserl, so for his successors, any individual act or expression reposes upon an underlying

unexpressed commitment to the whole of reality. Without this whole any individual act, expression, object or product would not be what it is, would, in fact, be nothing at all.

What all this suggests, then, is that something like the phenomenological *epoché* has entrenched itself in European philosophy since Husserl introduced it. The term is not used, but what it expresses, an attitude of ontological abstention, is certainly present. Philosophers avoid commitment on their own part to a reality in itself, as distinct from mere appearances. In fact, no one is interested in the 'really real' any longer. Rather, like Husserl, they are interested in the world (or worlds) *of* particular human groups, and in the manner in which experience, thought or discourse expresses and embodies its own commitment to such a world. It is as if the struggle of appearance and reality, so important to non- or pre-philosophical life, is a struggle in which the philosopher in his or her official capacity is no longer engaged. And if the human experience to which the world is referred is more collective than individual, this is something whose importance even Husserl saw in his last writings.

This is not to deny that Husserl's central focus, even in this latest work, remains individual subjectivity and conscious intentionality. There is no doubt that this focus has not survived the attacks it has received from several different directions. There is much else that has not survived, as we already pointed out: various aspects of Husserl's Cartesianism, his theory of essences, his intuitionism and his notion of *Evidenz*, which has come under attack as the last gasp of the metaphysics of presence. It must be said, of course, that it is just these aspects of his thought that Husserl himself seemed increasingly to question as he grew older, beginning himself some of the very criticisms which would later be sharpened against him. The emergence of the life-world itself is essentially a self-critical development, in which Husserl indirectly attacks his own ahistoricism and the inadequacies and inconsistencies of his earlier concept of world. But Husserl never went so far as to free his concept of world completely from its relation to consciousness conceived chiefly as individual subjectivity and intentionality.

There is another respect, of course, in which Husserl has been left far behind. The wide-spread 'linguistic turn' which *continen-*

tal philosophy has taken, from Gadamer's *Sprachlichkeit* through Ricœur's 'model of the text' to the pantextuality of the post-structuralists, and most recently to Habermas' theory of communication, is and remains foreign to Husserl. In spite of Merleau-Ponty's and even Derrida's attempts to find a turn to language in Husserl's late manuscripts (especially the fragment on the 'Origin of Geometry'⁶), Husserl never really wavered from the view of the *Logical Investigations*: Language gets its meaning from acts of meaning-bestowal; the ultimate and really the only bearer of meaning is the individual conscious act. He never really considered the view that language, as a system of possible meanings, is a prior condition of the possibility of any meaning-intending act, a view quite decisive for all versions of the linguistic turn.

There is a peculiar historical irony to be met with here, for the Anglo-American analytic tradition, which made its own linguistic turn much earlier (and from somewhat different sources and motivations), now seems to be turning back to the pre-linguistic. 'Cognitive science' deals unabashedly with the concept of mental representation. And though he is no friend of cognitive science, John Searle, one of the major practitioners of linguistic analysis, now sees the necessity of turning from speech acts to the mental states behind them, whose essential feature is their intentionality. Searle develops this concept in a way that owes much (more than Searle admits or perhaps realizes) to Husserl. What is more, he asserts that each intentional state is part of a holistic 'network' of beliefs to which the individual is tacitly committed, and that this network in turn reposes on a 'background' of know-how or mental capacities. While the latter are not themselves particular intentional states they are 'pre-intentional', i.e., they are linked to the intentional as preconditions.⁷ Thus in Searle, the focus on the concept of a prelinguistic intentionality has brought with it something very closely resembling the notion of the tacit natural standpoint as an underlying commitment to the lifeworld.

If this can be regarded as one sort of vindication for Husserl, another sort is beginning to emerge on the continent. As we have seen, though Husserl's thought developed in fruitful and influential directions in his last years, these developments left their author with a sense of unease. The theory of the lifeworld seemed to lead inexorably to a version of cultural and historical relativism. This

seemed to extend even to those disciplines whose aims and achievements were supposed to surmount the particular and become universal: mathematics, science and ultimately philosophy itself. Husserl's studies in the history of science and philosophy since Galileo led him to consider the origin of the whole project in Greece and to ponder the paradox that the quest for a universal, transcultural truth has its origins in quite particular cultural circumstances. Why, after all, did the scientific-philosophical idea of the modern West not arise spontaneously and independently in different places and times, perhaps to converge later? Such questions by no means imply, but they do allow and even suggest, that the whole western project of science and philosophy, all that we term rationality in the broadest sense, is merely the spinning out of certain aspects of the social-cultural-conceptual 'lifeworld' of ancient Greece. Put in this way, Husserl's notion of the lifeworld might seem compatible with and even reinforce the Nietzschean, late-Heideggerean notion of rationality which has found its adherents in French post-structuralism. This is the idea that rationality is essentially a social phenomenon expressing the will to power, that in the modern west it has found its natural outcome in technology and the instruments of social and political control, and that the universalist pretention of this sort of rationality is nothing but its capacity for conceptually and politically dominating the rest of the world. To many philosophers the only alternative to simply repeating and perpetuating this form of domination is to attack rationality itself from within, through forms of discourse which seek to undermine it as radically as possible, or to point wistfully but inarticulately beyond it to the emergence 'one day' of an alternative form or forms of life.

Husserl would probably have been appalled by these developments, but there can be no doubt that his thought contributed to them. He had, of course, himself criticized the *Technisierung* of science which identified mathematically conceived physical reality with all of reality. It was this identification which, in his view, led to a distortion and neglect of the subjective sources from which science springs. The discovery that science arises in the lifeworld was supposed to overcome that identification, relativize the objective world vis-à-vis the lifeworld and then subjectivity, and finally reveal genuine rationality in the subjective sources of science. A

kind of circle would be closed when reason, after conquering the objective world through science, turned back and recovered its own forgotten origins. But the notion of the lifeworld, as we have seen, got in the way. Once the idea was developed of the lifeworld as the natural habitat of consciousness, it seemed to condemn consciousness and ultimately rationality itself to a hopeless parochialism and fragmentation. So many lifeworlds, so many rationalities, which are just so many ways of structuring reality and exercising power.

Yet in 1945 Merleau-Ponty had already seen another possibility in Husserl's thought. 'Probably the chief gain from phenomenology', he wrote, 'is... in its notion of the world or of rationality... To say that there exists rationality is to say that perspectives blend, perceptions confirm each other, a meaning emerges'.⁸ Expressed in the idiom of perceptual metaphors congenial to both Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, this might seem to return us to the idea of the world as the receding end-point of an ascending series of approximations. But it can also be read in another way, stressing the attempt among subjects to exchange their ideas with a view to reaching agreement. Understood in this way, Merleau-Ponty's expression foreshadows the recent work of a philosopher of our own time, Jürgen Habermas.⁹ Though Habermas' primary sources are in the Frankfurt School, Weber, Marx and Hegel, and though he is normally not associated (except negatively and critically) with Husserl, one thing is striking about his work: the central place it accords the concept of the lifeworld. One way of looking at Habermas' recent work is to say that he faces squarely the challenge to rationality posed in Husserl's late work by the concept of the lifeworld.

Like Husserl, Habermas rejects the identification of reason with the mathematizing grasp of the laws of physical reality. This is purposive or instrumental rationality, oriented ultimately toward prediction and control. While the resulting technology vastly increases our capacity to act on the world, the real questions of rationality concern how this capacity is to be used. In other words, the question is that of a rational social ordering of the technical and productive forces. Like his predecessors in the Frankfurt School, Habermas attacks the notion that such questions are themselves finally just questions of instrumental reason, this time

directed at society itself. We know only too well that reason *can* be used in this way, to predict and control not physical but human nature. But this merely raises again the more fundamental questions: to what end should it be so used, and should it be so used at all? Such questions can only be addressed in the context of a discussion whose rationality is not instrumental but communicative: an exchange free of coercion among equal partners who submit their claims and proposals to the appraisal of the others.

For Habermas as for Husserl, the lifeworld is the reality we take for granted in the deepest lying convictions which precede our scientific mathematization of nature. But more importantly, this background is also the scene of our communication with others. Husserl approaches this insight in the *Crisis* when discussing Einstein's use of the Michelson-Morley experiments. Of course everything in the lifeworld *can* be scientifically objectified, says Husserl, but in his work Einstein, like everyone else, inhabited the everyday world. Here he 'could make no use whatever of a theoretical psychological-psychophysical construction of the objective being of Mr. Michelson; rather, he made use of the human being who was accessible to him... as an object of straightforward experience'.¹⁰ Typically, Husserl reverts to the language of objects of experience, even when dealing with persons. What he should have seen is that Michelson was for Einstein above all a partner in a scientific communication – made possible, it is true, by the shared world of laboratories, technical apparatus, scientific papers, etc... but presupposing as well certain shared goals and procedures of discussion and demonstration.

Participants in communicative interaction approach each other with the background convictions which make up their lifeworld. Generally it is these convictions, shared from the start, which provide the standards against which contributions to the discussion are measured, whether they are scientific theories, proposals for public policy or claims about art. But the process of discussion may require that these standards themselves be challenged. Habermas believes that, just as communication requires submitting private or personal views to public discussion, so any particular and parochial convictions, no matter how widely shared, must in principle be further justified in an ever-widening circle of rational discourse. This is the blending of perspectives which

is thus encompassing and general, at least as an ideal, that Habermas proposes as an alternative to a fragmented and pluralized rationality. And such a conception of reason is possible only as communicative reason. That is, rather than groping through appearances to a postulated real world beyond, we are portrayed as inhabiting the real from the start. Our rationality takes us neither beyond it nor back to ourselves, but rather turns us toward each other in the process of communication.

This sketch of Habermas' theory of communication, and the concerns it addresses, suggests that at least in one sense Habermas is the true heir of Husserl in late 20th century philosophy. Like Husserl he seeks to maintain the universality of reason against a conception of the world which, as lifeworld, is always particular and limited, no matter how broadly conceived. But in order to do it he believes he must part company with Husserl and much of the tradition in a decisive respect: the paradigm of consciousness, based on the subject-object relation, must be cast off and replaced by the subject-subject relation of communication.

This while in America Searle moves from speech acts to an intentionalist theory of mind, Habermas in Germany believes the philosophy of mind must give way to a theory of communication. In vastly different ways, from Frankfurt to Berkeley, the lengthening shadow of Husserl covers them both.

NOTES

1. The English translation, 'The Philosopher and His Shadow' appeared in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964) pp. 159-181.
2. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. First Book. Trans. F. Kersten. (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1983) p. 6.
3. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorian Carnis (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1960) p. 61.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 38-39 (I have slightly altered the translation).
5. J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. H. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956) p. 31.
6. See the introduction to Edmund Husserl, *L'Origine de la géométrie*, traduit et introduit par Jacques Derrida (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1962).
7. John R. Searle, *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) pp. 142-44.
8. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), p. xix.
9. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. T. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).
10. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970) pp. 125-6.

I. Husserl

I.1. Phenomenology and Relativism

Husserl first made his name by denouncing psychologism in logic. In his influential *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* (1900), the theories of Mill, Wundt, Sigwart and others are attacked as versions of 'skeptical relativism' which in various ways make truth dependent on the psychological make-up of human beings as a species ('anthropologism').¹ Later, in 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science' (1910) the attack is extended to historical or cultural relativism ('historicism') as well, where his major target seems to be Dilthey.² Husserl's refutation seemed to clear the way for a philosophy which could rest assured of attaining objective, non-relative truths, and this assurance is evident not only in Husserl's early work but also in that of his early followers (e.g., Geiger, Pfänder, Scheler).

In view of the importance of this antirelativism to the beginnings of phenomenology, it may seem surprising that later heirs to the phenomenological tradition move steadily toward more or less explicit versions of relativism, especially of the historical or cultural sort. As in other versions of relativism, truth becomes relative to something like a 'conceptual framework'. The early Heidegger's theory of truth is arguably historicist, and this theory is further developed in the hermeneutical theory of H.G. Gadamer. Merleau-Ponty's perspectivism seems clearly relativistic. The later Heidegger and Jacques Derrida seem to view the whole western metaphysical tradition as a 'conceptual framework' on a grand scale.

It might be argued (and this is the standard view) that this opposition between the early Husserl and later heirs to the tradition is not really remarkable: precisely to the extent that later

phenomenologists have moved away from Husserl's antirelativism, they have also moved away from his conception of phenomenological method. Indeed, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty, the later Heidegger and Derrida, are all so far removed from Husserl that it hardly makes sense to speak of a phenomenological tradition any more, let alone a school or unified method. Hence, it should be no surprise that Husserl and these philosophers differ on the matter of relativism. Besides, the move from strong initial claims of objectively binding truth to some form of skeptical relativism seems common to the development of many philosophical traditions. Something like this happened to British Empiricism from Locke to Hume, and a similar development occurred from German Idealism to the historical relativism of the later 19th century. In our own century the Anglo-American tradition in philosophy has seen the development from logical positivism to the relativism of Wittgenstein's 'forms of life' theory, to Quine's 'Ontological Relativity', and to the relativistic views of scientific theory made popular by Kuhn, Feyerabend and others. In fact, this gives us two ways of explaining the relativism of recent continental philosophy: either it is the result of a general law applying to philosophical traditions as such, or it is merely another manifestation of a widespread phenomenon of mid-twentieth century intellectual life.

However it may be with these broad – and, I might add, somewhat 'historicist' – explanations, it seems to me that the trend toward relativism among those influenced by Husserl is susceptible of a more detailed and reasoned account. I would like to argue that there are certain themes and concepts that are fundamental even to Husserl's earliest conception of phenomenology and which lead in a relativistic direction, even though Husserl himself may not have drawn such consequences from them. Furthermore, these are themes and concepts which have remained central to the approaches of at least some of those philosophers mentioned above as heirs to the phenomenological tradition, in spite of all their differences from Husserl; so that one *can* speak of a continuity to the phenomenological tradition precisely in reference to these concepts. In the following, I shall try to sketch these concepts briefly, point out their possible relativistic implications, and show how they have been carried forward as part of the tradition. First,

a word about Husserl's antirealist arguments in the *Prolegomena*. Generally, they take the form of accusing the relativist of contradicting himself. He (the relativist) puts forward theories and claims of supposedly objectively binding truth which are designed to show that no such theories and claims are possible. He tacitly assumes the nonrelative validity of his own concepts and scheme of concepts in order to show how any such scheme is 'relative'. Husserl also argues that the relativist cannot make sense of the notion of an 'alternative conceptual scheme' without attributing to such a scheme certain fundamental concepts which are also fundamental to *our* conceptual scheme.³ Husserl's antirealist arguments are *a priori* ones that resemble certain arguments currently being put forth against the notion of alternative conceptual frameworks, for example, by Davidson: either such a framework, or language, is translatable into our own language and thus shares at least its rudimentary concepts, or else we have no means for classifying it as a language at all. Since the very idea of *a* conceptual framework suggests that there could be others, and this latter notion is incoherent, the idea of a conceptual scheme is itself questionable.⁴

Richard Rorty has recently tried to show that such arguments are inconclusive.⁵ Admittedly we could never verify the existence of an alternative conceptual scheme without at the same time showing that it was not truly 'alternative'. But since we are aware of or can imagine conceptual arrangements that differ in some significant respects from our own, can we not 'extrapolate'⁶ to a conceptual scheme that differs in all respects? While we could never recognize such a scheme or language *as* such even if we stumbled over it, or even imagine what it would be like, we can nevertheless conceive of its possibility. With his notion of 'extrapolation', Rorty applies a notion of 'conceiving of the possibility of something' which his opponents would probably not accept. But he manages to articulate the doubt that always lingers at the conclusion of *a priori* arguments like those presented by Husserl and Davidson: in order to flesh out our conception of alternative conceptual frameworks, or indeed to say or do anything whatever, we have to appeal to concepts in such a way that we assume their universal validity. But does this make it so? While *a priori* arguments like Husserl's may thus not succeed in ruling out the

relativism of 'alternative conceptual frameworks', they do seem to rule out the possibility that anything could ever count as evidence for the existence of such frameworks. How, then, did such an idea ever gain currency? It could, of course, be seen as a rather overhasty inference from the new information about different languages, cultures and forms of life that bombarded Europeans in the 18th and 19th centuries. Rorty, however, believes that the roots of relativism lie deeper. If Hegel gave expression to the notion of historically changing world views, the way was prepared for him by Kant, 'himself the least historicist of philosophers. For Kant perfected and codified the two distinctions that are necessary to develop the notion of an 'alternative conceptual framework' – the distinction between spontaneity and receptivity and the distinction between necessary and contingent truth'.⁷ In other words, a widely accepted view of the basic structure of cognition and experience made the relativistic interpretation of incoming cultural and historical data plausible, even though its author, Kant, was not himself a relativist.

Now I would like to say something similar about Husserl: at the very time that he was attacking relativism with the sort of arguments mentioned above, he was developing a view of the basic structure of experience which rendered relativism plausible. Some aspects of Husserl's basic conception are, of course, taken over from or shared with Kant, such as the distinction between necessary and contingent truths. It is on other aspects of Husserl's theory, however, that I wish to concentrate, aspects that are peculiar to him and peculiarly phenomenological.

I. THE SEARCH FOR THE GIVEN

One aspect of the Kantian framework which Husserl seems clearly to reject is the idea of a neutral sense-given which is interpreted by a conceptual grasp. In the first Logical Investigation where he deals with the experience of using and understanding language, he makes the distinction between the hearing of sounds or the seeing of marks on a page on the one hand, and the 'animating intention' through which we grasp their sense on the other. One is tempted, he says, to see an analogous process going on in sense perception

itself, such that 'consciousness first looks at its sensations, then turns them into perceptual objects' through a similar animating intention.⁸ Thus, sensations would be signs for external objects which we can either understand or not, like the written or heard signs of language. But Husserl rejects this view, as he does later in the *Ideas*.⁹ Sensations, he says in the *Logical Investigations*, 'plainly only become presented in psychological reflection: in naive, intuitive presentations they may be components in our presentative experience, parts of its descriptive content, but are not at all its objects'.¹⁰ This is, of course, what he says about *hyle* in the *Ideas*.¹¹ Certain of these formulations in both works may seem to suggest that he is not entirely free of the notion of sensations as neutral data that are spontaneously interpreted. For example, he says that 'the perceptual presentation arises insofar as an experienced complex of sensations gets informed by a certain act-character, one of conceiving or meaning'.¹² However, it must be noted that in this passage Husserl says that the complex of sensations is *erlebt* not *erfahren*: it is lived through, not intended as an object, just as the act of intending itself is lived through or performed but not itself intended and can become an object only in a subsequent act of reflection.¹³

Even the very restricted notion of sensation that Husserl holds in these early works has little importance for his overall theory, and it gradually fades almost entirely from view. He seems to recognize that even in this limited form, the notion of sensation is a hybrid left over from precisely the quasi-physiological and causal conception of experience he wants to overcome. But in these early works he has already seen the essential point which has been the source of so much confusion: in order to be viewed as 'data' that are interpreted by an animating intention, sensations would have to be objects of conscious intentions, as are the signs of language, and this they certainly are not. To suppose the existence of some such interpreting process at the unconscious level would be, for Husserl, mere speculation.¹⁴

In spite of this rejection of the notion of sense data, Husserl is very much involved in a project which has traditionally been associated with that notion, namely what is usually called the search for the given. One recalls the famous slogan, *zu den Sachen selbst!* But because of the way Husserl construes the notion of the

given, this results differ markedly from those of others who have been engaged in the same quest, and at the time open the door to some relativistic interpretations. Traditionally, of course, the given was supposed to provide the guarantee *against* any sort of skepticism, relativistic or otherwise. The simple natures of the rationalists, or the sense data of the empiricists, were supposed to provide an infallible and unmediated link to reality.¹⁵ To limit one's claims to what is directly given, or to what can be cautiously inferred from it, was to be assured of genuine knowledge of the world, agreement among all rational creatures following the same procedure, and the avoidance of baseless speculation and the prejudices of a parochial 'point of view'. Even in the hands of Kant, where the given (sensation) has to be supplemented by an interpretation supplied by the mind if cognition is to be possible, sensation still constitutes a link to reality in itself. But Husserl develops his notion of the given from a rather different slant and, in doing so, deprives the given of the function it is traditionally designed to serve. As far as our awareness of the external world is concerned, we have just seen that Husserl regards perceptual objects in space as the most primitive objects of which we are directly aware, denying the existence of a consciously given layer of sense data below it. Since he does admit the availability of sense data to a second level reflective analysis of perceptual experience, it might be thought that he would take the phenomenalist's route of trying to reconstruct the objective world by this procedure. But it is clear that for Husserl, reflection on the sense-aspects (or any other aspects) of experiences yields evidence for nothing but claims about those experiences themselves. In fact, it is essential to his notion of the intentionality of experience that we can draw no conclusions from the existence or nature of an experience about the existence or nature of its object.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Husserl seems to be saying that in sense perception the external object is given. What does he mean?

It is clear Husserl has seized on only one aspect of the given in the traditional sense, namely, its unmediated character; and furthermore, he treats this in a purely descriptive way. A glance at one of the topics Husserl deals with in the Sixth Logical Investigation will show what this means. When we intend or refer to some empirical object or state of affairs, there are several

different ways in which this intention relates to its object: we can intend it emptily, simply referring to it in a way that involves nothing more than understanding the words we use; or we can imagine it, thereby illustrating our intention to ourselves; or we can see a picture of it, so that it is again illustrated, but this time by means of perceiving an object (the picture) other than the one we intend; or we can infer its existence whether by interpreting some conventional sign or drawing a causal inference, where again our inference is based on some object other than the one we intend; or finally, we can just see it, or touch, hear, smell or taste it, in which case our relation to the object is not mediated by some other thing.¹⁷ Here we see how Husserl's approach is descriptive and how his attack on sense-data is derived from this approach. We cannot describe how we could arrive at the perceived object or state of affairs on the basis of anything more basic such as sense data or images. We could only conjecture or postulate the existence of such an unconscious process on the basis of premises which are even more conjectural. And so, such theories are rejected. The descriptive fact is that as far as empirical objects and states of affairs are concerned, perception plays the role of supplying the *given*, the basic instance of self-evidence or fulfillment par excellence beyond which we cannot and need not go. The fact that perceptual evidence is always what Husserl calls 'inadequate' and open to further question does not remove its function of supplying the given. Furthermore, perceptual evidence does not guarantee intersubjective agreement; rather, it appeals to it, it assumes it will be forthcoming. In this sense it remains a 'pretension' or 'presumption'¹⁸ that has to be made good by further experience. The objective world in the strict sense, understood as the correlate of intersubjective agreement, is conceived by Husserl as a distant goal toward which we strive in our scientific endeavors, not something from which we begin.

Perception, on the other hand, is just that: it is that from which we begin. It is that on which our inferences are based and to which our perceptual judgments are naturally referred for their verification. To be sure, its presumption is to place us in contact with the real world that exists independently of us, but Husserl does not make a metaphysical pronouncement on the correctness of this presumption; his task is simply to describe it. This, the

perceptual world is the 'taken for granted', as he later calls it, on which our knowledge of the world is based. Of course, perceptual givenness is only one kind in Husserl's general theory of *Evidenz*: it would be inappropriate in the case of knowledge claims about our mental states, for example, or in mathematics. Here, according to Husserl, other forms of givenness are involved which are only functionally similar or analogous to perception in its domain. But as far as the real world is concerned, perception is our direct link to it, provided that the words 'direct' and 'real world' are understood in the descriptive sense as we have tried to define it. In this sense, perception becomes the core of what Husserl later calls the 'natural attitude', the underlying general belief in the world whose objects are given in experience. Husserl's natural subject, the traditional man in the street under the sway of the natural attitude, is committed first of all to the space-time world about him which fills in his perceptual intendings. Within this world, he pursues his particular practical or scientific interests, picking out spheres of objects for observation or explanation, focusing upon certain aspects of the world, reasoning on the basis of what is immediately given to the greater world beyond, etc. But the perceived world is not itself something picked out, not an isolated aspect of reality, not itself something inferred: it is, to repeat, that from which we begin, as distinct from anything we arrive at through it or on the basis of it, by inference, abstraction or other mental activity.¹⁹

This particular version of the search for the given, as the unmediated in the purely descriptive sense, has been a constant theme in phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty, describing what he takes to be Husserl's task as well as his own, says: 'To return to the things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks* and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign language, as is geography in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie, or a river is'.²⁰ But even before Merleau-Ponty, the search for the given or the return to the things themselves had already been undertaken in precisely this sense by Heidegger, and with rather striking results. As is well known, Heidegger in *Being and Time* claims that even perceptual objects, as 'things' in space and time, are second-

level abstractions from a more basic level which is actually our direct and unmediated encounter with the world. This is the level of *Zuhandenheit* at which we encounter not 'things' but 'equipment' in complexes of involvement and significance. It is only when we withdraw, for certain practical purposes, from engagements in this world of equipment, take a distance from it, as it were, that the world of *Vorhandenheit* comes into view, available to perception in the traditional sense.²¹ Merleau-Ponty himself accepts many of the features of Heidegger's description of this unmediated encounter, even while he retains the term perception. He adds, of course, his own notion of the lived body as the natural subject of perception such that perceived things, and even space and time, have the status of functional values for a mobile and practical life rather than the status of objects for detached observation. While the description of the 'given' thus changes considerably under the hands of these later phenomenologists, and while their views involve an implicit criticism of Husserl, it should be clear that these descriptions are arrived at by pursuing the notion of the given in precisely Husserl's sense: namely, as that which is 'there' for us prior to abstraction and explicit mental activity and is not itself arrived at by any such activity.

We made the statement above that this conception of the given leaves the door open to a relativistic interpretation. It can easily be seen how this is so. The concept of the unmediated in the purely descriptive or phenomenological sense not only does not supply an unassailable cognitive link to an independent reality existing in itself; it does not even involve any assurance of intersubjective agreement, at least not in the universal sense required to overcome relativism. It is true that for Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, the world of the natural attitude (the everyday world, or lived world) is intersubjective; it is a public world and not some idiosyncratic private spectacle that is given in this sense. That is to say, at least in Husserl's terms, that the perceiving subject takes himself to be in direct contact with a world that is available to others as well. But what is lacking is a transcendental argument to the effect that the world as perceived is not only factually accepted by others but must be accepted as such by any possible others. While Husserl may have conceived of it in this way, he provides us with no such argument.²² All we have is a sort of

layered description of mental life involving the distinction between what is given and what is secondarily derived from the given. In Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, while this same stratification is retained, any pretense toward showing the universality of the given world is dropped altogether and the strong suggestion is made that the world may vary, if not from individual, then perhaps one community or historical period to another. This is a possibility left open, as we have seen, by the Husserlian concept of the given from which they begin.

II. THE OBJECT AS INTENDED

There is another aspect of Husserl's earliest efforts in phenomenology which leaves his theory open to relativistic interpretations and even positively suggests them. In the previous discussion we have seen that Husserl's notion of the given was that of the unmediated. What this meant was that our access to the object is not mediated by some other *object*. But there is another sense of mediation that is often involved in these discussions, what is called mediation by concepts. Something like this is involved in Husserl's theory of intentionality. In the Fifth Logical Investigation, where he is broaching the thorny problem of the intentional object, Husserl insists, as he does throughout his career, that the object is not to be confused with or collapsed into the act in which it is intended. Nevertheless, he points out, we must distinguish between the object *which* is intended and the objects *as* it is intended. When I refer, for example, to the Emperor of Germany, the object which is intended may have many correct descriptions (e.g., the son of the Emperor Frederick the Third, the grandson of Queen Victoria) other than the one which is included in this particular reference to it. But it is incorrect to speak of these descriptions as applying to the object *as* it is in this case intended.²³ This distinction is, of course, absolutely essential to Husserl's notion of a conscious intention which, though it in one sense requires an object, is not dependent on the state of the world in order to be what it is. It not only means that the intended object need not exist, as in the case of illusion or fantasy; it also means that even where one supposes the object to exist just as I take it

to be, one cannot conceive of consciousness, experience or cognition as a straightforward relation obtaining between the subject and an object that exists 'in itself'. It means, in the language of recent discussions of intentionality, that descriptions of perceiving, thinking, believing something, etc., are nonextensional or 'referentially opaque', i.e., that they do not permit the substitution of different expressions, such as 'evening star' and 'morning star', even if they refer to the same object.²⁴ Husserl's own interest at this point is in developing the idea of a conscious act, pointing out that the same object can be intended in different ways. He extends the distinction between object-*which* and object-*as* to perceptual objects as well as the references of linguistic expressions and begins to introduce his famous analysis of *Ab-schattungen* or profiles: the object is always perceived from some angle or another, and we must distinguish the object *as* seen from the object with all its possible determinations and perspectives.²⁵

Here Husserl might be suspected of reverting to the Kantian distinction between the appearance and the thing-in-itself. This is, of course, not the case. The object-*which* or object-in-itself, in the distinction, is for Husserl not some unknowable whatnot and certainly not a remote cause of our sense experience, but is simply the object which robust common sense takes to be there independently of our different approaches to it, an object which we certainly can come to know and which in any case is directly given to us and not represented *in absentia* by some messenger or stand-in called an appearance. Besides, it is obvious that we have to know about the object-in-itself in order precisely to make the distinction in a given case between the object *which* is intended and the object *as* it is intended. What Husserl has introduced is something more like the Hegelian distinction between the in-itself and the for-me, a distinction which is perfectly legitimate and common-sensical and from which, according to Hegel and others, the Kantian distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself was illegitimately derived.

It will, of course, be recalled that when Husserl introduced his famous phenomenological reduction or *epoché* in the *Ideas*, his point was precisely to suspend the common-sense supposition of an object existing in itself in order to concentrate on the for-me

or the object as it is intended. The notion of the independently existing object belongs to the 'natural attitude', which brings with it the requirements of a relational or causal view of cognition and experience; and in order to avoid this requirement, the natural attitude had to be suspended. However, Husserl's purpose was to analyze and understand the natural attitude itself precisely by unearthing its hidden presuppositions, and thus he found, as Hegel had before him, that the distinction between the in-itself and the for-me is itself a distinction *for-me*. That is, it is a distinction internal to experience and thus turns up within the brackets of the *epoché*. The distinction has its place, for example, in the doctrine of the *noema* in *Ideas* where it is said that the object *as I intend* it always points beyond itself by tacit reference to other possible intendings of the same object.²⁶

What emerges from all this is a picture of experience or cognition as a series of *prises* on a reality which, while it never eludes our grasp, is never fully within in either. Even the given in sense perception is interpreted or intended-as. To be sure, Husserl is interested in the manner in which, particularly in our scientific endeavors, we aim at objectivity, i.e., at a complete grasp of reality which is not limited to any one point of view or description. He makes a great deal of the role of intersubjectivity – the intersection and agreement of simultaneous but different intendings of the same object of affairs – in the pursuit of such objectivity. In view of this, it can be seen that Husserl's theory of consciousness had to become teleological, his theory of *Evidenz* had to become genetic and dynamic in character once he developed the implications of the distinction between the object which is intended and the object *as it is intended*.

We shall return later to the teleological and dynamic character of consciousness in Husserl's theory, but first let us pause to appreciate the relativistic implications of his notion of the intentional object. What Husserl has obviously discovered in his own way is the equivalent of the now-familiar notions of taking-as and seeing-as. And we can see that these notions are made necessary by the concept of intentionality and by the intentionalist approach to experience and cognition. What Husserl's approach requires is that whenever we are dealing with conscious intending subjects, we cannot legitimately speak of objects, facts or even the

world without at the same time asking, in effect: whose objects, whose facts, whose world? This is simply to say that, from the phenomenological point of view, object, fact, and world as intended are referred back to some particular act or acts of intending them. Even the objective world of science is referred back to the scientific community as it construes that world. Most important, of course, is that on this view the objects of our reference 'under-determine' our references to them; that is, they are always such as to allow other possible references in the sense of other intendings-as.

This Husserlian train of thought is also taken up and made central by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. In their case, too, taking-as is a feature of the most primitive level of experience, that which corresponds to what we called the given. In Heidegger, we find in the notion of the 'as-structure of understanding'.²⁷ Understanding, which for Heidegger is a basic element of human existence, and which goes deeper than conceptual thought, means taking something *as* something. And from the point of view of his existential analysis of *Dasein* we cannot make philosophical sense of the world except as understood in this sense by *Dasein*. In Merleau-Monty it is the concept of perspective in perception which acquires central significance. Perception is the basic or primary mode of consciousness, in whose structure all other modes share, and thus the concept of perspective or 'point of view' becomes the central metaphor for any philosophical understanding of object or world.²⁸ World is always world as perceived from a particular, even if intersubjective, point of view.

In the case of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, it is important to stress again the intersubjective character of the as-structure of experience. In their discussions of everyday experience, taking-as is not to be regarded as something like a personal accomplishment, even though Merleau-Ponty often speaks of a kind of individual 'style' in perception. The sense of the world and its constituents is from the start a shared sense, and it is only perhaps in the experience of quasi-conversion to what Heidegger calls 'authentic' existence that the sense of the world acquires anything like a personal accent. But even though it is shared and thus intersubjective, the sense structure of the experienced world is pretheoretical in the sense that it exists prior to the explicit appeal to the

categories of objectivity and the explicit aim of intersubjective agreement. These activities are called into play for certain practical purposes and for the development of scientific theory, but what the phenomenologists are interested in showing is that these activities presuppose and build upon a level of experience which is both more primitive and more rich than the pared-down and somewhat sterile objective world.

III. CONSCIOUSNESS AS TEMPORAL GESTALT

The Husserlian conceptions we have been examining so far have all derived from the *Logical Investigations* of 1900–01. The one we turn to next is almost as early, dating from the lectures on the *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* of 1905.²⁹ Here Husserl begins to consider the dynamic character of consciousness, which later plays a role in his genetic and developmental theory of *Evidenz*. The temporal dimension is added to the conception of consciousness and intentionality developed in the *Logical Investigations*, where it had been passed over even where it seemed called for.³⁰ Even in the *Ideas* (1913) this discussion is suppressed, though Husserl is aware that it is required in order to make this phenomenology complete.³¹

In order to describe phenomenologically the consciousness of time, Husserl, like others before him, takes as his example the hearing of a melody. But a melody might well serve as an image for consciousness itself as Husserl describes it in his lectures. That is, consciousness is correctly conceived as consisting of more or less distinct phases or individual experiences (*Erlebnisse*), but each of these, like each note in a melody, derives its significance from its place in a temporal configuration that includes past and future phases. This is so *for* the experiencer since passing experiences are not annihilated for him, but are 'held in his grasp' by a kind of background awareness which Husserl calls retention, and future experiences are anticipated in so-called protention.³² The past need not be explicitly called to mind, as in 'recollection', nor the future expressly anticipated, in order to play a role in our experience of the present. Rather, they determine its sense, as the past and future notes of a melody determine the sense of the note

I am hearing now. The 'melodies' of a conscious being may be of greater or smaller scope, may overlap with each other or be contained in others as a theme is contained within the movement of a symphony.

In speaking this way I am admittedly resorting to metaphors which Husserl does not use and I have developed his theory somewhat beyond what he presents in the lectures. But I think that the above account grasps the essence of Husserl's temporal conception of consciousness, as can be seen by the way it is finally integrated, into his theory, especially in the *Cartesian Meditations*. When he speaks there of the ego as a 'substrate of habitualities',³³ he is referring to the manner in which ongoing experience stands out against an acquired background of beliefs and convictions which bear upon or give a slant to the present topic. For if we assume, as we must, that each individual has a different experiential past, and that membership in a community will make one individual's themes of concern different from those of an individual in another community, we can say that he confronts the world of his experience in a way that is unique to him or to the members of his community. Such a conception now gives us the means for elaborating on the two points that we have discussed earlier: (1) If the 'given' is seen as that which is 'taken for granted' about the world by particular individuals or groups, we can interpret this as a function of the temporal context of their experience, in such a way that such context will vary depending on who is involved. (2) That an object is intended as such and such, viewed or interpreted in a certain way to the neglect of other possible ways of intending or interpreting it, may again derive from the temporal context or theme of interest of the individual who intends it. Indeed, we can speak of typical ways of interpreting or intending objects or type of objects as arising from the temporal backgrounds and interests of individuals or groups of individuals.

Husserl himself began to draw out some of the relativistic implications of his theory of consciousness in his latest work, where he made much of the 'historicity' of experience with its 'sedimented' background.³⁴ But it was Heidegger and his pupil Gadamer who made the most of this notion. Heidegger's temporal interpretation of *Dasein* with its mutually implying dimensions of

past, present, and future, can be seen as derived from Husserl's temporal theory of consciousness.³⁵ And in his notion of the *Vorstruktur* of understanding, with its key concept of interpretation,³⁶ he supplies the basic materials for Gadamer's hermeneutic theory. A combination of logical and perceptual metaphors are involved in Gadamer's conception of interpretation: on the one hand, the sedimented background the subject brings to his present experience is seen as something like a set of ungrounded presuppositions or prejudices from which the interpretation is derived; on the other hand, it, too, is viewed as a sort of Gestalt which is a whole prior to its parts – whence the famous hermeneutical circle.³⁷

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, we should begin by pointing out that Husserl's intentionalist approach, from the earliest of this phenomenological investigations, precludes the realistic positing of a world in itself to which consciousness stands in a real or even cognitive relation. He is limited to describing the world as it presents itself, as it effectively claims the allegiance of consciousness and functions in the fulfillment of intentions and the verification of claims about reality. It is in this sense that he takes the perceptual as the given, and while perception 'pretends', as he says, or presumes to place us in direct contact with reality, the perceptual world is there for us prior to the explicit appeal to the categories of objectivity and intersubjective agreement. Further, while reality is thus given in perception, it is also subject, by the very nature of intentionality, to an interpretation or intending-as which leaves aspects of it beyond our grasp. Finally, even on Husserl's earliest view, consciousness does not approach reality empty-handed, as it were, but in each case brings with it the baggage of its past experience. Particular intentional grasps on reality are not isolated, but take their place in a Gestalt of a temporal character. We have tried to show the manner in which each of these points accommodates itself to a relativistic interpretation and has in fact received such an interpretation as it is carried on in the phenomenological work of later writers.

It might be argued that while these notions suggest a relativistic view of the knower's relation to the world or to external reality, this view would not necessarily be incompatible with Husserl's early antirelativism and might even have been acceptable to him. It would not necessarily imply a full-fledged *philosophical* relativism of the sort Husserl branded as a form of self-refuting skepticism. After all, Husserl's purpose in phenomenology was not to make straightforward claims about reality or to certify the veracity of our experience or our scientific theories. He did not wish to overcome skepticism in this sense, and in this he differs from Descartes. His purpose, rather, is to make transcendental or reflective claims of precisely the sort we have been describing about the nature of our experience and about the world as it presents itself in that experience. While he may arrive at a concept of world and reality that permits of a relativistic interpretation, the same would not necessarily apply to what he says the basic structures of experience, e.g., the stratification mentioned above in which perception appears at the lowest level. The same could be said for Heidegger: while the public world of *Zuhandenheit* may differ considerably depending on which 'public' is involved, the fact that *Dasein's* everyday world has the character of *Zuhandenheit* is not itself subject to the charge of relativism, but is presumably meant as a universally valid claim, i.e., true of every possible *Dasein*.

It is not so easy, however, to avoid by this means a relativistic interpretation. Husserl's phenomenology does involve a description of the world, if only as phenomenon or world-as-it-presents-itself-to-us. This is so precisely because of the thesis of intentionality: because all consciousness is consciousness *of*, we cannot produce a description of consciousness without at the same time dealing with what it is of, i.e., with its objects and its world. Another way of describing what Husserl is doing is to say that he seeks to describe the nature of our most fundamental beliefs about the world. To be sure, phenomenology deals with the world in structural, not in factual, terms. But it is still open to the charge that it is only *our* world whose structure it is describing or only *our* most fundamental beliefs about the world – however broadly we construe the 'our' – and not necessarily any possible world or beliefs about the world. The very fact that Heidegger and Mer-

leau-Ponty could so revise Husserl's conception of the world of the natural attitude seems to brand Husserl's description as that of a limited 'point of view' perhaps engendered in his case by an inherited set of objectivist prejudices. But if this can be said of Husserl's descriptions, why cannot something like it also be said of Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's as well, perhaps involving in their case other sorts of prejudices? It is hard to see how any phenomenological description is immune to this sort of criticism.

In this sense we can see that the same considerations which allowed for a relativistic interpretation of the consciousness of the natural attitude could apply as well to the phenomenologically describing consciousness. While its concern is not straightforwardly with the world but rather with consciousness, the structures of consciousness and the structures of the world as experienced, the phenomenologically describing consciousness is still, after all, consciousness. As such, does it not confront something analogous to a perceptual given in its own domain? Husserl himself suggests that it does.³⁸ In its approach to that domain is it not itself always a case of *inventing-as*? Husserl admits as much when he says that transcendental experience may be *inadequate*.³⁹ Finally, does it not approach its task like any other mode of consciousness with a background of past experience? We can see that in this way the very aspects of Husserl's theory of consciousness that allow a relativistic interpretation with respect to the worlds also reflect back upon and allow for the same interpretation of phenomenology itself.

NOTES

1. *Logical Investigations*, trans. J.N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), Vol. I. See especially Chapter 7, pp. 135 ff.
2. 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science', trans. Quentin Lauer in Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965). See especially pp. 122 ff. It should be pointed out that Husserl's use of 'historicism' to mean 'historical relativism' is at variance with other uses of the term, e.g., that of Popper in *The Poverty of Historicism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).
3. See especially the long critique of Erdmann in section 40.
4. Donald Davidson, 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 47 (1974), pp. 5-20.
5. Richard Rorty, 'The World Well Lost' in *Journal of Philosophy* LXIX, no. 19 (1972), pp. 649-665.
6. Rorty, p. 659.
7. Rorty, p. 649.
8. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. I, p. 309.
9. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Macmillan Co., 1958). See section 43.
10. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. I, p. 309 f.
11. *Ideas*, section 85.
12. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. I, p. 310.
13. Cf. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II, p. 540.
14. Cf. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II, p. 567.
15. In an excellent study, J.N. Mohanty has pointed to the various and distinct notions (simplicity, immediacy, passivity, indubitability) that have been confusedly combined in traditional concepts of the given. See 'The Given' in *Phenomenology and Ontology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), p. 13 f.
16. Cf. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II, p. 537.
17. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II, p. 710 ff.
18. 'Pretension' is used in *Logical Investigations*, (Vol. II, p. 712), 'presumption' is a later (and better) term.
19. Cf. *Ideas*, sections 27-32.
20. *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), p. ix.
21. See *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), sections 12-18.
22. He comes closest to it, perhaps, in passages like *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p. 140.
23. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II, p. 578.
24. See R.M. Chisholm, 'Sentences Anout Believing', and the discussion that has grown out of Chisholm's paper, in *Intentionality, Mind and Language*,

- ed. Ausonia Marras (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972); also the articles by myself ('Intentionality') and J.L. Mackie ('Problems of Intentionality') in *Phenomenology and Philosophical Understanding*, ed. Edo Pivcevic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
25. Cf. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II, p. 712 f.
 26. Cf. *Ideas*, section 131.
 27. *Being and Time*, section 32.
 28. *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 395.
 29. Trans. James S. Churchill. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964).
 30. Cf. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II, pp. 694 ff.
 31. *Ideas*, section 81.
 32. *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, sections 8–13.
 33. *Cartesian Meditations*, section 32.
 34. See *The Crisis of European Sciences*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970). In a study concentrating on Husserl's late work, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), I have dealt in more detail with the relativistic implications of the notion of 'consciousness as temporal Gestalt' as it is elaborated in Husserl's 'middle period' (*Cartesian Meditations*) and combined there with this theory of intersubjectivity to lead to the conception of historicity in the *Crisis*. The present essay goes further in tracing Husserl's implicit relativism to the earliest writings, not only the lectures on time-consciousness, but also, as in points 1 and 2 of this essay, *The Logical Investigations*.
 35. *Being and Time*, section 68.
 36. *Being and Times*, section 32.
 37. H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 235 ff.
 38. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 27; 'phenomenological *epoché* lays open (to me, the meditating philosopher) *an infinite realm of being of being of a new kind*, as the sphere of a new kind of experience (*Erfahrung*): transcendental experience'. *Ideas*, p. 112: 'our goal we could also refer to as *the winning of a new region of Being ... a region of individual Being*, like every genuine region'.
 39. *Cartesian meditations*, p. 22 f.

I.2. The 'Fifth Meditation' and Husserl's Cartesianism

Addressing his audience in the Amphitheatre Descartes at the Sorbonne in 1929, Husserl said that 'one might almost call transcendental phenomenology a neo-Cartesianism',¹ and he went on to name the book that grew out of the Paris lectures the *Cartesian Meditations*. To be sure, like most of Husserl's many homages to Descartes, this one is qualified: '... even though [phenomenology] is obliged ... to reject nearly all the well-known doctrinal content of the Cartesian philosophy'. But this qualification is further expanded upon by a sort of counterqualification that is also typical of Husserl's remarks on Descartes: phenomenology is so obliged 'precisely by its radical development of Cartesian motifs'.

The extent and nature of Husserl's indebtedness to Descartes has been a subject of much discussion, especially by those who are impressed and inspired by Husserl's way of doing philosophy, but who regard a *rejection* of Cartesianism as a point of honor in mid-twentieth century philosophy. It has been widely noted that in his last work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936), Husserl not only does not employ the 'Cartesian way' found in both the *Meditations* and the *Ideas*, but even sharply criticizes it.² Some have pointed out that the undermining of the Cartesian approach begins gradually even before the Paris lectures,³ so that the *Meditations* appear as a last attempt, prompted by external circumstances, to restate the 'classical' approach of the *Ideas* in rigorous and succinct form.

In the following I shall try to show that the *Cartesian Meditations themselves* – specifically the Fifth Meditation in its relation to the other four – make manifest a significant departure from Cartesianism in two important points. The first point concerns the

problem peculiar to the Fifth Meditation, that of the *alter ego*. As it is usually interpreted, the Fifth Meditation seems if anything to *support* a Cartesian reading of phenomenology, primarily because it addresses itself to the problem of solipsism. Because the problem of solipsism is a traditionally Cartesian problem, Husserl is usually seen as attempting a Cartesian solution to it, or perhaps a Leibnizian variant thereof. I shall try to show that Husserl is not at all concerned with the problem of solipsism in any traditional sense, and that the 'solution' he offers, when understood in light of Husserl's understanding of the problem, removes his whole theory from the context set by Descartes.

Husserl was quite clear on this first point, I think, and merely misled his readers by using the term 'solipsism' in a peculiar way. My second point may not have been clear to Husserl, but is implied in what he said. After 'solving' the problem of the *alter ego* in the Fifth Meditation, Husserl begins a project of putting his solution to work in what he calls 'intersubjective phenomenology'. I shall argue that this project, roughly sketched though it is, reflects back on phenomenology as a whole, calling into question one of its most explicit Cartesian elements, its dependence on the apodicticity of the *ego cogito*.

What does Husserl seek in the Fifth Meditation? According to the title, to 'uncover the sphere of transcendental being as monological intersubjectivity'. But in the first paragraph it appears that this task must be undertaken because of the objection that phenomenology, as described in the preceding four meditations, could 'be branded ... as transcendental solipsism'.⁴ By introducing the problem in this way Husserl has placed a great obstacle in the way of his readers' understanding of what he is about.

Now the objection of solipsism is often raised against idealisms, and Husserl has just characterized his phenomenology as (transcendental) idealism.⁵ What is the usual objection? To quote one concise definition, solipsism 'consists in holding that the individual *I* ... with its subjective modifications, is all of reality, and that other *I*'s of which one has a representation have no more independent existence than persons in dreams; – or [it consists] at least in admitting that it is impossible to demonstrate the contrary'.⁶ By seeming to present his theory of intersubjectivity as an answer to such an objection, Husserl gives the impression that he is setting

out to demonstrate or prove, deductively or inductively, the 'independent existence' of other '*I*'s'.

The impression that the standard problem of solipsism is at issue is reinforced by the Cartesian 'presence' which gives the *Meditations* their name. Husserl has presented the phenomenological reduction as a variant of the Cartesian systematic doubt, as he had already done in the *Ideas*; and he has credited Descartes with seeing 'that *ego sum* or *sum cogitans* must be pronounced apodictic, and that accordingly we get a first apodictically existing basis to stand on' [*einen ersten apodiktischen Seinsboden unter die Füße bekommen*]. But, once established upon this *Seinsboden*, what do we do? Descartes' idea of proceeding from this point is, of course, to be able to assert the existence of God and the rest of the world, including other egos, with the same degree of certainty, even if by inference rather than immediately, as that attaching to the assertion *ego sum*. And it is precisely against Descartes' and others' failure to do this that objection of solipsism is ordinarily raised. Now Husserl explicitly dissociates himself, early in the *Meditations*, from Descartes' attempt to prove the existence of 'the rest of the world' [*die übrige Welt*] by using the *ego sum* as an 'axiom'.⁸ But by raising the objection of solipsism in the Fifth Meditation, and presenting his theory as an answer to it, Husserl seems to be returning to the Cartesian approach, hoping to ascribe independent existence to other egos, if not to the rest of the external world, with a degree of certainty comparable to that of the *ego sum*.

This becomes plausible if we consider Husserl's reasons for rejecting Descartes' procedure. It is impossible to move by inference from one's own ego to 'the rest of the world' because the ego is not a 'tag end of the world', i.e., it is not 'part' of the world at all. As Descartes failed to realize, though there are different ways of considering the ego, the ego of which one has apodictic certainty is transcendental: its relation to the world and the things in it is intentional and not that of a part to a causally interrelated whole. Consequently, 'inferences according to the principle of causality', of the sort used by Descartes, are ruled out.⁹ Thus we cannot prove the existence of other egos considered as part of the world's causal nexus. But what about other egos considered as transcendental? The problem, as Husserl announces it in the

Second Meditation, is how 'other egos – not as mere worldly phenomena but as other transcendental egos – can become possible as existing and thus become equally legitimate themes of a phenomenological egology'.¹⁰ And at the beginning of the Fifth Meditation the problem of solipsism is stated in this way: 'But what about other egos, who surely are not a mere intending and intended [*Vorstellung und Vorgestelltes*] in me, merely synthetic unities of possible verification in me, but, according to their sense, precisely others?'¹¹ Thus other egos seem to demand a treatment which goes beyond the consideration of them merely as intentional objects, for they are intentional subjects. He seems to be admitting that he asserts that everything else has the status of merely something intended or represented 'in me' and is now faced with the question of whether other egos have only the same status. His 'denial of solipsism' would then take the form: 'no, others as transcendental egos in fact exist outside me', or the like.¹²

This could explain the fact that Husserl says he is addressing himself to the problem of *transcendental* solipsism. But in fact the transcendental character of the problem seems to involve much more, for the objection is described as calling into question 'the claim of transcendental phenomenology to be itself transcendental philosophy and therefore its claim that, in the form of a constitutional problematic and theory moving within the limits of the transcendently reduced ego, it can solve the transcendental problems pertaining to the *objective world*'.¹³

Not just a particular type of entity which has a status different from other entities, but the objective world as a whole, then, seems to be at issue. How is this so? Husserl explains the objectivity of the world in this way: 'I *experience* the world... not as (so the speak) my *private* synthetic formation but as other than mine alone [*mir fremde*], as an *intersubjective* world, actually there for everyone, accessible in respect of its Objects to everyone'.¹⁴ Husserl has indeed already insisted on the *transcendence* of the world by saying that 'neither the world nor any worldly Object is a piece of my Ego, to be found in my conscious life as a really inherent part of it, as a complex of data of sensation or a complex of acts'.¹⁵ Accounting for transcendence, says Husserl, is the task which gives transcendental philosophy its name. But while such transcendence is 'part of the sense of anything worldly', he goes

on, '... anything worldly necessarily acquires all the sense determining it, along with its existential status, exclusively from my experiencing, my objectivating, thinking, valuing, or doing...'.¹⁶ As the analysis proceeds, this apparent paradox is cleared up. Transcendence is conceived as the irreducibility of what is meant to the particular act or acts in which it is meant. But the meant surpasses any particular act or acts by always being the reference point of other *possible* acts implied in any *actual* one. Until the Fifth Meditation, all such acts, actual and possible, are conceived as *mine*. By introducing the problem of objectivity, Husserl is simply drawing on a sense of transcendence involved in the natural attitude which is stronger than the sense previously developed. The objective is not only irreducible to any particular acts of mine; it is also not reducible to *all possible* acts of mine, my whole actual and possible stream of consciousness, because it is identically the same for others and their acts as well.

Now if 'the claim of transcendental phenomenology to be itself transcendental *philosophy*' is threatened by the objection of solipsism, it is because phenomenology seems to be incapable of dealing with the stronger sense of the *transcendence* of the world. It can account for the weaker sense of transcendence (the transcendence of my particular act or acts) because of its concept of the relation between actuality and potentiality in the stream of consciousness. But up to now it has no concept of the *alter ego* to whose acts the stronger sense of transcendence refers.

The 'objection of solipsism' thus takes on a different sense: not the *existence* but very *concept* of the *alter ego* is needed in order to answer it. But the character of the concept required must be further specified. It is not equivalent, for example, to the concept of a multiplicity of egos: Husserl is not concerned with showing that *different* egos are possible or conceivable. In a sense the possibility of different egos has already been taken into account by the very eidetic approach of phenomenology. By taking the *particular* objects of transcendental reflection as merely exemplary, Husserl seeks to describe the structure of any consciousness at all. That not all possibilities can be construed as possibilities of *my* consciousness is ruled out by the concept of the monad as a system of compossibilities. Not all possibilities of consciousness are compossible with all others, and certain conceivable possibil-

ities would rule out my actual present and past. They would have to be other than they are, a different stream of consciousness involved in a different system of possibilities. The monad as such a system of compossibilities makes no sense except by reference to other possible systems, and this is why Husserl speaks in the *Cartesian Meditations* not only of the *eidōs* of consciousness, the instances of which could potentially all belong to one stream of experience, but of the *eidōs ego* whose instances are different and incompatible streams of experience.¹⁷

True, Husserl says that the eidetic approach presupposes 'neither the actuality nor the possibility of other egos'.¹⁸ But it is necessary to distinguish between *different* egos and *other* egos in the sense of the *alter ego* referred to in the fifth meditation. The eidetic approach conceives of different egos without conceiving of any relation among them other than their essence and their difference. But the concept of objectivity, introduced in the fifth meditation, places ego and *alter ego* in relation, since the ego refers his world, or the things in it, to others. The ego in the fullest sense, i.e., the monad, may differ from my own. But the problem now is to make sense of the *alter ego* for that ego, whoever he may be. The concept of objectivity, after all, is part of the natural attitude; it is the ego of the natural attitude that refers the objects of his experience to others. The task which arises is to explain *how* the other exists *for him*, not *whether* the other exists as such.

What is sought, then, is a specifically phenomenological concept of the *alter ego*, that is, one that will fit into the overall scheme of phenomenological investigation, the scheme indicated by the words *ego-cogito-cogitatum-qua-cogitatum*. And when Husserl places the objection of 'solipsism' into the mouth of his imaginary critic, it is the possibility of just such a concept that is being questioned in principle. The critic doubts not Husserl's ability to prove that others exist, which is not in question, but his ability to make 'phenomenological sense' of other egos. There is simply no place in the phenomenological scheme, he argues, for the *alter ego*. In that scheme everything must be either *ego*, *cogitatio*, or *cogitatum*, and the *alter ego* presents us with the apparent paradox of a *cogitatum cogitans*.

Husserl has his opponent say that other egos 'are not a mere intending and intended [*Vorstellung und Vorgestelltes*] in me', as

if he, Husserl, were simply asserting that everything else *is* just that. But this is a very naive statement of the results of the first four meditations; and Husserl seems aware of this in his use of the words *Vorstellung* and *Vorgestelltes*. One could object to Cairns' translation of this passage on the ground that Husserl is suggesting that the 'problem of solipsism' arises only if such a naive view is taken: to say that everything is something intended in (or by) me is equivalent to saying it is 'merely my representation' (*Vorstellung*). Thus transcendental idealism is transformed into subjective idealism. But Husserl does not answer his imaginary opponent by reiterating the distinction between transcendental and subjective idealism, so one suspects that the latter's case does not rest merely on this confusion. A more accurate statement of the phenomenological procedure is that it considers everything meant purely *as it is meant* (*cogitatum qua cogitatum*) and withholds any other attitude toward it.¹⁹ It thus arrives at a full account of its being-for-me or its sense. But even on this view it could be argued that the *alter ego* is not susceptible of this kind of treatment: he cannot even be *considered* purely as meant; or, to the degree that he is, he is no longer an ego. Thus the concept of the ego in general is incompatible with the phenomenological concept of something given, at least if the *alter ego* is to be considered transcendental and not merely worldly. To the extent that he is given he is not a transcendental ego, and to the extent he is a transcendental ego he is not given.

The difficulty is explained best in a manuscript bearing the title '*Das Ich und sein Gegenüber*'. Here Husserl refers to that which *gegenübersteht*, i.e., the *Gegenstand* or object, and brings up the problem of considering the other subject as object.

The non-ego, the object that is not a subject, is what it is only as a *Gegenüber*, only as something constituted with relation to an ego or an open multiplicity of egos... [But] the ego is *gegenüber* for itself, it is for itself, constituted in itself. Any ego can also be *gegenüber* for another or several other egos, [i.e.] a constituted object for them, grasped, experienced by them, etc. But it is also precisely constituted for itself and *has* its constituted surrounding world consisting of non-egos, mere 'objects'...²⁰

In this passage the problem of the *alter ego* is not raised as an objection to phenomenology as such or even as a difficulty. It is simply pointed out that if the other person is to be considered in his being-for-me (the standard phenomenological move), he must also be considered as being-for-himself, unlike any other kind of object. As usual in the phenomenological attitude, his 'being-in-himself' is simply not at issue. What is at issue is how he is given. But it is easy to see how this formulation is transformed into the 'solipsistic objection' of the Fifth Meditation: how can the other person be considered purely as being-for-me, in accord with the phenomenological reduction, when he is essentially for himself – not merely an object but a self-constituting stream of experience with 'his own' world? Other persons are not *Gegenstände* but *Gegen-Subjekte*, as Husserl says at one point in *Ideen II*,²¹ how can something that is not a *Gegenstand* be given at all in the phenomenological sense? Perhaps the *an sich* can be considered purely as *für mich*, but how can the *für sich* be so considered? Up to now the universal characteristic of any concrete object has been its position within the horizons of the world. An object is spatiotemporally situated in relation to my own body and a spatial horizon and ultimately causally related to its surroundings. But if the other ego is to be transcendental, his relation to his surroundings is not of this sort. His relation to the rest of the world is not that of a part to a whole or that of a thing to its surroundings. Rather, the world is *for* him, his relation to it is purely intentional; he can no more be considered a part of the world than I can. But how can anything be given except as being in the world?

Thus, if the other cannot be accounted for – phenomenologically – *as* other subject, how can the intersubjective sense of the objective world be given a phenomenological account? The only account of objectivity, then, according to the critic, is 'transcendental realism',²² which simply dogmatically assumes the existence of a multiplicity of egos without providing an account of their givenness to each other. But this, of course, is to give up the phenomenological attitude altogether.

What Husserl has done by raising the issue of solipsism is to articulate the problem he faces and even to give a preview of the

solution he proceeds to offer. He is convinced that the *alter ego* is given in experience – the other must be considered an object in some sense – but he must show that the other is given *as* a *Gegen-Subjekt*, i.e., 'not as mere worldly phenomenon, but as other transcendental ego'.²³ With the statement of the problem the first step of the phenomenological reduction has already been performed – the object has been transformed into the object-as-meant, the 'how of its givenness' has been brought into view. But Husserl must account for this givenness of the other subject in the usual way: he must correlate it with the activity of the conscious subject *to whom* he is given. 'We must ... obtain for ourselves insight into the explicit and implicit intentionality wherein the alter ego becomes evinced [*sich bekundet*] and verified in the realm of our transcendental ego; we must discover in what intentionalities, syntheses, motivations, the sense 'other ego' becomes fashioned in me...'. But the first step of the analysis already contains the second: by performing the reduction on *what* is meant and considering it purely *as* meant, one is already made aware of the intentional act of meaning it. Thus the direction of Husserl's inquiry is already outlined: he must lay bare the form of experience through which consciousness intends not merely an object within the world, as in the case of a perceived object, but another subject with its own stream of experience and its own objects.

There are further complications. While the other is not merely an object in the world of things given to me, he is nevertheless related to that world, and this in two ways: first he is given to me somehow through his body, which is part of the world as a perceived object; second, this object and the rest of my world must be *for him* as well as for me. Husserl must point to a form of my experience through which another subject is given as an individual when his body is given and through which the world becomes the world for both of us.

What Husserl does is to explicate the experience of others first by pointing to certain features it shares with other forms of experience already treated in the *Meditations* and elsewhere. The experience of others is in some ways analogous to perception and in some ways analogous to recollection. By showing how it is analogous and then how it is different, he hopes to have provided

an account that can be understood in the context of the phenomenological theory as a whole.

As for the other's body, it can be construed as 'transcendent' in the weak sense, i.e., purely in relation to my own actual and possible acts of consciousness. Everything that can be so considered belongs to what Husserl calls the sphere of ownness (*Eigenheitsphäre*).²⁴ But in the actual experience of another, in which the body is grasped *as* body (*Leib*) and not just as a physical object (*Körper*), it is subjected to what Husserl calls an 'analogizing apprehension';²⁵ it is taken as the organ or expression of a consciousness, by analogy to my own body in relation to my own consciousness. The consciousness *of* which it is the manifestation is intended by virtue of an act Husserl calls appresentation – the consciousness of something as copresent (*mitgegenwärtig*) that is not itself directly presented to consciousness.²⁶

How is such an act to be understood? Appresentation, Husserl points out, is what occurs in ordinary external perception where the intention includes the other side of object as 'copresent'.²⁷ This is different from what Husserl calls *Vergegenwärtigung*, rendering present to consciousness something that is not present either spatially or temporally, as in imagination or recollection. What is appresented is always the complement of what is presented, forming a kind of continuum with it. One can also, of course, remember the other sides of a perceived object, or one can imagine what they are like, perhaps constructing a determined image on the basis of certain evidence; but one need not do this, whereas the appresentative consciousness, whether more or less determinate, necessarily accompanies presentation in perception. The presented is what it is (the side of a thing) only *together* with the appresented. The appresented belongs to the (internal) horizons of what is presented; it is intended in a horizon-consciousness, not an independent act. Now the other consciousness, he wishes to say, is given in a similar act as copresent *with* the body, as its 'other side', so to speak; it is not something imagined in a separate act. Again, the presented (in this case the body as *Leib*, not as mere *Körper*) is what it is only together with the appresented.

Husserl is quick to point out the primary difference between appresentation in perception and in *Fremderfahrung*: the copresent side of the perceived object can be simultaneously present to

others and may be present to me at an earlier or later time; while the other consciousness can never be anything but copresent to another and is present only to itself.²⁸ One might mention other ways in which this relation of the copresent to the present is a special one, not comparable to such a relation in the perceived object. The present (the body) is organ or expression of consciousness, thus bearing a relation to the copresent that is comparable to nothing else. Thus the analogy to perception is only partial, but it is helpful in avoiding certain misunderstandings arising from the distinguishability and the supposed discontinuity between 'mind' and 'body'. Just as Husserl attacks the sign-theory of thing-perception, where the sense-datum is a mental sign or indicator of the thing that lies behind it,²⁹ so he opposes the view that the body is the 'sign' of a separate mind, something that announces or gives evidence of its existence. What I *see* in perception is the thing itself, even though only a side is strictly speaking presented to me. Likewise, in the experience of someone else, 'what I actually see is not a sign and not a mere analogue, a depiction in any natural sense of the word; on the contrary, it is someone else...'.³⁰

While this analogy to perception is helpful in explaining the mediating role of the other's body in *Fremderfahrung*, and goes some way toward clearing up the apparent paradox of the object which is a subject, it does not itself take account of what is ultimately given through the 'analogizing apprehension': another stream of consciousness. In order to illuminate this central point, Husserl introduces a comparison to a different phenomenological dimension, that of recollection.³¹ Recollection, of course, is a special sort of *Vergegenwärtigung*, an act which 'renders present something that is not present'; it is distinguished from an act of phantasy, for example, by locating its object in the past, and, what is more, in *my* past. It is, as Husserl says, in essence not only the consciousness of something past, but of this something as having been perceived or otherwise consciously experienced by me.³² Thus with a greater or lesser degree of explicitness, recollection renders present not only the object of the experience (e.g., a musical performance) but also the experience itself. In this sense 'the present ego carries out an accomplishment through which it constitutes a variational mode of itself (in the mode past) as existing'.³³ What is constituted, an experience, is a stream of

consciousness, and this stream is distinct from and in a sense different from the stream which constitutes it. It can also involve a different spatial location, as Husserl points out in a manuscript ('then I was in Paris, now I am in Freiburg').³⁴ In any case, one 'original' living present renders another, as past, to itself, which is similar to what happens in *Fremderfahrung*. To be sure, this is only an analogy, as Husserl makes clear, and not an explanation;³⁵ but at least it makes somewhat less paradoxical or self-contradictory the idea of a stream of consciousness as object. In order to make this comparison fruitful it is necessary, again, to be clear on the ways in which the two forms of experience are *not* alike. While recollection is an act in which one stream of consciousness is given to another, clearly both streams are actually segments of one and the same stream, and past acts are constituted as standing in a continuum which leads up to the very recollective act in which it is constituted.³⁶ While the recollected act can never be simultaneous with the recollection, the prime case of *Fremderfahrung* is precisely that in which the object-act is simultaneous with the subject-act. It belongs precisely to *another* stream of experience by virtue of this difference, and stands in relation to its own retentions, recollections, expectations, habitualities, etc. Furthermore, what is remembered has a kind of evidence and certain procedures of verification (*Bewährung*) which differ from those connected to the experience of another: in the one case 'reactivation' simply by virtue of *having* been experienced in living presence and thus retained; in the other case analogy, 'empathy', through the mediation of the other's body.

But there is another important sense in which the comparison holds, and which leads from the theory of *Fremderfahrung* to the theory of objectivity in the strong or intersubjective sense. In recollection, as we have noted, there is an inseparable correlation between the experience and the experienced, whichever may be the primary object of recollection. To recall a musical performance is to recall hearing it, and to recall hearing it is to recall the performance itself, even if the correlate is remembered in each case only indistinctly. Similarly, being aware of another person as a stream of experience implies being aware to some extent of *what* he experiences, if only 'by analogy'. When I am face to face with another person, I am aware not only of him but also that I am

an object for him and that our surroundings are given to him as they are to me – or rather, as they *would* be given to me if I were in his place.³⁷ In other words, what is *appresented* is not only the other consciousness, but also his body, my body and our whole surroundings as they are for him. From this central core of the *alter ego*, given to me by analogy in *Fremderfahrung*, the other is a stream of experience extending more or less determinately (in the case of a stranger almost totally indeterminately) into the past, together with all its objects. In short, the other is given as a complete monad in his own right.

Now the fact about the experience of another that makes comprehensible the full-fledged notion of objectivity is that, as monad, he is thus constituted as having 'his own' world just as I do. But these two 'own' worlds are construed in intersubjective experience as *appearances* or modes of givenness of one and the *same* world which is intended by both of us and indeed by all, and from which such appearances can at times differ.³⁸ The objective, or the transcendent in the strong sense, can thus be understood by analogy to the transcendent in the weaker or 'solipsistic' sense: just as the latter is given as one by relation to a multiplicity of *my* acts, actual and potential, so the intersubjective object has the same status in relation to a multiplicity of acts by different subjects. My act and that of the other 'are so fused that they stand within the *functional community of one perception*, which simultaneously presents and appresents, and yet furnishes for the total object the consciousness of its being itself there'.³⁹

Such is Husserl's *phenomenological* account of the alter ego which in turn makes possible his phenomenological account of the objective world. 'I *experience* the world ... *not* as (so to speak) my *private* synthetic formation' because I experience it as given to others as well. That is, it is given as exceeding my actual *and possible* consciousness, having the full sense it does only because it is referred in part to the consciousness of another. Thus the other consciousness is '*the intrinsically first other* (the first 'non-ego')'⁴⁰ because it is by being given to him that anything else is objective for me. But this is possible only because the consciousness of another, as an alien locus of givenness, itself has sense for me, i.e., it can be given to me in its own peculiar way. What Husserl has done, using the comparisons we have mentioned, is

to point to and elucidate the form of consciousness through which *this* givenness is realized. Through appresentation and the peculiar 'analogizing apprehension' involved in *Fremderfahrung*, I am confronted with an object which is a subject, a *cogitatum cogitans*.

What must be understood about this whole account is that, while the *alter ego* makes it possible that the 'rest' of the world exceeds my actual possible consciousness, the *alter ego* does *not himself* exceed my actual and possible consciousness. That is, he is described in the fifth meditation in the same way that everything else was described before the problem of 'solipsism' was raised, namely as transcendent only in the weaker sense: not reducible to the particular act or acts in which he is given to *me*. He is not so reducible only because he is the objective unity of actual and possible acts of my own in which he can be given. Or, if the other is himself given as objective (transcendent in the stronger sense) it is only by reference to another possible alter ego (or the same alter ego) which is transcendent only in the weaker sense. The objective is what it is *for me* because it is given to a possible stream of experience that is not my own. But this can make sense only because that stream of experience, not my own, can in turn be experienced by me – though 'experienced' must now be understood in a broad enough sense to include the appresentative or 'analogizing' apprehension.

In other words, Husserl's account up to this point is a strictly egological account, one contained wholly within the schema *ego-cogitatio-cogitatum*. It can even be called 'solipsistic' if the *solus ipse* is now understood at a higher level. This is necessary because the *cogitatum* in the broadest sense – the world – has been provided with an added dimension. The 'objective world' has been explained by reference to other subjects who are not in it but are transcendent in relation to it. In this narrow sense the other ego as transcendent is not *part* of my world at all. But he and his total 'contribution' to the make-up of the world – which comprise a full-fledged monad in its own right – do belong within the range of my actual and possible experience. That is, I distinguished between what is directly given to me and what is directly given only to him; but it is within my own experience that I do this. Now 'my own experience' in this broadest sense can itself be considered a

monad which contains and constitutes his (and also 'my own' in the narrower sense). While the other does not strictly belong to my world, as we said above, he certainly belongs to my monad. Thus what has been shown is 'how I can constitute in myself another Ego or, more radically, how I can constitute in my monad another monad ...'. Furthermore, it has been shown 'how I can identify a nature constituted in me with a Nature constituted by someone else (or, stated with the necessary precision how I can identify a Nature constituted in me with one constituted in me *as* a Nature constituted by someone else).⁴¹

Thus while everything in this framework is understood by reference to *my* actual and possible experience, the Fifth Meditation introduces into this framework an important distinction that was not articulated in the first four: the distinction between my actual and possible experience in the strict or narrow sense (what Husserl calls the 'sphere of ownness'), those which give an object directly; and those of my experiences in which what is given is another stream of experience and through which an object is given *indirectly*. The so-called 'reduction' to the sphere of ownness is not another phenomenological reduction at all, but simply a focus on the first or narrow sense of givenness so that the role and nature of the second sense can emerge.⁴² The two senses correspond, respectively, to the narrower and the broader concept of a *monad*.

Thus Husserl can say at the end of his account that 'at no point was the transcendental attitude, the attitude of the transcendental *epoché*, abandoned'. What has been provided is a 'theory' of experiencing someone else, [a] 'theory' of experiencing others, [which] did not aim at being and was not at liberty to be anything but an explication of the sense, 'others', as it arises from the constitutive productivity of that experiencing ...'.⁴³ It was not 'at liberty' to be anything more because the *alter ego* is simply another, though privileged, *cogitatum*, and even though he is not 'of the world' in the strict sense his givenness is dependent on that of perception. *Fremderfahrung* is tied to the perceptual givenness of the other's body, and the *alter ego* is thus given, 'not originally and in unqualifiedly [*schlichter*] apodictic evidence, but only in an evidence belonging to 'external' experience.'⁴⁴ This is certainly incompatible with any notion of 'proof' that others exist with a

certainty comparable to that of one's own ego. In fact it is no proof at all. In this sense the *alter ego* is treated as any other object is treated in Husserl's philosophy, i.e., purely as 'phenomenon'. The being of the other subject is at issue only in the sense that the being of anything at all is at issue in phenomenology up to this point, namely in the sense of his being-for-me. Husserl's theory seeks to show the experiential conditions under which the other exists for me as transcendental other.

In Husserl's 'solution to the problem of solipsism', then, the alter ego is not posited *outside* my own experience; rather, he is brought into the sphere of my own experience through the broadening of the concept of experience and of the concept of a monad. That is, it is shown *how* – i.e., through what form of experience – the other is given to me as subject, as *cogitatum cogitans*. This places Husserl's project in the Fifth Meditation in a context wholly different from that of the usual problem of solipsism, a context dictated by the approach of Descartes' *Meditations*.

But once he has 'solved' the problem of solipsism in this way, Husserl does not regard his work as done. Rather, he makes use of his solution to add a completely new dimension of his phenomenology. The phenomenology of the other ego's givenness provides the basis for what Husserl calls 'intersubjective phenomenology'.⁴⁵ Let us consider the transition from one to the other. We noted that the intersubjective object, the transcendent object in the strong or 'objective' sense, can be understood by analogy to the transcendent object in the weaker or 'solipsistic' sense; just as the latter is given as a unity in relation to a multiplicity of my acts, so the intersubjective object is given as a unity in relation to a multiplicity comprising my act and that of another. This multiplicity, Husserl says, is fused in the '*functional community of one perception*'.⁴⁶ Now, one might ask, whose perception is this? A perception of my own, as Husserl had seen in the lectures on time consciousness,⁴⁷ can be considered the functional unity of various temporal phases, not all of which are strictly presentations. Here the presented and the nonpresented are not simultaneous – the nonpresented is not *appresented* but *retained* as just past.⁴⁸ But they form a 'functional unity' because their status in consciousness is the *function* of a 'meaning intention' which aims at 'the

whole [temporal] object', e.g., an enduring tone or even a melody. The perception as such, which is 'relative'⁴⁹ to this whole object, whatever it may be, cannot be reduced to any of the particular acts of presentation that make it up, not even the one that is presently 'having its turn'. The perception which is constitutive of the object is an act that is *itself constituted* by the 'living present' of each of its temporal phases.⁵⁰

Returning to the 'one perception' of which Husserl spoke in reference to the intersubjective object, it can be seen as likewise constituted by reference to the presentations that make it up. *For me* it is the functional unity of presentation and appresentation, and, to the extent that it is for me, it can be considered my act. The unified act is constituted by the other as well, with the difference that the content of presented and appresented are reversed. But from the point of view of *either* presentation – mine or the other's – it is the *same* act that is constituted. And, if we take the concept of sameness seriously here, the perception 'as such', which corresponds to 'the whole *intersubjective* object', can only be considered *our* perception. The perception is a constituted act that cannot be ascribed totally to either of us, but only to both of us, to the *we*. The establishment of the *we* in common perception is the simplest form of what Husserl calls the *Vergemeinschaftung der Monaden*:⁵¹ when two subjects confront one another and stand in relation to the same objects they form, to that extent, a rudimentary *community* that can itself be considered as performing an act (*cogitamus*) through 'its' diverse (and in this case simultaneous) presentations.⁵²

For Husserl this leads to a whole theory of experience, constitution and the world whose point of departure is no longer individual consciousness but such a community at whatever level it may be found. The community now becomes the 'zero member'⁵³ about which the objective world is oriented. From this point of view the community is a '*community of monads*, which we designate as *transcendental intersubjectivity*'.⁵⁴ It is transcendental because it makes 'transcendentally possible the being of a world',⁵⁵ in this case the intersubjective world. As roughly sketched at the end of the *Cartesian Meditations*, beginning with paragraph 56, Husserl's theory follows the general lines of the theory of constitution at the solipsistic level, i.e., basing its divisions on

the ontological distinctions among the formal and material regions, on the difference in analysis between the static and the genetic, etc. Parallel to the solipsistic level, it is necessary to provide a theory not only of the community's world but also of the community's own being-for-itself, that is, a theory of its givenness to itself. A community, in other words, like an ego, can be considered as self-constituting even as it constitutes its world.

Husserl does not spell out in great detail the paths his 'intersubjective phenomenology' is to follow. Clearly, in spite of its many parallels to the theory of self- and world-constitution at the individual level, it cannot be a mere repetition of every detail with merely a 'change of sign' or of attitude. While it is possible to talk of the eidos community in relation to the world, etc., it is also necessary to take account of the much greater complexity of the intersubjective problem. For one thing, any community is composed of individuals while the individual is not. We have seen that the 'presentations' united in a communalization (*Vergemeinschaftung*) can be simultaneous, which is not the case in an individual. Communities not only contain individuals but also encompass smaller communities and are parts of larger ones. Furthermore, the community itself can be conceived as a monad and the problem of *Fremderfahrung* can be seen to arise *between* communities – where it clearly must be solved in a way very different from, or at least more complex than, the theory of 'appresentation'.⁵⁶ Finally, communities dissolve and reconstitute themselves in a way not ascribable to the individual. In general, Husserl's intersubjective phenomenology does not follow the Hegelian path of considering the community as a kind of macroperson⁵⁷ and endowing it with a life of its own of which the individual is only an abstract moment. Any community can be treated as a concrete 'subject' in a phenomenological analysis but, as our previous exposition makes clear, it must be seen in its specificity as constituted by its members.

This might lead us to think that the intersubjective level, and the phenomenological analysis that goes with it, is of merely secondary importance for Husserl. On the contrary – and this is of great significance for the problem posed by this paper – he sees it as complementing the 'solipsistic' dimension of phenomenology and as being required, as the original 'objection of solipsism'

suggested, if phenomenology is to be a full-fledged *transcendental* philosophy. 'Solipsistically' reduced 'egology' is only 'the ... first of the philosophical disciplines ... Then ... would come intersubjective phenomenology, which is founded on that discipline ...'. But priority in the order of inquiry does not imply priority in the order of being. Husserl even goes so far as to say that while solipsistic phenomenology is the intrinsically first (*die an sich erste*) discipline, 'the intrinsically first being [*das an sich erste Sein*], the being that precedes and bears every worldly Objectivity, is transcendental intersubjectivity: the universe of monads, which effects its communion in various forms – [*das in verschiedenen Formen sich vergemeinschaftende All der Monaden*]' . Announcing the problem in the Second Meditation, Husserl puts it this way:

Perhaps the reduction to the transcendental ego only *seems* to entail a *permanently* solipsistic science; whereas the consequential elaboration of this science, in accordance with its own sense, leads over to a phenomenology of transcendental intersubjectivity and, by means of this, to a universal transcendental philosophy. As a matter of fact we shall see that, in a certain manner, a transcendental solipsism is only a subordinate stage philosophically; though, as such, it must first be delineated for purposes of method, in order that the problems of transcendental intersubjectivity, as problems belonging to a higher level, may be correctly stated and attacked.⁵⁸

It is clear from these passages that what is referred to as the 'phenomenology of transcendental intersubjectivity' is not the investigation which makes up the largest part of the Fifth Meditation – the theory of how (through what forms of *individual* experience) the *alter ego* is given to the *ego* – but rather the 'intersubjective phenomenology' that takes transcendental intersubjectivity, instead of individual subjectivity, as the point of departure for a constitutive theory in relation to the world.

Now what is remarkable about this is that, in spite of its derivation from and dependence on the subordinate 'solipsistic' stage of inquiry, intersubjective phenomenology is accorded a status of at least equal dignity with it. This is remarkable because

of what the Fifth Meditation, prior to the introduction of intersubjective phenomenology, has taught us about the nature of our experience of others. Based as it is on the perceptual experience of the other's body, the certainty of the other's givenness can be no greater than the certainty of that perception itself. If the existence of the body is given only with the nonapodicticity characteristic of perception, the existence of the other person seems to be equally nonapodictic. In fact it seems even farther removed from certainty, since a claim is made over and above that of the body. And the analogical apprehension that lends content to the other person's consciousness, the givenness of his experiences as those I would have 'if I were in his place', etc., adds a further element of fallibility to the experience of another. To be sure, there is, as Husserl says, a peculiar type of confirmation that belongs to the essence of *Fremderfahrung*,⁵⁹ it is no more a *mere* presumption than perception itself. But this does not remove its *ultimate* fallibility, which is why Husserl remarks that the other's consciousness is given 'not originaliter and in *schlichter apodiktischer Evidenz*, but only in an evidence belonging to 'external' experience'.⁶⁰

But this is precisely the type of evidence on which intersubjective phenomenology must be based, at least in part. After all, the 'communities' of which Husserl speaks, beginning with the simplest perceptual encounter between two persons, are available to *me* only insofar as I participate in them through my communication with other persons. Part of my awareness of the community, of course, is that of my own contribution to it, but part of it must also be my awareness of the *particular* others who make it up and of their particular contributions to its nature. And this is the part whose evidence, for me, is that of *Fremderfahrung* as described above. And there must be no mistake that it is my awareness of communities *as such*, and not just of my own contributions to them, that must function as the basis of an intersubjective phenomenology. For here we are interested no longer in the others-for-me or the community-for me – my experience of the community – but rather in the community as a 'subject' in its own right in relation to its world. It is, as we have seen, the *cogitamus* which is the starting point of intersubjective phenomenology; yet the phenomenologist is an individual, and he

must base his assertions in this domain on *his* awareness of the *cogitamus* just as, in the individual sphere, he bases his assertions on his reflective awareness of the *cogito*. If the Fifth Meditation had provided a proof of the existence of the *alter ego*, if the other were found to be given with a certainty equivalent to that of the *cogito*, the situation would be different. But it did not provide such a proof, as we have seen, and indeed 'was not at liberty' to provide it.

Now the point might be raised that the phenomenologist's ultimate interest is not in the particular communities in which he participates, but rather in the a priori structure of those communities and indeed of all communities. Phenomenology, after all, is meant to be an eidetic and not a factual science, and the same should hold true at the intersubjective level. Such factual communities as are directly available to the phenomenologist are taken, under the attitude characterized as 'eidetic reduction', simply as *examples* of an essence which is sought. Since there corresponds to such an essence a possible 'intuitive and apodictic consciousness' of it,⁶¹ there is no need to be disturbed if the consciousness of the examples themselves is not apodictic.

Yet *exactly* the same point can be made about phenomenology at the solipsistic level. Here, too, phenomenology is not about the individual facts encountered in transcendental reflection, but takes these facts as examples for the purpose of arriving at an *eidōs*. But here, as is well known, Husserl not only insists on the apodicticity of the assertion *ego sum* or *sum cogitans*, but regards this apodicticity as a necessary condition if the science to be built upon it, phenomenology, is to satisfy the highest demands inherent in the idea of science itself. 'Only if my experiencing of my transcendental self is apodictic can it serve as ground and basis for apodictic judgments; only then is there accordingly the prospect of a philosophy, a systematic structure made up of apodictic cognitions, starting with the intrinsically first field of experience and judgment'.⁶² The role of the *ego sum* in phenomenology is indicated by Husserl when he describes apodicticity as 'the absolute indubitability that the scientist demands of all *'principles'*'.⁶³

Here we have one of the most explicitly Cartesian strains in Husserl's phenomenology, the idea that the scientific rigor of his investigation is ultimately secured because they stand on the 'firm

ground' of the *ego cogito*. Now we have seen that if the existence of the *ego* is a 'principle', it is not a premise from which to infer the existence of anything else, not even, as we have seen, that of the *alter ego*. Rather, it functions as the basis of apodictic claims about the essence of the ego, and it is these claims that form the actual content of phenomenology. But does the apodicticity of these eidetic claims really require the apodicticity of the *existential* claim *ego sum*? If our picture of intersubjective phenomenology has been correct, Husserl conceives of such a phenomenology as having the same dignity, and thus presumably the same scientific status, as individual phenomenology. And it is based on the *cogitamus* in just the same way that individual phenomenology is based in the *cogito*. To be sure, the two types of phenomenology are not simply parallels, as we have seen, since the *cogitamus* has to be grounded in the *cogito*, i.e., it has to be shown how the community is given to the ego in his *Vergemeinschaftung* with others. But precisely what this grounding shows is that the *cogitamus* is *not* given in an apodictic way.

The difficulty raised by the introduction of intersubjective phenomenology, then, can be put this way: if the *rigor* of phenomenological analysis requires the apodictic givenness of the subjective to the phenomenologist, then only egological or solipsistic phenomenology can be rigorous. If, on the other hand, intersubjective phenomenology is to be regarded as equal in dignity, and thus presumably in rigor, to its solipsistic 'subordinate stage', then the apodicticity of the primary given is no longer the standard of rigor.

At the end of the *Cartesian Meditations* we find Husserl insisting unambiguously upon the equal dignity, even the primacy of intersubjective phenomenology and its correlate, transcendental intersubjectivity. He does not seem to be explicitly aware of the way in which this insistence reflects back upon and requires a rather non-Cartesian reinterpretation of the starting point of his inquiry. It is plausible, however, that Husserl did become aware of this; for this would help explain the fact that in the *Crisis* he makes an attempt to begin phenomenology without insisting on the apodicticity of the *ego cogito*.

NOTES

1. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans., Dorion Cairns, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960, p. 1 (hereafter referred to as 'CM'). See also the reconstruction of the original Paris lectures in *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, ed. S. Strasser, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1963, p. 3.
2. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, tr., with an introduction, by David Carr; Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 155.
3. See the 'Einleitung des Herausgebers', p. xxxvii, in Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Zweiter Teil*, ed. Rudolf Boehm, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1959. Also 'Husserls Abschied vom Cartesianismus' in Ludwig Landgrebe, *Der Weg der Phänomenologie*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1967, pp. 163 ff.
4. CM, p. 89.
5. CM, pp. 83 ff.
6. *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, ed. André Lalande, 8th ed., Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1960, p. 1008.
7. CM, p. 22.
8. CM, p. 24.
9. *Ibid.*
10. CM, p. 30.
11. CM, p. 89.
12. Those who interpret Husserl's project in this way usually judge that he has not succeeded. This interpretation seems to lie behind Quentin Lauer's opinion that Husserl meant to provide an 'additional guarantee for the validity of subjective constitution' and failed. See his *Phenomenology: Its Genesis and Prospect*, New York, Harper and Row, 1965, p. 150.
13. CM, p. 89.
14. CM, p. 91.
15. CM, p. 26.
16. *Ibid.*
17. CM, p. 71.
18. CM, p. 72.
19. The *cogitatum qua cogitatum* goes back to a distinction in the *Logical Investigations* (tr. J.N. Findlay, New York, Humanities Press, 1970, vol. II, p. 578) between 'the object as it is intended, and the object (period) which is intended'.
20. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie, etc., Zweites Buch*, ed. Marly Biemel, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1952, p. 318.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
22. CM, p. 89.
23. Paul Ricoeur (*Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology*, trans. L. Embree and E.G. Ballard, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1967,

- p. 117) says that 'the conflict between the requirement of reduction and the requirement of description becomes an open conflict' in the case of the other ego, and that the conflict is never resolved (p. 130). The *alter ego* is somehow 'more other' than any other object. But any transcendent object is given as 'other' and the requirement of reduction is simply to describe it as it is given. Thus it is difficult to see why the *alter ego* is a special case.
24. CM, p. 92.
 25. CM, p. 111. A great deal of discussion has been occasioned by the way in which Husserl accounts for this apprehension. He seems to be asking for the experiential conditions under which one would be motivated to take a particular object as another person. His account has been attacked by A. Schutz in 'Das Problem der transzendentalen Intersubjektivität bei Husserl' (*Phil. Rundschau* V (1957) pp. 81-107) and defended by M. Theunissen in *Der Andere. Studien zur Sozialontologie der Gegenwart*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1965, pp. 64 ff. We leave this whole discussion aside, concentrating on the analysis of such apprehension itself, whatever its preconditions may be.
 26. CM, p. 109.
 27. *Ibid.*
 28. *Ibid.*
 29. Cf. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie, etc., Erstes Buch*, ed. Walter Biemel, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1950, p. 99.
 30. CM, p. 124. See also p. 121.
 31. CM, pp. 115 f. and 126 ff. A clearer exposition of this point is found in *The Crisis...*, p. 185.
 32. This is a paraphrase of a passage in an appendix to *Erste Philosophie. Erster Teil*, ed. R. Boehm, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1956, p. 264. See also *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, ed. R. Boehm, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966, p. 40 f.
 33. *The Crisis...*, p. 185.
 34. Cited in René Toulemont, *L'Essence de la société selon Husserl*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1962, p. 57.
 35. Toulemont (*Ibid.*, pp. 55 ff.) mentions Husserl's use of 'comparisons' with perception and recollection, but confuses the issue by calling these modes of experience the 'indispensable foundation for the higher associations', (p. 56) i.e., those of *Fremderfahrung*. But Husserl is quite clear on the fact that *Fremderfahrung* is not based on recollection; the latter simply offers an 'instructive comparison' (CM, p. 115).
 36. Cf. paragraph 25, 'The Double Intentionality of Recollection' in *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*.
 37. CM, p. 117.
 38. CM, pp. 107, 123.
 39. CM, p. 122.
 40. CM, p. 107.
 41. CM, p. 126.
 42. Cf. Toulemont, *op. cit.*, p. 40: 'La nature des deux réductions est différente:

la première consiste en un changement d'attitude du sujet, la seconde est un rétrécissement de son champ de vision'.

43. CM, p. 148.
44. CM, p. 149.
45. CM, p. 155.
46. CM, p. 122.
47. *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, p. 38.
48. And, one might add, is given in 'protention' as that which is just about to come.
49. Husserl speaks of 'Relativierung', *Ibid.*, p. 39.
50. Cf. CM, p. 134.
51. CM, p. 120.
52. Cf. *Ideen...*, *Zweites Buch*, p. 191: 'Wir sind in Beziehung auf eine gemeinsame Umwelt – wird sind in einem personalen Verband: das gehört zusammen'.
53. CM, p. 134.
54. CM, p. 130.
55. CM, p. 129.
56. CM, p. 134 f.
57. In spite of his use of the term 'personalities of a higher order', CM, p. 132.
58. CM, p. 30 f.
59. CM, p. 119.
60. Cairns' translation, 'in unqualifiedly apodictic evidence', suggests that such evidence is somehow 'qualifiedly' apodictic. But this is not at all suggested by *schlicht*, which modifies *Evidenz* and not *apodiktische*.
61. CM, p. 71.
62. CM, p. 22.
63. CM, p. 15.

I.3. Husserl's *Crisis* and the Problem of History

It has long been claimed that *The Crisis of European Sciences*, Husserl's last work, represents a significant new development in his thought. I believe this is true, but I think this claim has consistently been made for the wrong reasons. Not the concept of the life-world, which is usually taken as the new departure, but the emergence of the problem of history, is what is radically new in the *Crisis*. To be sure, the two notions are closely related. But there is a way of considering the life-world which, although it greatly expands the scope of Husserl's earlier phenomenology, is entirely consistent with its program. It is otherwise with the problem of history, as I shall try to show. For what this problem introduces into phenomenology is neither a new theme for investigation nor even, as in the case of the life-world, a new conception of the whole domain of investigation. Rather, it calls forth a new conception of the procedure of investigation itself, a new conception of phenomenological method.

Of course there are also those who have argued that there is really nothing new in the *Crisis*. After all, the work bears the subtitle 'Introduction to Phenomenological Transcendental Philosophy', presumably the same transcendental phenomenology that had been introduced in the *Ideas* and the *Cartesian Meditations*. The manner of introduction is new, to be sure, dispensing with and even criticizing the Cartesian approach of the two earlier works. But Husserl had experimented with other methods of introduction before, notably the logical method of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and the psychological one of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article. There is certainly no evidence that Husserl himself regarded his phenomenology as being crucially, much less

fatally, affected by the ideas explored in his last work, that his remarks about the end of the dream of philosophy as rigorous science should be taken as his own opinion. Those who regard the *Crisis* as a kind of deathbed conversion to existentialism and a renunciation of his earlier efforts have simply not read the text. As for the historical considerations, it might be said, this is easily explained. Husserl begins by stating that the sciences are in crisis because philosophy has failed in its task of clarifying their ultimate unity and significance. Even thus is nothing new – it was the theme of ‘Philosophy as a Rigorous Science’ in 1910. Having thus pointed to the crisis, it is to be expected that Husserl should be interested in finding out how we got into it, going back, as he does, to the origins of modern science in Galileo and tracing the course of the flawed attempts at its philosophical interpretation from Descartes to Kant. What is more normal, in fact, than that a philosopher should rehearse the failures of his predecessors to solve philosophical problems, before proceeding to solve them himself? Coming from Husserl, such an elaborate treatment of the history of philosophy is perhaps unusual, but he had done something like this before, in the 1923-24 lectures on ‘First Philosophy’, whose ‘systematic part’ had been preceded by a ‘critical history of ideas’.¹ Although he had not tried this before in print, external circumstances may have decided him in favor of it. The turbulent events of the Nazi years, Husserl’s feeling that he had been deserted by his most brilliant students and the reading public – all suggested the need for a new and more impressive mode of presentation for his phenomenology.

If this were truly the character of the historical framework of the *Crisis*, and these Husserl’s motives for adopting it, one might remark its novelty but not be inclined to ascribe to it any significance for the program of phenomenology. But such a reading would also be guilty of ignoring the text, for Husserl’s historical investigations exhibit features which distinguish it sharply from anything he has done before. These features make it impossible to dismiss them as embellishments chosen for external effect or timely relevance, and they prove, as we shall see, to be of decisive significance for phenomenology itself.

In the first place, Husserl justifies his historical reflections in terms of urgent necessity. After expounding this notion of the

crisis of science, Husserl says: ‘What is clearly necessary (what else could be of help here?) is that we reflect back, in a thorough *historical* and *critical* fashion, in order to provide, *before all decisions*, for a radical self-understanding’.² We gain a notion of the ‘task which is truly our own’ as philosophers, he says later, ‘only through a critical understanding of the total unity of history – *our* history’.³ The critical-historical reflections in which Husserl is engaged are described as ‘the philosopher’s genuine self-reflection on what he is truly seeking [*auf das, worauf er eigentlich hinauswill*]’.⁴ Such remarks suggest much more than a mere résumé and critique of past attempts to solve philosophical problems before proceeding to their true solution. Such a résumé might be helpful, but would not be a *material* part of philosophy itself and could just as well be dispensed with. But here we find Husserl insisting on the necessity of historical reflections in order to discern the very business of philosophy itself. Being clear on the task of philosophy cannot be dissociated from doing philosophy; it is an indispensable part of its establishment. And, as we know, it is the establishment or foundation of philosophy, its true beginning, that is Husserl’s prime interest.

But why does this require precisely *historical* reflections? Husserl first calls for them because his brief exposition of the contrast between the present crisis and the optimism of the Renaissance has, as he says, ‘reminded us that as philosophers we are heirs to the past in respect to the goals which the word ‘philosophy’ indicates, in terms of concepts, problems and methods’.⁵ Later, he says that historical reflections are needed to reveal the ‘task which is truly our own’ because ‘we not only have a spiritual heritage, but have become what we are thoroughly and exclusively in a historical-spiritual manner’.⁶ ‘A historical reflection of the sort under discussion’, he writes, ‘is thus actually the deepest kind of self-reflection aimed at a self-understanding in terms of what we are truly seeking as the historical beings [*historisches Wesen*] we are’.⁷ These remarks suggest that ‘being historical’ is something like an essential trait of those who do philosophy, and because of this they must begin philosophy in a historical way.

An indication of the importance he attached to his historical reflections is Husserl’s recurring preoccupations with the method, aims, and presupposition of his procedure. Twice in the course of

Part II of the *Crisis* Husserl interrupts his historical expositions with remarks on the method he is following.⁸ As if unsatisfied, he returns to the problem in a text designed as a preface to Part III but not included in the published text.⁹ Other unpublished manuscripts of the period exhibit the same preoccupation. The common point of departure in these methodological considerations is a negative one: what we are engaged in, although certainly historical in character, is not history in the usual sense. This shows us an important difference between the *Crisis* and the first part of the *Erste Philosophie*. In the 1923 lectures, which are in many details similar to the exposition of the *Crisis*, Husserl hardly seems conscious of methodological problems. What he is engaged in is, after all, something easily classifiable and familiar: it is a 'history of ideas'.¹⁰

But most important of all, the distinction between the 'historical introduction' and the 'systematic part', found in the *Erste Philosophie*, is broken down in the *Crisis*. Historical expositions are, to be sure, found primarily in Part II, while the two sections of Part III, on the life-world and psychology respectively, are largely nonhistorical in character. But even they are couched in historical references, and the historical and nonhistorical are constantly mixed. In any case, if historical reflection really belongs essentially and not just accidentally to the establishment of philosophy, as we have seen, then it is just as 'systematic' as the nonhistorical.

We have already spoken of the notion of alternative 'ways into' phenomenology, a notion Husserl first developed, in fact, in the *Erste Philosophie*. One possible interpretation of Husserl's novel approach in the *Crisis* is that reflection on the history of philosophy is now seen by Husserl as one of these ways. But this interpretation is not tenable. Husserl is still explicitly conscious of the notion of alternative ways in the *Crisis*, and the two sections of Part III are presented as two parallel ones: the way from the pre-given life-world and the way from psychology. But history is not mentioned in these terms. In fact, as we have seen, Husserl's language indicates something much stronger than this. The historical route is not a merely possible but a necessary one, and the idea seems to be that whichever of several parallel alternatives is chosen, it must be accompanied by historical reflections.

The idea that the way to philosophical truth passes through the history of philosophy is not new in itself, but for Husserl it is not only new but almost startling in contrast to his earlier views. 'Zu den Sachen selbst!' was the motto of the early phenomenological school gathered about Husserl. What it meant primarily was best expressed by Husserl in 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science': 'The impulse of research must proceed not from philosophies but from the issues and problems [*von den Sachen und Problemen*]'.¹¹ To deal with the history of philosophy is to deal not with the *Sachen* but only with what others have *said* about the *Sachen*. Husserl objected not to the history of philosophy as a discipline, of course, but only to the tendency to confuse it with philosophy itself, either in the manner of *Weltanschauungsphilosophie* or as an attempt to conjure a doctrine of one's own by ingeniously mixing and stirring the doctrines of others. In the *Ideas*, to ward off from the start any such temptation, Husserl laid down what he called the 'philosophical *epoché*': 'Expressly formulated [it] consists in this, that we completely abstain from judgment respecting the doctrinal content of all pre-existing philosophy, and conduct all our expositions within the framework of this abstention'.¹² Husserl does not, of course, rule out references to philosophy as 'historical fact' especially for purposes of criticizing one or another of its representatives. And, indeed, criticisms of other philosophers are found throughout his writings. But we find nothing like the elaborate historical reflections of the *Crisis* and nothing like the insistence on the necessity and problematic character of such reflections.

If it is the 'thoroughly and exclusively' historical character of those who do philosophy which makes it necessary, says Husserl, that they reflect critically on the history of philosophy in order to 'do' it properly. What does this mean – in what sense are potential philosophers 'historical beings' – and why should it result in this requirement? After all, philosophers could be, in some sense, historical beings without, for that reason, having to engage in historical reflections. What is Husserl's concept of the historicity of the potential philosopher? In this concept lies the only explanation for Husserl's new approach, the key to its correct interpretation, and the clarification of its ultimate significance for the phenomenological program.

The answer to this question is to be found, I think, in Husserl's

earlier philosophy, and goes back even to some of his earliest writings. It is in the very pursuit of the project of transcendental philosophy that Husserl eventually arrives at the necessity for this seemingly untranscendental procedure. But if the answer is to be found in Husserl's earlier writings, it is there only in concealment, for otherwise the necessity of historical reflections would have emerged much sooner. Or, to put it more precisely, certain lines of inquiry, pursued independently throughout Husserl's career, finally intersect in the *Crisis*, and their intersection explains Husserl's novel approach. These lines of inquiry are pursued under the headings of *genetic phenomenology* and the *theory of intersubjectivity*. Let us examine these separately before dealing with their convergence and its consequences for the problem of history.

Genetic phenomenology derives directly from the demands of transcendental philosophy. The latter gets its name, Husserl says, from the problem of transcendence.¹³ The transcendence of the object – its objectivity or validity (*Geltung*) as such – does not ground itself but must be grounded in the consciousness in which it manifests itself. In the *Logical Investigations*, the givenness of the objective is sought in consciousness conceived as sense-bestowing, intentional experience or act. In the *Ideas*, this notion is broadened through the concept of attitude – pre-eminently the natural attitude – which is not itself an act but which underlies and expresses itself in all acts falling within it. Both of these concepts – act and attitude – are static, in that they do not take into account the flowing character of consciousness. The natural attitude runs undifferentiated through the life of consciousness, and the act or *cogito*, at least as originally conceived, is a slice in time, likewise undifferentiated temporally. Such characterizations are obviously abstract from the standpoint of a description of consciousness, but, more important, they are also abstract from the transcendental point of view as well. That is, the givenness of the objective must be regarded as a temporal affair, for the object is given as a unity through the temporal multiplicity of its appearances. Thus the concepts of retention, protention, recollection, and such, first developed in answer to the question of our experience of time, must be brought into play in the analysis of our experience of anything in time. The abstract, static treatment of consciousness

in the *Ideas* must be made concrete by taking into account the dynamic or temporal dimension.

With this, the character of transcendental grounding changes somewhat. Each act passes into retention as it is replaced by a new act. As the original act is pushed farther and farther back by successive retentional modifications it approaches what Husserl calls, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, an 'essentially necessary limit'. That is to say: with this intentional modification there goes hand in hand a *gradual diminution of prominence*: and precisely this has its limit, at which the formerly prominent subsides into the *universal substratum* – the so-called 'unconscious' which, far from being a phenomenological nothing, is itself a limit mode of consciousness'.¹⁴ In passing beyond the limit of conscious retention, Husserl says, the past *cogitatio* becomes sedimented as an acquisition or possession (*Erwerb* or *Habe*) which can be awakened in recollection. But even if it is not actually reawakened, it remains a part of what he calls 'the substratum of sedimented prominences which, as a horizon, accompanies every living present'.¹⁵

Thus, while, from the transcendental point of view, every object is given as what it is in virtue of the character of the act in which it is given, this act in turn is what it is partly by virtue of the temporal background or horizon against which it stands out. 'Every evidence', as Husserl says in the *Cartesian Meditations*, 'sets up' or 'institutes' for me an *abiding possession*,¹⁶ and it is with an ever growing stock of such abiding possessions that consciousness enters each new living present. Each act not only intends its object but unifies itself with its past and intends its object in light of that past. Its sedimented evidences, although no longer actual, function as presuppositions and norms for the future until cancelled or modified by present evidence. Thus, consciousness, rather than a mere succession of experiences linked by memory, or tied to an unchanging ego, is a cumulative process of reciprocal interrelations and influences. Again, it must be emphasized that this characterization is called forth not only by the desire to describe consciousness but by the needs of transcendental philosophy. In order to account for how objects are given or constituted, it is necessary to make reference to the self-constitution of consciousness. The givenness of the world requires the

unity of consciousness, and this unity is not simply a brute fact but the result of a process of self-unification which is the very form of conscious life.

Of interest to our topic is the fact that Husserl uses the terms 'history' and 'historicity' to describe this form. 'Every single process of consciousness', he says in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 'has its own 'history', that is, its *temporal genesis*'.¹⁷ And every such particular history finds its place within the temporal unity of a particular conscious life as a whole, which has its own 'history' in such a unity. As he says in the *Cartesian Meditations*, 'the ego constitutes himself for himself in, so to speak, the unity of a 'history''.¹⁸

This is a rather unusual, even metaphorical sense of 'history', as Husserl indicates by his use of quotation marks or expressions like 'so to speak'. What does it have to do with history in the usual sense? Since the term is usually applied not to the life of the individual but to that of groups or societies, the link between the two concepts must be found in Husserl's philosophy of intersubjectivity.

Contrary to the usual interpretation, Husserl's Fifth *Cartesian Meditation* is not concerned with the problem of solipsism in any standard or traditional sense at all. His question is not whether other minds, in fact, exist or whether we as philosophers can prove, inductively or deductively, that they do. Rather, Husserl poses the same question here that he does with respect to any other object of our awareness, the question: how is it given? For Husserl this means, as in all other cases, that we must seek 'insight into the explicit and implicit intentionality wherein the alter ego becomes evinced [*sich bekundet*] and verified in the realm of our transcendental ego; we must discover in what intentionalities, syntheses, motivations, the sense 'other ego' becomes fashioned in me'.¹⁹ The special difficulty here is presented by the fact that the objects is in this case a subject, a *cogitatum cogitans*. This is what Husserl calls the paradox of solipsism which he challenges himself to overcome.

As is well known, this matter has significance beyond the problem of how other subjects are given. For only by understanding such givenness can we account for the givenness of the objective world in the sense of the world which exists not just for me,

but for others as well. Only if there are others for me can there be a world for others as well as for me. The worldly object is transcendent because it is not reducible to the act or acts in which it is given. This is because it is the reference point of other possible acts of consciousness. But up to the Fifth Meditation, all actual and possible acts of consciousness were considered acts of *my* consciousness. The problem of objectivity concerns the object which transcends not merely my actual experience, but all actual *and possible* experience of mine, because it is given to other experiences not my own. The task is to understand how I transcend this 'ownness sphere' of my actual and possible experiences and encounter a world which is not my private property by encountering an experience which is not my own. Thus, the importance of the problem of intersubjectivity from the transcendental point of view: not merely the givenness of a particular sort of entity, the alter ego, is at issue, but, through him, the sense of the world's transcendence as a whole.

We need not recount in detail Husserl's description of the experience in which the alter ego is given. Certainly it contains many problems. But its general sense is already prefigured in the very way the problem is set up. Through what Husserl calls 'appresentation' and 'analogizing apprehension',²⁰ I encounter another subject. But this means that what I encounter is another flow of experience, actual and possible, with all its objects. What could be called 'my world' is now confronted with 'his world'. But this is only an abstract description, for there is only one world. What I actually encounter is another perspective on *the* world, a perspective which is not my own. Because of my awareness of this alien perspective, the world that I experience is always more than what I directly experience of it or ever *could* directly experience of it. Yet through my encounter with the other, that alien perspective is at least indirectly given, given by analogy. This is why, in even the simplest case of the wordless confrontation of two persons, the experience of another is an act of communication and the formation of a rudimentary community – Husserl calls it *Vergemeinschaftung*.²¹ Just as the object may be conceived as one by reference to the multiplicity of its appearances to *me* (through time), so the intersubjective object is one by reference to the (simultaneous) multiplicity of its appearances to me and to others.

What implications does this have for the phenomenological conception of individual consciousness? How do I constitute the intersubjective object and hence the objective world? Only by combining my own experiences with those not my own, only by borrowing, as it were, what others communicate to me in my encounters with them. The world I live in is only partially given to me directly; it has the sense it does for me, which far outruns what is directly given, because I live in a community of other subjects whose experiences complement, but can never be, my own. It is compounded of direct and indirect or quasi-evidences. Thus, again stressing the *transcendental* point of view: the sense of the world for the individual subject is at least partially traceable to the community in which he lives, or, more precisely, to his appropriation of the experiences of others through his communicative encounters with them.

If we combine the intersubjective and genetic analyses, what emerges is the full-fledged notion of the *historicity* of subjectivity from the transcendental point of view. The object as given is mediated through the temporal and social horizons of the act itself. The 'substratum of sedimented prominences which, as a horizon, accompanies every living present'²² as we saw, forms a background of presuppositions which determine the character of that present. But this substratum may in turn be socially mediated. Husserl says that 'every evidence sets up in me an abiding possession',²³ but we could also say that not every abiding possession may be traceable to direct evidence. It may derive from the quasi-evidence of a communicative encounter. Every subjective process is an expression not only of its own past but also of the past of the community in which it functions, a past which it appropriates through its communal life with others.

As I have constantly stressed, the concept of history is developed according to the procedures of transcendental phenomenology and in answer to the demands of that very procedure. But the phenomenological description of the historicity of consciousness is not itself a *historical* reflection. What happens in the *Crisis* is that the results of this investigation reflect back upon and call into question the very procedure followed in order to reach them.

Husserl justifies his historical reflections there, we remember, by stating that we as philosophers are 'historical beings', that

'we ... not only have a spiritual heritage, but have become what we are thoroughly and exclusively in a historical-spiritual manner'.²⁴ We are now in a position to understand what Husserl means by this. We are historical beings first of all because we are conscious beings; our conscious life consist in constituting itself 'in the unity of a history', personal and social. Again, it must be stressed that this is the character of consciousness considered transcendently. To say that we are historical beings is not merely to say that we are *in* history, that we arrive on the scene and disappear at certain points in objective historical time. Each of us is indeed aware of himself as such an *empirical ego*, but this is not what Husserl means by the historicity of consciousness.

But how does this notion of historicity apply to the philosopher in particular? As conscious beings we are heirs to the past, whatever our beliefs, attitudes, and goals; and if we are philosophers, we are, as Husserl says, 'heirs to the past in respect to the goals which the word 'philosophy' indicates, in terms of concepts, problems, and methods'.²⁵ What significances could this have? Obviously, becoming a philosopher involves not only accepting a certain notion or definition of an endeavor that exists and has existed in society, but also studying the works of those who are commonly regarded as philosophers. But the procedure of the incipient philosopher is generally not a matter of simply accepting and identifying himself with the philosophers he reads. For most, taking up philosophy does not mean simply learning the 'truths' that others have written. This may be the attitude of the interested layman, but the potential philosopher is more often marked by his very dissatisfaction with traditional doctrines. It is the *task* of philosophy that Husserl has in mind, and the assumption of this task may even involve the conscious, total rejection of the entire philosophical tradition. But even such a philosopher, Husserl is saying, is an 'heir of the past' in taking up the problems which his predecessors, in his view, have failed to solve. Yet his awareness of his indebtedness to the past rarely penetrates to this level; his acknowledged relation to the past consists in his rejection, or even his eventual critical acceptance, of what he finds there. It is clearly the notion of *unacknowledged* heritage which interests Husserl at this point and which constitutes the peculiar historicity of the philosophically engaged consciousness.

Once Husserl begins to take seriously the idea of the unacknowledged heritage of the philosopher, his relation to the past becomes a much more complex affair than it was originally thought to be. When he enunciated the principle of philosophical *epoché* in the *Ideas*, Husserl clearly had in mind one's conscious, explicit, acceptance of this or that philosophical doctrine. This was to be put aside, bracketed. And this presents no special problem, because what is explicitly acknowledged can just as easily be set aside. The phenomenological *epoché*, by contrast, was a real effort, because the natural attitude, which it bracketed, has the character of an unacknowledged prejudice, a *Selbstverständlichkeit*. In order to be bracketed it must be dredged up and recognized as a thesis to which we subscribe. In fact the process of bracketing is identical with coming to awareness of this underlying presupposition which otherwise remains hidden, and the whole effort of phenomenology is to sustain this *epoché*, to avoid the hidden, unrecognized commitment which is the natural attitude, to struggle against the gravitational pull of consciousness to resume its natural state.

If we now arrive at the generalized recognition that the philosopher is burdened by historical prejudices which, like the natural ones, are unacknowledged and hidden, what do we do? Does it suffice that we be warned against them? But – and here is the rub – what do we mean by *them*? In the case of the natural attitude, as we have seen, overthrow must at the same time be discovery. It is not enough simply to announce the principle of emancipation from all prejudices in order to make it so. Hence, the peculiar relationship between the natural attitude and its suspension: it must be relived at the same time it is being overthrown-rediscovered. The result is what Husserl occasionally describes as a splitting of the ego between the natural self and his phenomenological observer²⁶ and a pattern of inquiry involving a zigzag between the two. In the case of historical prejudices, something similar seems indicated. Like natural prejudices, these are distinguished by being taken for granted, *selbstverständlich*. What suggests itself here, by analogy to the phenomenological *epoché*, is a reliving of our philosophical prejudices, a repetition of the philosophical *Selbstverständlichkeiten* under which we turn to philosophy in the first place. Like the phenomenological *epoché*, such a repetition

will not be a *mere* repetition: what is relived is relived reflectively in order to be raised from the level of something taken for granted to that of something explicitly recognized. Just as the phenomenological *epoché* is habitually practiced in the form of a method called the phenomenological reduction, so the philosophical *epoché* must be systematized and universalized to become a *philosophical reduction*, or what might better be called a *historical reduction*.

Although Husserl nowhere uses this term in the *Crisis*, this, we maintain, precisely what he has in mind in that work and is the initial key to his historical procedure. 'This manner of clarifying history', Husserl says of that procedure:

by inquiring back into the primal establishment of the goals, ... is to make vital again, in its concealed historical meaning, the sedimented conceptual system which, as taken for granted, serves as the ground for [the philosopher's] private and non-historical work... If he is to be one who thinks for himself [*Selbstdenker*], an autonomous philosopher with the will to liberate himself from all prejudices, he must have the insight that all the things he takes for granted *are* prejudices, that all prejudices are obscurities arising out of a sedimentation of tradition.²⁷

... There is no doubt [he writes elsewhere] that we must engross ourselves in historical considerations if we are to be able to understand ourselves as philosophers and understand what philosophy is to become through us. It is no longer sufficient to grasp ... at certain working problems we have run up against in a naive development, to treat of them with our working partners, with those who, in the same course of a living tradition, have run up against the same problems.²⁸

This is why even the 'theory of knowledge' has to become a 'peculiarly historical task', as Husserl says in the 'Origin of Geometry', and why the failure to see this is 'precisely what we object to in the past'.²⁹ It is not enough simply to proceed 'naively' to the *Sachen* and *Probleme* of philosophy as we find them in our own present; or, as we have put it elsewhere,³⁰ the *history* of those *Sachen* and *Probleme*, their very *Selbstverständlichkeit* as part of

the tradition, is now seen to count pre-eminently among the very *Sachen* to which philosophy must turn.

And this is indeed remarkable: for it seems to demand of the philosopher, as an essential part of his method, a serious and systematic consideration of his particular time and place, a consideration previously declared irrelevant to phenomenology but the *eidetic* reduction. Under that reduction facts and particular events, even and indeed especially those revealed in transcendental reflection, serve only as examples of the patterns which are ultimately sought. Now facts and events become important in their own right. To be sure, it may be essentially true that consciousness, and thus philosophical consciousness, is historical, that is, that it is laden with prejudices derived from its social-historical milieu. But this means precisely that the character of such prejudices will vary depending on the milieu. This is why, when explaining the need for historical reflections in order to obtain clarity on the task of philosophy, Husserl says that we can obtain such clarity 'not through the critique of some present or handed down system, of some scientific or prescientific *'Weltanschauung'* (which might as well be Chinese, in the end) – that is, not through the study of just any history – 'but only through a critical understanding of the total unity of history – *our* history'.³¹ It is no longer the case that any example will serve as well as any other, as in the search for essences. The historical reduction, unlike the phenomenological reduction, is not and cannot be coupled with an eidetic reduction. In order to penetrate to the previously unacknowledged historical prejudices which determine the *Sachen* and *Probleme* of philosophy, we must turn not to the essence of history, or to the essence of consciousness, but to the particular tradition of which we are a part.

And this is exactly what Husserl proceeds to do in the *Crisis*. After his brief introduction he embarks upon what he calls the 'Clarification of the Modern Opposition Between Physicalistic Objectivism and Transcendental Subjectivism'.³² His discussion of modern philosophy constitutes a 'historical reduction' because it is above all, as he says, an 'inquiry back [*Rückfrage*] into the primal establishment of the *goals*'³³ of modern philosophy, not simply a rehearsal of the 'doctrinal content' of certain theories. It tries to show *in detail* how we are 'heirs of the past in respect

to the goals which the word 'philosophy' indicates, in terms of concepts, problems and methods'. It is an attempt to relive the tradition of which we are a part in order to bring to recognition the prejudices that are part of that tradition.

Not surprisingly, Husserl traces the origin of modern philosophical problems to the rise of modern science, whose decisive feature is its mathematical character. It is primarily to Galileo that we owe the transformation of the study of nature into a mathematical science, and as soon as this science 'begins to move toward successful realization, the idea of philosophy in general... is transformed'.³⁴ In order to understand the origin of the modern idea of philosophy, we must turn first to what made it possible: Galileo's 'mathematization of nature'.

Husserl's inquiry is directed toward uncovering *goals*, and the question he asks about Galileo's mathematization is 'How do we reconstruct the train of thought that motivated it?'³⁵ Galileo's basic goal is that of overcoming the subjectively relative character of our everyday manner of describing the world around us and arriving at exact, intersubjectively agreed upon characterizations of it. Such exactness is already to be found in the mathematical disciplines, handed down from the Greeks, one of which is geometry. Is it not the case that our natural surroundings contain, somehow embedded in them, examples of the shapes geometry is able to determine with such exactness? Galileo's proposal is that we deal with nature only to the extent that we can describe it in geometrical terms. In this way, our description can partake of the exactness enjoyed by that science. Initially, this seems to leave out a great deal of what presents itself to our experience, notably the so-called secondary qualities which do not lend themselves to exact measurement. Changes in these qualities can, however, be correlated with changes in primary qualities, and, in his boldest move of all, Galileo proposes to treat all such secondary qualities exclusively in terms of their measurable correlates with the idea that *all* will thereby be accounted for.³⁶

Now Husserl is not as interested in the Galilean proposal itself as he is in its philosophical interpretation. In the hands of philosophers, Galileo's proposal is transformed into an ontological claim: *to be is to be measurable* in ideal terms as a geometrical configuration. Thus it happens, as Husserl says, 'that we take for *true*

being what is actually a *method*'.³⁷ Mathematical science is a method which considers the world *as if it were* exclusively a manifold of measurable shapes; the ontological interpretation simply states that it *is* such a manifold. Now the scientific problem is different from the philosophical problem: the first seeks inter-subjectively exact knowledge *about* the world, the second hopes to determine the true nature of reality. But here the solution to the first problem is taken as the solution to the second and a hidden shift of meaning has occurred. All subsequent problems connected with the world – its scope, its beginning and end, man's place in it and, above all, his knowledge of it – henceforth operate with this conception of reality as a presupposition. Rationalism treats the scientific method as a kind of instrument, like the microscope, through which we come to see reality; empiricism makes the point – correct, given the rationalist assumptions – that all we ever *see* are the causal effects of reality upon our minds, and then asks the legitimate question of whether what we *see* accurately informs us of what is. The development ends in Hume's skepticism, which is only possible because the rationalist conception of reality is taken for granted.

But the real opposition in modern philosophy, for Husserl, is not between rationalism and empiricism but between objectivism – which includes both of these – and transcendentalism. Hume demonstrated the ultimate futility of the quest for an objective justification of our knowledge, but it was Kant who turned this apparent failure of philosophy to positive advantage. He did this by returning to that radical reflection which Descartes had considered merely provisional and establishing it as the true method of rigorous philosophy. The objectivity of knowledge is given not an objective but a subjective grounding through an examination of the forms of thought in which it announces and establishes itself. The idea of such a subjective or transcendental grounding was Kant's contribution to the history of modern thought.

But Kant's philosophy too must be interrogated in terms of its underlying problems and motives, and it is here that the true significance of Husserl's historical reduction begins to merge. Husserl had always been critical of many aspects of Kant's philosophy, but in the *Crisis* his criticism takes a new form. Kant envisaged the possibility and necessity of a transcendental

grounding of the objective world; but what is the *nature* of that objective world which is susceptible of and requires such a grounding? The fact is that this world, although no longer naïvely taken for granted as self-grounding, is still conceived in exactly the same terms as it was by the rationalists and empiricists. That is, it is the mathematized world of the natural scientists that constitutes Kant's problem. For him, this *is* the world. But we have seen, through our reflections on Galileo, that the scientific conception must be regarded as an interpretation of the world, a certain way of looking at it and dealing with it which serves certain purposes. There remains the world *of* which this is an interpretation, the prescientific lifeworld in which such interpretation begins and to which it must return for the direct verification of all its hypotheses. This is a world whose objects are not ideal geometrical shapes; instead, they fall into vague and approximate types and exhibit not only primary and secondary qualities but aesthetic and practical ones as well. As long as knowledge is considered the causal effect of the objective world upon the mind, the prescientific features of the life-world can be explained away as 'mere appearance'. But if the approach to knowledge is that of transcendental grounding, the role of the lifeworld must be taken into account. The theoretical constructions of the scientist take the lifeworld for granted as built upon it. We cannot adequately understand those constructions without understanding the intermediate and founding role of the lifeworld.

Yet this is what Kant failed to do, says Husserl. Thus, while he succeeded in one sense in overthrowing the naïve objectivism of his predecessors, his philosophy contains a hidden presupposition inherited from them. The transcendental problem of the world, for Kant, is predetermined by a concept of the world borrowed from modern science. Hume, although he had no explicit conception of the transcendental turn, had a much clearer awareness, says Husserl, of 'the world enigma in the deepest and most ultimate sense' for he questioned 'the *naïve obviousness* of the certainty of the world ... and, what is more, the certainty of the *everyday* world as well as that of the sophisticated theoretical constructions built upon this everyday world'.³⁸ But Kant failed to see any enigma here, and began his transcendental critique in the wrong place.

We can see that Husserl's discussion of Galileo, in which the life-world emerges, takes on its ultimate significance not in his critique of objectivism, but in his critique of the transcendental turn in which objectivism is overthrown. But whose transcendental philosophy is actually being criticized? The strange fact about the Kant-critique in the *Crisis* is that while Husserl takes Kant to task for not recognizing the significance of the lifeworld, this is the first time, in Husserl's own writings, that the lifeworld is accorded this significance. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Husserl's Kant-critique is really a Husserl-critique in disguise, that the inadequate concept of transcendental philosophy that is criticized here is not Kant's but that of the earlier Husserl. It is true that Husserl had not made the mistake of identifying the world with the entities of *natural* science alone. He had always criticized Kant for doing this, insisting that other forms of objectivity, those treated in the humanistic, social, psychological, and even life sciences, should be treated in their own terms and according to their own 'categories'. But this suggests a sort of *additive* concept of the world, as if it were composed of the various scientific domains side by side. Here Husserl's lengthy discussion of natural scientific idealization and construction is carried out not for the purpose of contrasting natural science to other sciences, but rather in order to contrast the scientific endeavor – any scientific endeavor – with a prescientific consciousness and its world. What is being criticized is precisely the conception of world articulated in the early pages of the *Ideas*, that of 'the totality of objects which, on the basis of actual experience, are knowable in correct theoretical thinking'.³⁹ This conception was then pursued in the second volume of the *Ideas*, where the theory of constitution takes its clue from the various material regions, which correspond to the main divisions of science: the natural, the psychic and the spiritual or *Geistige*. The implication is that these ontologies, taken together, constitute an ontology of the world. But in the *Crisis*, Husserl suggests that the lifeworld as a whole requires its own ontology,⁴⁰ which is not equivalent to the totality of those ontologies which correspond to the various domains of science. The lifeworld is the realm of what is pre-given to consciousness not only prior to *natural* science but also, as he says, 'before anything that is established scientifically ... in physiology, psychology, or sociol-

ogy'.⁴¹ Correlatively, the lifeworld calls forth its own theory of constitution, a theory of prescientific world-life whose intentionality is not that of subsuming its objects under theories of any kind, whose interest is not determined by the demands of logical consistency or completeness of theoretical scope. Husserl has come to the realization that consciousness is not theoretical all or even most of the time, that there was consciousness before there was science, and, above all, that there was a world before science came along to interpret it.

Now there can be no doubt that the concept of the life-world represents a significant new development in Husserl's phenomenological theory. It is, after all, nothing less than a new approach to the problem of the *world*, not merely the opening of a new domain within already established phenomenological guidelines. Those who seek to minimize the novelty of the *Crisis* often point out that many of Husserl's descriptions of the life-world coincide with those developed much earlier under the rubric of the phenomenology of perception or, as it was later called, that of a transcendental aesthetic,⁴² and that even the term 'lifeworld' seems to have been used as early as 1917.⁴³ All this is true, but none of these earlier investigations are carried to the point of requiring such a thorough reconstruction of the world-concept. Even the borrowed term 'transcendental aesthetic' suggests that, while Husserl wishes to enlarge on the Kantian conception he still sees it as oriented toward a theory of judgment and ultimately theoretical judgment. The investigations of *Erfahrung und Urteil*, for example, and those of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, exhibit this orientation in their very titles. But in the *Crisis*, Husserl explicitly says that the problem of the lifeworld must be separated from its connection with the theory of science and seen as a philosophical problem in its own right.⁴⁴ He conceives of the possibility of an *Erfahrung* which is not oriented toward *Urteil* at all, at least not in the theoretical sense. Rather than being essentially an 'incipient science', in Merleau-Ponty's words, experience is a much broader field with many possible orientations, only one of which is science. The world, correlatively, is characterized as having many dimensions, and it is not just this or that science which abstracts from its full concreteness, but science as a whole, or theoretical consciousness generally.

Significant as this new development is, however, I do not think that, in itself, it involves a threat to the phenomenological program as a whole. Here I must side with those I was just attacking who minimize the novelty of the theory of the lifeworld. Both consciousness and the world are conceived more broadly, but the phenomenological analysis of their relation is the same. This is clearly what Husserl has in mind. From the new ontology of the lifeworld we must proceed through a phenomenological reduction to the conscious intentionality in which this world is constituted. With its base broadened, everything previously accomplished in phenomenology can be integrated into this new theory of consciousness and the world while maintaining the pattern of analysis.

The really serious questions for phenomenology are raised not by the theory of the lifeworld itself but rather by Husserl's way of arriving at it, namely, not through the phenomenological reduction alone but through the *historical* reduction we spoke about. For what has emerged from our discussion is that Husserl's historical reflections are not a mere attack on his predecessors and a historical justification *post hoc* of theories he already held, but rather a questioning of his own assumptions and a recognition of their rootedness in their own past. Husserl is above all criticizing himself for taking over the *Sachen und Probleme* of philosophy from his predecessors. This helps explain Husserl's strange remark that it is not just any history, but the totality of *our* history that must be subjected to interrogation, as well as the fact that the history he actually examines contains only the philosophers he himself has studied intensively. Far from being a philosophy of history, in the sense of a description of the sense emerging from the vast panorama of Western thought – hardly a world about Hegel, none at all about Nietzsche or Marx, no mention of Christianity – the *Crisis* offers us a historical critique above all of Edmund Husserl and the philosophical milieu from which phenomenology emerged. The *Crisis* is essentially the construction of a history which reflects the philosopher's own philosophical prejudices for purposes of overcoming those very prejudices. Husserl even speaks of his historical reflections as the 'construction of the novel of history for purposes of self-reflection [*Selbstbesinnung*]'.⁴⁵

The emergence of the concept of the lifeworld in the *Crisis* confirms the necessity for historical reduction which is only prescribed in principle by Husserl's investigations in genetic and intersubjective phenomenology. His aim had always been to describe the world just as it presents itself to us, and to describe the forms of consciousness in which this presentation is actualized. But in the *Crisis* a discovery is made which changes radically the character of phenomenological investigation. This discovery has been particularly well expressed by Aron Gurwitsch in a recent article: 'On account of our historical situation as heirs to the modern scientific tradition, the world *presents itself to us*, including those of us who are not professional scientists or are even ignorant of the details of scientific theories, with reference to and in the light of its possible mathematical idealization'.⁴⁶ The implication is that any attempt to describe the world as it presents itself, if it is historically naïve, will result in the description of a historical-cultural phenomenon which nevertheless takes itself to be a universal characterization. My view is that Husserl is implicitly accusing himself of having made just such a mistake. The historical-cultural world is another of the discoveries of the *Crisis*, by the way, to which Husserl also, rather confusingly as I have argued elsewhere,⁴⁷ gives the name 'lifeworld'. There can be many lifeworlds in this sense, as in the *Cartesian Meditations*,⁴⁸ whereas the lifeworld in the sense described earlier is universal and is both prescientific and precultural. It is the condition of the possibility or the universal ground of any conceivable cultural or scientific interpretation. It is this world which must be laid bare and subjected to phenomenological-constitutional analysis if the phenomenology of science or culture or anything else is to be placed in its proper perspective. Yet, arriving at *this* world, laying it open to phenomenological description, is more complicated than the mere description of the world as it presents itself. It is rather a constant struggle against historical prejudices which takes the form of careful attention to and analysis of those very prejudices. In this sense the constant danger is that of falling back into the attitude of historical naïveté, which parallels Husserl's earlier warnings against falling into the natural attitude, of resuming its prejudices rather than keeping a distance from them in order to analyze and understand them.

Insofar as Husserl insists on such analysis as an essential part of the phenomenological enterprise, his last work does lend support to several post-Husserlian developments. Merleau-Ponty's notion of the relevance of historical and sociological evidence, precisely because it frees us from cultural naïveté, seems to me to be compatible with Husserl's new conception. The idea of philosophy as *Ideologiekritik*, or as a hermeneutic of the tradition, becomes not only possible but necessary for phenomenology. At the limit, even Heidegger's attempt to think the unthought in the whole Western tradition is a legitimate task. But does it follow, once the possibility and necessity of such investigations is recognized, that this is *all* philosophy can be? This seems to be suggested by the advocates of these approaches, often explicitly in criticism of Husserl. After all, who is to say that Husserl's attempt to describe the universal lifeworld is not itself merely the articulation of the presuppositions of a historico-cultural milieu? By admitting the importance of history, does Husserl ultimately fall prey to the very historicism he attacked in 1910?

It seems to me that there is no guarantee that Husserl's description has attained the universality he hoped for; but the only way to decide the matter is to *criticize* his view just as he criticized the modern scientific world view in the *Crisis*: namely, by rooting out its hidden prejudices, showing its limitations, its one-sidedness, its abstractions. Such criticism by its very nature makes impossible the relativist thesis, for prejudice is recognized only by contrast to the unprejudiced, limitation only by an insight that goes beyond the limits, one-sidedness by our awareness of the other side, abstractness by a reference to the concrete. In short, criticism of this or that view of the world and of consciousness as historically relative always has in view a nonrelative conception of the world of consciousness, whether it succeeds in attaining that conception or not. Insofar as such criticism is used to support the relativist thesis, as Husserl showed in the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, relativism contradicts itself by presupposing the very thing it sets out to deny. But the self-contradictory character of relativism does not justify claiming absolute validity for any particular philosopher's view; it merely suggests that there is a truth to be known and that we cannot assert the impossibility of knowing it. Much of the pathos of Husserl's last work comes down to just this

question: we cannot exclude the possibility of a knowledge which lies beyond the limits of our cultural-historical situation, but are we willing to take on the task of actualizing it?

It must not be forgotten that there is a positive as well as a negative side to Husserl's historical reflections. He seeks to work his way through the inadequate attempts at actualizing philosophy to a clear conception of its task. So the historical critique serves the purpose, as Husserl says, of clarifying what 'the point of it'⁴⁹ ultimately is, the *telos* of philosophy which is implicitly presupposed by our critique. Husserl is often accused of a sort of cultural chauvinism because he seems to speak of the task of philosophy as if it were a purely European affair. Yet if we look closely at Husserl's characterization of the origin of that task in Greece, we see that it begins with the very recognition of the difference between a cultural world and the world as such. Husserl obviously has the *physis-nomos* controversy in mind. The paradoxical essence of the European spirit, for Husserl, lies in its very attempt to transcend the limits of any cultural world, including that of Europe in the empirical historical sense. What was born with the European spirit was the ideal of a nonrelative truth, that is, a truth which is neither European truth, Chinese truth, nor any other.⁵⁰ Neither Husserl nor any other philosopher, to my mind, can demonstrate that he has fulfilled this ideal and attained such a truth. What Husserl does through his critique of relativism is to show that the ideal is in a sense unavoidable, since to deny it is to subscribe to it secretly. This much was accomplished in the *Prolegomena* and 'Philosophy as a Rigorous Science', and transcendental phenomenology was developed in the service of the ideal. But the *Crisis*, I have tried to show, adds a new dimension to phenomenology. For here Husserl recognizes that it is not enough simply to turn our backs on history – *our* history – in order to move toward a non-relative truth. We must work our way through it in order to escape it.

NOTES

1. E. Husserl, *Erste Philosophie, Erster Teil*, Vol. VII of *Husserliana*, ed. by R. Boehm (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1956), p. 3.
2. E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. by David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 17 (hereafter abbreviated as 'Cr.').
3. *Cr.*, p. 71.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Cr.*, p. 17.
6. *Cr.*, p. 71.
7. *Cr.*, p. 72.
8. *Cf. Cr.*, sections 9–1, 15.
9. E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*, Vol. VI of *Husserliana*, ed. by W. Biemel (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1954), p. 435 ff. (This section was not included in its entirety in the English translation, but *cf. Cr.*, p. 102 for an excerpt).
10. *Erste Philosophie, Erster Teil*, p. 3.
11. E. Husserl, *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1965), p. 71.
12. E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Philosophie*, Vol. III of *Husserliana*, ed. by W. Biemel (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1952), p. 40 f.
13. E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. by Dorion Cairns (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1960), p. 26.
14. E. Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. by Dorion Cairns (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1969), p. 319.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 60.
17. *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 316.
18. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 75.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 111.
21. *Cf. ibid.*, p. 120.
22. *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 319.
23. *Cf. Cartesian Meditations*, p. 60.
24. *Cr.*, p. 71.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
26. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 35.
27. *Cr.*, p. 72.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 391 f.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 370.
30. *Ibid.*, p. xxxii (Translator's Introduction).
31. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, p. 34 ff.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
39. *Ideen*, etc., p. 11.
40. *Cr.*, p. 173 ff.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
42. *Cf. Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 291 f., *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 146.
43. E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Philosophie, Zweites Buch*, Vol. IV of *Husserliana*, ed. by M. Biemel (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1952), p. 375.
44. *Cr.*, p. 134 f.
45. *Die Krisis*, etc., p. 556.
46. A. Gurwitsch, 'Problems of the Life-World', in *Phenomenology and Social Reality*, ed. by M. Natanson (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1970), p. 48 (my emphasis).
47. 'Husserl's Problematic Concept of the Life-World', in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, October, 1970.
48. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 133.
49. *Cr.*, p. 73.
50. *Cf. Cr.*, p. 286.

I.4. History, Phenomenology and Reflection

... phenomenological explication does nothing but *explicate the sense this world has for us all, prior to any philosophizing*, and obviously gets solely from our experience – *a sense which philosophy can uncover but never alter ...*¹

With these words, toward the end of the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl summarizes in remarkably succinct form his phenomenological program. Let us examine briefly what Husserl is saying in this passage. Three important elements can be disengaged from it.

First, phenomenology does not invent or construct, but shows us what is already there, and would be there even if phenomenology had not come along to do its work. The first point is that phenomenology is *descriptive*.

Second, what does it describe? Not the world, or its constituents, strictly speaking, but rather the *sense* the world has *for us*, a sense which it has through our experience of it. This indicates phenomenology's *reflective* character, a character that makes phenomenology into a genuine *transcendental* philosophy by virtue of the *phenomenological reduction*. Phenomenology reflects in the sense that it turns from a straightforward consideration of the world to our experience of the world, yet in an important sense phenomenology is still about the world. It is just that it considers the world strictly and exclusively by reference to our experience of it. This change in attitude or perspective which transforms the world into the *world for us*, the world as experienced, is the phenomenological reduction. It can also be called the 'transcendental turn', the move according to which subjectivity is

considered not as an entity or occurrence within the world but as the 'limit of the world' and the locus or source of its sense: transcendental subjectivity.

Third, phenomenology seeks to explicate the sense the world has *for us all*. This 'all' indicates the *universality* of phenomenology's claims, a universality which is to be achieved by means of the so-called eidetic reduction. The sense of the world 'for us all' means the sense of the world for anyone at all, worldhood as such for subjectivity as such, rather than the sense the world has for me personally, for us Europeans, etc. – that is, for any particular individual or group under particular geographical, sociological, historical circumstances. 'Subjectivity as such' does *not* mean *Bewusstsein überhaupt* in the sense of an actually existing, superior transindividual subject. Subjectivity is not 'transcendental' in this sense; it is always individual, unless it is expressly called intersubjectivity. But intersubjectivity always presupposes individual subjectivity and must be 'derived', in the phenomenological sense, from it, as Husserl insists in the very section of the *Cartesian Meditations* from which this passage is drawn. It is I-myself, my own conscious life, on which I reflect in order to do phenomenology, according to Husserl; but I vary the results in such a way that what I say will apply to any possible conscious subject, and will not be limited to facts about myself. The point is to move from statements of fact to statements of essence. What is essential to subjectivity is what applies to all individual subjects alike, and what is essential worldhood as such is what characterizes the world in relation to any possible experience. This is what Husserl means by the 'sense the world has for us all'.

The search for this universal sense of the world, in its essential correlation with the experience in which it is given, is what animates Husserl's philosophical career from beginning to end. His aim was always to describe the world just as it presents itself to us, the world as it is always taken for granted in our active concern with things. We *take the world for granted* in the most fundamental sense, and this means that for the most part we overlook the fact that we do this and are not explicitly aware of the *manner* in which we do it. The point of the reduction is to bring about, in the form of a habitually established attitude, a direct contact with our experience, a contact which we always already

have but are forever overlooking, and to guard it against our natural tendency to theorize around and about it. By bracketing all our theoretical prejudices and ultimately by setting aside the natural attitude itself, we are able to restore and maintain this direct contact, and the result is an awareness of and an ability to describe the genuine sense of the world as experienced. This is the *Sache selbst* which phenomenology enables us to attain and describe.

In Husserl's last work, this concept of the 'sense the world has for us all' receives a new name derived from a new emphasis in Husserl's line of inquiry: the *lifeworld*. If Husserl's efforts in his earlier work had been directed primarily toward understanding the world as envisaged in the unity of scientific theory, he now recognizes that scientific theory is but one form of consciousness, one that has come on the scene relatively late in human history, and that it presupposes and builds upon a prior and more fundamental conscious stance in which the world is not yet given in terms of scientific objectivity. It is this world which is truly the world of conscious life as such, the *natürlicher Weltbegriff*, and it must be explored in its own terms, not merely in relation to the scientific activity that is built upon it. Thus when Husserl proposes, in the *Crisis*, a 'science of the lifeworld',² his proposal is in keeping with the idea expressed in the *Cartesian Meditations* that phenomenology's task is to explicate the sense the world has for us all, prior to all philosophizing.

Now it is well known that Husserl's last work is also marked by an interest in *history* as a philosophical problem. We have already suggested that what leads Husserl to this new concept of the lifeworld is his recognition that the scientific outlook with which we are all so familiar is precisely an historical phenomenon, something that is not coextensive with human consciousness as such but is an accomplishment that has arisen in a certain time and place and has been handed down to us as a tradition. That consciousness is capable of handing down and receiving such a tradition, that subjectivity stands not only within the horizon of the world but also within the horizon of its own history and embodies its own history, is a characteristic of conscious life with which Husserl was increasingly preoccupied in his last years.

Is it possible that the recognition of the *historical* character of

consciousness in this sense – what is called its *historicity* – could come into conflict with the aim of phenomenology to explicate ‘the sense this world has for us all’? Can a philosophy which is mindful of the role of history in man’s conscious life at the same time fulfill or even formulate sensibly the aim of a transcendental philosophy? This is the problem raised but not resolved by Husserl’s last work, and it is the problem I would like to explore here.

Husserl’s late preoccupation with historicity came at a time when the heightened historical consciousness of the nineteenth century was undergoing a revival in Germany. The seventh volume of Dilthey’s collected works, devoted to philosophical problems of history, had appeared in 1927, and Husserl’s attitude toward Dilthey was always one of respect, even though he had attacked him on precisely this point in ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’. Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1927) also had an important section on historicity which itself claimed to be derived from Dilthey’s work. And there is the fact that Germans in the 1930s no doubt had a sense of ‘living through history’ that they could not ignore. But Husserl’s concern is not merely the result of outside influences. In fact it can be seen as a development internal to his thought had to come sooner or later. Some of the seeds for the later philosophical interest in the problem of history, running from Heidegger through the post-war work of Gadamer and others, can be found precisely in the peculiarly Husserlian version of transcendental philosophy dating from the first explicit formulations of the phenomenological program. And it is not surprising that these seeds should have borne fruit in Husserl’s own thinking before he died.

One of Husserl’s great accomplishments, quite early in his career, was the recognition that consciousness can and indeed must be considered *temporal* without thereby losing its transcendental character. Consciousness, seen from the transcendental point of view, is in its own way essentially temporal without belonging to the objective temporal order. It experiences and constitutes that order, but this does not make it atemporal or supertemporal. Rather it must be seen as a pre- or proto-temporal continuum which constitutes its own unity. Thus the concept of the intentional experience or mental act, on which so much had turned in the *Logical Investigations*, had to be deepened by

recourse to the notion of an internal time-consciousness in which a multiplicity of such acts is unified. The act as present stands out against a background of past retentions and against a projected future of protentions. This is not a description of consciousness *in* the world, in the empirical sense, but a description of how consciousness is *for* the world, how it is intentionally related to the world. Indeed, this is how it must be if there is to be a world for it at all. The idea of consciousness as a flow which bears within itself its own past even as it projects its future before it already has something of the historical in it, as Husserl indicates in the *Cartesian Meditations* when he says that the ego ‘constitutes himself for himself in, so to speak, the unity of a ‘history’.³

A second characteristic of conscious life which is relevant to the notion of historicity is its relation to intersubjectivity. This characteristic, while it is also implicit in Husserl’s earliest investigations, is not fully developed until the Fifth Cartesian Meditation. The point made there is that consciousness’ relation to the world is mediated by its relation to other subjects. The world as experienced is essentially *transcendent*. This is not to say that it is out of all relation to consciousness; on the contrary, this is precisely its sense as experienced. It is transcendent in the sense that it is not an element or real part of the experience I have of it. But its full transcendence or ‘objectivity’ must be explicated as its ‘thereness for everyone’, which means that its very sense as transcendent is dependent upon at least the possibility of others. The only way to make sense of the transcendental subject – i.e., the subject as intentionally related to the transcendent world – is to understand him as already intentionally intertwined with others in relation to a common or public world. Even though the multiplicity of subjects must be explicated phenomenologically by reference to *my* experience – this is what Husserl tries to do in the Fifth Meditation – *intersubjectivity*, and not merely individual subjectivity, is the key to the sense this world has for each of us considered as an individual.

It is these notions that lead Husserl to the concepts of historicity that so interest him in the *Crisis*. Through its intentional intertwining with the experience of others, consciousness in its temporality involves not only its own past but also that of the community. Or rather, the community’s past becomes its own past, the

background against which present experience stands out. To exist in a community is to appropriate and take for granted its experience as a horizon of retention.

But the concept of historicity immediately takes on broader implications which lead Husserl to the historical investigations of the *Crisis*. To exist in a particular community, with its historical tradition, is not merely to share a communal experience in the sense of a broadened awareness of certain facts about the world. It is also to inherit certain ways of interpreting the world as a whole. The prime example of this, the one which occupies Husserl in the *Crisis*, is our own participation in the tradition of modern science. So great has been the success, so all-pervasive the influence of modern physical science that all of us, whether we are scientists or not, tend to see the world through its eyes. This means not that we are in possession of a stock of scientific explanations about the way things behave – for most of us our actual knowledge is sketchy at best – but that we view the world around us in terms of the concepts of space, time, thing, event, causality, etc. that allow science to do its work. In doing so we overlook the work of idealizing interpretation that the originators of modern science, such as Galileo, had to perform upon the events and relations of the surrounding world in order to be able to deal with them in mathematical terms. Their accomplishment – the inauguration of a whole new way of looking at the world – we now take for granted, not only in doing science, but also in our everyday experience.

In the text of the *Crisis* this gives rise to a peculiar paradox. On the one hand we find Husserl insisting that we distinguish *between* the lifeworld – the world as it actually presents itself to us in immediate experience – and the scientifically interpreted world which is constructed upon the lifeworld and constitutes an idealized abstraction from it, a realm of postulated entities and relationships that are not themselves even available to direct experience. The only way to fully understand science is to recognize its roots in the lifeworld, the world in which we actually live. On the other hand he says that the results of the scientific activity of idealization *flow back into* the lifeworld⁴ and thus determine its character for us, that is, they determine the very way the world presents itself to us. And this is true even if we are not ourselves

the conceptualizers, the scientific theorizers, but simply live in a culture dominated by the scientific view of the world. For those who live ‘in the spell’⁵ of such a tradition the original distinction between lifeworld and scientifically interpreted world is blurred and, it appears, is finally obliterated. We can no longer separate the world we live in or directly experience from the world envisaged by our scientific concepts.

Although this latter side of the paradox is only hinted at in the *Crisis*, we find it pursued in some depth in the Introduction to *Erfahrung und Urteil*. Though the text was admittedly composed by Landgrebe, it claims to be based on Husserl’s ideas, derived in part from conversations held at precisely the time of the writing of the *Crisis*.⁶ In any case it explores a difficulty raised by Husserl’s thought that needs to be explored; so we should not be overly concerned about its authorship.

Initially we are steered in the same direction by *Erfahrung und Urteil* (hereafter referred to as EU) as by the *Crisis*. Judgmental activity, we are reminded, is *about* something. In order to understand the role of judgment in conscious life it is not enough to abstract from the content, as the logician does, and consider purely formal relations between judgmental forms. Rather we must explore the problem of how anything can be present to us beforehand such that we can judge about it. In order to understand judgment ultimately, we must understand how objects – and at the most fundamental level individual objects – can be given, and this is the problem of EU. What is the nature of our direct encounter with things prior to all predication, an encounter which predication presupposes? It is the world of immediate encounter, which EU also calls the lifeworld, that must be understood first and foremost.

But now the text begins to warn us of complications. It turns out that ‘in the flow of our world-experience, as it is related to the always already pre-given world, [we] will not always find so easily those sought-after, ultimately original self-evidences of experience ...’⁷ It will not suffice simply to take any experiential judgment as an example and ask after the givenness of the objects to which it refers. And why not? Because ‘the world in which we live and in which we act in a cognitive-judging way, from which everything comes which affects us as substrates of possible judg-

ments, is always already pre-given to us permeated [*durchsetzt*] with the deposit [*Niederschlag*] of logical accomplishments'.⁸ Thus it is *given* as already 'worked over', so to speak, by judgmental activity, either my own or that of 'others whose experimental acquisitions [I] take over through communication, learning, tradition'.⁹

Like the *Crisis*, and in part by actually quoting from it, EU cites the concepts of modern natural science as the prime example of how the 'original life-world' gets 'covered over' with the deposit or sediment of the mental activity of the past. Even more than the *Crisis*, EU insist that for us, as heirs to the scientific tradition, the world actually presents itself, is actually pre-given, as a scientifically determined or at least determinable world. Thus it is not merely a matter of the way we have learned to *think* about the world, not merely a matter of a certain stock of concepts we apply to a world which is given independently of them beforehand. Rather, 'from the very start [*von vornherein*]'¹⁰ the world of our experience has already been interpreted for us in virtue of our membership in the culture that descends from Galileo and his contemporaries. We might say that their legacy to us is not merely a way thinking about the world, but the very world about which we think.

But what has become of the task of tracing judgmental activity back to its roots in the lifeworld? EU is quick to grasp the profound implications of this view for phenomenological method. Clearly, for us, as 'adult men of our time'¹¹ the 'return to the original lifeworld is not one which simply accepts [*hinnimmt*] the world of our experience, just as it is given to us ...'.¹² The original lifeworld, upon which the scientific construction of sense has been erected, has been covered over, hidden from us, in a certain sense left behind, and has to be rediscovered. One curious result, according to the terminology of EU, is that the lifeworld is no longer the world in which we actually live. But more serious is the matter of *how* the lifeworld is to be rediscovered. It no longer suffices simply to turn from our world to the experiences in which that world is given; for to do so would be to inquire into the experience of 'subjects who are already precisely subjects of our world – a world which is already covered over [*überlagert*] with idealizations and is apperceived in terms of this covering'.¹³

EU dismisses such a procedure as 'psychological', but it is clear

that what makes it unacceptable is that it is based on *reflection*.¹⁴ What is reflection but the act of turning from our straightforward concern with the world to our own experience and to the manner in which things are given in that experience? But reflection is not something which is characteristic merely of psychological procedure; indeed, as we have seen, it is the key to *phenomenological* method itself. Yet now, EU seems to be telling us that any method based on reflection would condemn us to a hopeless relativism. Once it is admitted that our historical position determines the very way the world is given, we would have also to admit that any reflection-based description could not extend beyond what is available to us as 'men of our time'. The sense of the world, of objectivity, and of our experience that would result from reflection would be limited to a particular historical phenomenon: we would be describing *only* the world of those of us who happen to exist at this particular time in a culture which bears the stamp of the scientific tradition. Clearly this would fall short of the 'genuine sense the world has for us all' where the 'all' refers precisely to the sort of universality that transcends historical differences. Of course, the claim that philosophy is incapable of transcending its own historical situation is none other than the 'historicism' that Husserl had attacked, as a variant of psychologism, in the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* and 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science'. Is this the fate of phenomenology once historicity is taken seriously?

Needless to say, this is not the conclusion drawn by the author of EU. In fact, his whole point in discussing the pre-given, historically determined world is that philosophy *must* transcend it, get at its roots. But if reflection is incapable of accomplishing this, how is it to be accomplished? What we must do, according to the text, is 'pursue the historical development, which is already deposited in [the pre-given world], back to its origin'.¹⁵ All the 'deposits of sense' (*Sinnesniederschläge*) that are 'at hand in our present experience' must be 'dismantled'.¹⁶ This activity of dismantling (*Abbau*) involves

an inquiry back ... into the subjective sources from which [these deposits of sense] have arisen, and thus into an accomplishing subjectivity which does not belong to the subject who, reflecting

psychologically, sees himself confronting the ready-made world. Rather, it is that subjectivity through whose accomplishments of sense the world as it is pre-given to us – *our* world – has become what it is for us.¹⁷

What the text apparently has in mind is an investigation of the historical sources of the tradition of which we are the heirs. In the case of the modern scientific tradition, what is meant is presumably the examination of Galileo and his contemporaries as it is carried out in the *Crisis*.

But this brings us to a seemingly paradoxical position: Everything turns on an understanding of the ‘original lifeworld’; yet, as we have seen, the lifeworld is not even the world in which we live. Now we are apparently being told that the subjectivity to which we must turn, if we are to understand anything else, is a subjectivity *other than our own*. It is no wonder that reflection will not do, if we consider reflection as the subject’s examination of his own conscious life. Presumably the result of this interrogation *will* eventually be an understanding of our own experience. But this understanding is not to be gained by the sort of direct examination we associate with reflection. Rather, we must take the round-about, historical path.

But the difficulty inherent in this proposal is obvious: how do we, in our time, make the kind of contact with originators of our tradition that would enable us to understand how they experienced the world? We have their written works, and other documentation about them. Will this suffice as a means of access to the world in which they lived?

According to EU there is more that we can do. We need to understand the accomplishments of these predecessors, but it is not as ‘particular historical personages’ that we turn to them.

We could not understand [their accomplishments] if we could not reproduce [*nachvollziehen*] these accomplishments in ourselves, if we could not re-experience [*nacherleben*] this arising of the accomplishment of idealization out of original life-experience, that is, [if we] could not complete in ourselves this return [*Rückgang*] from the covered-over lifeworld with its garb of ideas, to the original word-experience and lifeworld.¹⁸

But the possibility of such a move becomes problematic if we ask ourselves just how the *Nachvollzug* of the accomplishments of our predecessors is to be achieved, given the presuppositions of EU. Recalling the Galileo-analysis of the *Crisis*, we remember that its ‘reconstruction’ of Galileo’s ‘train of thought’¹⁹ involved, first of all, an understanding of his goal – the achievement in respect to physical nature of the kind of clarity and intersubjective agreement found in mathematics. Then it traced the fulfillment of this goal in the application of ideal geometrical concepts to the experienced world – or more precisely, the application of the experienced world to those concepts, through the procedure of idealization. Galileo ‘proposes’, as Husserl puts it, to deal with the real world theoretically only to the extent that its experienceable features can be treated as instances of ideal geometrical properties and relationships. His greatness lies not only in this proposal, but also in the degree to which he was able to carry it out by finding more and more aspects of the real which could be treated in this way – including the so-called ‘secondary qualities’, as they were called later philosophers.

But how are we able to *understand* Galileo’s accomplishment – we who live in an age so thoroughly dominated by this thought? Clearly, the analysis of Galileo in the *Crisis*, and the understanding we are supposed to achieve through it, can only succeed if we have access not only to Galileo’s intellectual accomplishments of mathematization but also to the world which he confronted and sought to deal with in this way. In other words, we must place ourselves in a world which *preceded* Galileo’s accomplishment in order to be able to ‘reproduce’ it in ourselves and thus to understand it in the way it must be understood.

Yet this is the very thing that EU says we cannot do. As the heirs of Galileo and the whole tradition of modern science we have supposedly lost contact with the world that preceded that tradition. Yet that contact is needed if we are to carry out the investigation prescribed. EU seems to leave us at an impasse. It exhorts us to recapture the original lifeworld which has been ‘covered over’ by the sediment of tradition; it directs us to relive the intellectual accomplishments of those who originated that tradition in order to effect that recapture; but the possibility of this recapture seems to presuppose the very contact with the

original lifeworld that we seek. Otherwise, living as we do in the already mathematized world of science, it seems we can only speculate as to the nature of an experience and a world in which this mathematization had not yet occurred.

The only helpful hint offered by EU is the term 'dismantling' (*Abbau*), a term also found in one of the *Beilagen* to the *Crisis*. The idea seems to be that we can somehow subtract the idealization from our present experience, remove or take apart what has been superadded to the world by the function of tradition, and thereby arrive at what was present before this process began. But we are given no further clue as to the nature of this procedure. Without an idea of what was there before, how are we to know what has been superadded? Again a circle begins to appear. What is more, such a dismantling procedure seems to suggest a kind of negative construction, rather than a reconstruction or reproduction in us, of the original life-world in its relation to the idealizing accomplishment. This is a far cry from the phenomenological insistence on grasping in original intuition the thing itself.

But this is what the rejection of reflection has left us with. Since we no longer *live* in the original lifeworld, since the world no longer *presents* itself to us in this way, we cannot simply turn, in the manner of reflection, to the *way* in which it is given. Reflection is the form of intuition in which we make the kind of contact with the world-as-given that is required by a phenomenological description. Yet now, for reasons we have seen, reflection will no longer do. If the procedure of 'dismantling', and the resultant construction of the original lifeworld, is still to be described as a *phenomenological* procedure, then the term has surely changed its meaning. And unless we can make sense of this procedure in itself, however it may be described in relation to the classical conception of phenomenology, EU seems to leave us stranded in the very position it exhorts us to escape: engagement in a world determined by our historical situation. We are condemned to history, and historicism seems vindicated after all.

Is there any escape from this predicament? One possibility we should examine is that EU has simply gone too far with the notion of historicity found in the *Crisis*, exaggerated its importance beyond Husserl's intentions. This might be Landgrebe's fault.

After all, Husserl has actually done, or at least attempted, what turns out to be impossible on our analysis of EU, namely an account of Galileo's accomplishment by reference to the 'world of immediate experience'. From there he goes on to an exploration of the lifeworld for its own sake, separated, from its relevance to the problem of science. If we are convinced by Husserl's analysis, and feel that he has gone some of the way toward discovering or rediscovering the lifeworld, then it must be that there is some access to it. Presumably we *can* 'reproduce in ourselves' the accomplishments of our predecessors, which means that we have some awareness of the world in which they lived and on which their conceptual edifice was founded. And indeed, according to the *Crisis*, we have such awareness because their world and ours are fundamentally the same. The lifeworld is the world in which we truly live, according to the *Crisis*, the world as we actually experience it, if we would only recognize it, which is what Husserl is trying to get us to do. When Husserl tells us that the things we encounter are not themselves possessed of exact geometrical properties but fall into vague and approximate types, that they are encountered in space oriented around the lived body, that they have both primary and secondary qualities, and so on, we recognise all this as true because we can reflect on our own experience and see that it is so. Rather than directing us to someone else's experience, the *Crisis* seems, like Husserl's earlier phenomenological investigations, to rest on a superior penetration into the nature of our own.

But this raises a further question. If we can appreciate and understand Galileo's accomplishment by reflecting on the lifeworld and reproducing his train of thought, and if the goal of our undertaking is a grasp of the lifeworld as the 'genuine sense this world has for us all', then why do we need recourse to history at all? If we have direct access to the life-world, then it has not been cut off from us by history, and we do not need to go through history in order to rediscover it. We might, of course, be interested in history of its own sake from the point of view of consciousness, wondering how Galileo's and others, accomplishments took place. But the matter would have no urgency from the transcendental point of view, since the goal thought to be attained by this sort of investigation – reacquaintance with the life-world – would

already be presupposed in the investigation itself. The various conceptual innovations and their ensuing traditionalization which make up the flow of the history of consciousness would be so many ways of building upon the sense of the world that belongs to consciousness as such, irrespective of its historical situation. The real work of phenomenology would remain what it was always thought to be: the isolation and description of this 'world as such' for 'consciousness as such' which is presupposed by all the particular expressions which make their appearance in human history.

Now while such an approach would indeed save us from the predicament we described, it would at the same time deny the compelling insight which seemed to get us into the predicament in the first place: that of the *historicity* of subjectivity from the phenomenological point of view. Of course, the subject is always *in* history, which is to say that he enters the scene and vanishes at some particular time and in some particular society. But his 'being in history' would have no *transcendental* function or significance, that is, his position in relation to history would play no role in the constitution of his world. To be sure, as no one can deny, each historical epoch would have its own concepts, its own norms, and at the highest level even its own *Weltanschauung*, its own view of the world as a whole. But these would remain precisely so many 'views', interpretations of a common world which remains fundamentally unaffected by them. Are we willing, in order to save the project of a transcendental philosophy, to give up an insight that seems not only compelling and undeniable in itself, but seems to derive precisely from Husserl's phenomenology pursued to its limits?

Clearly we must look for a middle way.

On the one hand, we should be suspicious of the extreme historicism suggested by EU, and not merely because it interferes with the project of transcendental philosophy. If this interference were the consequence of a sound view, it would simply have to be accepted. But the fact is, as Husserl showed in his early attack on historicism, that if we were really as bound by history as this view claims, we would have no grounds for asserting the view itself. Historicism assumes a trans-historical perspective which its own theory does not allow. Even the minimal claim that our own

historical period is different in a fundamental way from others requires some access to those others as they really are.

Another troubling aspect of the theory suggested by EU is that it concentrates so heavily on the modern scientific era as the only example of historical sedimentation. It suggests a kind of 'age of innocence' prior to the origin of those scientific idealizations which now 'cover over' our world, an age which there was a direct, unmediated encounter with things. But surely it is wrong to think of Galileo and his contemporaries as free of *any* historical tradition. Indeed we usually think of such pivotal historical figures not as initiating a view of the world *ex nihilo*, in a cultural vacuum, as it were, but as introducing a *new* way of looking at things and effecting a break with the old – in this case the Aristotelian-Medieval way. In the *Crisis*, Husserl stresses not only the break but also the continuity involved in Galileo's accomplishment: his dependence on the ancient idea of mathematics and the overall Renaissance conception of reviving and fulfilling the Greek ideal of philosophy. Thus our own tradition, while it has its proximate source in the rise of modern science, has its ultimate sources in the origin of the Greek idea of knowledge generally, as Husserl points out in the Vienna Lecture. And yet Husserl does not suggest, by analogy to EU, that the whole Western tradition from the Greeks on represents a kind of covering or hiding of the world which we have inherited and from which we cannot, by our own power, escape. This is the view of extreme historicism put forward by the later Heidegger and, in somewhat different form, by Derrida. Metaphysics, philosophy itself is a kind of enclosure in which we are held, and any *philosophical* attempt to penetrate behind it and thus to escape it would be but another move within it. If Husserl's 'return to the lifeworld' projected an 'age of innocence' behind or prior to the whole Western tradition in this sense, it would indeed fall prey to such extreme historicism. But if we follow the *Crisis*, rather than EU, the life-world is not something distant from us, or belonging to a subjectivity other than our own, but rather what is closed to us and at the same time represents what we have in common with all historical periods, furnishing the ground from which they all depart.

This idea should not, however, lead us to the other extreme of declaring that history has no relevance at all for transcendental

philosophy. If we say we have direct, unmediated reflective access to the lifeworld, then we are saying not only that historical reflection has no importance for phenomenology but also that history has no power to affect the way we experience things. In doing this we would be giving up one valuable aspect of the phenomenological theory of consciousness – its notion of historicity – in order to save phenomenology's aspirations to the status of transcendental philosophy.

Somehow Husserl wants to say *both* that we are always already in the lifeworld – not that we have left it behind and are cut off from it by history – *and*, on the other hand, that we as philosophers must go through history in order to get at the lifeworld. Reflection is not ruled out as the key to phenomenological method, rather it becomes itself a historical undertaking. The preconceptions deriving from our historical situation – in our case those inherited from the scientific tradition – stand between us and the direct access to the essence of our own experience that reflection was thought to provide. What is ruled out is reflection that is historically naive, that does not take into account the role of history in our thought and experience. The idea of a reflection that is historically aware is that of a procedure that can penetrate beneath the layers of historical sedimentation once it recognizes what they are. Its aim is still to describe 'the sense this world has for us all' in the totally unrestricted, universal sense of the 'all'. But it takes into account the blocks that history places between us and that universal sense, though it is the closest thing to us.

This idea of historically mediated reflection, incidentally, is found in practice – though is not dwelt upon in such a tortured way – in the work of Merleau-Ponty. Like the early Husserl he often seems to be saying that we must *simply* turn our backs on historically derived conceptualization and go directly to the world as we live it. Yet his phenomenological descriptions always emerge from a dialectical critique of what he calls 'intellectualism' and 'empiricism', which constitute the two-sided tradition in which our thought moves as the historical beings we are.

The introduction of history into phenomenology does not force us to reject its claim to status as transcendental philosophy or to reject the idea of transcendental philosophy altogether, but it does force us to reassess that claim. History represents an obstacle to

reflection that has to be overcome. Can we ever be sure of having succeeded? What guarantee is there of having arrived at 'the sense the world has for us all' *rather* than merely another expression of our historical situation? Historicity offers us the strongest reason, though not the only one, for considering the eidetic claims of phenomenology as tentative – a position Husserl himself admitted at the end of this life.

But the lack of a guarantee for the transcendental status of phenomenological claims does not render totally illusory the ideal of transcendental philosophy, as long as we consider it an ideal to be pursued rather than something already in our possession. History is not a prison from which there is no escape. Or at least we have no ultimately compelling reasons for thinking that it is. We are justified in continuing to seek to escape in the sense of seeking to arrive at insights that are not historically relative. But we must resign ourselves to the unsettling recognition that we can never be sure we have succeeded.

NOTES

1. *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. by Dorian Cairns, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960, p. 151.
2. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. by David Carr, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 123.
3. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 75.
4. *The Crisis*, p. 113.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
6. *Erfahrung und Urteil*, ed. by Ludwig Landgrebe, Hamburg, Claasen Verlag, 1964, p. x.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
19. *The Crisis*, p. 23.

II. Husserl and Others

II.5. Intentionality: Husserl and the Analytic Approach

Discussion among analytic philosophers of the concept of intentionality, at least under that name, dates primarily from R.M. Chisholm's paper, 'Sentences About Believing' (1955).¹ This paper evoked a wide response, and discussion and interest in the topic to date have grown to the point where an anthology was thought appropriate: one has recently appeared under the title *Intentionality, Mind and Language*, edited by A. Marras.² Chisholm derived his presentation of the concept from Brentano, who was the first modern thinker, as far as anyone knows, to revive this medieval term. Most of the analytic discussions of intentionality have taken their point of departure from Chisholm's reformulation of Brentano's thesis, and little attention has been paid to the fact that intentionality, as Husserl borrowed it from Brentano and also reformulated it, is one of the key concepts, if not *the* key concept, of the phenomenological tradition descended from Husserl. Even Chisholm himself, who knows the phenomenological literature well, warns readers of his article on intentionality in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, after mentioning two related 'theses' of intentionality, that the term 'is also used in connection with certain other related theses of phenomenology and existentialism'.³ This almost suggests that the two traditions share only the word, and not even the concept; or that, if the concept is the same, it is treated in very different ways.

Now there is no doubt in my mind that the concept is the same, but it is partly true that it is treated in different ways. Chisholm, following the 'linguistic turn', transforms the discussion of what is essential to psychic phenomena into a discussion of the logical properties of sentences about psychic phenomena. This, of course,

is not the way phenomenologists tend to proceed, and such a transformation was in any case foreign to Husserl. After the logical properties of certain sentences about the psychic have been delineated, the question arises as to whether such sentences are dispensable or indispensable in psychology and the philosophy of mind. This was the subject of the famous correspondence between Chisholm and Sellars, and much of the discussion in analytic philosophy has centered on this question. In phenomenology, on the other hand, this question is taken as answered – intentionality is indispensable in dealing with the mental – and the investigation goes on from there, applying the concept in its attempt to describe everything that falls under it.

In this paper I would like to suggest that despite these broad differences there are more parallels than have been noticed between the Chisholm statement, with its ensuing discussion, and the phenomenological treatment of intentionality, especially in Husserl's original introduction and elaboration of it in his *Logical Investigations*. It is true that the differences are fundamental: Husserl introduces the concept with rather different interests in mind from those even of Brentano. Still, many of the problems that have been seen by Chisholm and his successors were also seen by Husserl, and he has provided a solution to them, as I shall argue, that is surprisingly like that of certain recent analytic proposals. I shall try to show, further, that Husserl's solution to certain problems of intentionality forms the basis of his phenomenological method.

Chisholm follows Brentano in designating intentionality 'the mark of the psychological'. 'Every psychic phenomenon', says Brentano,⁴ 'is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or perhaps mental) inexistence of an object, and what we, though not without some ambiguity of expression, call the relation to a content, the direction toward an object (which is not to be understood as a reality), or immanent objectivity. Each contains something as an object within itself, though not in each case in the same way. In representation something is represented, in judgment something is acknowledged or rejected, in love something is loved, [etc.]... This intentional inexistence is characteristic exclusively of psychic phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything similar'. Chisholm speaks

of the 'intentional use of language', which 'we need when we talk about certain psychological states and events' and which 'we can avoid when we talk about non-psychological states and events'. The claim is that all and only psychic phenomena (or sentences about psychic phenomena) are intentional.⁵

Chisholm introduces three criteria by which we can identify the intentional use of language. I shall set these out now, with some examples and comments, as a basis for further discussion.

(1) A simple declarative sentence is intentional if it uses a substantival expression – a name or description – in such a way that neither the sentence nor its contradictory implies either that there is or that there isn't anything to which the substantival expression truly applies,⁶

Thus 'when we say that a man is thinking of the Dnieper Dam, we do not imply either that there is or that there isn't such a dam; similarly when we deny that he is thinking of it'. Chisholm has in mind sentences involving such verbs as thinking of, imagining, envisaging, wishing or hoping for, etc. Translating this back into the material mode, we should say that the existence or occurrence of such a 'psychic phenomenon', while it is necessarily *about* or *of* something, implies neither the existence nor the non-existence of that something.

Second, Chisholm turns to sentences whose principal verb takes as its object a phrase containing a subordinate verb, such as 'he believes it will rain'.

(2) I shall say that such a simple declarative sentence is intentional if neither the sentence nor its contradictory imply either that the phrase following the principal verb is true or that it is false.⁷

Thus, if we say that he believes it will rain, it follows neither that it will or that it won't; likewise if we deny that he believes this. In material terms, claiming, asserting, supposing that something is the case implies neither that it is or is not the case.

Third, Chisholm introduces the criterion of Frege's 'indirect reference', or what is often called 'referential opacity'. 'A name

(or description) of a certain thing has an indirect reference in a sentence if its replacement by a different name (or description) of that thing results in a sentence whose truth-value may differ from that of the original sentence'.⁸ Thus the third criterion reads:

- (3) A simple declarative sentence is intentional if it contains a name (or description) which has an indirect reference in that sentence.⁹

Chisholm comments that this allows us to consider certain *cognitive* verbs such as 'know', 'remember', 'perceive' and 'see' – which are presumably not intentional by the first two criteria – as being intentional. Thus I may see that Jones is here and, though Jones is the chairman of the philosophy department, I cannot be said to see that the chairman of the philosophy departments is here, unless I know that he is the chairman of the philosophy department.

Now it is clear that the phenomenological conception of intentionality exhibits similarities to these three criteria, provided they are translated back into non-linguistic terms. Husserl repeatedly states that the existence of an intentional reference to an object does not imply the existence of that object, just as the reference to a state of affairs does not imply that that state obtains.¹⁰ He even hints at a version of Chisholm's third criterion when he distinguishes between '*The object as it is intended*, and the object (period) *which is intended*'. 'The idea, e.g. of the German Emperor', he says, 'presents its object as an Emperor, and as the Emperor of Germany. The man himself is the son of Emperor Frederick III, the grandson of Queen Victoria, and has many other properties neither named nor presented'.¹¹

One question about intentionality is notoriously left undecided by Brentano's thesis, and also by Chisholm's reformulation of it. If we take Chisholm's first criterion, which affirms that the existence of a given mental state implies neither the existence nor the non-existence of the thing to which it refers, we can ask: does the existence of that mental state nevertheless imply that there is some other type of object? This would be affirmed by anyone who stated, for example, that when I think of a winged horse, there must exist, presumably in my mind, the *image* of a winged horse,

even though there is in reality no such horse. Brentano seems to have expressed such a position in using such terms as 'inexistence' and 'immanent objectivity'. A second alternative would be the view of Meinong, who claims that while such items as winged horses do not exist in reality, they are also not 'merely mental' either. He says that they must be accorded some independent status, and he uses the term *ausserseiend* ('beyond being'), for this status.¹² In the first instance the mind is related to something, but instead of the thing referred to it is related to a mental entity; in the second case the mind is related to something extramental, but something which, strictly speaking, cannot be called an entity.

All this concerns the status of the intentional object, and these alternatives are clearly designed to cover such things as winged horses, round squares, present kings of France and the like. It should be pointed out that if either of them is accepted, great problems arise when we turn to more humble cases such as ordinary, existing objects. In any case, it is customary to distinguish the question of the ontological status of the intentional object from that of the 'mark of the psychological', and to deal with them separately.¹³ Actually, this is not so easily done, for if the first of the above two alternatives is chosen, one is saying something about the nature of the mental by saying that it somehow contains an object or image within it. Still, for purposes of comparison with Husserl, we shall put this question aside for the moment, returning to it later.

First we must ask whether Husserl, in introducing the concept of intentionality, was interested, like Brentano and Chisholm, in discerning 'the mark of the psychological'. Did he make the claim that all and only psychic phenomena are characterized by intentionality? As for the 'all', the answer is no. Not all psychic phenomena 'in the sense of a possible definition of psychology' are intentional, he says.¹⁴ Intentionality is characteristic of only 'a sharply defined class of experiences [*Erlebnisse*]',¹⁵ not all experiences. He regards sensations – not to be confused with sense-perceptions – and certain types of feelings as being non-intentional,¹⁶ but at the same time perfectly legitimate topics for psychology.

Are 'only' psychic phenomena intentional? A version of this question has been part of the debate following upon Chisholm's

formulation. Chisholm himself recognized that comparison verbs often result in sentences that seem to satisfy the criterion (1). For example, the sentence 'Some lizards look like dragons' does not commit us to the existence or non-existence of dragons (nor does its contradictory), yet it is clearly not about the psychological.¹⁷ It has been pointed out that sentences like 'it is probable that p ' and 'this is consistent with p ' satisfy criterion (2) since both they and their contradictories are indifferent to the truth-value of p .¹⁸ It has also been noted that sentences bearing the modal prefixes 'it is necessary that ...' and 'it is possible that ...' often satisfy criterion (3). For example, if the governor of Alaska is the governor of the largest state in the Union, the statement 'It is necessary that the governor of Alaska is identical with the governor of Alaska' does not imply that 'It is necessary that the governor of Alaska is identical with the governor of the largest state in the Union'. In other words, here the substitution of an expression with an equivalent extension results in a sentence whose truth-value may be different from the original sentence.¹⁹

Here the difference between the linguistic and non-linguistic approaches is crucial. Since he did not make the shift from the psychic to sentences about the psychic, it would probably never have occurred to Husserl to ask whether some sentences about non-psychological matters share certain logical features with those about the psychic. Perhaps, even if it had occurred to him, he would have been neither troubled nor surprised. He was, after all, interested in the nature of certain experiences, not in the features of sentences. The presence of shared logical features in psychological and non-psychological sentences does not imply that there is anything outside the mind that is 'directed upon an object' or 'of something' in the way that certain experiences are. Still, the problem cannot be disposed of so simply. If asked whether the psychological treatment of experiences requires 'concepts' or 'categories' which, to quote Chisholm, 'we can avoid when we talk about non-psychological states and events', he probably would have answered in the affirmative. The question is really whether experiences constitute a domain that can ultimately be reduced to physical states and events and dealt with philosophically in their terms. The discovery that non-psychological sentences share some of the supposedly distinctive logical features of psychological

sentences raises the question in a special way. But does this discovery really imply an affirmative answer to the question? This problem must be dealt with if the validity of the intentionalist thesis is to be decided, and Husserl clearly does not deal with it.

But perhaps the most important reason why Husserl does not look at the question this way is that this purpose is not to circumscribe the domain of psychology and distinguish it from that of other disciplines. This was Brentano's purpose, and Chisholm has taken up the problem from this point of view. What, then, is Husserl's purpose? In the *Logical Investigations*, it is to provide, as he says, for *ein erkenntniskritisches Verständnis der reinen Logik*, an understanding of pure logic from the perspective of a critique of knowledge;²⁰ or, as he also puts it, his task is 'to bring the Ideas of logic, the logical concepts and laws, to epistemological clarity and definiteness'.²¹ In the first volume of the work, the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, Husserl had attacked psychologism, arguing that logic is not concerned with mental states, processes or acts of logical thinking. In the second volume, when he begins the *Investigations* proper, his point is to ascertain what logic *is* (or ought to be) concerned with. To this end, strangely enough, he does not turn away from mental states and processes, but turns back to them, with the idea of seeing how logical concepts and laws are related to them and how they can be disengaged from them. In a sense his purpose is still to refute psychologism, but he chooses different means; instead of advancing *reductio* and other formal arguments against psychologism and other forms of reductionism and relativism, he suggests that if we examine the mental processes of thinking, judging and the like, we will see that they must be separated from their logical content, and that the latter cannot be dealt with in terms of the former. But his purpose is also a positive one: to see how logical concepts and laws relate to mental processes in the context of a theory of knowledge and a critique of knowledge.

This when Husserl singles out intentional experiences as 'a sharply defined class of experiences', he does so because such experiences are relevant to his purpose of relating logic to the mental. Logical concepts and laws, he is saying, enter into mental life primarily in the knowing situation. It is the aspects of psychic life that enjoy 'mental, conscious existence in a certain *pregnant*

sense of these words'²² that interest him, and these are all intentional. Now perhaps Husserl's interest in the intentional, as distinct from Brentano's, is actually shared by Chisholm through the fact that the German word *psychisch* gets translated into English as *mental*. Chisholm, and most of those who come after him, most often speak of intentionality as the mark of the *mental*, rather than the psychic or psychological. When they refer to the mental, most English speakers usually mean precisely cognitive and related phenomena, and not necessarily everything that belongs to the domain of psychology. Though this distinction is not made as clearly as it is in Husserl, it appears that analytic philosophers, too, are interested in intentionality only as pertaining to philosophy of mind or epistemology, not as the distinguishing mark of all phenomena considered by psychology. For Husserl, of course, it is the term *consciousness* which names the focus of his interest, a term which has very much fallen out of vogue among analytic philosophers.

As we have seen, it did not trouble Husserl to assert that not all psychic phenomena are intentional. But it would indeed have run counter to his view if it were found that intentionality was not a feature of all those aspects of mental life deemed relevant to a theory or critique of knowledge; or, to put it in his terms, that not all consciousness is intentional. But this is precisely one of the criticisms that have been levelled against the theory of intentionality. It appears that precisely those mental activities that one would think the most relevant of all to a theory of knowledge do not meet the most important criteria of intentionality. This claim has been made about the so-called cognitive verbs such as 'know', 'see', 'perceive', 'remember'. While the notion of intentionality seems to work well for such verbs as 'imagine', 'think of', 'suppose', 'conceive', i.e. verbs which make no claim to knowledge, it does not seem to work for verbs which do make such a claim in one form or another.

If I see or perceive x , x must really be there to see. If I remember x , x must really have happened. If I know that p , p must really be the case. Thus Chisholm's first two criteria are violated. A sentence employing 'see', 'perceive' or 'remember' implies the existence of the objects of these verbs. A sentence employing 'knows' is not indifferent to the truth value of the subordinate

phrase but precisely requires its truth. Incidentally, this was one of the main criticisms levelled by Gilbert Ryle against Husserl's concept of intentionality in his report on Phenomenology to the Aristotelian Society in 1932.²³

Now Chisholm saw this problem, too, and it is for this reason, we recall, that he introduced his third criterion. But there are serious objections that can be raised against this criterion. Chisholm states it in such a way that it applies to simple declarative sentences whose action verbs take a substantive expression as their object, but the examples he gives are of complex sentences, i.e. sentences whose verbs take a subordinate clause. Doubtless Chisholm states his third criterion in this way because he believes, as he says in a footnote,²⁴ that it can be made to do the work of the first two; thus he wants to cover both cases. But one may ask whether the criterion really works in the case of non-complex sentences. If I have seen the morning star, isn't it correct to say that I have seen the evening star, even though I didn't know it?²⁵ To use one of Dreyfus' examples, if my next-door neighbor turns out to be the murderer, it would be considered not only odd but a case of perjury if I testified in court that I hadn't seen the murderer until the day his guilt was revealed.²⁶ Even complex sentences with verbs like 'see' raise problems. To return to our earlier example, if Jones is the chairman of the philosophy department, and I see that Jones is here, could it be the case that I don't see that the chairman of the philosophy department is here? The answer that comes most readily to mind is 'yes and no'. Thus at least some sentences employing so-called cognitive verbs seem not to be intentional by Chisholm's third criterion; and if they are not intentional by the first and second either, we must conclude that they are not intentional at all, at least not in Chisholm's sense.

How could Husserl have dealt with such an objection? Is there any sense in which the verbs in question (or the corresponding 'phenomena') are intentional? If not, then Husserl's claim, that all mental phenomena relevant to a theory of knowledge are intentional, would seem to be false precisely for those phenomena which are instances of knowledge or are very closely related to it, such as perception.

One solution to this problem has been proposed by J.W. Cornman.²⁷ He suggests that we need not worry if these verbs are

not intentional because intentionality is meant as a characterization of verbs designating mental *activities*. Despite appearances to the contrary, he says, 'cognitive verbs are not verbs which designate certain mental activities'.²⁸ Then he invokes Ryle's concept of 'achievement verbs' to tell us what they do designate.²⁹ Rather than an activity, he says, they refer to the successful completion of a task. To know something is, according to Ryle, more like winning than running a race. In order to win, one must run, but 'winning' is not itself a term that designates merely a particular activity; its concept may involve running, but it relates it to the rules, the finishing line, etc. The non-intentionality of the cognitive verbs is not surprising because the concept of intentionality was not designed to deal with them in the first place. To use Brentano's words, these are not, strictly speaking, 'psychic phenomena'. We can still say that all mental *activities* are intentional and that all sentences employing verbs that genuinely designate such activities are likewise intentional. And for this Chisholm's first two criteria will suffice. However, we must presumably be on the lookout for verbs that do not designate such activities. Following Ryle, we may want to assert that many terms applied to the mental designate not activities but achievements, dispositions, etc.

I would like to argue that Husserl not only anticipated the objection that cognitive verbs – or the corresponding phenomena – are not intentional, but that he provided an answer to it which is in some ways like Cornman's. More than this, it seems to me that Husserl's version of Cornman's solution is at the very heart of his concept of intentionality and is the key to how the full-fledged phenomenological method is derived from that concept.

Cornman's view may seem highly objectionable in its own right, and it may seem even more objectionable to attribute such a view to Husserl. Against Cornman's view our first reaction is to say that while Ryle's concept of achievement verbs may work well in the case of knowledge, how can it be applied to the other cognitive verbs mentioned, namely 'see', 'perceive', 'remember'? If any verbs at all are to designate mental activities – a question that could be debated, but is not even raised by Cornman – surely these do. As for Husserl, nothing could be more obvious than that he devotes a great deal of treatment precisely to seeing, perceiving

generally and remembering, that he considers them mental activities, and that he considers them intentional. Furthermore, he is occupied in the *Logical Investigations* with such concepts as knowing, evidence and truth. In any case, as we have seen, his whole point in delineating the class of intentional experiences is to proceed to a theory of knowledge. How could he be said to be developing a theory of knowledge if precisely knowledge is now ruled out of consideration?

It is interesting to note further that if we allow for the analysis of mental terms into disposition or achievement terms, some favorite examples of intentionality seem to be affected. Brentano said: 'in representation something is represented, in judgment something is acknowledged or rejected, in love something is loved, in hate something is hated, in desire something desired'. We look in vain, I think, for a mental *activity* directly corresponding to loving, hating and desiring, and find it easy to interpret these phenomena as dispositions to say, feel, think or do certain things under certain circumstances. Once we do this, the suspicion is sure to arise that we have been misled by the grammar of certain words into inventing something that isn't there. And curiously enough, I think that no verb is more susceptible to a disposition analysis than '*believing*', the very term which Chisholm takes as a paradigm of intentionality.

But the fact that we can easily give a dispositional or other non-action analysis of some mental verbs does not entail that all mental verbs can be so analyzed, and it can be argued, as Cornman does, that just as winning the race implies running it, so knowing implies the existence of some genuine mental activity. He suggests believing, but better candidates could perhaps be thinking, asserting, judging or claiming.³⁰ Now Husserl has no doubts about the existence of such activities, and it is clear that it is these that he is interested in (and not in dispositions or achievements) despite the fact that he often uses terms we would regard as expressing something other than activities. This is amply shown by the fact that Husserl's key term is *Erlebnis* (experience), which for him is clearly an episodic term. The terms 'experience' and 'content', he says, 'mean for the modern psychologist ... real occurrences [*Vorkommnisse*] (Wundt rightly calls them 'events' [*Ereignisse*]) ... In this sense, percepts, imaginative and pictorial presentations, acts

of conceptual thinking, surmises and doubts, joys and griefs, hopes and fears, wishes and acts of the will etc., are, just as they flourish in our consciousness, 'experiences' or 'contents of consciousness'.³¹ He then goes on to distinguish the phenomenological from the psychological concept of experience, but the phenomenological refers no less to mental occurrences or events. As for Husserl's interest in a theory of knowledge, it would not be inconsistent to accept an achievement analysis of knowing itself and still insist that the class of intentional experiences is relevant to a philosophical understanding of knowledge.

This leaves us, however, with those other verbs besides 'knowing' which are termed cognitive: 'seeing', 'perceiving', 'remembering', one of which Husserl mentions in the catalogue of experiences just quoted. These seem to refer directly to mental activities or episodes, yet they seem not to be intentional. Is there, nevertheless, an intentional analysis that can be given of them? Cornman apparently thinks so, but he does not elaborate. What could he have in mind?

One way of analyzing 'seeing' is suggested by the following example: If I am really seeing the Eiffel Tower, I am having a certain convincing visual experience, usually involving the tower as being here before me,³² and furthermore, the tower really is here before me. I say 'convincing' in order to rule out cases like the well-known mirage of water on the road ahead: here I could be said to have a experience of water on the road ahead, but it is not convincing.³³ In a convincing visual experience, no reasons occur to me, from past experience or whatever, for questioning what I 'see'. However, it is also possible, of course, in the case of the sort of illusions that trouble philosophers, to have a *convincing* visual experience of the Eiffel Tower when it is not really there before me at all. In such a case, of course, I could not be said to be seeing the Eiffel Tower. Here we might be inclined to say, tentatively, that the visual experience is like that involved in the seeing of the Eiffel Tower in every detail, except that the tower is not there.

Now it may be that the analysis of seeing that I have given is not adequate. It does not rule out the far-fetched case in which I have a convincing, but hallucinatory, visual experience of the Eiffel Tower when the tower, quite by chance, happens also to be

before me just as I experience it. Perhaps this is not a seeing. Is it because seeing implies a causal relation between the Tower and my experience of it? I do not intend to argue this question, for it is not important for my point. It suffices to state that having the convincing visual experience, and the tower's really being there, are necessary conditions.

What is perhaps curious about this two-part analysis is that, from the experiencer's point of view, the first part implies the second. If my visual experience is really convincing, then I am convinced that the tower is really here before me. For me, all my convincing visual experiences are seeings, at least while I'm having them. The case of illusion, however, shows that not all *are* seeings. The judgment on whether a given convincing visual experience is genuinely a seeing is rendered on the basis of another experience independent of the first, whether it is a later one of my own, that of an external observer or ultimately that of an *all-seeing* God.

This analysis permits us to apply the Ryle-Cornman distinction between achievement and activity to perception. Having a convincing visual experience can be called a mental activity with a certain goal, and the independent judgment, mentioned above, decides whether or not the goal has been reached. The analogy to running and winning a race is a good one: there, too, the decision as to whether a given case of running is a case of winning is left up to an external authority. When I have a convincing visual experience, I think I have achieved my goal. But the decision cannot be left up to the perceiver alone, any more than the runner can decide whether he has won the race; or, if he does decide, he does so in a different act, and according to standards agreed upon by all participants in the race.

Husserl's approach to seeing could be described in this way: he is concerned with describing convincing visual experiences as such without rendering the independent or external judgment as to whether or not they are cases of seeing. Clearly, the description of such an experience would have to include the fact that it considers itself, so to speak, a case of seeing. But Husserl is interested neither in concurring in nor in denying that judgment as an external observer. Rather, he withholds judgment. This was his approach, I would argue, in the *Logical Investigations*, though he was not explicitly aware of its peculiarity and its value. He

became explicitly aware of both in the years following the publication of *Logical Investigations*, and the approach developed into a full-fledged method of philosophy in the *Ideas* of 1913 under the title of phenomenological *epoché* or phenomenological reduction, where it is applied to all mental activities represented by the so-called cognitive verbs.

It is to be noted especially that, in the analysis I have given, in a case of seeing, the visual experience is not something *other* than the seeing. This would seem to differ from the sort of analysis suggested by Cornman's solution to the problem. But I do not think it does. Running and winning a race are not two different activities or events. Rather, to call a case of running a case of winning is to affirm a relation between it (the running) and a certain goal. So, in the case of seeing, the visual experience is not one mental act, while the seeing is a second mental act somehow superimposed upon it. Rather, the purpose of the independent judgment I spoke about is to decide whether a given visual experience *is* or *is not* a seeing. The implication of this analysis is that a convincing visual experience must be one or the other. However, its being a convincing visual experience is not itself evidence of which one it is. Thus, as long as we consider it purely as a visual experience we are not committed to saying that it either is or is not a case of seeing, and thus are not committed to saying that its object exists. In this sense, we can say that a convincing visual experience is intentional according to Chisholm's first criterion, that is, ascribing such an experience to someone implies neither the existence nor the non-existence of the object of that experience.

Now in approaching seeing, perceiving generally and other cognitive activities such as remembering in this way (*mutatis mutandis*), Husserl obviously believes also that a description of a convincing visual experience (to stick with the same example) can be given which is indifferent to whether or not it is a case of seeing. Whatever the decision of that 'independent judgment' we spoke about, it will not change the details of the experience itself. Or, to put in in another way, given two convincing visual experiences of, say, a dancing bear, one of which is a seeing and the other an illusion (and supposing perspective, background and the like to be the same), the two would be described in just the same way.

This brings us back to the problem of the intentional object. The case of illusion has notoriously been used to argue in the following way: *ex hypothesi* the two experiences are like in every detail, and one of the details is that they are both experiences of a dancing bear. Thus the two experiences have a like object. However, in one case there really is a dancing bear, in the other there is no such bear. Since these two details are not alike, we should not count the bear himself as one of the descriptive components of the two experiences. Rather, we should say that both experiences have something like a 'dancing-bear-appearance' which is different from the bear himself, but which in the one case corresponds to (resembles, or whatever) a real entity and in the other case does not. Now this appearance, we could say, is the *intentional object* of the experience in both cases. Whether or not the bear exists, this object must, in some sense, exist. But in what sense? This is the question of the ontological status of the intentional object. On this point, Chisholm speaks of the view that the object has a status 'that is short of actuality but more than nothingness'.³⁴ As we have seen, this could mean that there exists in both cases a mental entity, say, a dancing-bear-*image*. Or, accepting Meinong's doctrine of the independence of *Sosein* from *Sein*, we could point to an extra-mental non-entity, that is, something that, strictly speaking, does not *exist* (i.e., is *ausserseiend*) but still has an independent ontological status.

Husserl rejects both of these alternatives. Criticizing Brentano's presentation of intentionality, he speaks of two misunderstandings that are promoted by it. The first is 'that we are dealing with a real [*realen*] event or real [*reales*] relationship, taking place between 'consciousness' or 'the ego', on the one hand, and the thing of which there is consciousness, on the other'.³⁵ In rejecting such a real relationship, Husserl is of course affirming that the object itself need not exist; but I take him also to be stating that when it does not exist, we need not invent some other extra-mental thing, such as a Meinongian *Ausserseiendes*, to which the experience stands in a real relation. The second misunderstanding is 'that we are dealing with a relation between two things, both present in equally real fashion [*reell*] in consciousness, an act and an intentional object, or with a sort of box-within-box structure of mental contents'.³⁶

In rejecting these alternatives, Husserl is affirming that the intentional object is not something *other than* the object referred to in the experience. He says explicitly, with emphasis, 'that the intentional object of a presentation is *the same* as its actual object, and on occasion as its external object, and that it is *absurd* to distinguish between them'.³⁷ But again, what if the object does not exist? To return to our example of the two experiences, how can we say that they have a like object, if the object exists in one case and not in the other? Is it not necessary to say that they both have a mental image, and that this is what they have in common, while the actual status of the external objects constitutes difference between them?

Still criticizing Brentano's terminology, Husserl makes this remark: 'it will be well to avoid all talk of immanent objectivity. It is readily dispensed with, since we have the expression 'intentional object' which is not exposed to similar objections'.³⁸ How does this help? I suggest that instead of saying 'intentional object' we say 'intended object'. If we do this we can see that the philosophical term 'intention', usually considered a technical term, is really very close to our ordinary use. We can speak of an intended object in much the same way as we speak of an intended insult. If no insult actually results from a remark, i.e. if it is not taken as an insult, it still makes perfectly good sense to speak of the intended insult. If the remark hits home, however, i.e. an actual insult does result, it is not different from the intended insult, it *is* the intended insult. Now we could say of the two experiences of a dancing bear, one veridical and one illusory, that what they have in common is an *intended* object. The intended object is not necessarily some real thing, whether internal (mental) or external, that they both have. To speak of an intended object is to refer obliquely, one might say, to a possibly real object, but not to commit oneself to its reality (or unreality). Possible equivalents for 'intended' would be 'putative' or 'alleged'. Thus one can speak of an alleged crime and describe it in great detail without at the same time affirming that such a crime took place. To speak of an alleged crime or an intended object, however, is not merely to speak of some random possibility, for one is dependent, for the content of one's description, upon a particular act of alleging or intending. Thus while Husserl denies that the intended object is

other than the real object (where there is a real object), he adds that this 'does not, of course, stop us from distinguishing, as we said previously, between the object *tout court* which is intended on a given occasion, and the object *as it is intended* ... and in the latter case peculiar analyses and descriptions will be appropriate'.³⁹

From these passages, one begins to get a sense of what Husserl means by phenomenological *description*. Clearly he wants to consider the intentional object as a descriptive component of an experience without thereby collapsing the two so as to make the object a real part of the experience. Furthermore, he wants to be able to characterize descriptively the different ways of intending. In Brentano's presentation of intentionality he says, 'only one point has importance for us', namely that there are different ways of being intentionally related to an object — in 'mere representation', judgment, perception, etc.⁴⁰ To say more than this on the topic of phenomenological description would lead us too far afield. It should be pointed out in passing, however, that the notion of the intended object is in itself neutral with regard to the question of realism vs. idealism. Insofar as the notion I have outlined is fundamental to Husserl's phenomenological *epoché*, and insofar as the method of *epoché* remains constant throughout Husserl's career, it could be argued that he succeeds in avoiding these two alternatives in spite of many later formulations which seem openly idealistic. I do not intend to argue this point here; suffice it to say that if these formulations are taken as being expressed within the context of the suspension of judgment that the *epoché* requires, they do not translate into straightforward idealistic claims.

What I hope to have shown here is how Husserl's methodological device, the *epoché*, was developed as a way of dealing with just the problem raised by Cornman and others, namely the problem of the intentionality of experiences or mental activities designated by the so-called cognitive verbs. And, as I have said, his solution to the problem is not unlike that of Cornman himself. While the *epoché* as a methodological tool is explicitly formulated only in the *Ideas*, it is already at work in the *Logical Investigations*. Only on this assumption can we make sense of what Husserl says there about perception and related topics.

A world should be said in conclusion about the relation between Husserl's approach and a theory of *knowledge*. Clearly phenomenology, as understood by both Husserl and his successors, is intended to be more than just a theory of knowledge. It wants to deal, for example, with such phenomena as thinking, imagining, and valuing outside the context of the knowing situation. But at the same time phenomenology does claim to have epistemological import. Husserl believes that this approach is the only proper one for a theory of knowledge understood as a *critique* of knowledge. It makes it possible to deal consistently with *claims* to knowledge – or, as in the case of perception, claims to a direct contact with reality – strictly *as* claims, i.e. without having to commit oneself on the validity of those claims. One might well ask whether phenomenology, understood in this way, qualifies as a theory of knowledge at all, or even as a critique. But it must be pointed out that the *epoché* does not rule out a treatment of knowledge, evidence, and even truth, as *intended* (claimed) knowledge, intended evidence, intended truth. And this is, in fact, the way Husserl treats these topics. He speaks at one point of 'the 'experience' of truth' (*das 'Erlebnis' der Wahrheit*).⁴¹

But an adequate exposition of these subjects would likewise lead us far beyond the scope of this essay. There are many aspects of the problem of intentionality I have not touched on at all. The most important of these is doubtless the question of whether this concept can be dispensed with entirely in the philosophy of mind. Like Husserl, Chisholm and Brentano, I do not think that it can. But I do not claim to have argued for this view here.

NOTES

1. An early version of Chisholm's paper appeared in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 56 (1955-6), pp. 125-48.
2. Chicago, University of Illinois press, 1972. Chisholm's paper is reprinted on pp. 31-51.
The following books are referred to by abbreviations in the notes to this paper:
IML *Intentionality, Mind and Language*, ed. A. Marras (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1972).
LI Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J.N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970).
3. 'Intentionality' in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. P. Edwards, (New York: Macmillan, 1967), Vol. 4, p. 201. Chisholm does relate the concept to phenomenology in the Editor's Introduction to *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology* (New York: The Free Press, 1960).
4. *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1874), Vol. 1, pp. 115 f.
5. *IML*, p. 31. It is true that Chisholm says 'certain psychological states and events', but he seems to argue for the 'all and only' thesis, and does not dissociate himself from this aspect of Brentano's claim.
6. *IML*, p. 32.
7. *IML*, p. 33.
8. *IML*, p. 34.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Logical Investigations (LI0)*, trans. J.N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970). Cf. p. 596.
11. *LI*, pp. 578 f.
12. See *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology* (note 3 above), pp. 76 ff.
13. Cf. Marras in *IML*, pp. 3 f., Chisholm in 'Intentionality', *loc. cit.* (note 3 above).
14. *LI*, p. 552.
15. *LI*, p. 553. He does say, however, that having intentional experiences is a necessary feature of psychic *beings*. Beings without such experiences 'would not be called 'psychical' by anyone' (*ibid.*).
16. Cf. *LI*, pp. 569 ff.
17. *IML*, p. 35, n. 5.
18. J.N. Mohanty, *The Concept of Intentionality* (St Louis; Warren H. Green, 1972), p. 28.
19. A. Marras, 'Intentionality and cognitive sentences', in *IML*, pp. 68 f.
20. *LI*, pp. 249 f. I have translated this rather differently from Findlay.
21. *LI*, p. 251.
22. *LI*, p. 553.

In rejecting these alternatives, Husserl is affirming that the intentional object is not something *other than* the object referred to in the experience. He says explicitly, with emphasis, 'that the intentional object of a presentation is *the same* as its actual object, and on occasion as its external object, and that it is *absurd* to distinguish between them'.³⁷ But again, what if the object does not exist? To return to our example of the two experiences, how can we say that they have a like object, if the object exists in one case and not in the other? Is it not necessary to say that they both have a mental image, and that this is what they have in common, while the actual status of the external objects constitutes difference between them?

Still criticizing Brentano's terminology, Husserl makes this remark: 'it will be well to avoid all talk of immanent objectivity. It is readily dispensed with, since we have the expression 'intentional object' which is not exposed to similar objections'.³⁸ How does this help? I suggest that instead of saying 'intentional object' we say 'intended object'. If we do this we can see that the philosophical term 'intention', usually considered a technical term, is really very close to our ordinary use. We can speak of an intended object in much the same way as we speak of an intended insult. If no insult actually results from a remark, i.e. if it is not taken as an insult, it still makes perfectly good sense to speak of the intended insult. If the remark hits home, however, i.e. an actual insult does result, it is not different from the intended insult, it *is* the intended insult. Now we could say of the two experiences of a dancing bear, one veridical and one illusory, that what they have in common is an *intended* object. The intended object is not necessarily some real thing, whether internal (mental) or external, that they both have. To speak of an intended object is to refer obliquely, one might say, to a possibly real object, but not to commit oneself to its reality (or unreality). Possible equivalents for 'intended' would be 'putative' or 'alleged'. Thus one can speak of an alleged crime and describe it in great detail without at the same time affirming that such a crime took place. To speak of an alleged crime or an intended object, however, is not merely to speak of some random possibility, for one is dependent, for the content of one's description, upon a particular act of alleging or intending. Thus while Husserl denies that the intended object is

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What I hope to have shown here is how Husserl's methodological device, the *epoché*, was developed as a way of dealing with just the problem raised by Cornman and others, namely the problem of the intentionality of experiences or mental activities designated by the so-called cognitive verbs. And, as I have said, his solution to the problem is not unlike that of Cornman himself. While the *epoché* as a methodological tool is explicitly formulated only in the *Ideas*, it is already at work in the *Logical Investigations*. Only on this assumption can we make sense of what Husserl says there about perception and related topics.

23. 'Phenomenology, Goodness and Beauty', *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Vol. XI*, (London: Harrison & Sons, Ltd, 1932), pp. 80 f.
24. *IML*, p. 34, n. 3.
25. Marras in *IML*, p. 67. Cf. A. Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will*, (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), p. 198.
26. H. Dreyfus, 'Sinn and the intentional object', in *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, ed. R.C. Solomon (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 205 f.
27. 'Intentionality and intensionality', in *IML*, pp. 52-65.
28. *IML*, p. 63.
29. *IML*, p. 64. Cf. G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), pp. 149-53.
30. In calling the last three mental activities, I am of course distinguishing them from 'uttering' a proposition. One can utter a proposition without asserting it or claiming anything.
31. *LI*, p. 536.
32. I may, of course, take it to be something else.
33. Here I am ruling out an analysis stating that what I 'really see' is the effect of heat upon the light which strikes my retina. I do not think there is any sense in which this is what I see.
34. 'Intentionality', *loc. cit.* (reference in note 3 above).
35. *LI*, p. 557.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *LI*, p. 595.
38. *LI*, p. 560.
39. *LI*, p. 596.
40. *LI*, p. 554.
41. *LI*, p. 194.

II.6. The Problem of the Non-Empirical Ego: Husserl and Kant

I shall deal in this essay with a subject that has a long and contentious history in the tradition of transcendental philosophy. This is the distinction between the empirical and the pure or transcendental ego. To avoid terminological disputes I shall refer to the latter simply as the non-empirical ego. Insofar as I deal here with textual formulations of the distinction I shall refer to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, where the distinction originates historically; and to Husserl's phenomenology, in which, among recent versions of transcendental philosophy, this distinction plays the greatest role. But my purpose is less to interpret texts than to get at 'the thing itself', to use Husserl's expression. Like others I felt the correctness of the distinction when I first read these texts; so I began to take it for granted, make use of it, speak of it and draw consequences from it without directly testing it. But when I began to reflect, I slowly realized that I hardly understood what was meant by it. Then I encountered more recent forms of transcendental argumentation, such as those of analytic philosophers, who either explicitly reject the distinction or get along perfectly well without it. All this prompts me to attempt the following critical examination.

I

First let us consider Kant. Shortly after the beginning of his transcendental deduction (second edition) he introduces the concept of pure or original apperception, which he distinguishes from empirical apperception 'because it is that self-consciousness

which, while generating the representation '*I think*' (a representation which must be capable of accompanying all other representations, and which in all consciousness is one and the same), cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation'.¹ Thus he is speaking of two ways in which I am conscious of myself. In empirical self-consciousness I know myself as an object; on the basis of inner experience I ascribe certain properties to myself. This is easy enough to understand. What Kant says about pure self-consciousness, on the other hand, seems contradictory: at one point he says that here I make use of a 'concept' that should be counted among the pure concepts of the understanding;² a few pages later he calls it a representation, 'and we cannot even say that this is a concept, but only that it is a bare consciousness which accompanies all concepts', indeed, it is that of which 'we cannot have any concept whatever'.³ In one passage Kant insists that this self-consciousness is by no means to be described as knowledge;⁴ in another he calls this apperception 'the first pure knowledge of understanding'.⁵ Pure apperception is characterized as the apprehension of my own existence ('... not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am');⁶ on the other hand, it is described as if it were a 'mere representation', i.e. an empty thought, not of an existing but of a merely possible *etwas = x*.⁷

If we attempt to understand this pure self-consciousness by contrasting it with empirical self-consciousness, then we apparently must call it the representation of an ego, my ego, that is qualified by no particular properties. Particular properties are also called empirical properties. Insofar as particular qualities of the ego are involved we have an instance of empirical consciousness. Thus the two modes of consciousness can be distinguished at least because of a difference in their objects: in one case an ego with its particular properties is represented; in the other, an ego *without* such properties. In this way we can speak, as the post-Kantian tradition has done, not only of two different modes of self-consciousness, but also of two different sorts of ego, one empirical and the other non-empirical.

Let us now examine this distinction critically, without being too concerned with the needs of Kant's epistemology. To be sure, this two-fold concept of the ego arises out of a particular set of

questions which we must not lose sight of if we wish to understand it. Still, it makes good sense to examine it in quasi-isolation, i.e., we are asking not *how* this concept functions within the critical philosophy, but rather *what* it is that has this function.

Our first question is a simple one: Can there be such an ego, with no particular properties, in consciousness or elsewhere? Kant claims that pure self-consciousness, though it is not knowledge, is a thought. But is such an ego even thinkable? If we are to think of such an ego and then subtract its particular properties, what sorts of properties are meant? Perhaps bodily properties? But if the claim is that such properties belong not to the ego but to the body, then one can quite properly reply that in ordinary language, at least, I ascribe such properties to myself, not to my body. Philosophers are of course known for their uncommon use of language, and many are proud of it, but even the most stubborn Cartesian would hardly claim that not he but his body was six feet tall, weighed 170 pounds and had blue eyes. In analytic philosophy, and in the work of Merleau-Ponty, we find important arguments, not merely drawn from linguistic usage, to the effect that corporality belongs essentially to the concept of the ego and its identity, even my own identity for myself.

Yet I would like to set aside this whole discussion, important as it is, for I believe that even if we were to choose the Cartesian side of this debate, and exclude bodily properties, there would be grave difficulties with the concept of a non-empirical ego. To be excluded here are not only particular bodily properties but all particular properties. And even mental predicates, which supposedly relate to the ego and not the body, concern particular properties. Thus I ascribe to myself certain experiences, actions, thoughts, cognitions, intentions, feelings, etc., which are either particular episodes making up my personal history or are dispositions and capacities which are instantiated in such episodes. Kant had such predicates in mind when he spoke of the empirical ego; he was enough of a Cartesian that he would not have thought of bodily properties of the ego. In short, the logical and ontological status of particularity for the ego cannot be limited to what is bodily.

Does the term 'non-empirical ego' then mean that these properties, too, the particular mental ones, are lacking? But how can

we speak meaningfully of something that has no particular properties? How could one distinguish this ego from other things? According to classical ontology an entity exists in virtue of its properties, or at least certain of them that are termed essential; and only through them can it be thought. Remove these and we remove the entity's existence as well. Failing such essential attributes the thing can neither be nor be thought. In the case of physical things, according to tradition, spatial extension plays this role; it can change but not be missing altogether. As for the ego, even if certain properties are declared unessential, such as feelings, certain essential properties – consciousness or reason, for example – must be present if it is to exist at all.

According to this critical line the concepts of a pure self-consciousness and of a non-empirical ego must be rejected. An ego without any particular properties simply cannot exist at all. A self-consciousness of such an ego would be a consciousness of nothing.

But perhaps the defender of the non-empirical ego has something else in mind. Of course I am conscious of myself as something particular, he may say, and thus as having particular properties. I have this particular personal history, a particular set of experiences which distinguishes me from other persons. But I can also abstract from these particularities, look away from them and toward the general. Here I deal not with what distinguishes me from others but with what I share with them. In short, I deal here not with particular aspects of myself but with the essence of my ego. Since it is still with the ego that I deal, one may speak of a sort of self-consciousness. The objection that an object without properties is unthinkable is indeed correct, but properties need not be particular properties. They can, as in this case, be quite general, expressed in the universal predicates we use all the time, even in ordinary speech. Through such predicates the ego is distinguished from other sorts of things, e.g. physical bodies, but one ego is not thus distinguished from another ego. In this sense the pure ego is something that can very well be the object of such a universal consciousness; we can speak meaningfully of it; and it is clearly to be distinguished from the empirical ego, since no particular properties pertain to it. Kant's pure apperception thus refers not to a particular ego but to the ego 'as such', the ego 'in general',

the 'pure form' of ego-ness. Thus the non-empirical ego may be defended.

To this conception it may be objected that in view of the generality of the object of consciousness the expression 'self-consciousness' is not appropriate. If I abstract from everything that distinguishes me from others, am I dealing with 'myself' at all? Kant's remark that, in pure apperception I am conscious of my own existence, would seem incompatible with this view, if 'existence' here means individual existence.

In some versions of transcendental philosophy, however, all this is admitted, or rather, it is not viewed as an objection at all. The non-individuality of the pure ego is not merely accepted, it is even emphasized. The ego's function as condition of the possibility of knowledge – and morality as well – is supposed to require this very feature. The universality of cognitive judgments and moral judgments supposedly requires a universal subject. Here it is no longer a matter for *my* ego, which can only be empirical, but a matter of *the* ego which is identical in all genuine cognitive and moral judgments. Such judgments are to be regarded as *its* acts, in which I, this particular person, somehow participate insofar as I am guided by such judgments. Reason is one, and with respect to reason there is nothing which could distinguish me from other persons. Such distinctions obtain only where there is unreason and error; or they concern the accidental features of thought and action which have nothing to do with their rational content.

But the objection, mentioned above, that this conception ignores the individuality of the ego, is too weak. In fact, insofar as we move to essential and general predicates and speak only of what pertains to the concept of the ego, we leave behind not only the particular ego but the ego itself. Or, to put it another way, we deal with it, but only indirectly. Our concern is now with a concept – or an essence, *eidos*. To be sure, the concept is that of the ego and not of something else. But the concept of the ego is precisely a concept and not an ego. If we try to describe this concept, whether we call it 'conceptual analysis' or '*We-sensschau*', we are listing the conditions which must be fulfilled if a particular item is to count as an instance of this concept. This is quite different from dealing with the instance itself. I am not saying that only the instance, the particular, can exist, while the

universal cannot. There is no need to choose nominalism over realism in order to make my point. Hence I shall use 'concept' and '*eidōs*' indifferently, even though one has a subjective and the other an objective coloring. For whatever the mode of being of a concept or *eidōs*, it is not to be confused with the mode of being of one of its instances. Quite simply: the concept 'table' is not a table, in the sense that one cannot put anything on it, eat from it, etc. It is located neither here nor there nor anywhere else, and in this sense is not useful. It is neither produced nor does it decay. And it does not change matters if we speak of the 'table as such' rather than of the concept as the *eidōs* 'table'. There *is* no 'table as such' – unless, of course, we mean the concept or *eidōs* in question. When we list what 'belongs' to the concept, this may be called predication, indeed universal predication; but the object to which these predicates are attributes is not a universal table but a concept. At the same time we indicate what must belong to any particular table, but then we are speaking not of universal properties but again of particular instances of these properties.

So if we abstract from all the particularities of the ego, we do indeed come up with something universal, but not a universal ego. Whatever the legitimate ontological status of the concept or *eidōs* 'ego', it does not play the role of an ego. Just as the concept table may be said to express but not to exercise the function of a table, so it is with concept of the ego: it neither acts, nor sees, nor hears, nor understands. The idea of an actually existing ego that acts without doing anything in particular, thinks without thinking anything in particular, and somehow takes over from *me* these functions, seems to me untenable, a logical mistake of confusing the concept with its instances.

The concept of a supra-individual subject, which I have rejected here for logical reasons, should not, however, be confused with the concept of a social or communal subject. In ordinary language we often attribute to different sorts of social groups mental properties such as actions, opinions, intentions and the like. It is a significant and interesting philosophical question whether and how far such language is justified, whether it is meaningful in social theory, etc. However one may answer this question, the logical considerations introduced above do *not* count, in my opinion, against the possibility of such a subject. For a social

group is after all, in the logical sense, an individual, and in such usage it is particular properties that are being ascribed to it. When one ascribes particular properties to a particular subject, no logical mistake is made. The genuine philosophical question here is whether this *sort* of individual is properly qualified with *these* sorts of predicates or whether a 'category mistake', in Ryle's sense, has been made. In Husserl's language these are questions of material rather than formal logic. In any case the relation between member and group is quite different formally from the relation between instance and concept (or *eidōs*). It is against the misuse of the latter relation, rather than against the concept of a social subject, that my criticism is directed.

If this criticism is correct, we may now well ask what has become of the non-empirical ego. To be sure, our critique was directed against a particular formulation according to which 'being empirical' means 'having particular properties'. The pure ego, thus conceived, is supposed to be non-empirical and yet still not only exist as an ego but also somehow function as an ego. But such a conception has proved to be untenable. Must we then give up altogether the concept of a non-empirical ego, or is there another conception of it which can avoid the logical difficulties?

II

Turning now to Husserl, we do not in fact encounter these difficulties, yet we find the explicit and repeatedly emphasized distinction between the empirical and the non-empirical ego. Husserl's non-empirical or 'transcendental' ego is clearly conceived as an individual.⁸ Transcendental philosophy, according to one passage, is 'the knower's reflecting on himself and his knowing life'; the source of all transcendental-philosophical claims is – or am – 'I myself'.⁹ As transcendental ego I am the subject of a conscious life made up of a stream of individual experiences. I am also a 'substrate of habitualities'¹⁰ and am constituted in the unity of a history.¹¹ Accordingly the term 'transcendental ego' is used by Husserl in the plural¹² and one of his major problems is to understand how such egos relate to each other. There is no question of a supra-individual subject in Husserl, except perhaps

in the sense of a community which consists of individuals.¹³ Still, Husserl wishes to distinguish sharply between this transcendental ego and what he variously calls the empirical, the physical or the mundane ego, or simply 'I, this person' ('ich, dieser Mensch').¹⁴ What does Husserl mean by this distinction?

Clearly Husserl can maintain it only if he construes the opposition between empirical and non-empirical in a way that differs from ours so far. In fact, the opposition for him is not between having or not having particular properties. Rather, if I understand him correctly, it is a matter of two ways of conceiving the relation between the ego and the non-ego. Both cases concern particular properties or activities of the ego – perceptions, rational thinking, valuations and even feelings – but these can relate in two different ways to other objects and events. They may stand in *causal* relations with things and occurrences in the world; or they may be *intentionally* related to them. Understood intentionally, everything other than the ego can have only the status of an object for its consciousness; or better – since the word 'object' is too narrow – it has no other status than that of having meaning *for* the ego, meaning something *to* it. What means nothing to the ego is nothing for it, has in this context nothing to do with it. The ego is considered the subject of a consciousness whose essence is to be conscious *of something*, and anything else figures in this scheme only if it has the value of such a *something*. For it the word *Gegenstand* is appropriate: it is what stands 'over against' consciousness. But here one speaks not merely of objects but of how they are given, i.e. of internal and external horizons, of intentional implications, of founding relations, etc. – all terms which make sense only in the intentional context, terms indicating intentional relationships. Concepts like space and time, which also function in non-intentional contexts, figure here with a special intentional sense.

It is from his concept of intentional relations that Husserl derives his notion of the 'transcendental'. The remarkable thing about consciousness is that objects are given to it but do not become part of it, are not 'really contained' (*reell enthalten*) in it. In this sense, objects *transcend* consciousness.¹⁵ Phenomenologically, this means that *for* consciousness the object has precisely the sense of transcending it. The term 'transcendental' is used to

designate consciousness' property of relating itself in *this* way to the transcendent, i.e. in the way of conferring upon the object the sense of transcendence. So when Husserl speaks also the transcendental *ego*, he means the ego insofar as, and only insofar as, it bears this same relation to what is other. The ego is thus transcendental insofar as it is the subject of intentional acts of consciousness. Such acts are considered particular episodes in the ego's or stream of consciousness which together make up a particular personal history.

It is important to add here that from the phenomenological point of view *all* the ego's relations count as intentional, even its relations to itself and its own conscious life. Thus the ego's past and future experiences are considered only insofar as they have a meaning for it. In this sense they 'influence' present consciousness, but not in the sense of a causal influence. This is how Husserl distinguishes between a psychological and a phenomenological theory of association.

In short, on this view everything that is not the ego is regarded as *having* a sense, whereas the ego itself, through its acts of consciousness, is regarded as *giving* sense. Even in relation to itself it is sense-giving, or – as Husserl expresses it – it constitutes itself. We can also say: the empirical ego is *in* the world, the transcendental ego *for* the world, or alternatively, the world is for it. To be in the world is to be part of a causal interaction. To consider the ego empirically is to consider what happens to it in relation to the happenings of its surroundings, to search for correlations and regularities and in this way to arrive at causal laws. Such procedure, which concerns empirical psychology, is by no means limited to behaviorism, which considers only externally observable and linguistic behaviors; the older introspective psychology dealt with purely internal phenomena – perceptions, thoughts, feelings, etc. – in the same way. Thus it is not the difference in our mode of access to the ego – introspection or external observation – which makes the difference between the two ego-concepts. Also, this difference must not be confused with that between the *eidetic* and the empirical or factual. What distinguishes phenomenology is not that it is eidetic, for many other disciplines are also eidetic; rather, phenomenology is distinguished by the fact that *its* eidetic theme is the ego in its intentional relations to the world.

Let us now look critically at this, the Husserlian version of our distinction. When considering the earlier way of distinguishing the two egos we asked whether a non-empirical ego, thus conceived, could even exist concretely and be thought without contradiction. The same question must now be addressed to the Husserlian formulation. One could object that here too we are dealing not with something concrete but with an abstraction. Of course we can abstract from the empirical – i.e. causal – relations between the ego and the rest of the world, that is, we can simply ignore them in favor of the intentional. This would be a different sort of abstraction, of course, from the one described earlier. In this case our gaze is directed not away from the particular and toward the general, i.e. from the instance to the concept or *eidōs*; instead, it is directed toward one feature of the ego and away from another. Such a focus of gaze or interest is always possible, but this is not to say the object in question can exist concretely, or even be conceived concretely, under this one aspect alone. We can, for example, at any time consider only the color of a physical object, or the color-aspect of physical objects generally, and leave unconsidered their spatial shape. But this does not mean that such objects can exist concretely without spatial shape, or that we can represent or think them concretely without extension. According to this objection we would have to say that a purely intentional or transcendental ego cannot *exist*, strictly speaking, though we can certainly consider and investigate the *concrete* ego under this particular aspect. But in this case our investigation is an abstract one; we are treating and investigating the very same ego that also has causal relations to the rest of the world.

How is this objection to be evaluated? Can the transcendental ego in Husserl's sense concretely exist? As might be expected, Husserl's answer to this question is decidedly affirmative. It must be, for he knows that the whole sense and possibility of the transcendental-phenomenological reduction and thus of phenomenology itself, hangs on this point. Especially in the middle chapters of *Ideas I*, he is attempting to show that the ego and consciousness, conceived transcendently, are conceptually and ontologically possible. 'If conscious experiences were inconceivable apart from their interlacting with nature', he writes, 'in the *very way* in which colors are inconceivable apart from extension,

we could not look on consciousness as an absolute region for itself alone in the sense in which [in phenomenology] we must actually do so'.¹⁶ For phenomenology is supposed to be a concrete, not an abstract discipline. Let us now look more closely at Husserl's argument.

For Husserl the ego's causal relatedness to its surroundings is necessary only if the so-called natural standpoint is assumed. Under this standpoint a unified, all-encompassing space-time world, to which I and my conscious life belong, is posited. To the essential structure of this world belongs the regular causal interrelatedness of all events, including psychic events.

As is well known, a basic and indispensable part of the theory of the phenomenological reduction is the claim one can at any time 'bracket' or 'suspend' the natural standpoint as a whole; one can consider and describe it, but refrain from participating in it. This bracketing procedure can be conceived and indeed carried out without contradiction, such that afterward, i.e. under the suspension itself, we have something concrete before us. This is, of course, none other than the ego and its whole conscious life, considered intentionally – in other words, everything that goes to make up the object of phenomenology.¹⁷ Phenomenology is egology. But is it really possible to bracket the natural standpoint?

For Husserl the possibility of bracketing is derived, like practically everything else in phenomenology, from the concept of intentionality. As we saw, the ego considered as intentional subject is not isolated but relates to what is other – its object, its world. In fact it is nothing except in relation to something else. Now, if this relatedness to objects implied the existence of those objects, so that they and the ego had the same ontological status, then we would have to say that these objects belong to the real surroundings of the ego within the one space-time world. In this case, in keeping with the notion of such a world, these objects would have to be related causally to each other and to the ego as well. The ego could have no intentional relation to the world without having at the same time a causal relation to it. To put it another way, the transcendental ego would have to exist concretely also as empirical ego.

But it is an essential feature of an intentional relation precisely that it does *not* imply the existence of its object. I can take

something to exist, for example in perception, when in fact it does not; I can believe that something is the case when in fact it is not; and I can think and imagine all sorts of things without even claiming that they exist. Intentionality is not a relation in the extensional or truth-functional sense, which implies the existence of relata or the truth of sentences. Even Brentano saw this when he described intentionality as merely 'relation-like'.¹⁸ This makes it possible to posit the existence of an intentional ego without having to posit the existence of the world. Yet with this the world is not lost, as Husserl repeatedly reminds us; for the transcendental ego exists precisely in intending the world. Posited with the ego is the world *as* intended world, objects *as* intended objects. But this relation of *intending* is neither itself a causal relation nor does it imply one.

In short, Husserl's view is that I exist concretely as transcendental ego and that as such I am concretely, consciously given to myself. The natural standpoint, and with it the interpretation of myself as empirical ego, can *also* be assumed, but *need* not be. Husserl describes the latter as a prejudice from which I can liberate myself.

III

There are problems in the Husserlian conception that we have not yet touched on; we shall return to them later. First, however, it may be possible to use this conception in order to cast light on Kant's distinction, in order to find for it a more satisfying interpretation than the one we considered in Part One. There we examined a concept of the non-empirical ego that seemed to match at least some passages in Kant, and which in various ways subtracted from the non-empirical ego all particular properties. But Kant is in fact far from denying properties to this ego. On the contrary, the *Critique* often speaks of such properties, implicitly or explicitly; indeed we could say that the whole book is about such properties. Just the fact that this ego is introduced in the expression 'I think' already ascribes something to the ego. And in keeping with our earlier critique we must say that it is not thinking 'in general' that is ascribed to the ego (whatever that could mean)

but rather particular acts or episodes of thinking in which something specific is actually thought. The relation of the ego to its representations takes the form of particular acts, as Kant says: 'That relation comes about, not simply through my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but only insofar as I *conjoin* one representation with another and am conscious of the synthesis of them'.¹⁹ Kant calls thinking spontaneous. It results in knowledge, expressed in judgments, which derive from acts of judging. If knowledge arises from concepts, as Kant says, and concepts in turn are understood as rules,²⁰ then knowing must involve acting according to these rules. The ego that so acts, and whose activity is described as spontaneous, Kant calls the 'determining', as opposed to the determined or determinable.²¹ To put it another way, but still in Kant's terminology: the 'I think' must accompany all my representations; since this accompaniment takes place in *thinking* and not some other way, its function must be, as Kant says, to refer these representations, through concepts, to an object.²²

It is easy to see in Kant's framework the concept of intentionality, expressed in other terms, and this should not surprise us. In knowledge – what Kant calls experience (*Erfahrung*) – the subject reaches beyond itself toward the object. Since Kant is speaking here of the knowing or experiencing ego, he means the ego precisely insofar as it stands in this knowing or experiencing relation to the objective. The latter, to which it stands in this relation, has the status of object of knowledge. The ego is determining, i.e., it determines how the object is, it apprehends it as such and such; the object gets determined in judgment, and thereby has meaning for the ego.

On the other hand, when I turn to myself and apprehend myself as an object, my attributes, even if they appear as thoughts, experiences, judgments, are given in temporal sequence almost as things that happen *to* the ego. Given to myself in inner sense, Kant says, I am, like any other object in the world, subject to the causal order. If something happens to me, it must be causally related to what is going on around me, with what happens before and after. Thus even thinking seems to be passive and causally produced, rather than an activity which spontaneously follows rules of the understanding. If we take Kant in this way, then we can say, as

we did with Husserl, that in one case the ego is *in* the world as part of the causal order, in the other the ego is *for* the world and the world is for it as the horizon of the objects of its experience.

The verb 'accompany', which Kant often uses for the non-empirical ego, can also cast light on his distinction. In the case of self-intuition the ego becomes the *object* of my thought and experience. But the ego appears in connection with *any* object of experience, including self-experience – though the word 'appears' is not right, since the ego is not in this case an object but is related to the representation of some object as its *subject*. It occurs solely in this relation of thinking to its object, it only turns up insofar as something else is occupying consciousness in the capacity of object. In Husserl's language we could say that it is co-intended in the manner of a horizon. This interpretation of 'accompanying' would thus confirm that the pure ego's mode of existence is intentionality.

IV

These considerations can help explain why the matter of *knowing* this ego causes Kant so much difficulty and why it leads him to such apparently contradictory assertions. On the one hand there is the well-known paradox that supposedly derives from the logic of the concept, quite independently of Kant's system, namely, that the ego always slips through my fingers when I try to grasp it. Every time I try to make it my object it pops up again, so to speak, behind my back. So the attempt to grasp this ego is like trying to jump over one's own shadow or, even more appropriately, like trying to see one's own eyes. Kant saw this problem; he speaks of the subject about which 'we can only revolve in a perpetual circle, since any judgment upon it has already made use of its representation'.²³ On the other hand there are problems specifically linked to Kant's system, for example, the principle that an object of knowledge must be given in intuition, thought according to the categories, etc. Of course, it is wrong to say that this is an embarrassment for Kant, since the unknowability of the ego plays an important role in his whole architectonic, i.e. in his critique of rational psychology and in the transition to this theory of

practical reason. In spite of this, or rather because of it, Kant is forced to make some strange assertions. The representation of the pure ego, which is so important for him, is always described as a consciousness, indeed as self-consciousness, but it contains no knowledge. To be sure, the idea of a consciousness which is not knowledge is unproblematic. It could mean an empty intention, in which one 'entertains' the idea of some object without making any claim that there *is* such an object or that some object *is* thus and not otherwise. In those cases one has the mere concept of an object, a merely possible object. Perhaps Kant means such an empty consciousness, which is then transformed by inner intuition into knowledge. At first glance this seems quite proper, since this works with other objects: an empty concept becomes knowledge when coupled with intuition of the object in question; we learn thereby that the object really is as we thought. But the present case is quite different. With inner experience it is also the *concept* of the object which changes. It is no longer that of a spontaneous knowing subject, freely following the norms of the understanding, but that of a causally determined object of nature. Thus we do not move from the possibility to the actuality of an object; instead we construe the object, in this case the ego, in a totally different way.

Besides, Kant's 'pure' or 'original apperception' does not look like a merely empty intention, or like merely entertaining the idea of something. First, we have Kant's remark that here I am conscious of my own existence.²⁴ Second, as we saw, we are given a whole series of descriptions for the ego, which form an important part of the critical philosophy, and of which Kant would hardly say that they are merely possibilities. Of these we can quite properly ask how Kant can know them if the subject of knowledge is unknowable. Third, there is the following consideration, also mentioned before: when I have a representation, Kant says, the 'I think' 'accompanies' this representation. Thus presumably I have the representation in question and along with it the representation of myself. This cannot mean that the two representations are simply together side by side in one consciousness. It must mean that they stand in a quite peculiar relation, namely that through the representation in question *I think* an object. This is what consciousness means, that I not merely 'have' a representation,

as if it were something happening to me, physiologically or psychologically, but that through it some object is thought. Now perhaps there can be representations without self-consciousness – this is an old controversy. But there can certainly be no self-consciousness unless it is related to some object of thought. This is simply to say that I take myself to be the subject of such thought. So it is hard to see how Kant can avoid speaking of a self-consciousness that is at the same time self-givenness and self-knowledge.

The considerations which prevent Kant from arriving at this conclusion can be avoided if we put aside the demands of the Kantian system and think about the issue systematically. The old familiar paradox of self-knowledge is really not a paradox at all. It is important in epistemology not to confuse the act of knowing with the object of knowledge. This is the confusion to which the empiricists fell prey, as Kant and Husserl both clearly saw. In this sense they both affirm the principle of intentionality. But this principle does not prevent the subject of knowledge from being numerically identical with the object of the same act, provided a temporal gap is involved. Kant's special problem, of course, derives not from the logical character of the subject-object relation, but from his theory of the nature of the object of knowledge. There are two sides to this theory. On the positive side, the object is construed exclusively as a *natural* object; because of this, on the negative side, Kant cannot see how a spontaneously thinking and acting subject could ever become an object of knowledge. To be an object means to be passive, to be subjected to worldly causality. This conviction makes it impossible for Kant to recognize that we constantly view not only ourselves but also our fellow humans as spontaneously thinking and acting, i.e. as intentional subjects, and that this is how they are known to us. But Husserl recognizes this, and it serves as the basis for his theory of reduction. Even in the natural attitude, which sees everything as causally interrelated, other persons are given and taken as intentional subjects. In *Ideas II* and elsewhere Husserl examined phenomenologically the manner in which *Person* and *Geist* constitute their own region of being within the world. The problem of intersubjectivity, as dealt with in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation, is above all the problem of how the objective givenness of others,

as intentional subjects within the world, is to be described phenomenologically. The givenness of an intentional subject *to itself*, as a special case, can then lead, when the natural attitude is bracketed, to the theory and method of reduction. This does not, of course, represent the order in which Husserl published his views on these matters. I mean simply that because Husserl did not regard the objective givenness of an intentional subject as an insoluble riddle or paradox from the start, he did not see it as a problem in the special case of self-consciousness.

Even if we thus free ourselves from the Kantian assumptions, one problem remains which we also touched on in connection with Husserl. This is the problem of how an intentional subject can be *concretely* given *as such*, and thus how and whether a non-empirical ego can exist and be thought concretely. We saw how important the solution of this problem is for Husserl; but has he really solved it? Even if it is true that we can apprehend the ego not only as empirical, i.e. as belonging to the causally interrelated world, but also as intentional or as subject *for* the world, the question remains: in the latter case are we not merely considering one aspect of a being which *also* exists empirically? In the natural attitude, as Husserl admits, this is exactly what we do. But can we bracket the natural attitude, as Husserl claims?

One could defend Husserl's claim in the following way: even to recognize the natural attitude *as* an attitude, i.e., a scheme of thought which rests on certain presuppositions, is to recognize its non-necessity. One of the most important features of phenomenological analysis is to show what 'natural' experience presupposes, what it takes for granted as the basis for everything else but cannot further ground. *In* the natural attitude we stand under these presuppositions and do not see them. The phenomenological gaze permits us to see them by neutralizing their hold on our experience. Now clearly we can understand Husserl's phenomenological analyses; we can follow his thinking and even do phenomenology ourselves. Does this not prove that we can actually bracket the natural attitude and free ourselves from it?

But this does not really do justice to the complex relation between the natural and the phenomenological attitudes. Even Husserl is quite aware of the difficulties of this relation. Why, for example, does he choose the word 'natural'? Does this attitude

belong to the nature, i.e. to the essence, of consciousness? Certainly not, one would think, if the phenomenological reduction consists in throwing off this attitude and replacing it with another. Still, certain of Husserl's images and expressions suggest something highly ambiguous and even contradictory. On the one hand he does not hesitate to call the phenomenological attitude 'unnatural',²⁵ even 'artificial' (*künstlich*).²⁶ This is in keeping with his repeated warnings against the temptation of 'falling back' into the natural attitude, something he accuses his erstwhile and errant disciples of having done. But whence comes this temptation, whence the gravitational pull which threatens something like a fall from grace? Whereas Husserl warns against such a fall, he also seems to admit that we must return to the natural attitude outside our 'working hours' as phenomenologists.²⁷ Is he then admitting, what seems in any case obvious, that the phenomenological attitude cannot be maintained for any of the practical purposes of life? Even if such a thing as philosophical or phenomenological 'working hours' are possible, comprising their own special attitude, we may well ask how concrete such an attitude can be if it can only survive in a constant alternation with the natural attitude.

We may also ask if the phenomenological attitude might not be united with or incorporated into the natural attitude, so that phenomenology could be practiced without altogether giving up the latter. In a certain sense even Husserl thought this was possible when he developed the idea of a phenomenological-eidetic psychology. In contrast to an empirical-explanatory psychology, this would be identical with transcendental phenomenology in content except that the decisive step of excluding the natural attitude would not be made. Only intentional relations would be considered, but the ego thus considered would at the same time tacitly be taken as wordly or empirical. Thus the transition to the intentional analysis seems not to *require* forsaking the natural attitude.

A further question is whether all the implications of a consistently executed transcendental phenomenology are really acceptable. Even Husserl saw that his approach led to a kind of *methodological* solipsism, in which other persons, along with everything else, appear merely as intentional objects.²⁸ This is why he tries, in the Fifth Meditation, to develop an intersubjective phenome-

nological attitude which posits, if I understand Husserl correctly, a plurality of intentional subjects whose interaction is to be understood in strictly intentional terms. Here he borrows from Leibniz's monadology, which at first glance seems quite appropriate: for Leibniz there are no real or causal relations among monads but only 'representational', i.e. intentional relations. Husserl also sees the limits to this compromise, since it leads him in the direction of a transcendental realism. To avoid this, he adds that the monads in his sense are not to be understood as simply existing, external to one another, but as an '*intentionales Ineinander*'²⁹ – i.e. intentionally inside one another, or intentionally interpenetrating. In this baffling, almost incomprehensible expression, all the paradoxes of a consistently executed, non-solipsistic transcendental phenomenology are somehow brought together.

Let us summarize what has been said, without pretending to have given an unequivocal answer. The only acceptable concept of a non-empirical ego is that of a subject considered as intentional and nothing else. Such a subject can exist and be conceived concretely – i.e. it can be more than a mere abstraction – only if a phenomenological reduction can be fully carried out, that is, only if the natural attitude is really dispensable. Otherwise, empirical and non-empirical (i.e., causal and intentional) egos are simply two aspects of my concrete self, just as they are in the natural attitude. To the question of whether the phenomenological reduction can be fully carried out there is still, as far as I know, no satisfactory answer.

NOTES

1. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: MacMillan, 1963), B 132.
2. B 399.
3. B 404.
4. B 158.
5. B 137.
6. B 157.
7. B 404.
8. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1983), p. 64.
9. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp. 97–98.
10. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns. (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1960), p. 66 (Hereafter 'CM').
11. CM 75.
12. CM 30.
13. CM 132.
14. CM 25.
15. CM 26. Cf. also *Ideas...* 239.
16. *Ideas...* 115.
17. CM 68.
18. *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (Leipzig, 1911), Anhang I.
19. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 133.
20. See A 126, A 132/B171.
21. B 157 f.
22. B 137.
23. B 404.
24. B 157.
25. Edmund Husserl, *Erste Philosophie*, vol. II. ed. R. Boehm (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1959), p. 121.
26. Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie*, etc. vol. II, ed. M. Blemel (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1952), p. 180.
27. *The Crisis...* 136, 150–51.
28. CM 30.
29. *The Crisis...* 257.

II.7. Findlay, Husserl and the *Epoché*: Realism and Idealism

J.N. Findlay's estimation of Edmund Husserl seems to have grown with the years. In the 1963 version of *Meinong's Theory of Objects and Values* Husserl is still compared unfavorably with Meinong, who is called 'the true phenomenologist', while Husserl is rather darkly labeled a 'realistic subjectivist' and a 'cryptosolipsist'.¹ But by 1966 and the appearance of *The Discipline of the Cave*, Findlay could call Husserl 'in my view the greatest philosopher of our age';² in 1970 (in the Translator's Introduction to the *Logical Investigations*) he placed Husserl among 'the small number of supreme contributors to philosophy, not unworthy of being spoken of in the same breath with Kant and Hegel, or with Plato and Aristotle';³ and again in 1975 (in 'Husserl's Analysis of the Inner Time-Consciousness') Husserl is called 'the greatest of recent philosophers'.⁴ These are strong words, but Findlay's greatest praise is embodied in the remarkable fact that, in the full bloom of his own philosophical maturity, when some of his most important works were flowing or about to flow from his pen, he took the time and the pains to translate the whole of the *Logische Untersuchungen*, an effort for which the word 'herculean' can bring only a weary smile to the lips of one who has himself tried to translate Husserl. Translating is a peculiarly selfless and thankless task: like words themselves, whose humble nature it is, says Findlay, to 'bow themselves off the stage as prime terms of our references, and [which] merely serve to introduce, or to help introduce, objects and connections other than themselves',⁵ the translator effaces himself before the work of someone else and struggles to make it appear, somehow remaining what it is while forced into an alien and necessarily ill-fitting native costume. And

Findlay not only did it, when he had so much of importance to say for himself; he did it with such brilliant success that the result not only is accurate but manages to leave us with the impression, unfortunately mistaken, that Husserl could write as well as Findlay.

Of course, we should not expect a philosopher of Findlay's *niveau* and originality to buy Husserl wholesale. At the same time Findlay's affinity for Husserl is a deep one; Husserl is for him obviously more than a philosopher who happens to have said a great many more true things than false ones. And a discussion of the relationship between these two powerful thinkers would hardly be illuminating if it contented itself with enumerating those particular Husserlian doctrines that Findlay accepted and those he rejected. The relationship is interesting because it lies at a level below (or above) considered views on this or that topic; it lies rather at the level of philosophical method and, more important, philosophical attitude or posture – *Einstellung*.

Yet at this very level an ambiguity strikes the attentive reader. It is found in two curiously opposed statements in the work in which Findlay most closely identifies himself with Husserl, *The Discipline of the Cave*. Explaining in the Preface that he owes much to Husserlian methods, Findlay insists that he is nevertheless not strictly a Husserlian phenomenologist 'since I neither practise nor wholly understand the *epoché* or suspense of conviction, of which Husserl wrote so much...'.⁶ Yet a few pages later, in the first lecture, he tells us that 'to be a cave-delineator, a transcendental speleologist, one must be a phenomenologist in Husserl's sense of the word', which means that one 'must practise that sweeping *epoché* of transcendent conviction which Husserl recommended...'.⁷ Now anyone who knows Husserl knows that almost nothing is more fundamental to his whole philosophical posture than the *epoché*, and the reader of these two statements now wonders whether Findlay shares this posture or not. The answer, I think, has to be another contradiction: he does and he does not; and this turns out to be one of those contradictions which are far more illuminating, if we take the trouble to understand them, than many a string of consistent statements. The closeness and also the essential difference between Findlay and Husserl as philosophers can be seen in their attitude toward and use of *epoché*, which in

turn derives from their handling of a concept that is even more fundamental for both: intentionality. This area is the focus of the following discussion, which I hope will cast some light not only on Findlay and Husserl and the relation between them, but also, through them, on the *Sache selbst*.

I

We should begin by noting another fundamental philosophical posture, one which Findlay shares not only with Husserl but with almost the whole modern tradition. This is the *reflexive* posture, the insistence on dealing not directly with the world and what is in it but rather, at least at first, with how we encounter these things and know something about them. In Descartes and Locke this insistence was prompted by skeptical worries about whether and how much we could know at all, a motivation whose half-heartedness and bad faith were roundly condemned by Hegel. But in Findlay and Husserl, and also in Kant and Hegel himself, the reflexive turn has another sort of motivation. Findlay says simply that 'we cannot achieve clarity in regard to [nature, its various departments, etc.] without achieving clarity as to our own empirical, conceptual and linguistic approaches to them'.⁸ The motivation is critical rather than skeptical: in what sorts of experiences do we encounter reality rather than illusion? What rules do we follow to arrive at the truth? But that we *do* encounter reality in some sense, that we do arrive at truths, is no longer doubted – not because the skeptics' doubts were assuaged, but because of a recognition of the confusions upon which they rested. Foremost among these confusions was one which was manifested in the ambiguity of the term 'idea' in both Descartes and Locke, namely the confusion of 'the experiences which we live through with the objects, physical, mental, or ideal, which are presented to us by their means'.⁹ Findlay, in 1933, credits 'modern realism' with combatting this confusion with success in the latest round, presumably against idealists of the Anglo-Hegelian sort. But it was Hegel himself who expressed the counter-position as clearly as it could be when he said that 'consciousness distinguishes itself from something to which at the same time it relates itself'.¹⁰

Here something like the notion of intentionality makes an appearance; and it appears in essence, though not so succinctly expressed, in Kant as well as the later Husserl, which shows that it is not the property of realists. There is no doubt, however, that the notion has a realist first-order significance; it makes a kind of opening declaration of realism to which the philosopher, despite all further wanderings toward idealism or whatever, is supposed to remain true. What it says is that the mind is what it is only by transcending itself, by going outside itself and meeting up in various ways with things whose natures are for the most part radically different from its own, and which for the most part do not depend on the mind for their existence. For these philosophers this notion is more than an appearance to be saved; it is a point of departure, a basic category recognized as necessary after centuries of regarding it as an insoluble puzzle because it could not be derived from something else. Findlay compares it to the category of relations, 'which occasioned so many headaches for philosophers by seeming to hover neutrally *between* entities without inhering *in* any of them, or which seemed to require an infinity of other relations to cement them to their terms', but which 'became wholly unmystifying once philosophers had ceased to try to assimilate them to qualities or to particular entities and had become clear as to their unique conceptual status'.¹¹ Many conceptual transformations are of this sort: it is as if, after failing to eliminate or exile from our kingdom a particularly subversive rebel, we were to give up and not only allow him to stay but also name him to the privy council.¹²

But it is another law of the history of ideas that the successful removal of one set of puzzles makes way for host of new ones, and this occurs when the intentionality of mind is approached with basically ontological concerns or, worse, ontological prejudices. For what at first looked like a straightforward, if unique, *relation* between the mind and various items in the world is complicated by the fact that the mind seems to have commerce with a great many things that are not in the world at all. Thus occurs either by mistake or quite willfully, as in the case of fantasy and fiction. And even the mind's connection to what does exist is of a peculiar, ontologically unsatisfying character, as in those cases where it makes some kind of sense to say of a person that he sees the

morning star but not the evening star, or that he is aware of an object that is many-sided but neither has nor does not have twelve edges.¹³ If one's concerns are primarily ontological, one will at this point begin to shudder at the prospect of having to admit such monsters as non-existent objects, even logical impossibilities, into one's universe, and will begin casting about for a way to explain away all apparent references to non-realities and all 'referential opacity'. One will try to show, for example, that they are 'really' veiled references to something real, or dispositions to say or do certain (real) things when other real things or situations come up against us in a certain way.

Here we encounter the deep gulf of philosophical attitude and concern which separates Findlay from Russell and Moore, Ryle, and Wittgenstein, and aligns him with Meinong and Husserl. For Findlay, one cannot serve the interests of a tidy ontology of real entities and real relations without bringing about the 'complete destruction of the study of thought and meaning',¹⁴ without doing violence to our understanding of the mind and its peculiar ways. Even the reply that Russell, for example, was simply not *engaged* in a philosophy of mind (or 'psychology') but had other interests, is no excuse if the pursuit of these interests blocks the fulfillment of others. For some of these philosophers, the fact that we have a variegated mental life that does not conform to certain preconceived logical and metaphysical standards, but seems to follow rules of its own, is a sort of philosophical embarrassment, like a lurid family scandal that has to be explained away or hushed up. But Findlay's first concern is to understand the mind, and this concern, together with a commitment to intentionality, requires that objects be taken seriously as somehow present to the mind, and as genuinely referred to, even if they in fact do not or for conceptual reasons cannot exist. To be sure, Findlay's concern, and perhaps even Husserl's, is ultimately ontological too. Ontology, however, should not come first, but should wait its turn until the study of mind has had its say.

But there Findlay takes a further step, which is the decisive one for us. It is not only the preoccupation with the needs of a restricted, realistic ontology that gets in the way of the philosophy of mind. It is the ontological preoccupation generally. This view is expressed in the last pages of *Meinong's Theory* (again in the

1963 version but, *N.B.*, several pages *after* Meinong is called 'the true phenomenologist') and used against Meinong himself. Meinong could be said to have made his ontology – in his own terms, his theory of objects¹⁵ – follow his philosophy of mind, taking seriously all those mental references to non-existent objects. But he apparently could not avoid thinking of intentionality as a real relation, and of 'intentional references in terms of objects logically prior to them, on which they necessarily depended'.¹⁶ 'For there to be a conscious reference or intention there must in some wide sense *be* something which that reference or intention is 'of'... If such objects do not exist, they must subsist, if they do not subsist they must have the extraontological status of *Aussersein*, of being at least genuine subjects of predicates...'. But, Findlay says, this whole line of argumentation is wrong, for there is 'no valid move from the thought of X to the being (in any sense not defined in terms of thought) of X'.¹⁷ Meinong's ontological theory (or theory of objects), in which 'the golden mountain stood on a level with the Pennines, the round square on a level with the Red Square at Moscow', and $2 + 2 = 10$ on a level with $2 + 2 = 4$,¹⁸ was hard enough to keep afloat, but the real damage is done to the philosophy of mind from which it sprang, and which now becomes a merely ancillary discipline. What is needed is a study of mind which can take full account of intentionality, and thus also of the *objects* of our mental references, precisely as they present themselves to us, whether as real, non-existent or absurd, without supposing that the mind is thus relating itself to an independently existing or quasi-existing world, and thus without feeling the need to fit all these objects into an ontology.

Findlay says that on this point Meinong lagged behind his teacher Brentano, who saw that intentionality was not a real relation at all, but was merely 'relation-like';¹⁹ but in another place Findlay suggests that this insight of Brentano's which appeared only in 1911, might be traceable to a reading of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* (1901), a case of the pupil influencing his teacher.²⁰ It was really Husserl who first saw clearly that intentionality should not be treated as a relation, and who produced a lengthy study of the mind (especially the Fifth and Sixth Investigations) based on this conviction. His discussion of the god Jupiter, who exists in no sense at all, neither in the mind nor in

reality nor anywhere else, but who can still be a valid object of conscious reference, makes clear his refusal to ontologize non-existent objects.²¹ But Husserl also sees that there are dangers in treating our references to the real world, e.g., in perception and perceptual judgments, as real relations. For we are likely to forget that there is a distinction to be made between the objects of these references, *tout court*, and such objects *as* they are referred to, *as* they are intended by us.²² Again, ontological interests could get in the way of an understanding of mind. In order to do justice to the various forms of conscious reference, we should stop trying to fit them to a preconceived real world, or alternatively, stop expanding our notion of reality to fit them; in fact we should, for the moment, stop worrying about 'reality' altogether: we should bracket our ontological interests and convictions, even, indeed especially, in the case of the *real* world of whose existence we are so convinced. Oddly, Husserl did not seem to realize at the time he wrote the *Logical Investigations* that this freedom from ontological commitment was the key to his success in that work; he had described his investigations as 'phenomenological' without really defining that term, except to say that the investigations were 'neutral'.²³ It took him some years to see in that freedom a unique approach to the study of mind and to take a sort of vow of ontological abstinence: the *epoché*. But it is clear that this abstinence had been practiced with considerable consistency in the *Logical Investigations* before it was articulated as a principle.

Thus Findlay, at the end of the Meinong book, goes a step beyond Meinong and, it seems to me, though he does not say it there, in the direction of Husserl. Even Meinong's 'one great idea', i.e., 'the bold notion of *Aussersein*, which at least does justice to the world's most strengthless, most disregarded of majorities',²⁴ is ultimately rejected by Findlay, at least in the precise sense in which Meinong intended it. If I am right in seeing in Findlay's critique of Meinong's ontologizing tendency a move toward Husserl's *epoché*, I hope I have also made clear what the motivation for this move is, for both Findlay and Husserl: one brackets one's ontological convictions and concerns not because one doubts the existence of the world, or for some other reason believes that ontology is in itself a disreputable thing to be caught doing; one does it because these convictions and concerns tend to

obscure our view of the mind and its ways – and its intentional objects. The *epoché* may close off some avenues, but it is intended to open up, in all its richness and variety, all its subtle nuances of light and shade, the life of conscious experience and the world as experienced. Its point is to enable us to say ‘what factors and objects and principles really count in human experience, and precisely as *what* each of them is experienced’.²⁵

A phenomenological treatment may therefore be equated, in what, by persuasive definition, we may call the ‘true’ sense of ‘empirical’, with an empirical treatment... It is empirical, because it studies how things actually do come before us in experience, and not how, if we accepted certain analyses or follow certain difficult procedures, they could or should come before us, and because, also, it studies things as they do come before us, and not as, in their intrinsic being, we think they really must be.²⁶

Findlay’s use of the term ‘empirical’ to describe phenomenology, which echoes some of Husserl’s own remarks, is meant to stress the positive side of the enterprise, as against the negative coloring of such terms as ‘*epoché*’, ‘abstinence’, etc. One must look not only away from some things but also toward others. And what is more, one must not only look toward these things but also be able to *see* them. Husserl’s way of presenting the *epoché*, the phenomenological ‘method’, ‘reduction’, etc., seems to place him among those philosophers who are looking, like Descartes, for the Royal Road to the truth which any fool, once he has found it, can follow. But the *epoché*, or bracketing procedure, can only serve as a helpful warning to stifle one’s ontologizing tendencies; it cannot by itself produce what is really essential to phenomenology, namely, a particular sort of attitude (Husserl spoke of a *Geisteshaltung* or *Einstellung*) which is characterized by a sort of openness and sensitivity to the distinctions among kinds of experiences and to how things are experienced as such. It is doubtful that this sort of thing can be learned, or propounded as a method. At best, it is to be learned by example. In any case, it is this aliveness to the detail and texture of mental life which Findlay so admires in Husserl, and which he exemplifies himself. There is a

sort of flavor of profusion and subtlety in the writings of both philosophers, what Findlay describes (in Husserl) as ‘a richness of categorial distinction such as we find in Aristotle’, an awareness of ‘all the iridescent variety which confronts one’ in mental life.²⁷ This common flavor is best appreciated when one compares the *Logical Investigations* with *Values and Intentions*, a work in which the direct influence of Husserl is less noticeable than in later works, and which deals with many topics Husserl hardly touched. Findlay may have learned some of this from Husserl, but it is more likely that he turned so strongly toward Husserl because he already shared the latter’s phenomenological sensitivity and attitude. It is these qualities that constitute the spirit of the *epoché*, if not its letter.

II

Given the existence of this attitude, and its explicit cultivation through a methodological reminder like Husserl’s *epoché*, what can be accomplished? Its direct application of course, is precisely to what Findlay calls ‘transcendental speleology’, the philosophical understanding of the human ‘predicament’, of the furnishings of the human cave and the manner of our commerce with them. Like Husserl, Findlay conceives of his phenomenology as an eidetic enterprise: it is not empirical in the sense that it catalogues facts, but looks rather for structures, types under which the facts fall.²⁸ Findlay borrows liberally from Husserl’s phenomenological investigations, enriching and also criticizing them as he goes along. He is interested in exploring large regional distinctions of objects, such as bodies vs. minds, in terms of the different manners in which such objects are encountered. Like Husserl, Findlay believes in a ‘non-formal, non-tautological *a priori*’²⁹ which lays down conditions under which something can be for us and appear to us as, for example, a physical object or another person.³⁰ In the case of physical objects it is necessary to talk of spatial horizons, of givenness through *Abschattungen*, so that the full givenness of an object can never be attained in a single experience; in the case of other persons it is necessary to understand how our fellows are encountered in and through their bodies,

but are nevertheless grasped according to categories which go beyond mere bodily existence.

Findlay also deals phenomenologically with matters which cut across regional distinctions among types of objects, i.e., those matters which Husserl called 'logical' and treated in the *Logical Investigations*. For example, we must distinguish in general between what is intended and *as* what it is intended – a distinction which corresponds to Frege's between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*, which was also explored extensively by Husserl, and which Findlay develops in a theory of what he calls the 'variations of conscious 'light' or sense'.³¹ An important place in Findlay's philosophy of mind is also occupied by the distinction between the unfulfilled and the fulfilled intention, i.e., between those cases in which what is intended is 'merely indicated, foreshadowed, vestigially suggested, present merely in a reduced, attenuated or surrogative form' on the one hand; and those cases in which the object is 'fully and concretely present, actually apprehended or 'given' on the other'.³² Like Husserl, Findlay also believes that such functions as predication, logical combination and inference, which make their explicit appearance in language, are foreshadowed in certain pre-linguistic, pre-predicative structures of experience, and he repeatedly mentions Husserl's *Erfahrung und Urteil* as a place where these foreshadowings are described in detail. But Findlay's highest praise is reserved for Husserl's treatment of the deepest-lying, most encompassing feature of conscious life, i.e., the time-consciousness, or temporal structure of experience.³³ But even here Findlay is his own phenomenologist, and has important criticisms and corrections to make of Husserl's treatment.

These are all points of close contact between the two philosophers in the actual practice of phenomenology. Two other points should be mentioned which concern Findlay's value theory. First, like Husserl, Findlay seems to believe in a relation of *Fundierung* between valuative acts and those which are broadly termed 'cognitive'. As he says, 'the real or possible facts or objects cognitively brought before us [are] the indispensable target or background for our evaluative responses'.³⁴ Secondly, in his actual treatment of valuation, Findlay sees 'the source of our value pronouncements' in 'the general 'spirit' or attitude of mind lying behind our varying value-determinations'.³⁵ While Husserl, to my knowledge, did not

explore this notion of 'spirit' or attitude in relation to value, he made much of the notion in other contexts: his treatment of the natural attitude (*natürliche Einstellung*) in *Ideen I*, which is further subdivided into naturalistic and personalistic attitudes in *Ideen II* (not to mention his treatment of the phenomenological attitude itself) develops the concept of a general framework of consciousness which outlines a sphere of interest and establishes and governs the development of particular acts and undertakings within it.³⁶

We have mentioned only a small portion of the many topics and interests which Husserl and Findlay have in common, and only begun to suggest the many similarities of their views on these subjects. It would be a large and interesting undertaking to develop this line further, and also to take up some of Findlay's many criticisms of Husserl on some of these topics. But this is not our purpose. The point of mentioning all these matters is to give some indication of those vistas that open up once the phenomenological attitude of *epoché* is adopted, and of how these these vistas can be explored if the tendency to do ontology is studiously avoided.

What concerns us more is the overall attitude of each philosopher toward the phenomenological 'frame of mind' and what it reveals. This question imposes itself because the *epoché*, as a fundamental philosophical posture, as important as it is, seems strangely unsatisfying by itself; it seems to require some 'higher order comment',³⁷ some final assessment which will put it in its place in a larger context. There are obviously some deep philosophical needs which it does not fulfill. This can be seen in the fact that, once he did become aware of its peculiar features and began to fashion it into a philosophical method, Husserl became so preoccupied with its overall significance that he spent most of his time, and almost all of his published writings, talking *about* phenomenology rather than doing it. It is further seen in the fact that almost everyone who adopted the phenomenological method went beyond it in one way or another, often to Husserl's dismay.

The reason for this dissatisfaction is easy to see. As both Findlay and Husserl point out, it is part of the natural business of consciousness to ontologize, that is, to orient itself toward objects that exist independently of it and to try to arrive at a correct

awareness of such objects, avoiding error. We all want to have things straight for ourselves, no one wants to live in illusion. To be sure, much of our time is spent in the deliberate cultivation of untruth – fiction, fantasy, daydreams – a fact that the epistemology-oriented philosophers of modern times tend to forget. But the normal person pursues his commerce with the unreal against the backdrop of what, for him, is real. Now the *epoché* consists precisely in the suspension of this natural tendency: even though the phenomenologist *qua* phenomenologist is interested in the distinction between the real and the unreal *for* the ‘natural’ consciousness, he does not make this distinction for himself. Even the real is given a merely intentional, ‘merely meant’ status for purposes of his investigation. This sort of ontological suspense is a highly unnatural state in which to persist for very long, and Husserl often warns against ‘falling back’ into the natural attitude, an expression which suggests a sort of gravitational pull on consciousness, if not a fall from grace. Of course, the very act of suspension must go hand in hand with an ontological commitment of sorts: for, if we accord merely intended status to some object, we are at the same time according *real* status to the intention of it; and if we then accord merely intended status to this intention, we are again asserting the existence of an intention of it, and so on. Findlay credits Husserl with seeing this, ‘a point clear to Descartes as it was not clear to Kant.’³⁸ Thus the very business of conducting a phenomenological description, under the rubric of the suspension of ontological conviction, requires that one ontological conviction remain intact, namely, the commitment to the existence of the mind and its intentions.

But this sort of thinking carries one dangerously into the vicinity of subjective idealism, to which Husserl, according to Findlay, finally succumbed. Findlay makes some critical remarks on Husserl in this regard that are somewhat inconsistent. He complains that the *epoché*-posture for Husserl became ‘frozen into a permanent paralysis’.³⁹ He says that Husserl should have been guided ‘away from the methodological *epoché* or suspension of conviction which is preached in the later *Ideas*’,⁴⁰ as if the *epoché* itself was an idealistic thesis; whereas at another point he speaks of Husserl passing ‘from a Cartesian suspension regarding the objective world to something that looks uncommonly like Berkel-

eyan idealism’ – and this in a context where it is clear that these are two different things, the second being a ‘higher order comment’ on the first.⁴¹

And clearly there *are* two different things involved here. The *epoché*, if it is really a simple bracketing of ontological commitment, a refusal to deal at all with the question of the ontological status of the objects of experience, is not by itself idealistic. There are three features of Husserl’s handling of the *epoché* which stand out, however. First, he insists on using it not just to deal with this or that object or type of object, but extends it to the whole ‘world’ of human experience – in fact, the notion of the world, as the ultimate intentional horizon of experience, is one of his most important concepts. Second, in his hands the *epoché* does become something of a ‘permanent paralysis’, that is, philosophical understanding is equated with practicing phenomenology, and there is no talk of a need or a desire to go beyond the phenomenological *Einstellung*. Third, like Kant, Husserl gets caught up in the terminology of ‘synthesis’ and ‘constitution’, which has a legitimate phenomenological sense but tends to give the impression that the objects of experience are somehow created by the experiencing subject, or at least constructed out of simple parts. From here Husserl seems to slide imperceptibly from the injunction not to consider objects – in fact, the whole ‘world’ of objects – except in their status as intentional objects, to the claim that they *have* no other status; what began as a methodological warning, for purposes of understanding the mind and experience, seems to transform itself into an ontological thesis; whereas it is quite clear, as Findlay puts it, that ‘the examination of consciousness, and of how things are given to consciousness, goes with no implication that such things have no being other than their givenness to consciousness’.⁴² And of course the same thing must be said even if the whole world is investigated phenomenologically. Insofar as Husserl makes this move, it is clear that he, too, found the *epoché* difficult to live with. He seems to end up ontologizing after all, not in a realist but an idealist way, according independent existence to consciousness and its intentions, and denying it to the objects of consciousness except in their intentional status.

The trouble is – and this must be said in Husserl’s defense – that

it is very hard to pin this illegitimate move on Husserl, since every time he seems to make the sort of idealistic ontological assertion we have been talking about, he also seems to be making it *within* the brackets of the *epoché*. This could be said, for example, of *Ideas* sections 49 and 55, and of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, section 99, which are taken by Findlay as evidence of Husserl's lapse into idealism. In other words, he seems merely to be making the tautologous statement that insofar as the objects of experience are considered as merely intentional objects, they are merely intentional objects. He calls himself an idealist, of course, but vehemently denies he is a subjective idealist and calls his idealism 'transcendental'. If this means that he is an idealist only within the brackets of the *epoché*, then Husserl does not seem to be making any standard sort of philosophical claim, but only the tautology mentioned above. But if this is all he is doing, then he is not really making any 'higher order comment' on the phenomenological method at all. Furthermore, if this is the case, then he cannot claim that phenomenology by itself answers all the questions of philosophy. This is a point to which we shall return.

As for Findlay, he is clear that the phenomenological *epoché* requires a 'higher order comment' – precisely the point on which Husserl is so unclear. Since Findlay considers the idealist 'higher order comment' illegitimate, does this mean that he considers the realist one legitimate?

On the one hand, Findlay no doubt sees that his critical admonition to Husserl, quoted above, can be turned around to apply to the realist: the examination of consciousness, and of how things are given to consciousness, goes with no implication that such things *have* any being other than their givenness to consciousness. After all, Findlay himself made against Meinong the logical point that there is 'no valid move from the thought of X to the being (in any sense not defined in terms of thought) of X'.⁴³

On the other hand, Findlay sees in the practice of a phenomenological philosophy of mind, and in some of its results, some strong hints in the direction of realism. For one thing, the conviction that objects *do* have being other than their givenness to consciousness is, even by Husserl, 'without reservation taken to be part and parcel of consciousness itself';⁴⁴ that is, to be conscious at all is to believe oneself in contact, or at least capable of

contact, with what is genuinely other than consciousness. But there is more involved than just this belief. The possibility that things might be other than they are given, points to a possible state in which they are given just as they are. The awareness of what this possible state is or would be like is part of the business of consciousness. Here Findlay is appealing directly to the Husserlian theory of *Evidenz*: 'For Husserl... it is part of the notion of intentionality that there is a limiting state (ideal in the case of physical objects) in which the object as it is thought of or given simply fades out in, or achieves coincidence with, the object as it in and for itself is'.⁴⁵

Thus the investigation of intentionality concerns not only the fact that consciousness aims at the target (the transcendent object), but also the manner in which it contrives to hit in. The *epoché*, whose purpose it is to focus our full attention on the sphere of the mind and its objects by isolating that sphere, cutting it off from its real or other relations to a pre-conceived reality, at the same time shows how it is that consciousness, by its very nature, goes beyond its own sphere and meets up with the world: '... it is part of the teleology involved in thinking, that the hitting of an authentic target should be no fortuitous, no abnormal occurrence, but the natural outcome of all intending'.⁴⁶

But doesn't all this beg the question? If the whole examination of those conscious processes related to the theory of *Evidenz* – the fulfillment of intentions, the aiming at and the hitting of the target, etc. – takes place under the rubric of the *epoché*, have we not denied ourselves any legitimate metaphysical implications, including realistic ones? A *phenomenology* of self-evidence can give us only *intended* self-evidence, of 'hitting the target' only an intended hitting of the target; if we speak of an experience or state of consciousness in which the object is given just as it is, this means, within the phenomenological brackets, that the object is *meant* or *thought* to be given as it is. It seems that all those cases in which consciousness meets up with the real world are, phenomenologically speaking, only cases in which consciousness *purports* to meet up with the real world. But can we infer, from the fact that it purports to do this, that it really does it? Must we not still say that there is no valid move from the thought of X to the being of X, even where the 'thought' in this case claims the self-evident

givenness of X? Isn't there always the *logical possibility* that X is otherwise, or is not at all, or is nothing beyond our thought of it?

But here we encounter one of Findlay's chief complaints, intertwined with one of the deepest-lying characteristics of his philosophical *Einstellung* – and this time it is one that places him in a rather different camp from Husserl. If there is anything for which Findlay has no patience at all, it is philosophers who make everything turn on a mere logical possibility. To be sure, Findlay would say, this logical possibility exists; but does it make sense to allow our philosophical thinking to be cramped by such a remote possibility?⁴⁷ For Findlay there are relations among concepts which are not those of strict implication and which thus leave open the possibility of doubt and exceptions, but which are nevertheless compelling and reasonable guides to philosophical belief, just as similar relations are reliable guides in our everyday dealings. At the everyday level, concerning factual occurrences, we speak of likelihood, plausibility, probability; and so, for the philosophical level, Findlay coins the term 'essential probabilities' as indicating conceptual interrelations no less compelling, and usually more interesting and informative, than essential necessities.⁴⁸ Practically the entire philosophy of Hegel, according to Findlay, is built upon such conceptual interrelations: Hegel 'made plain that our notions do carry with them a certain natural shading into other notions, a natural implication of such notions, and a natural favorableness and unfavorableness to other notions, which it is not in our power to create or alter'.⁴⁹

This is undoubtedly the sort of 'natural implication' or 'essential probability' that Findlay has in mind when he offers a realist argument in the context of a discussion of belief in *Values and Intentions*. Belief, he says, 'is nothing if not deferential to compulsive experience, of which sense experience is the ultimate form. It therefore presupposes as its appropriate complement, the natural world in time and space ...'⁵⁰ This world has 'precisely that degree of independence among its parts, and of manageable simplicity within them, as to serve both as the source of our compulsive experiences and of the coherent beliefs built upon them'. Belief, proceeding according to its own rules and structures, may be said to

reconstruct for itself the independent, public, compulsive order which its own existence and development presupposes, and to reconstruct it largely as it is 'in itself'. For the world in which belief exists must itself be a believable world, and the structure it suggests to those relying on the compulsive experiences it produces in them, is likely to be like its own structure. These propositions, repudiated by Kant as involving an unwarrantable 'pre-established harmony' between beliefs and things in themselves, would seem to be almost truistic applications of the notions of the 'like' and the 'likely'.⁵¹

Obviously, to this the idealist, or the skeptic, could still reply that instead of buttressing or certifying our belief in the external world, Findlay has simply produced another statement of that belief. It is, after all, 'our idea' that the natural world serves this function. I myself find it hard to apply notions such as 'likelihood' or 'probability' to Findlay's assertions, at least without the shoring up of some of their presuppositions (the idea of an externally produced structure of compulsive experience, for example), partly because I find it hard to dissociate these notions from a weighing of evidence on either side of the question, which seems inappropriate in this context. But perhaps another version of the drift of Findlay's thinking would be this: after a phenomenological analysis of the workings of consciousness and belief, and in particular of the manners in which they 'intend' to transcend their own sphere, we certainly have no argument that they fail to achieve this transcendence; and the appropriate and plausible 'higher order comment' on the *epoché* may be simply to assent to the beliefs that we now understand better than we did before. While this version may seem to have a Moorean flavor, Findlay would insist that this assent *be* a 'higher order comment', not *just* a return to common sense. (Here he differs from Husserl, too, who was willing to concede even the phenomenologists an occasional, but non-philosophical, lapse into the natural attitude during their off-hours). The phenomenological *epoché* is itself, of course, a 'higher order comment' on the natural attitude, suspending its beliefs and commitments in order the better to understand them. If we find the *epoché* philosophically unsatisfying by itself, only a philosophical assessment will do to relieve our discomfort.

This step which Findlay takes beyond the *epoché* now permits him to treat the intentionality of mind and its objects with a different slant and with greater flexibility than was possible for Husserl. Though there are large tracts of what we might call 'pure' phenomenological analysis in Findlay's writings, there are also sections in which a sort of mixed attitude is adopted, an approach in which we see both things-as-they-are-presented-to-consciousness and things-as-they-are, in which we 'stand hesitantly in the doorway of the intentional cage, seeing the world as it presents itself from its vantage point and yet continuing to evaluate that vision from an outside critical standpoint'.⁵² This alternative of 'constantly confounding and mixing categories'⁵³ produces a picture fairly bristling with contradictions: here appears the cube which neither has nor does not have twelve edges, even though we know it must have one or the other in order to exist; here is the thought of my brother, which is surely of my brother even though 'my brother *as* I think of him is not properly my brother' since only 'some of the things predicable of the real object can be predicated of the intentional object that is 'identified' with it',⁵⁴ and so on. And it is not only the intentional objects of mental references that come in for this 'mixed' treatment, but the mind itself, especially in *Psyche and Cerebrum*. Here Findlay explores the 'ill-assorted triumvirate' – the behavioral, the phenomenological, and the neural dimensions – which the mind unites:

We must be acted upon by the world and be reactive to it like any other worldly object, but to be *consciously* alive, we must have a world which is there for us, given *to* us in a vast variety of manners, lights and guises, and we must in addition have a nervous system and brain, and above all a brain bark or cortex, in order to be effectively in the world and in order for the world to be effectively there for us.⁵⁵

It is thus possible, employing this mixed approach, 'by a vast amount of poised tight-rope walking, as strained and unnatural as the abyss of nonsense which it avoids, to talk in a philosophically acceptable manner about intentional inexistence and intentional objects'.⁵⁶ Of course, ordinary talk, the talk of the 'natural attitude', lives in this mixed attitude at all times, and deals 'with

tact and address'⁵⁷ with the logical and metaphysical problems that arise within it. It manages to treat objects now as merely intentional, now as independent, and the mind now as intentional subject, now as object in the world, without feeling discomfort at this procedure. But this is because ordinary discourse 'simply turns its back on uncomfortable self-contradictory implications'.⁵⁸ Having discovered and explored, through the *epoché*, the intentional sphere as a self-contained domain with its own laws and principles, philosophy cannot respectably simply return to the natural attitude, and it cannot turn its back on contradictions. One way of dealing with them, of course, as we have seen, is to try to eliminate the intentional sphere altogether in favor of a realistic metaphysics and an extensional logic. Another way is to move toward idealism. But a third way is to face these contradictions head-on, to recognize them *as* contradictions and to bring out in all possible clarity their contradictory character. This is what must be done by the mixed approach Findlay recommends and practices, an approach that has 'all the truth and the life' in spite of the antinomies and contradictions it reveals. In fact, for a certain kind of philosopher, 'there may be a connection between the antinomies and contradictions on the one hand and the truth and the life on the other'.⁵⁹

Now Findlay is that kind of philosopher, and Husserl is not, and this is perhaps the most appropriate final comment we can make on the deepest-lying attitudes of these two thinkers. They both have an openness and sensitivity to the spectacle of mental life and to the manifold guises in which the world presents itself to us. But Findlay beyond this can savor antinomy and contradiction, and this is something for which Husserl has no taste at all. One might say that it was to escape the contradictions of the natural attitude, which had still been allowed some limited exposure in the *Logical Investigations*, that Husserl imposed the protective brackets of the *epoché* upon his whole enterprise. Once they were imposed, Husserl was unwilling to remove them, which left him in the odd position we have tried to describe, seemingly undecided between an unsatisfying methodological neutrality and a swing toward idealism. The most positive way of describing the philosophical posture inaugurated and persisted in by Husserl is that it makes possible what he often called a 'working' philoso-

phy, a concrete method of description and analysis which simply turns its back on the old and perhaps unresolvable debates between realism and idealism. But certain problems receive short shrift or are unrecognizably transformed by this approach. For example, the problem of the emergence of man's rational consciousness in a cosmos that antedates him, which is a legitimate problem for Findlay once he steps beyond the *epoché*, would become another phenomenological investigation for Husserl: what is the sense of this problem for the transcendental subject, what kind of experience and scientific inference does its formulation presuppose? But the *problem itself* legitimately remains, it seems to me, as do many other, and the phenomenological method by itself, while it may help clarify them, can neither resolve them nor make them disappear.

Findlay sees this, sees that the phenomenological *epoché* requires a 'higher order comment', and this leads him in the direction of realism, as we have seen. Which is not to say that he stops there, since it is precisely this move, together with his phenomenological appreciation for the mental, which brings him into the realm of contradiction. This calls forth yet a higher order comment, for Findlay, while he may savor contradiction, does not simply luxuriate in it, as do some philosophers, but must also pass beyond it. By the time he reaches this stage, it is clear that he has bid farewell to Husserl and taken up with even more congenial philosophical companions such as Hegel, Plato and Plotinus. Anyone who knows Findlay's work will know that he revels with Husserl only in the lowest *étages* of the philosophical edifice. Or, to return to the original metaphor: after transcendental speleology comes geography and perhaps astronomy.

NOTES

Abbreviations

Works by J.N. Findlay:

- AA *Ascent to the Absolute*. New York: Humanities Press, 1970.
 DC *The Discipline of the Cave*. New York: Humanities Press, 1966.
 TC 'Husserl's Analysis of the Inner Tome-Consciousness'. *The Monist*, Vol. 59, No. 1, Jan. 1975.
 MT *Meinong's Theory of Objects and Values*. 2nd Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.
 PC *Psyche and Cerebrum*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1972.
 VI *Values and Intentions*. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1961.
- LI Edmund Husserl: *Logical investigations*, trans. J.N. Findlay, New York: Humanities Press, 1970.

1. MT 332.
2. DC 39.
3. LI 2.
4. TC 3
5. LI 4
6. DC 15.
7. DC 24-5.
8. DC 19.
9. MT 1.
10. *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hegel: *Sämtliche Werke* [Stuttgart: Fr. Frommann's Verlag, 1927, vol. II] p. 75.
11. VI 36.
12. It seems impossible to read a lot of Findlay and write about him without trying, however feebly, to imitate his style and particularly his use of similes. But what a relief it would be to the dreariness of most philosophical prose if more of us could even remotely approximate the elegance and humor of his writing.
13. AA 242.
14. VI 42.
15. Meinong's categories of objects, as indicating something extra-mental, are, in the traditional sense, if not in his own terminology, ontological categories.
16. MT 344.
17. MT 343.
18. DC 31.
19. MT 344.
20. LI 9.
21. LI 558-9.
22. LI 578-9.

23. LI 249.
24. MT 348.
25. DC 42.
26. DC 42–3.
27. LI 5.
28. DC 46.
29. VI 16.
30. AA 190.
31. VI 57.
32. VI 51.
33. TC passim.
34. VI 46.
35. VI 24.
36. Cf. *Husserliana: Edmund Husserl, Gesammelte Werke* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1950 ff). Vol. III, paragraphs 27–32, Vol. IV, paragraph 49.
37. DC 78.
38. LI 10.
39. DC 25.
40. LI 10.
41. DC 78 This is also the interpretation found in Findlay's most recent criticism of Husserl's idealism, which came to my attention after writing this paper: 'Phenomenology and the Meaning of Realism' in *Phenomenology and Philosophical Understanding*, ed. E. Pivcevic, Cambridge University Press, 1975.
42. LI 10.
43. MT 343.
44. LI 10.
45. LI 10.
46. AA 237.
47. A discussion of this topic in *Values and Intentions* is the occasion for one of my favorite Findlayisms: 'Logical possibility, like the meditative Celts, retains no more than a merely poetical or philosophical importance, when driven, as by Saxon invaders, from the territories that it once cultivated, and made to submit to the harsh pressure of empirical frequencies'. (VI 129).
48. Cf. AA 184 ff.
49. HR 79.
50. VI 132.
51. VI 133.
52. AA 239.
53. AA 241.
54. AA 242.
55. PC 1.
56. AA 243.
57. MT 344.
58. AA 243.
59. AA 239.

II.8. Interpretation and Self-Evidence: Husserl and Hermeneutics

Hermeneutic philosophy, understood as a general theory of human understanding, is associated with the names of Paul Ricœur and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Ricœur and Gadamer developed their hermeneutic philosophies in relative independence of one another, and their theories first emerged in rather different forms: Gadamer's in 1960 in *Wahrheit und Methode*, a historically presented conception applied primarily to the practice of the humanistic disciplines; Ricœur's in 1965 in *De l'interprétation*, an essay on Freud.¹ But both philosophers take their cue from Heidegger in *Being and Time* and this lends their efforts a common provenance and a common accent.

Through Heidegger, and in Ricœur's case more directly, hermeneutical theory also descends from Husserl. But while Husserl exercises some positive influence, he also provides a foil for hermeneutics. In many respects, Husserl's thought, in its overall structure and basic themes, seems to represent to both Gadamer and Ricœur the most elaborately articulated version of the philosophical tendency to which hermeneutics is most fundamentally opposed.

In the following essay I would like to examine some of the basic ideas of the hermeneutical philosophers in the light of this opposition to Husserl's classical phenomenological position. I think that some hermeneutical criticisms of Husserlian phenomenology are justified and some are not. But my purpose is not to adjudicate between two schools of thought; nor is it to produce some hybrid between the two. Rather, I think that an examination of hermeneutical ideas from this point of view can bring to light some of their underlying presuppositions which have not yet been seen. In

particular, it will be seen that hermeneutics shares with phenomenology, and indeed most modern philosophy, an unexamined basic concept that it has not yet acknowledged.

It is primarily in its capacity as heir to the Cartesian tradition that phenomenology comes under the hermeneutical attack. Though Husserl's criticisms of Descartes are many and very important, according to this view, phenomenology is still at bottom a form of Cartesianism. This characterization of phenomenology centers on two closely related doctrinal emphases: one is a certain elevated, even pretentious conception of the capacity of human knowledge, expressed in the notion of philosophy as rigorous science; the other is its focus on subjectivity as the beginning and end point of all knowledge. Against this view, hermeneutics stresses above all the finitude of the human condition and the resultant finitude of human knowledge, even self-knowledge.

With its stress on finitude and its antisubjectivism, hermeneutical philosophy participates in the general anti-Cartesianism of some of the most influential twentieth-century thought. We find the same notions stressed in Wittgenstein's language games as forms of life and in Quine's ontological relativity. Everywhere, it seems, it is thought to be important, as it was for the early figures of eighteenth-century empiricism, to curb the pretensions of human knowledge, at least philosophical knowledge; and it matters little to the tenor of the message whether the source of man's limitations lies in his role as language-user or his embeddedness in a historical tradition. In fact, these two notions at bottom come to the same thing.

Confining ourselves here, however, to the hermeneutical critique of phenomenology, let us seek out those key elements of Husserl's classical position, which, in the eyes of these critics, seem central and vulnerable. I have already suggested that there are two such elements. First, Husserl presents a theory of the essence of human knowledge or understanding whose centerpiece is the theory of *Evidenz* – which I prefer to translate as 'self-evidence'. The measure and aim of knowledge in its preeminent form – *Wissenschaft* – is grounded judgment, and self-evidence is what grounds judgment in the preeminent sense. In a case of self-evidence 'the affair [*die Sache*], the complex (or state) of affairs,

instead of being merely meant 'from afar', is present [*gegenwärtig*] as the affair 'itself', the affair complex or state-of-affairs 'itself'...'² Self-evidence, says Husserl, is 'an 'experiencing' of something that is, and is thus; it is precisely a mental seeing of something itself'.³ The object which is intended is also given; and furthermore, it is given just *as* it is intended. To encounter something in this way is furthermore to acquire an 'abiding possession' to which one can return again and again.⁴

The second element consists of a doctrine concerning where the self-evidence appropriate to *philosophical* science is to be found. The ideal of self-evidence is never fulfilled, for example, in the external world. There and in other spheres of knowledge it is burdened by a one-sidedness, incompleteness, and uncertainty that makes it a mere presumption, not an actuality. Above all, it is burdened by unclear presuppositions or prejudices. Only in the sphere of reflective self-awareness are such defects not *in principle* to be found. Only here is the ideal of self-evidence *in principle* fulfillable. In this sphere, furthermore, the structure of all other spheres, and indeed the reason for their defectiveness with respect to self-evidence, can be self-evidently recognized.

Hermeneutic theory oppose each of these two elements in turn. Against Husserl's phenomenological theory of knowledge is ranged a theory of human comprehension derived from Heidegger's notion of *Verstehen*, a term which now takes over the central place occupied by consciousness in Husserl's thought. Understanding is not a human faculty or a particular sort of act but a fundamental dimension or *Existential* of *Dasein*. And *Dasein*'s essential finitude is exemplified in his understanding. It is a mistake to suppose that the one-sidedness, incompleteness, and lack of certainty that is characteristic of our understanding can be overcome. These features, which Husserl correctly saw and identified, are not accidental but quite necessary characteristics of our encounter with the world. Above all, it is a mistake to think that the presuppositional or prejudice-laden character of our comprehension is something to be put aside. It is the very nature of our understanding to be ahead of itself, to approach its objects and its world with a prior structure of comprehension, a prejudice in the literal sense.⁵ Husserl even recognized the source of this structure of comprehensive when he insisted on the temporality

and historicity of consciousness.⁶ Yet he failed, on this view, to draw the proper consequences of what he himself saw. The theory of self-evidence is incompatible with this view of human understanding.

And against the second element of Husserl's classical conception, hermeneutical theory makes the point that self-understanding is *no exception* to the conditions of human comprehension. In fact, according to Heidegger's theory, all understanding is self-understanding, the projection of one's own possibilities. The supposed Cartesian self-coincidence or self-transparency is only self-comprehension reduced and abstracted into an empty and meaningless identity.⁷ Genuine self-understanding is possible, but it is no less historical and finite an understanding than any other.

Let us now turn to the theory of the structure of human understanding that lies at the base of this hermeneutical critique and serves as the source of the notion of finitude. One of the first things that the expositions of this theory usually say is that the structure of human understanding is by no means to be construed as a kind of barrier or obstruction which stands between the knower and the known. This is already found in Heidegger's theory of *Verstehen* ('understanding') and the closely related concept of *Auslegung* ('interpretation'). 'In interpreting', says Heidegger, 'we do not, so to speak, throw a 'signification' over some naked thing which is present-at-hand ...'.⁸ The process of interpretive understanding, in which something is understood *as something*, is not a process in which the thing is hidden from us, but precisely the process through which it is revealed.⁹ 'In the projecting of the understanding, entities are disclosed in their possibility'.¹⁰ 'When entities within-the-world are discovered along with the Being of *Dasein* – that is, when they have come to be understood – we say that they have *meaning* [*Sinn*]. But that which is understood, taken strictly, is not the meaning but the entity ...'.¹¹ Thus meaning is not some intermediate domain (*Zwischenreich*)¹² standing between me and the object of my understanding: rather, the latter is accessible to me only as having meaning and, without meaning, would be hidden.

Here Heidegger is essentially repeating a Hegelian point. One recalls the masterful way in which Hegel, in the first paragraph

of the introduction to the *Phenomenology*, reduces to absurdity one of the guiding assumptions of modern philosophy since Descartes. If we conceive of the faculty of knowledge as a kind of instrument for grasping the object or as a medium through which it is discerned, doubts arise about the ability of this faculty to do its job. For an instrument transforms what it works upon, and a medium may distort the image of what appears. Once these doubts have been raised, we wish we could somehow dispense with the instrument or medium, or at least subtract from the final product its distorting effects. But, Hegel reminds us, the instrument or medium we are talking about is precisely knowledge, and if we dispense with it or subtract from its effects, we are worse off than before: for now the object is unknown, and rather than a direct, undisturbed grasp of it we are left with no grasp at all. What is wrong according to Hegel is the original metaphor through which we conceive of knowledge: 'what calls itself fear of error reveals itself as fear of the truth'.¹³

Something like this theme has been taken up by post-Heideggerian expositors of hermeneutical theory, such as Ricœur. Prior to the notion of finitude, which is a negative concept, he says, is the 'entirely positive' notion of the 'ontological conditions of comprehension'.¹⁴ This condition is best expressed, according to Ricœur, in the notion of belonging (*appartenance, Zugehörigkeit*) a notion he takes over from Gadamer, who in turn adapted it from Count York von Wartenburg.¹⁵ York was speaking of our knowledge of history in particular, and referring to the fact that we are interested in and can know about history because we ourselves are historical. This, of course, is the point on which Heidegger draws in his own discussion of history, historicity, and historiography. But in the hands of Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricœur, the notion of belonging as the basis of knowledge is not limited to the sphere of history. Or rather, historical knowledge becomes the paradigm of all knowledge. A striking reversal takes place: natural-scientific knowledge, which for most modern philosophy has served as the model, is now seen as a mere 'subspecies [*Abart*] of understanding'.¹⁶

As Ricœur points out, the concept of belonging does not refer merely to a relation between subject and object.¹⁷ Rather, it means that subject and object belong to the same sphere, that for the

knower the object to be known belongs, in advance, within a horizon of familiarity. It is in virtue of this horizon, which constitutes the *Vorgriff* with which the knower enters the situation and partakes of it, that the object is rendered accessible to him; without this it would be utterly strange, would be strictly speaking meaningless. Because it has meaning for him in advance, he can ask meaningful questions about it in the effort to come to understand it.

This, then, is the positive hermeneutical concept of understanding, of which the negative notion of finitude is only the reverse side. But here we might ask, how do we pass from the observe to the reverse? Does the conception of human understanding we have just been sketching really imply, in any sense, the idea of finitude normally associated with it by the hermeneutical philosophers? Linking this conception with Hegel, as we just did, causes us to wonder. Indeed, if we examine more closely the idea of belonging, and that of the horizon of familiarity, as sketched above, we find a few more historical precedents which not only make these ideas seem less innovative than they originally appeared, but also raise doubts as to the link between this and the notion of finitude.

Consider, for example, Plato's theory of knowledge. Here it is precisely because man's soul belongs within the same sphere as the forms and is not merely confined to the temporal world, that he can come to know them. If there is finitude or limitation here to man's ability to know true reality, it derives not from his belonging to the world of the forms, but rather from the extent to which he is *not* entirely of that world. The horizon of familiarity, too, has its counterpart in Plato's theory of recollection. Man can come to know the forms fully because he is already somehow familiar with them in advance.

This conception of belonging, entirely without skeptical or finitist consequences, has had its echos throughout the history of philosophy. In Vico it is applied directly to the problem of our knowledge of history. History for Vico is the only thing that we can fully know, and the reason is that we have made it ourselves. Thus, unlike nature, it belongs fully to the human sphere, and its inner workings are accessible to us in a way that nature's are not.

In modern philosophy, of course, the notion of the horizon of familiarity finds its primary counterpart, as Heidegger acknow-

ledges in one passage, in the concept of the *a priori*.¹⁸ Kant even comes close to saying about nature what Vico says about history: that we can know it because we make it. This does not mean, of course, that we create it in the sense of giving it existence, but we do determine, through *a priori* concepts, what counts as nature, and thus we make sense of it.¹⁹ Again, while human finitude plays an important part in Kant's philosophy, it is not derived from the horizon of familiarity. On the contrary, what is within the horizon is precisely what we can know fully, in the form of mathematics and natural science, whereas is that which lies totally outside such a horizon which escapes our ability to know and defines the limits of our reason.

These observations suggest that the transition from the notion of belonging, and that of the horizon of familiarity, to the concept of human finitude, is not a necessary one. They make it clear, in fact, that other considerations must be involved, in addition to the ones we have mentioned, if this transition is to be made in the manner of hermeneutical philosophy. It may be that the object – a person, a social event, a text, even a natural event – is accessible to us because it belongs to the same sphere, because it within the same horizon with us in some sense. But if our grasp is limited, one-sided, incomplete, this is because there is *another* possible sphere, another horizon, to which the object *also* belongs while we do not. The term 'horizon' suggests perspective, of course, and we could say there is another possible perspective on the object. Put simply, in the language of hermeneutics, *another interpretation* is possible. Furthermore, in order to make the hermeneutical point significant, it must be said that this alternative interpretation is somehow closed to us. The *Vorgriff* which we bring to the situation rules out an alternative framework which may be brought to bear on the object by others or under other circumstances. Thus our situation limits our perspective, rules out our being simultaneously in another situation which is nevertheless considered possible.

The idea of the finitude of human comprehension, then, derives, not merely from that of belonging, or of the horizon of familiarity, but rather from the notion of *alternative* – and perhaps mutually exclusive – spheres of belonging or horizons. But more than this. If the notion of finitude is to make any sense, it

must be the *same object* which is subject to different interpretations or perspectives. It is our grasp of *this object* that is shown to be limited by the consideration of another possible grasp of the same object. If the alternative perspective in question were totally unrelated to my own, without a common object, then it would make so sense to say that its possibility is what limits my understanding of this object. A common object, then, with a possible variety of different but equally correct perspectives on it, is required if we are to make the transition in question.

What does this, in turn, commit us to? A certain notion of the *object*. As we said before, this object may be another person or his actions, a historical or social event or entity, a text, possibly even a natural object or event. But in any case we are saying that the object is not exhausted by the understanding we have of it. It may be accessible to us in virtue of belonging within the horizon to which we ourselves belong. But it has an identity and a set of possible determinations which transcend this horizon, determinations that may be accessible to others under other circumstances. What these circumstances are, of course, and what it is about the object that is known, we cannot say. But the object in this sense serves, as in Kant's notion of the limiting concept, to curb the pretensions of our own understanding.

As in Kant's case, the notion of object as limiting concept goes hand in hand with a concept of the alternative perspective. In Kant's case, of course, the latter is the *intellectus archetypus*, a mind of intellectual intuition that knows the object as it is in itself, that is, presumably, in all its possible determinations, including those that are known to us. The finite intellect is measured against the infinite intellect. For the hermeneutical philosopher the alternative is more likely to be but another finite perspective, conceived in the same terms as ours – that is, as being likewise historically situated and laden with prejudices of the same sort as ours, but different in content.

But how different is this, really, from the Kantian conception? For the finitist, presumably, no single perspective is able to exhaust the object. But this suggests two possibilities. Either the object is exhaustibly determinable by a certain number of perspectives, which, taken together, would constitute complete knowledge of it; or, alternatively, the object is inexhaustible – i.e., is

open to infinitely many interpretations. But it could be said that these infinitely many interpretations are precisely what define the infinite intellect Kant was speaking about. To be sure, the ideal completion of interpretations which would take in the whole object would not be brought under the unity of one intellect, i.e., synthesized in the manner in which we unify the various strands of our own knowledge. But the point is this: the finitist thesis of the hermeneutical philosophers cannot even be formulated without tacit reference to an object which lies in some respects beyond the grasp of the finite intellect, which corresponds in some way to a totality – *Inbegriff* – of interpretations, and against which any given interpretation is measured in order to be declared finite.

There is some resistance to admitting this among the hermeneutical philosophers. Gadamer, for example, writes:

Whereas the object of the natural sciences can probably be defined *idealiter* as what would be known in a completed knowledge of nature, it is senseless to speak of a completed knowledge of history; and precisely for this reason the talk of an object in itself, corresponding to this [historical] inquiry, can in the last analysis not be cashed in.²⁰

But Gadamer must see that without such a conception, in order to be consistent, hermeneutical theory would have to give up such notions as 'incomplete', 'one-sided', 'relative', 'finite'. There would simply be different grasps or interpretations, ranged alongside one another; and with nothing against which to measure them, we might as well call them complete as incomplete.

These considerations allow us to see that hermeneutical philosophy shares with Husserl's phenomenology and indeed most of modern philosophy a fundamental conception of human understanding that lies so deep and is so all-determining that we ought to accord it the status of a basic metaphor or myth. It is more important than the concept of the intervening medium criticized by Hegel, and is in fact shared by Hegel. Sellars has spoken of the myth of the given in empiricism, but this in my view is only one version of a deeper myth we might call 'the myth of the measure' or of 'the final appeal'. The measure may stand at the beginning of experience, as it does for the empiricists and rational-

ists, as an unmediated datum or clear and distinct perception; or it may stand at the end of a long process of experience, whether individually or historically conceived, as in the case of full-blown Hegelian idealism – what Gadamer calls ‘total mediation’. To mention another, perhaps more important division, that between the gnostics and the skeptics of modern philosophy, the measure may be attainable and actually attained, or it may be unattainable. But running through all these struggles and divisions is the shared presupposition which underlies each position and enables it to make each of the assertions it makes. The hermeneutical position we are discussing, in the context of these struggles, is perhaps the most sophisticated of all. The very thing that renders the object accessible to us – interpretation – is also the thing that keeps it from being totally accessible to us. Mediation is not a barrier but a means to the object, as the term *Vermittlung* implies. Yet, mediation cannot be totalized. But the *it* which is rendered thus imperfectly accessible to us remains as the Archimedean point for the very articulation of this position. To be sure, the dependence of the position and its articulation upon this *it* is for the most part unrecognized or unacknowledged. But it does come through. In Heidegger it can be found in the key phrase of his theory of *Auslegung*, the phrase *etwas als etwas verstehen*. Attention is understandably directed by Heidegger and his followers to the second *etwas* and, even more important, to the *als*. The ‘as-structure’ of understanding becomes the focus. But the first *etwas* is just as important; without it the whole notion of interpretation would be senseless. It is this *etwas* to which we turn with our interpretation, which we try to disclose and illuminate when we understand it *as* something; it is what we try to bring close to us and render comprehensible. In this sense it is prior to our understanding, it is the pre-given focus of our interpretative endeavor. At the same time, it is this *etwas*, somehow identical, that can be subject to another interpretation and thus rendered accessible in a different way, perhaps to others at another time.

To be sure, as lying somehow both prior to and beyond our interpretation, this *etwas* seems to be without content and perhaps even meaning for us. This is the case if we accept the principle that something is meaningful only *as* something. This raises a paradox which turns out to be a version of Plato’s in the *Meno*: if this *etwas*

has no meaning for us, how can it be anything at all for us, and this how can it be something that we turn to and try to understand? Perhaps we can avoid this paradox if we say that nothing ever comes to us uninterpreted in some way. It would be in keeping with Heidegger’s analysis, I believe, to say that the object is first passively encountered as already interpreted, with its received sense and significance, and that the individual’s understanding consists in his either accepting and appropriating this interpretation or forging a new one. In the latter case, however, the *etwas* remains, in the sense of our discussions earlier, as that which is identical between the new and the old, that which the new interpretation discloses for us in a way that is more appropriate or authentic than the old.

Thus this first *etwas* – to speak with Kant we might call it an *etwas = x* – remains as a sort of indispensable placeholder, and it seems as impossible to get rid of it as it is difficult to say anything else positive about it.

What are we to say about the myth of the measure, or the myth of the *etwas = x*? We have suggested that it explicitly or implicitly underlies modern philosophy and that for hermeneutical philosophy it is maintained as an unarticulated and unacknowledged principle. If this is true, this gives it the status of an unadmitted presupposition, a *Vorurteil*. Is this all we can say about it? Or is this a prejudice that, once recognized, can be examined with regard to its legitimacy?

The concept of the object we have just been developing was entailed, we claimed, by the simple assertion that, for any given object, another interpretation is possible, besides our own, which is somehow equally valid and which is not collapsible into our own. Perhaps it is this claim which should first be examined. When the hermeneutical philosopher asserts this, how does he know it, since the other interpretation in question is supposedly beyond his reach? Is this claim merely an unjustified dogmatic assertion?

Yet seems absurd to characterize as an unjustified dogmatic assertion the innocuous claim that, for a given object, ‘another interpretation is possible’. The reason for this is, of course, that this possibility is evinced constantly in our everyday experience. Perhaps there is something like a completely naive and straightfor-

ward grasp of an object in our experience, such that no question of alternative interpretations arises, or indeed of interpretation in any sense, i.e., where the object is simply there for us with a univocal and unquestioned sense. But in most cases, the fact that another interpretation is possible is not something we need to be told by philosophers. We recognize it every time the apparent sense of a perceived event, the remark of a friend, or an item in the newspaper becomes questionable and has to be reassessed. Or, such an object can present itself right from the start as ambiguous, carrying its alternative interpretations, so to speak, along with it as it enters our experience. If we encounter such alternatives within the confines of our own experience, we encounter them all the more in social interaction. The meaning of an event is not always agreed upon by the members of even the closest community, and here my actual encounter with alternative interpretations may involve rational discussion, persuasion, complex political maneuvers, or even violence.

Thus, meeting up with other interpretations is in a way one of the most common and pervasive occurrences in our encounter with ourselves, with our world, and with others. There is, of course, a difference between the situation I have just been describing and the thesis of the hermeneutical philosophers. While the 'other interpretations' we have just been describing are encountered within our own experience, hermeneutics seems to be speaking of another interpretation which lies somehow beyond my capacities even for encounter. I can only encounter the interpretations of others because I can encounter *them* (the others) and can communicate with or at least understand them. This communication presupposes some common ground, some shared *Vorstruktur* as a condition for recognizing our very disagreement. Still, the hermeneutical thesis can legitimately draw upon this experience of disagreement for support. Just as there *are* other interpretations that I actually encounter, so there *may be* still others that I do not and indeed cannot encounter in virtue of my limited historical situation. For example, the interpretations which future generations will put on the events of the present day are in principle closed to me. And the hermeneutical thesis requires not the existence of different interpretations beyond my experience, but only their *possibility*.

But there is an aspect of the situation we have been describing that is just as important and to which the hermeneutical philosophers seem to pay too little attention. The encounter with another interpretation sets up a tension, a certain problem to be resolved. In a way the matter is simplified if I just reject the other's interpretation and maintain that I am simply right. But if I grant a certain validity to the other's interpretations, I am at the same time acknowledging that my *own* is 'just' another interpretation, and this is not a recognition with which I can remain comfortable. In some ways this is like the hermeneutical situation that Gadamer speaks of, where the object in its strangeness calls for understanding, or Ricœur's point of departure with the double meaning or plurivocity of the text. But with the actual encounter, not just with the object to be interpreted, but with another interpretation of the object, a special sort of problem is created. A certain critical distance has opened up between the object-for-me, to put it in Hegelian terms, and the object-in-itself. The very act of according even a preliminary validity to the other interpretation initiates a kind of comparison between the object and my interpretation of it. This comparison has the purpose of bringing me back into accord with the object, of restoring the straightforward givenness of the object before it was torn away from me, so to speak, by the intrusion of the other. This purpose may be achieved, either by rejecting my interpretation in favor of the other's, rejecting his and reinstating my own, rejecting both in favor of a third, or combining the two into a third.

It is during this process that one's prejudices come in for critical scrutiny. Even the hermeneutical philosophers, starting with Heidegger, admit that there is a difference between naively assumed and unexamined prejudices and critically evaluated presuppositions. In Heidegger we find this expressed as follows: speaking of the 'positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing', he says:

To be sure, we genuinely take hold of this possibility when, in our interpretation, we have understood that our first, last, and constant task is never to allow our fore-knowing, foresight, and foreconception to be presented to us by fancies [*Einfälle*] and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme

secure by working out these forestructures in terms of the things themselves [*aus den Sachen selbst her*].²¹

In this passage, if I understand it correctly, Heidegger seems to envisage just the sort of critical comparison I was speaking of where my interpretation is examined in light of the *Sache selbst*. Gadamer echos this in commenting on Heidegger:

Even for Heidegger, historical knowledge is not planning projection, not the extrapolation of goals of the will, not the arrangement of things according to wishes or prejudices or suggestions of those in power; rather it remains something measured against the things [*Anmessung an die Sache*], *mensuratio ad rem*.²²

And he speaks in similar terms himself when he writes of distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate prejudices,²³ and even 'true prejudices, through which we *understand*, from false prejudices, through which we *misunderstand*.'²⁴ The problem with Gadamer's theory, and Heidegger's too, is that they tell us precious little about how these distinctions are to be made and how the *Anmessung an die Sache* is to be achieved.

But even putting this crucial problem aside, they also fail to recognize the *point* of all these maneuvers. What is the point? Surely it is not to escape the 'mediation via interpretation' altogether. But it is to reach an interpretation of the object that cannot be superceded – the *true* interpretation, if you will, one of which we can no longer say, 'another interpretation is possible'. In other terms, the point is to reach a conclusion of the process in which there is no longer a gap between the object for me and the object as it is in itself. Or, in still other terms, to reach that point where the object is given just as it is intended.

It is obvious that we have now returned, via the theory of interpretation and some Hegelian terminology, to something like the Husserlian theory of self-evidence. We have not claimed, of course, that such a point of coincidence (*Deckung*) of intention and the given is ever actually reached, or even that it can be reached. We have described it, rather, as a conception or an idea that draws us on in our encounter with the object, as a guiding

or regulative principle of the understanding. But this is how Husserl described it too, though he took different positions throughout his life on whether this ideal could ever be achieved in particular cases or in particular domains. But even the description of the ideal has its variations in his writings. Early in his career, he was content simply to state the ideal, to define that endpoint or *telos* of our cognitive endeavors, to tell what it would be like if it ever were reached. But later, when he became more interested in consciousness as a dynamic and progressive process, he stressed not only this ideal endpoint but also the manner in which it functions in the life of consciousness and how it structures the variations and maneuvers through which the understanding is drawn in its endeavor to reach it. This is so to the extent that, in the later work, the 'theory of self-evidence' becomes the description of this process itself. Indeed, in the *Crisis*, as is well known, Husserl tries to come to terms with the process of interpretation in precisely the context of tradition and history with which hermeneutical theory is so concerned.

But let us recall that we are inquiring here into the validity of the hermeneutical thesis that 'another interpretation is possible'. We have pointed out how this thesis is legitimated in part by the actual encounter, within our everyday experience, with other interpretations of the events and actions around us. But we have also suggested that the thesis has further implications that are not spelled out by the hermeneutical philosophers, implications that we tried to articulate as the commitment to the idea of the object and of the full determination of the object. Can this commitment be similarly justified or validated by an appeal to experience?

In one sense, of course, it cannot. While we do encounter other interpretations in our experience, we do not, perhaps, ever encounter the fully determined object as long as we are engaged in the process of interpretation itself. And, if the hermeneutical thesis is correct, we never come to an end of this process in our experience, i.e., to that place where all other interpretations would be *a priori* excluded.

In another sense, however, we do encounter the fully determined object – or rather the *idea* of the fully determined object – in the very process of understanding itself. But we encounter it precisely as the regulative principle which drives our inquiry on

its way. The fully determined object is not, strictly speaking, something we encounter *in* experience, but is rather a structural feature *of* our experience itself which gives sense and direction to what we do. The legitimation derives, then, not merely from engaging in the process of interpretation, but from reflecting on its structure. And this means that such legitimation is not empirical but eidetic and transcendental in precisely Husserl's sense. It is eidetic because it is the recognition of a structure common to all interpretive processes; and it is transcendental in that what is recognized – the presence of the fully determined object as regulative principle – is a condition of the possibility of any interpretive process.

What I have been saying amounts to the claim that something like the Husserlian notion of self-evidence is after all – though perhaps not admittedly – involved in hermeneutical theory. But in one sense I would claim that Husserl is more sophisticated. For while hermeneutical theory seems tacitly committed in a straightforward way to kind of in-itself lying beyond the grasp of our interpretations, Husserl sees this in-itself as an ideal and transcendental structure. Operating as he does within the *epoché*, Husserl does not commit himself ontologically on this in-itself beyond all understanding. Does this make his theory more idealistic? Or simple less dogmatic?

I would like to turn now to the second phase of the hermeneutical critique of phenomenology, which I think can be discussed briefly in the light of the foregoing response to the first phase. This second critique is directed against Husserl's notion that, given the *theory* of self-evidence, reflective self-awareness, our apprehension of our own subjectivity is the only place where genuine self-evidence is to be found. While my remarks on the first phase of the hermeneutical critique have been critical of the hermeneutical approach, in this case I am more in agreement with it. There is some justification for saying that Husserl moved away from this Cartesian position in his later works, as many commentators have claimed. But the real problem is that Husserl tended to confuse, even in his latest works, the essentially Cartesian motive of finding unassailable self-evidences in self-apprehension, with the essentially Kantian motive of finding the transcendental structure which makes experience possible. The true accomplishment of the

phenomenological *epoché* is not the turn inward, but, as Ricœur says, the turn to meaning. What is genuinely discovered is not the solitary ego but intentionality in its various forms and functions. And to take intentionality seriously is not merely to describe consciousness but also to describe what is *of* and how this *ofness* is achieved. Thus phenomenology must be as much about the world as about consciousness. Further, in the transcendental turn, there is no reason to suppose that the self-evidence achieved are any more infallible or unassailable than any other sort.

NOTES

1. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 2nd edition, J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1965; Paul Ricœur, *De l'interprétation*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1965. The present essay is an expanded and revised version of a contribution to a symposium on 'Phenomenology and Hermeneutics' held at the Western Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association in Chicago, April, 1975.
2. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations* (trans. Dorian Cairns), Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1960, p. 10.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
5. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson), Harper and Row, New York, 1962, p. H. 150. (Pages preceded by 'H.' refer to the original German pagination in the margins).
6. *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 500.
7. *Being and Time*, p. H. 144.
8. *Ibid.*, p. H. 150.
9. *Ibid.*, p. H. 149.
10. *Ibid.*, p. H. 151.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (ed. J. Hoffmeister), Felix Meiner, Hamburg, 1952, p. 65.
14. Paul Ricœur, 'Phenomenology and Hermeneutics', *Nous*, 9, March, 1975, p. 88.
15. *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 247 and note.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 245. Cf. *Being and Time*, p. H. 153.
17. 'Phenomenology and Hermeneutics', p. 88.
18. *Being and Time*, p. H. 150.
19. Cf. *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A 92, B 125.
20. *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 269.
21. *Being and Time*, p. H. 153.
22. *Wahrheit und Methode*, p. 247.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

II.9. The Future Perfect: Temporality and Priority in Husserl, Heidegger and Dilthey

If we take the term 'phenomenological' in its broadest sense, we can say that Husserl's, Heidegger's and Dilthey's reflections on time and temporality are all phenomenological. The use of the term is legitimate in the historical sense even for Dilthey, since he was already under the influence of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*¹ when he wrote the *Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften* in the years 1905 to 1910, a text which contains some of his most interesting and sustained reflections on the temporal character of experience.² Husserl's lectures on internal time-consciousness, of course, were composed in this same period.³ And when Heidegger developed his own theory of temporality in *Being and Time*, in the 1920's, he was very much under the influence of these two predecessors.⁴

The kinship of the three reflections is more than just historical; it can be described in methodological terms as well. In all three cases, time is approached as is any other theme in phenomenology, namely, not 'in itself' but 'for us'. The focus is not simply time, but the intersection of time and human experience, where time is human and human experience is temporal. Furthermore, the question is not how we think about or conceptualize time, but how we directly encounter and experience it. And it is assumed that any ability we have to conceptualize time will ultimately be based on this original, preconceptual encounter.

What interests me in the following is this: Though they deal with the same theme and approach it in largely the same way, and though they come to very similar results, these three thinkers diverge on one important point: the order of priority assigned to the dimensions of time. My concern here is not the historical

development but the thing itself. I think we may be able to advance our own understanding of temporality by considering this divergence.

My essay is divided into five sections. In the first I shall introduce the problem by talking in a general way about how to deal with time phenomenologically. In the second, third and fourth I shall discuss Husserl, Heidegger and Dilthey briefly one by one, such that their difference of opinion will become clear. And in the fifth part I shall attempt first to explain and then to overcome this difference.

I

I have already characterized the phenomenological approach to time in a preliminary way by saying that it deals with time not 'in itself' but 'for us'. We must note further that this approach brings with it one of two possible schematisations of time, namely the one in which time is divided into past, present and future. This is what McTaggart called the A-series, which can be distinguished from the predicate-scheme before/after or earlier/later (the B-series).⁵ This second scheme can be called objective, and objective time can be compared to objective space: time is homogeneous, all 'points' in time are of equal value, their temporality consists in their relations to other points – relations which they possess absolutely, i.e. independently of the 'observer'. Such relations are characterized by using the number-series, such that in principle each position is assigned a number: t_1 , t_2 , etc. In this scheme it is neither necessary nor even possible to say of any point in time that it is past, present or future. The points simply succeed one another.

The phenomenological point to be made is that the succession of numbers is not *eo ipso* a temporal series; in order to be so it must be run through, as in the act of counting, an act which of course requires a counter. In counting the latter is always 'situated' at one point, looking forward and backward to the other members of the series. In the experienced time of counting, then, the temporal positions must be termed either past, present or future, terms which apply to them not absolutely but relatively,

i.e. relative to the 'standpoint of the observer' – metaphorically speaking, of course, since these latter terms are analogues of space.

According to this phenomenological interpretation, the two series, A and B, are not simply alternative approaches to time; instead, objective time (B) is grounded in subjective time (A). Not only can we say that the B-series can be thought but never experienced. We can also say that the mathematised B-series, as useful as it is as a representation of time, is only possible by subtracting from it what was to be explained, namely its temporal character. A serial order – numerical, logical, hierarchical – is a temporal series only when related to a subject, i.e. when relativized. To be sure, as in all other attempts at relativization, the absolute does not disappear but turns up in another guise. The absolute objective order is replaced by the absolute subject, or rather the absolute temporal position of the subject. Just as, in oriented space, the *here* is absolute, so in experienced time, is the *now*.

In this sense, the three-dimensional, subjective time-scheme seems to lead directly to the notion of an order of priority. One of the three dimensions of time seems privileged, namely the present. This privilege can be expressed in several ways. First, continuing the analogy with space, the present seems to be the center or focus around which past and future are oriented. But less metaphorically, the priority of the present seems both ontological and epistemological: ontological, because what is present *is*, while what is past and what is future *are* not. 'Being' and 'being-present' seem equivalent. Epistemological, because what is present is or at least can be directly given to our cognition while what is past and what is future are accessible only through the indirect and less reliable channels of memory and expectation or prediction respectively.

II

The foregoing account of the priority of the present is not particularly phenomenological; indeed it reflects the thinking of the philosophical tradition extending back to Augustine and beyond.

But it is subscribed to by phenomenology, or at least by Husserl. To be sure, in the lectures on time-consciousness he introduces concepts that go far beyond the traditional approach. The first of these is undoubtedly the phenomenological approach itself, which achieves one of its earliest formulations in these lectures.⁶ And one of the primary features of this approach is that it supposedly goes beyond both ontology and epistemology in the traditional sense, or rather, transforms both sorts of questions into phenomenological ones. That is, the question of what is or is not, as well as the question of what can be known and how, are absorbed into the question of how something is given in consciousness. Thus the ontological and the epistemological senses of the priority of the present, sketched above, would not interest Husserl as such.

The other principal feature of Husserl's analysis that must be mentioned, of course, is the concept of retention and protention, or the distinction between primary and secondary memory and correspondingly between primary and secondary expectation.⁷ This brilliant innovation leaves all previous treatments far behind. This distinction is by no means to be confused, as is often done, with that between long-term and short-term memory or expectation. The distinction is qualitative rather than quantitative. The content of retention and protention belong just as necessarily to the givenness of what is presently experienced – e.g. the sounding tone – as the spatial background belongs to the givenness of an object seen. Space and time are originally the horizons of experience, and it is as horizons that past and future surround and set off the present, extending in their different ways from the determinate, immediate background into the indefinite and indeterminate 'distance'. Secondary memory, or recollection, is quite different: here something from this wide horizon of the past singles itself out for re-presentation. Primary memory belongs to the temporality of the present and belongs to *all* experience. Secondary recollection is a special *kind* of experience in which we relive in the present what is not present.

A crucial aspect of this theory is that in the original experience of time the three dimensions – past, present, future – are not simply ranged alongside one another, as if one or the other could be lacking. The primary future is not something we gaze into from time to time, the past not something we dredge up occasionally,

whereas we normally live only in the present. To be conscious at all is to be in past, present and future 'at once'. Not that the three dimensions interpenetrate to the point that they lose their difference (this was Bergson's mistake). On the contrary, temporality consists precisely in the fact that they are differentiated. To be *in* all three 'at once' is not to be in all of them in the same way. Rather, their differentiation is what constitutes a *field* which makes it possible for us to experience something temporal, something that is in time or takes time – that is, something that happens.

As for the content of this something, here too the three dimensions determine each other. In Husserl's example of hearing a melody, the presently sounding tone is what it is for us only in the context of the elapsed and the still expected tones. The temporal object, whether a melody, an action, or an event, is experienced as a whole whose temporal phases are given as dependent parts.

This short sketch of the main features of Husserl's theory will suffice, I hope, to show how far the theory goes beyond the traditional approach and how much it accomplishes. While it constitutes a new departure in most respects, however, it still maintains the priority of the present. Though past and future belong inseparably to the field of what is directly given, they still have only the status of a background for the present which is the central or zero-point. From the earliest to the latest of Husserl's meditations on time, the now – *nunc stans, lebendige Gegenwart* – remains the primal source, the fountain from which the river of experienced time gushes forth.⁸

III

Heidegger's theory of the temporality of *Dasein* in *Being and Time* has more in common with Husserl's conception than the terminology would lead us to expect. Even if Heidegger avoids some of the basic terms of Husserlian phenomenology, such as consciousness, experience, and others, one can say first of all that both theories concern not a conceptualized but a lived temporality. In both cases, two-dimensional time, conceived as a succession of

now-points, is declared secondary and derived from an original, three-dimensional temporality. Heidegger's conception of the relation among the three dimensions of time (he calls them ekstases) also reminds us of Husserl. Both speak of a mutual or reciprocal determination such that the three ekstases are to be seen as inseparable aspects of a whole.

Given this similarity, which is but one manifestation of the influence of the older upon the younger colleague, it is all the more surprising to find Heidegger stating with emphasis that it is not the present but the future which should be considered privileged.⁹ With this claim Heidegger runs counter not only to his mentor but also, as we saw, to most of the philosophical tradition. What can he mean by it?

The priority of the future derives from the projective character of *Dasein*. This character can be seen as corresponding roughly to Husserl's concept of intentionality. Things have meaning, the world has meaning, because *Dasein* projects their being, that is, grasps them in terms of their purposes (*Woraufhin*). But this happens only insofar as *Dasein* projects itself, i.e. grasps itself in terms of its possibilities. In this sense *Dasein* is, as Heidegger says, always ahead of itself.¹⁰ For *Dasein*, according to Heidegger, possibility stands 'higher' than actuality in the sense that what is is understood in the light of possibility. Thus the present and the past are grasped together and interpreted by way of the future.

In order to understand the full sense of the priority of the future, it is necessary to refer to the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity. For us mortals the future is not an infinitely extended, open horizon. It finds its closure in death, where future possibility of being and non-being coincide. This finitude of our existence announces itself in anxiety. In the course of everyday life we are inclined to look away from this revelation, to flee from it into a mode of existence in which the future is regarded simply as a coming present. We de-finitize the future and thus falsify it. The future and our temporality in general are genuinely lived and authentically understood, by contrast, if we acknowledge their finitude. Running ahead toward or anticipating death, as Heidegger says, we are capable of fusing past, present and future into a coherent whole. This process is not one of conceptual understanding, however; Heidegger describes it as a resolve or resoluten-

ess. Anticipatory resoluteness is authentic existence, and it is here that the future, as finite, manifests its priority. My existence is truly my own – and thus authentic – when I acknowledge its finiteness. I do this by living it in the light of a future which finds its closure in death.

It is clear that Heidegger is opposed not only to a conception of time as a succession of now-points but to any conception which places the present in a privileged position. And such conceptions are not so much refuted as explained by their with inauthentic existence. The privilege of the present, which we find in Husserl and most of the philosophical tradition, is not simply a collective mistake; it is the expression of a pre- and extra-philosophical tendency to deny the finitude of being and of time. If we found it natural and obvious, as we began this discussion, to accord priority to the present, and were able to support this view with ontological and epistemological arguments, we were doing nothing, Heidegger would say, but giving further expression to this traditional prejudice.

IV

In his plan for completing the *Aufbau* text, Dilthey wants to burrow to the foundations, the ultimate building blocks of spiritual life. At bottom life is a flux of experiences (*Erlebnisse*) whose 'basic categorial determination'¹¹ is temporality. As with Husserl and Heidegger, it is a matter not of objective but of lived time, which is experienced as a 'restless forward push of the present' between future and past. At first this three-dimensional time seems to be centered, as for Husserl, in the present. Here we live 'in the fullness of our reality' and from here we regard actively the future of possibilities and passively the unalterable past.¹² As Dilthey's theory develops, however, it is otherwise. Simply to live is not necessarily to achieve what Dilthey calls the 'coherence of life'.¹³ Even though the experiences that make up life do not simply succeed one another, but are lived as parts of a temporal whole, the larger sense or significance of this whole is not thereby available to us. To achieve such an understanding of life we need reflexion (*Besinnung*) which avails itself of three basic 'categories

of thought'. If we follow Dilthey's discussion of this process of reflexion, it becomes clear, though he never says it explicitly, that neither the present nor the future has priority, but the past.

The 'categories of thought'¹⁴ are value, purpose and significance or meaning, and they function according to the temporal perspective we take toward the course of life. Values relate us to the present, in that we assign positive or negative worth to the realities around us. Our purposes refer us to the future, in which we seek to realize what is valuable. Significance is available to us only in memory, when we grasp and view together elapsed portions of the course of our lives.

First Dilthey seems not to assign priority to any of these categories. On second thought a certain order emerges. Values are ranged alongside one another in the present; the category of value is not itself in a position to relate them to one other. Purposes are simply values projected into the future, and they too have no ordering principle built in. 'It is like a chaos of harmonies and dissonances',¹⁵ Dilthey says, and only the category of significance is capable of transforming this cacophony into the well-formed melody that constitutes a coherent life. The category of significance thus has priority over the other two because only it can find coherence in the values and purpose of a life.

With this the priority of the past is clearly indicated. Significance is, as we saw, the category of memory, or retrospect. Perhaps we should not be surprised to hear this opinion from Dilthey, the historian and biographer, whose major project is to secure a rightful place for the human sciences. What he is asserting here is nothing other than the advantage of retrospective, historical knowledge. Human life consists of plans, intentions, purposes; only in retrospect can we know which of these were realized, how they related to their concrete circumstances and to the plans and purposes of others. Only after the fact do we know the true, rather than the merely wished for, result of actions. Only afterwards can the sense of a life be discerned.

To assert in this way the priority of the past over the other temporal dimensions is not, of course, entirely new. Hegel had also held that memory is what brings to light the truth of a spiritual development. Life as lived is confusing and full of mistakes and

disappointments; only sober, subsequent reflexion can find meaning in it. In a more modest but similar way, the advantages of retrospection are pointed out by such philosophers as R.G. Collingwood and A.C. Danto.

For the individual, of course, the implications of this doctrine are depressing, if not paradoxical. At the beginning of the *Aufbau*, and elsewhere, Dilthey had advanced the view that the individual knows himself in the same way that others know him, namely through his actions, his expressions, the effects of his life on others.¹⁶ The temporal interpretation of the categories of understanding seems to take a further and more radical step: The individual will never be able to understand his own life as well as another could, because he is always in the midst of it. At most he can understand his past; present and future are still confused and undecided. 'One would have to await the end of life; only in the hour of death could one survey the whole and discern from there the connection of the parts'.¹⁷ Even my past, as it appears to me now, may look quite different in the final reckoning. One is reminded of the paradox of *eudaimonia*, mentioned by Aristotle in the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: Since happiness can only be ascribed to a whole life, one could never call a man happy until he was dead, and no longer in a position to enjoy it. In Dilthey the result seems just as gloomy, if not more so. The temporality of life rules out the understanding of life – at least of one's own, the one we want above all to understand. Only when we turn to the finished lives of others can we find meaning. As for ourselves, it is ultimately left to the judgement of others whether our life makes any sense.

v

We claimed at the outset that these three thinkers have a similar approach – broadly speaking, a phenomenological one – in dealing with temporality. We have also seen the extent to which their results are similar. We must now turn to the discrepancy we have discovered in the matter of priority. How are we to explain it? Is one of the three simply right? Is their difference only apparent? Is there a deeper-lying unity to be found? Can we take this

difference seriously and thereby advance our thinking about temporality?

We could proceed *ad hominem* and attribute the difference of views to a difference of personalities. People can in fact be distinguished by their tendency of privilege one or the other of the dimensions of time. We all know people who live in or for the future, those for whom everything present and even the past has only instrumental value for the attainment of future goals which, once achieved, become boring and are cast aside. We also know all too well those who live only in the present, who think neither of tomorrow nor of yesterday. And dwelling on the good old days is not the only way of living in the past. Freud has taught us of more significant ways of being imprisoned by it. Not only individuals, but stages in the lives of individuals, and indeed whole groups, generations and epochs could be classified in this way. Think of Weber's portrait of the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, which could be given a temporal interpretation. We do not have to look far to find examples of societies that live only in the present. And collective nostalgia is not unknown. Can it be that our three philosophers are simply expressing philosophical or sociological syndromes when they accord priority to one of the dimensions of time? To be sure, it might be quite difficult to align these three personalities with these particular preferences. And quite apart from that, one could question whether it is worthy of a genuine philosophical discussion to try to overcome a difference of views by explaining it psychologically and sociologically. It was Dilthey himself, of course, who considered it not only valid but even important to deal with philosophers' views in terms of their biographies and world-views.

There may still be a way of accounting for the difference of views which deals with the issues themselves. The three philosophers may treat of the same theme with a similar approach, but they have, after all, different questions they want answered and in this sense different interests. Perhaps this difference of interest could make understandable the discrepancy that concerns us here.

Could we not say, for example, that Husserl in his lectures describes immediately experienced, that is, prereflective or unreflected temporality, whereas Heidegger and Dilthey are interested in a more reflective level of experience? To be sure, reflective here

does not mean conceptualized, two-dimensional time. But even if Heidegger's so-called authentic temporality, with its privileged future, is not to be described as a reflection, it does constitute a frame of mind which steps beyond the confusing interests of the everyday and surveys the wholeness of life in the light of death. In Dilthey's case one can clearly distinguish between experience and life on the one hand and, on the other, the stage of reflection in which one seeks, autobiographically or scientifically, the coherence of life.

And how do we account for the further discrepancy between Heidegger and Dilthey? Here we could distinguish, broadly speaking, between ethical and epistemological interests. Though Heidegger's authenticity is more reflective than prereflective, its goal is not knowledge; it is resoluteness, i.e. the active shaping of life by way of the future. Dilthey, by contrast, is interested in knowledge of life; he is trying to ground the sciences of man. In Heidegger, authenticity is a matter of one's own life, the ownness of life. Knowledge is something I can have not only of myself but also of others, perhaps even primarily of others, as we saw.

Our attempted solution to the discrepancy would thus be as follows: Husserl gives us an accurate but limited description of temporality. He describes only time as immediately experienced, which in Heideggerian language would have to be called everyday, inauthentic time. Here we are indeed centered in the present, while past and future function as background horizons. But Husserl does not provide us with an adequate phenomenology of reflective temporality (or indeed, one could add, of reflection in general). What he does not see is that there we are capable of escaping this immersion in the present and shaping our existence as a whole in full awareness of our finitude. Another form of escape from the present is that offered by the humanities, especially history, in which we understand life – if not our own then that of others – retrospectively.

Yet we should not, I think, be satisfied with this attempted compromise, for several reasons. First, it rests on certain subtle but important misinterpretations of the three philosophers. For Heidegger, everydayness is not *eo ipso* inauthentic, if I understand him correctly, but rather neutral with respect to authenticity and inauthenticity. And Heidegger would not look kindly on our

attempt to interpret his doctrine in ethical terms. As for Husserl, he would probably not agree that this description applies only to pre-reflexive temporality, much less to the further suggestion that it depicts only a false, superficial, or secondary conception of time. And finally, our compromise links Dilthey with the notion of a sharp discontinuity between life as lived and the humanistic understanding of life; whereas he clearly sees in the latter the extension and enrichment of the former.

To be sure, if our purpose here is to advance our own understanding of temporality, we need not be bound to the letter of these theories; nor must we always expect an author's approval of our interpretation of his thought. But there are other reasons for thinking our compromise solution inadequate. It is not uninteresting to say that from one perspective the future, from another the present, and from a third the past is prior. But does this dispose of the priority question? It seems to me that the discrepancy we have been discussing can teach us more if we look for a deeper-lying unity among the three theories in question, which in turn can be accomplished if we seek a deeper unity among the time-dimensions themselves. But this is possible only if we are able to get beyond the notion of priority altogether.

Let us recall how the discussion of priority began. Heidegger may have been the first to raise the issue explicitly, but he by no means invented it. As we saw, he only reacted against the traditional and unquestioned assumption of the priority of the present. In a certain sense Dilthey, following Hegel, presents us with another way of questioning the traditional dominance of the present.

It seems to me justified to count Husserl among those who give priority to the present, and to attribute this doctrine to the influence of metaphysical remnants in his thought that should have been overcome by phenomenology. Moreover, this view seems to contradict the most important insight of the lectures on time-consciousness. I am referring, of course, to the concept of the retentive-proceptive field, that is, the insight that consciousness spans the dimensions of time, holds them in its grasp. It is not isolated in the present, possessing only indirect and unreliable access to past and future. Only ontological and epistemological questions require such an order of priority among the

dimensions of time. For phenomenology, which is supposed to go beyond such questions, it suffices to keep these dimensions apart, i.e. to understand their articulation. The present is what it is because it is not past and future and does not function as they do in our experience, not because it is the source, ground, etc. of the other two. Phenomenology, in my view, is a descriptive discipline, not one designed to provide metaphysical grounds – even though its founder often confused the two functions.

It is to Heidegger's and Dilthey's credit, then, that they try, each in his own way, to liberate us from the dominance of the present. But is it necessary, to do this, to assert the priority of another time dimension in its place? The fact that Heidegger and Dilthey seem to go off in opposite directions on this point indicates to us, I think, that something has gone wrong. If we look more closely at their positions, we see that they are not as far apart as they first appear.

Heidegger's claim is not, we recall, that we live in the future, but that authentically we interpret the present and the past by way of the future. Resoluteness, in which the priority of the future supposedly manifests itself, is called anticipatory (*vor-laufende*) that is, it runs ahead toward death. We take over (or over-take) the standpoint of the end-point, the perspective which permits us to survey *Dasein* as a whole. Is this not the same as considering life as if it were past, and is this not precisely the standpoint of retrospective historical understanding? Dilthey would have to admit that in our own case we have the freedom to regard our life in this way. We need not limit ourselves to the lives of others or restrict ourselves to our own past in order to find coherence and significance. The confusion and incoherence of values and purposes, which corresponds to what Heidegger calls the fragmented (*zerstreut*) character of the everyday, can be fused into a meaningful whole by means of this quasi-retrospective anticipation. Heidegger's *Vorlaufen* gives us access not, of course, to the real past but to a future past or future perfect – that which will have been – which we can, at least in part, still change.

But only in part. And Heidegger, of course, would have to admit that the future past is only an 'as if' past which is in fact still open. Any significance or coherence achieved through resoluteness is not something that can simply be known, as if it were

fixed. It is still to be brought forth and sustained, and to that extent it is vulnerable and fragile. It is a coherence that can at any moment fall to pieces, fragment itself into inauthenticity.

This is due to the fact that such anticipation is only *quasi*-retrospective; which in turn derives from the fact that it is, after all, from the present that we make this anticipatory leap. We are not isolated in the present; we have the freedom to surpass it. But this freedom is not absolute. The present remains the inalienable 'situation' of our temporality. But its role is not one of priority but merely that of the standpoint which gives us access to the field of time.

The anticipatory-retrospective structure of temporality, sketched here, is relevant not only to the context of the question of the coherence of life that we find in Heidegger and Dilthey. Other philosophers have found the same structure in analysing action. Thus it is appropriate not only to the longer-term temporality of a whole life but also to the more limited contexts of the means-end relation. Alfred Schutz speaks precisely of the 'future perfect' in his analysis of action: we perform an action consciously insofar as we regard it from the perspective of its having been completed.¹⁸ This is merely the temporal articulation of the teleological structure that any theory of action must account for.

To conclude: we arrive, it seems to me, at the following result. The genuine lesson to be learned from the phenomenology of temporality has nothing to do with assigning priority to one of its dimensions but consists in a correct understanding of how those dimensions relate to one another and function within experience. The notion of priority derives from the tradition. Dilthey and Heidegger are quite right to point out that in certain contexts it is not the present but the past or the future that are privileged. But in the end, past, present and future are equally privileged members of a unifold structure. To invoke a notion used by Husserl as an example and by Dilthey as a metaphor, we can say that it makes no mere sense to claim priority for one of the dimensions of time that it does to claim it for one note in a well-formed melody.

NOTES

1. First published 1900-01. Trans. J.N. Findlay, New York, Humanities Press, 1970.
2. See vol. VII of Dilthey's *Gesammelte Schriften* (ed. B. Groethuysen, 5th ed., Stuttgart, B. Teubner, 1968). I refer hereafter to Dilthey, *Selected Writings* ed. and trans. H.P. Rickman (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), abbreviated as 'Rickman', which contains selections from the *Aufbau*, though the translations are largely my own. In preparing this paper I was not able to consult the new vol. XIX of the *Gesammelte Schriften*, which contains relevant materials.
3. See *Husserliana* vol. X, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins* ed. R. Boehm (The Hague, M. Nijhoff 1966). The English translation is by J.S. Churchill *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1964). I refer to paragraph numbers instead of pages.
4. *Being and Time* trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, (New York, Harper and Row, 1962). Again I refer to paragraph numbers.
5. This distinction was made by J. McTaggart in *The Nature of Existence*, vol. II, ed. C.D. Broad, Cambridge, 1927.
6. Husserl, *op. cit.*, para. 1-2.
7. *Ibid.* para. 11-14.
8. *Ibid.* para. 36. Cf. K. Held, *Lebendige Gegenwart* (Phaenomenologica, vol. 23, Den Haag 1966).
9. Heidegger, *op. cit.* para. 65.
10. *Ibid.* para. 41.
11. Rickman p. 209.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Der Zusammenhang des Lebens*. Rickmann translates it as the 'connectedness of life', p. 212.
14. *Ibid.* p. 215 f.
15. *Ibid.* p. 216.
16. *Ibid.* p. 176.
17. *Ibid.* p. 236.
18. A. Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, trans. G. Walsh and F. Lehnert (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1967) p. 61.

II.10. World, World-View, Lifeworld: Husserl and the Conceptual Relativists

Does it make sense to distinguish between world on the one hand and world-view or world-picture on the other? The following reflections are devoted to this question and its relation to the Husserlian concept of the lifeworld. Their purpose is to raise questions rather than provide answers or advance theses.

I shall begin by quoting a passage from one of the appendices to the *Crisis*:

The lifeworld is the world that is constantly pregiven, valid constantly and in advance as existing, but not valid because of some purpose of investigation, according to some universal end. Every end presupposes it; even the universal end of knowing it in scientific truth presupposes it, and in advance; and in the course of [scientific] work it presupposes it ever anew, as a world existing, in its own way [to be sure], but existing nevertheless. The scientific world (nature in the sense of natural science, world in the sense of philosophy as universal positive science) is a purposeful structure extending to infinity ...¹

In his book *Die Lebenswelt*² Gerd Brand cites these and similar passages from the *Crisis* manuscripts in order to bring out an important aspect of the concept of the lifeworld. According to Husserl the lifeworld is *not* a historically or socially relative or otherwise conditioned or limited *conception* of the world, it is not a scientific or even pre- or extra-scientific *interpretation* of the world. Rather, Husserl insists on sharply distinguishing all such world-conceptions, – interpretations, – pictures from the world *of which* they are conceptions, interpretations and pictures. It is the

world in this latter sense, prior to all conceptions, that Husserl calls the lifeworld. While there are many possible conceptions of the world, there is only one lifeworld, since it has 'in all its relative features, a *general structure*. This general structure, to which everything that exists relatively is bound, is not itself relative'.³

It must be said that *terminologically* speaking this is true only for the texts of the *Crisis* period. In the *Cartesian Meditations* 'lifeworld' has almost the opposite sense, e.g. where Husserl speaks of the 'concrete lifeworlds in which the relatively or absolutely separate communities live their passive and active lives'.⁴ In the sense used in the *Crisis* such a plural would not be possible. But the *substantial* difference between world and world-concept is present in the earlier writings. For example: 'phenomenological explication does nothing but *explicate the sense this world has for us all, prior to any philosophizing ... a sense which philosophy can uncover but never alter ...*'.⁵ And the same view can be traced back to the concept of the world of the natural attitude which we find in *Ideas I*.

If we take seriously this feature of Husserl's late concept of the lifeworld we can see that, like the early essay 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science', the *Crisis* is directed not only against naturalism and 'physicalistic objectivism' but also against *Weltanschauungsphilosophie*, i.e., against historical, sociological and other forms of conceptual relativism.

How does it stand today with these two adversaries of Husserl's phenomenology? Naturalism or physicalistic objectivism seems largely, with some exceptions, to have been defeated. But the victor is not transcendental philosophy, Husserlian or Kantian, but precisely a wide-spread conceptual relativism extending even to the philosophy of natural science. This relativism takes many forms and comes from different directions: in part it is influenced by the Husserlian critique of objectivism and even by Husserl's concept of the lifeworld itself – though perhaps in misunderstood form. In part, e.g. in the analytic philosophy of science of Kuhn and Feyerabend, it arose quite independently of phenomenology. As representatives of conceptual relativism in the broad sense intended here we can also count: the later Wittgenstein, H.-G. Gadamer, Michel Foucault, the earlier Frankfurt School and such 'apocalyptic' thinkers as the late Heidegger and Jacques Derrida.

Now I would like to claim that these philosophers, as different as they are from each other, agree on one point that puts them in sharp opposition to Husserl's concept of the lifeworld. This is the view that the distinction Husserl wants to make between world and world-view or world-picture is not possible. Let us now consider Husserl's distinction and the reasons for denying it.

If Husserl were a naive realist the distinction would be clear, if not very interesting: the world is simply reality in itself; it is what it is, independently of our relation to it. On the other side are our ideas, which can be true or false, or perhaps (as Hegel describes this view) as instrument or medium of cognition, are in principle incapable of adequation to reality. But all this has nothing to do with Husserl's concept of world. The world, which for Husserl is prior to all ideas and views, is a given and pre-given world. Without its reference to subjectivity 'world', in the phenomenological sense of the term, has no meaning. The world is for consciousness, it exists only in relation to consciousness, it is the horizon of possible objects for an intentional conscious life. This is why Husserl writes, in the text we quoted at the beginning, after distinguishing between lifeworld and 'purposive structures', that even the lifeworld, 'which precedes all purpose', is a 'structure' [*Gebilde*], but not a 'purposive structure' [*Zweckgebilde*].⁶ By using the term 'structure', with quotation marks, he means that even the lifeworld is structured or constituted by subjectivity, though not by the higher-level constitution of 'practical reason' which is broad enough to include logical reason.⁷ Every conceptual structure is purposive in this broadest sense. The development of concepts and conceptual frameworks occurs through interests and motives that derive from historical traditions and circumstances. This is true of the historically given interest in knowing the world in the sense of scientific truth. But prior to developing any conceptual framework consciousness already has a world, which is then overlaid with an 'interpretation' through such a framework. The world remains the constant presupposition and background for any and every conceptual world-view. It does not require conceptual mediation to be accessible to us; nor does it lie beyond our experience. On the contrary, it is directly given, it is what is closest to us.

Is there such a world, prior to all conceptual frameworks and

purposive structures? But how can there be a world, it might be objected, which is the horizon of human experience and activity, but which is not conceptually articulated? In the *Crisis* Husserl often contrasts the theoretician, whether scientist or philosopher, with the pre- or non-scientific 'ordinary person'. But concepts are not only the property of professional theoreticians. Everyone has some conceptual view of the world as a whole, whether he develops this view himself or takes it over ready-made from science, from philosophy, from religion or perhaps from all three, and whether his view is clear, vague or even internally inconsistent.

Husserl would probably answer this naively formulated objection by saying: of course, we all try, some with more success than others, to make some meaningful whole out of the bewildering confusion of our experience, and the scientist's activity is just the consistent and critical attempt to satisfy this healthy human need. But such theorizing, whether practiced by Sunday philosophers or professional ones, is a human activity with a particular purpose, and as such it necessarily occurs within a horizon. It is the theoretical response to an already pre-given world. The latter is no chaos, even if it is not theoretically constructed whole either; rather, it has a meaningful structure, which is not produced but precisely presupposed by theoretical activity.

But the same objection can be expressed in a less naive way. True, the individual's theoretical activity occurs on the basis of a passively pre-given world-horizon. But this horizon itself incorporates a conceptual view or interpretation of the world which the individual already has before he begins, for whatever personal reasons, to develop a particular, conscious world-view. The acquisition of concepts does not always occur consciously or purposively. A person already has a world-interpretation just in virtue of speaking a language. Without language there is no world; and language does not just name what is already there, it also determines what is nameable, what can occur. The world can only be given to us (if 'given' is the correct term), insofar as it conforms to a possible language. But there are many languages and groups of languages. If all these could be reduced to a single, universal, ideal language, perhaps it could be said to refer to a world beyond all linguistic differences. But such a reduction is not possible, we are told. Language, with its world-interpreting functions, is so

diverse, even within a single natural language, that we can hardly even catalogue, much less define these functions. At best we can avail ourselves of metaphors, like that of the game, in order to make the role of language comprehensible.

Thus the distinctions between the passivity and activity of the human relation to the world does not suffice to justify Husserl's distinction between world (life-world) and world-view. Because of the specificity of language, the world is always already interpreted for the individual; in hermeneutic terminology, it is not pre-given but pre-conceptualized or pre-understood. It is always understood *as something*, to use Heidegger's terms, and this 'as' contains a world-view. Even the distinction between purposive structure and the world which precedes all purpose is questionable if we consider the Marxian concept of ideology. Understood as a passively acquired world-view, ideology does not *arise* from conscious purposes, but it does serve a purpose, that of maintaining the existing social order.

Against this conception phenomenology may want to introduce its distinction between picturing consciousness (*Bildbewusstsein*) and self-giving intuition. If a world-view is really a picture of the world, then it has the function of a portrayal *of something*, just as a picture portrays (*darstellt*) its object. No one confuses the picture with the pictured object; we recognize it *as* a picture precisely by distinguishing it from the object. But this response, too, is insufficient as an argument against current conceptual relativism. Even if the term 'world-picture' is used, what is meant is precisely a picture which is *not* recognized as such. The person who is under the influence of such a 'picture' believes that he is simply viewing reality itself. The pictured world is simply the real world, 'here and there it is at most 'otherwise' than I supposed', in the words of *Ideen I*,⁸ but it is taken as the one and only existing world. Why use the misleading term 'world-picture'? In order to indicate that such a person does *not* have the one and only real world directly given, but one view of it among others, whether he recognizes this or not.

The conceptual relativist may want to point out that Husserl himself introduced the idea of such a world-picture is his late work. Husserl speaks of man as a 'historical being', and of the 'sedimented conceptuality' belonging to every consciousness.⁹

What is taken for granted (*Selbstverständlichkeiten*), which Husserl wants to transform into what is understood (*Verständlichkeiten*) is not only the prejudices of the natural attitude but also those of a historical tradition. Terms like 'taken for granted' and 'sedimented' clearly suggest conceptual frameworks that are not recognized *as* such. Husserl also says that the results of theoretical activity 'flow into' the concrete lifeworld.¹⁰ Is this only the trival observation that the products of technology, as well as the scientists' theories, are objects in the lifeworld of non-scientists? Or does it mean that the theoretical interpretation of the world becomes sedimented as the structure of the passively pregiven world of the non-scientist? If this is so it contradicts the other sense of Husserl's concept of the lifeworld. Husserl seems to recognize this contradiction in the *Crisis* and sees himself in an 'uncomfortable situation'.¹¹

Husserl's concept of the world could be defended in the following way: Even if world-views are not actively produced by the individual but are passively taken over, they are still views *of* the world. Even if the individual has no access to the world which is independent of and prior to his world-view, the world is still 'there' as the intentional object, so to speak, of his view. But such a defense would be unphenomenological and would in fact abandon the Husserlian concept of world. It would mean either falling back into the standpoint of naive realism or turning to the Kantian thing-in-itself. Such a world, which must 'be there' because of the intentional nature of consciousness, but can never be given *to* consciousness, is an unknown world-in-itself whose relation to consciousness is at best that of a *mundus intelligibilis*. Husserl, we know, sharply attacked the idea of an unknown world in itself; and in any case such a world have little to do with a lifeworld defined precisely as being immediately given in intuition. For Husserl, as for Hegel, the distinction between the object and our view of the object is a distinction made *within* experience.¹² For Hegel, of course, the realm of 'objects referred to' is not a single lifeworld common to all conscious life. Rather, this realm differs for each '*Gestalt*' or figure of spirit. Thus the distinction between 'our view of objects' and 'objects referred to' is completely compatible with the idea of a multiplicity of world-views which have *no* shared, presupposed lifeworld.

It is well known that Hegel's notion of the *Gestalten* of spirit stands behind all later world-view philosophies and conceptual relativisms, even though Hegel himself was the farthest thing from a relativist. For Hegel, as for Husserl, all world-views stand within a single horizon of truth; but for Hegel this horizon is not an ahistorical structure which underlies these world-views and encompasses lifeworld and subjectivity, as it is for Husserl; it is the process whereby these world-views unfold in history, a process Hegel calls spirit coming to itself. Though the idea of this unified, unfolding historical process is no longer convincing, the Hegelian notion is still widely accepted that science, religion, art, politics and even philosophy are not separate cultural accomplishments, distinguishable from a neutrally experienced world, but are manifestations and expressions of a certain way of experiencing the world. For Hegel there is no experience and no theoretical activity which exists by itself or is restricted to one domain of objects. Every consciousness aims, at least indirectly or mediately, at the absolute or the whole through the medium of a particular *Gestalt*. This conception, as taken over by Dilthey, influenced not only the Heidegger of *Being and Time* but also the Husserl of the *Crisis*. But Husserl attempted, with the concept of the lifeworld, to rescue his transcendental philosophy from the crippling force of this conception.

Heidegger, for his part, claims in his late work to overcome the idea of the world-view. A plurality of world-views and a clash of world-view is possible only in an age in which the world is reduced to a picture, i.e. in which 'what is' (*das Seiende*) is interpreted according to the modern concept of objectivity, where the world as a picture stands over against 'representing-producing (*vorstellend-herstellend*) man'.¹³ Yet is Heidegger not simply further relativizing modern world-view-relativism with a change in terminology? What was called world-view he calls interpretation of being (*Seinsauslegung*) or 'basic metaphysical stance' (*metaphysische Grundstellung*),¹⁴ and to the modern metaphysical stance belongs among other things the idea of the world-view. Just as there are different world-views, so there are different 'basic metaphysical stances'. To be sure Heidegger does not compare and contrast these stances with each other, say that of Protagoras with that of Descartes. The latter is seen as a variant of the former,

and both together belong to metaphysics as a whole, which is also called philosophy. But then philosophy itself is relativized: it is a single *Seinsauslegung*, which extends from Thales to Nietzsche and Husserl and which has now 'reached its end', arrived at its 'most extreme possibility'.¹⁵ Is metaphysics (philosophy) just one interpretation of being among others? The alternative to philosophy for Heidegger is not another philosophy, not a new metaphysical interpretation of being but a 'thinking' of being whose nature, however, Heidegger does not reveal. The only thing we can be sure of is that it requires the 'sacrifice of previous thinking',¹⁶ the 'overcoming of metaphysics'.¹⁷

We encounter similar views among those French philosophers who are influenced by structuralism. In sharp opposition to the anti-relativism of their sources, e.g. in Saussurean linguistic and the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, these philosophers are developing what seems to be a relativism of the most radical sort. The *epistémès* of M. Foucault¹⁸ are world-interpreting or world-ordering conceptual schemes which succeed one another in history, apparently without transition. Such self-enclosed systems, which determine the whole culture and human experience of a period, can be unearthed by an 'archeology of knowledge', but the reasons for their appearance and disappearance, as well as the sense of their relations to other systems, are hidden from us. Foucault insistently denies any identification of his concept of *epistémé* with that of world-view or *Zeitgeist*.¹⁹ but it is hard to see more than terminological differences.

In contrast to this unrelated multiplicity of isolated systems, J. Derrida affirms that such systems form a whole which, as for Heidegger, is that of Western metaphysics. Derrida does not simply replace the idea of a neutral experiential world, prior to conceptual schemes, with that of an experiential world structured by concepts; he questions the whole idea of a world beyond language to which language refers, something we could encounter face to face. The idea of an ultimate *signifié* of all *signifiants*, of a 'living present' which fulfills all signitive intentions, is seen as the prime illusion of the *métaphysique de la présence*. In fact all signs just refer to other signs, and the putative encounter with a presence beyond language is deferred *in infinitum*. The traditional and derogatory characterization of writing as sign for a sign – i.e.

for the spoken word, which embodies the unity of thought and being – is taken by Derrida as the model for all language and all thought. In his sense even Heidegger's attempt to think being belongs to Western *métaphysique de la présence*, which is portrayed by Derrida, as by Heidegger, as an accomplished and finished *clôture*.²⁰

How does all this relate to the Husserlian concept of the lifeworld, and to the distinction between world and world-view or world-picture? Has Husserl's concept been rendered obsolete by this accumulation of relativisms, or is there a possible response to them?

One response was of course already given by Husserl in 1900.²¹ Every relativist is a skeptic, and every form of skepticism contradicts itself. Anyone who claims that truth is relative to this or that, whether the psychic faculties of the individual or the world-view of a particular age or even the whole of Western metaphysics, makes a claim whose validity is unrestricted and which is not itself meant as a relative but as an absolute truth, i.e. something which this person says is impossible. But it is clear that this 'refutation', which made such a big impression in its day, has hardly curbed the relativistic tendencies of recent philosophy, and we must ask why. This refutation fails, not, in my opinion, because it presupposes a conception of truth that has been surpassed, say by Heidegger or Gadamer, as some claim, but rather because it is too narrow to cover all the varieties of philosophical expression. The relativism of Heidegger, of Derrida or of Foucault – and also that of the late Wittgenstein – is not set forth in a series of theses, not justified by arguments that appeal to logical principles, as if it laid claim to an objective, timeless truth. Rather, through aphorisms, metaphors upon metaphors, and – especially in Foucault's work – countless examples, a position is suggested which is never formally articulated. The only real effect of Husserl's refutation was that philosophers of this sort tend to avoid, for good reasons, traditional philosophical argumentation. Thus the *belief* in relativism has also affected the *style* of philosophical writing. The weakness of Husserl's refutation is that it is aimed not at the content of the belief itself but only at its straightforward expression in traditional language. Heidegger quotes Aristotle's remark that 'it is uneducated not to have an eye for when

it is necessary to look for a proof, and when this is not necessary'.²²

A refutation of relativism similar to Husserl's likewise based on formal arguments, has recently been put forward by Donald Davidson. Such a relativism, the argument goes, could only be maintained if we had a clear instance of a 'conceptual scheme' which could not be translated into our own. But we can only recognize concepts and conceptual relations as such by observing, in the linguistic and other behavior of those who supposedly use them, a conceptual relation to the world which we can also observe. But to observe this would be *eo ipso* to translate the other system into ours, which was supposed to be impossible. Without the possibility of such translation the behavior of these supposedly alien persons would not even be recognizable as rational or conceptual behavior, and their putative conceptual scheme could not even be identified as such.²³

But this argument is likewise incapable of overcoming relativism, and not because it presupposes a literary style that our relativists are unwilling to adopt. The argument shows that we could never *recognize* an alien conceptual scheme, but it does not deny the 'very idea' of such a scheme; in fact it presupposes it. Thinkers like Heidegger and Derrida do not advance their position by comparing our conceptual scheme with other actual or possible schemes. Rather, they trace our thinking and our world-view back to certain basic presuppositions or concepts which are made to look arbitrary. Thereby they raise the possibility of changing these basic concepts, without telling us how they are to be changed. Both insist that they are not even capable of proposing alternatives because they themselves are still within the enclosure of Western metaphysics. Their project is not reform or reconstruction but destruction and deconstruction, which is at best capable of clearing the ground for the conception of alternatives.

Further, the translation argument may not stand up even against the less radical relativists. Granted, some translation is necessary in order to recognize an alien language or conceptual system as such; and translation presupposes shared concepts and a common reality correlated with these concepts. But what is common may be something quite limited, like the overlapping of two circles. Those concepts we share with persons in an alien or

past culture – for example, those of perceptual objects, of perceived space and experienced time – which make possible limited communication or historical understanding, are integrated in each case (i.e. in their culture and in ours) into a whole system which gives to these subordinate concepts their sense. Perhaps our understanding of such cultures extends only far enough to establish that these subordinate concepts are combined for them with other concepts in a way we do not comprehend at all.

To this Husserl could perhaps respond that precisely the perceptual world of experienced space, time and objects is a matter not of subordinate concepts belonging to a larger system, but of basic concepts upon which all other elements of a world-view must be built. We can learn to understand a foreign language or an alien conceptual system, he might say, because all its other concepts, however complex they are, can ultimately be explained in terms of these basic concepts, which we, the learners, share. But this response would be guilty of a *petitio principii*. We cannot say *a priori* that we are in principle capable of completely mastering any alien conceptual system. It could be that its concepts are *not* all explainable in perceptual terms. And in any case, is it not implausible to maintain that a person's space- and time-concepts are not dependent on his total world-view, that they constitute a neutral territory unaffected by the religious, mythical or scientific aspects of his life?

While it may thus be that these attempts to refute relativism are inconclusive, serious questions can still be raised on other grounds. What evidence are we actually given for the existence of purportedly different, all-encompassing and mutually exclusive world-views? Kuhn draws on scientific theories, Foucault on the written documents of economics, linguistics and jurisprudence, Gadamer, Heidegger and Derrida on works of literature and philosophy – all products of high culture. Is it entirely clear that such works express the world-view of a whole historical period? Or do they merely express the views of the intellectual elite that produces them? How do we know that such testimony expresses the views of ordinary people, that such language-games really reveal the 'forms of life' of non-theorists, that Aristotle's remarks about being, for example, have anything at all to do with the concrete lifeworld of a non-philosophical Greek of the 4th Centu-

ry B.C.? Does such testimony really provide sufficient grounds for rejecting our (perhaps naive) view that we share the same world with the ancient Greeks, with members of an alien culture, and even with persons in the future? It is not surprising when Derrida claims that the signs of our language refer only to other signs. Today's philosophers, forever occupied with the tradition, live in a world of texts, which refer only to other texts, beyond which no further reality seems discernable. In a similar situation Husserl said: 'back to the things themselves!' and then: 'back to the life-world!' Like all rationalists he did not believe in an elite, even if he said that philosophers should be functionaries for mankind. He saw that we – especially we philosophers – are blinkered by tradition and sedimented concepts, but he believed that all of us – and not only philosophers – could free ourselves from such blinders. The relativist has a different view: All of use are blinkered, limited by our historical or linguistic or metaphysical situation; it makes no sense to speak of emancipation or responsibility for self (*Selbstverantwortung*) in Husserl's sense. Of course, it is the relativists alone who are capable of this insight, even if they are careful enough not to present it as scientific truth. Their insight is indeed not available to everyone, as a scientific claim would be, but only to those properly educated in the tradition. Thus these philosophers are not only occupied with an elite, they themselves constitute an elite, a league of the well-educated who know when it is not necessary to look for proof.

But the reproach of elitism is unfortunately itself not an argument. It remains to be seen whether a world beyond the text is there to be found.

NOTES

1. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970) p. 382.
2. Gerd Brand, *Die Lebenswelt*, (Berlin, 1971), p. 17.
3. *The Crisis*, p. 139.
4. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1960), p. 133.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
6. *The Crisis*, p. 382.
7. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 77.
8. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1983), p. 57.
9. *The Crisis*, p. 71.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
12. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A.V. Miller (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 53.
13. M. Heidegger, 'Die Zeit des Weltbildes' in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt, 1957), pp. 82–83.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
15. M. Heidegger, 'Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens', in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen, 1969), p. 63.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
17. 'Die Zeit des Weltbildes' (op. cit.), p. 96.
18. M. Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* (Paris, 1966), p. 13.
19. M. Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris, 1969), pp. 25–26.
20. Cf. J. Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris, 1967) first part, esp. p. 72.
21. Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, tr. J.N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970) vol. I: *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*.
22. Heidegger, 'Das Ende der Philosophie ...' (op. cit.), p. 80.
23. D. Davidson, 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme' on *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 47, 1974, pp. 5–20.

II.11. The Lifeworld Revisted: Husserl and Some Recent Interpreters

The concept of the lifeworld was of central importance to the revived interest in Husserl's thought during the 1950's and 1960's. In Europe this revival was influenced jointly by the French existentialists and by the post-war publication of Husserl's collected works. Maurice Merleau-Ponty had referred at several points in his 1945 *Phenomenology of Perception* to the unpublished portions of Husserl's last work, *The Crisis of European Sciences*, in which the *Lebenswelt* figures prominently, and those portions were then published in 1954 in vol. VI of *Husserliana*. As existential phenomenology attracted interest in North America in the 1960's, Husserl's late work was seen as part of a trend that included Merleau's concept of the *monde vécu* and Heidegger's emphasis in *Being and Time* on being-in-the-world.

Inevitably the philosophical landscape has changed since then, and the lifeworld has been somewhat lost from view. This shift is not without its historical ironies. Continental European philosophy was contrasted in the post-war period with a strong Anglo-American preoccupation with language. But German and French philosophy has itself taken up language since then, either literally or as a powerful metaphor for human thought and experience. Hermeneutics sees human reality as a text to be interpreted, and structuralism and post-structuralism analyse everything in terms of realms of discourse closed in upon themselves. Meanwhile Anglo-American philosophers have for some time felt the constraints imposed by taking language as the paradigm for thought, and in some quarters Husserl's concept of intentionality is being proposed as a mentalistic solution to the problem of linguistic meaning.

In my view something important has been lost in these developments, something valuable that Husserl contributed precisely in his concept of the lifeworld. And by overlooking this contribution some of those who now focus their attention on Husserl are not fully understanding this thought. By returning to the concept of the lifeworld in this essay I hope to rectify in some measure this oversight.

What has been overlooked can be characterized in a preliminary and very general way as follows: Those who focus on language as discourse tend to dissolve the world into language or equate it with a series of conceptual projections, forgetting or denying that language refers beyond itself. Those who concentrate narrowly on Husserl's theory of meaning, and in particular on the noema as the meaning of an expression or its corresponding mental act, rightly complain that the above view overlooks the distinction between sense and reference; but in their interest in the relation between act, meaning and object meant they forget that the world as a whole is co-intended (Husserl's term is *mitgemeint*) along with particular objects of reference. In the absence of an exploration of how this co-reference works, the world is sometimes simply posited in an uncritically realist way, and indeed in a scientifically realist way, as if its status as a whole were not at issue in phenomenology. Those who focus on language as discourse at least recognize that language not only permits us to speak of this and that, but commits us to a whole system of interconnected meanings.

The conceptual picture we have presented here is not, by the way, altogether unlike the one which Husserl faced when he wrote the *Crisis*, and to which his notion of the lifeworld was meant to respond. Scientific realism (Husserl calls it 'physicalistic objectivism') was the long legacy of the modern period, and this is the primary object of Husserl's criticism in the *Crisis*; but conceptual relativism and other forms of skepticism were his long-standing adversaries as well, and I shall try to show that the concept of the lifeworld is no less addressed to them. Let us first place Husserl's idea in the context of its own time before coming back to the question of how it is relevant to ours.

The modern idea of a scientific realism has always contained elements of paradox, and the paradoxes were growing more and more acute in the early decades of this century. As physical theory penetrated ever further into the inner workings of nature, its idea of what is real seemed to differ more and more markedly from the world in which we find ourselves. The directly felt and sensed qualities of the world around us were declared mere appearances, while the reality which supposedly underlay them was deemed inaccessible to our experience. As this all-encompassing view of nature includes human beings as well, it seems to present us with a view of our own nature that we can no longer recognize as ourselves. What Husserl called the crisis of European science was not an internal crisis but an external one: the loss of its meaning for life.¹ Since the Renaissance, and perhaps since the birth of philosophy in Greece, we have lived in what Husserl thought of as a scientific culture, that is, a culture which places in our free, rational, theorizing activity its hopes for our ultimate understanding of ourselves and our place in the universe. But instead of facilitating our self-understanding science seems to have contributed to our estrangement from our world and ourselves.

There is a social side to this development of which we are all aware. The scientist's universe is not only removed from us but also incomprehensible to most of us. To those who do comprehend it, the professional scientists, we cede our right to understanding; they become intermediaries, like high priests, between us and the true nature of things, even the true nature of ourselves. And like high priests, with access to the powers of the universe, they can also direct those powers for our good or ill. The abstractness of scientific theory can suddenly become very concrete when its applications can both improve life and threaten our survival.

Husserl has no quarrel with scientists as such. We are all well advised to follow them if we seek a sophisticated physical theory and if we desire the technological advantages that result from it. Husserl's criticisms are directed at philosophers. In the face of the growing discrepancy between the scientific view and our ordinary sense of ourselves and our world, most philosophers have simply followed the lead of science. But philosophers ought

not merely to follow but to understand and even evaluate what scientists do, especially when it comes to attributing reality to their objects. Husserl said that philosophers should be functionaries for mankind,² and part of what he meant is that they should mediate between the scientists and the rest of us. But for many philosophers, what counts as real is what is determined to exist by the latest criteria of physical theory. Reduced to a mere hand-maiden or cheer-leader for science, philosophy has left the articulation of man's concrete sense of his world to the novelist and poet. This is how the novelist Milan Kundera views Husserl's notion of the crisis.³ And the literary critic Harold Bloom seems to agree that literature has taken over philosophy's function.⁴

But Husserl believes philosophy can exercise its proper reflective and critical function in relation to science in its own way. He reminds us that scientific theory is after all a human activity within a cultural space, and that this cultural space itself presupposes an everyday world of perceived things and other people. The scientist lives in the same world as the rest of us. As laymen we may think that his achievement is to devise instruments like the microscope so that he can *see* this world better than we do. But his real achievements are techniques not of seeing but of thought: the major accomplishments of modern science are really very specialized ways of thinking about and conceiving the physical world.

In putting the emphasis on the active and constructive character of the scientific view of reality, Husserl so far follows the lead of Kant. But Kant still regarded the scientifically constructed world as the best candidate for knowable reality and thus concurred in the ontological devaluation of the everyday or prescientific world. What Kant overlooked, according to Husserl, is the actual context in which scientific thinking takes its point of departure.

This context is not one of fleeting and subjective sense-data or impressions buzzing about in the scientists's head prior to being fixed and objectified by the categories of scientific thought. The world of perception has a nature of its own which, far from being confused and chaotic, is in fact coherently structured in an intentional way. It is indeed a sense-world, and its appearance to the perceiver is correlated structurally with the human body which not only passively receives impressions but actively engages itself in its surroundings.⁵ The perceived world as we experience it is

correlated with a flowing and synthetic 'bodily subjectivity'⁶ which remains 'anonymous'⁷ in the sense that for the most part we do not notice it. Husserl builds here on earlier investigations into what he calls 'passive synthesis'. He also proposes the title 'transcendental aesthetic', almost as a reproach to Kant for so severely restricting his analysis of sensibility.

But far more important than this subjective analysis of perception is its objective side. Husserl had always been a 'direct realist' in his treatment of perception, and in the *Crisis* too he stresses that here we have direct contact with a real world. Only by contrast to the rigorously mathematized and idealized scientific world is the perceived world 'subjectively relative' and changeable.⁸ In their own domain the objects of perception are stable, independent, and coherently distributed in the oriented space around our bodies. Above all they are real, and are directly given (intuited) as such. By contrast, what is posited as 'real' in the context of a sophisticated physical theory is what Husserl calls a 'logical construction'. The entities so constructed are 'in principle not perceivable'.⁹ The view which declares the perceived world 'mere appearance' is itself a psychological variant of a physical theory, in this case about how our experiences are caused. But the proponent of this theory, like everyone else, lives in the full certainty of the directly given reality of the world about him. The physical and neurological entities and events of his theory are objects of his *thought*; but he does his thinking in the perceptually 'pregiven', full-blooded real world of things and persons.

As we have seen, Husserl is led to these considerations by the growing discrepancy between the scientific concept of the real and our prescientific sense of reality, and by the failure of philosophy to come to terms with that discrepancy. Having introduced the concept of the lifeworld as a way of reassessing the significance of science, Husserl now recognizes that the lifeworld has much broader significance as a philosophical theme. Not only the sciences but any and all conceptual thought and all human cultural endeavor including philosophy itself arise within and in a certain sense presuppose the lifeworld. What had seemed a specialized problem for the philosophy of science is now seen as a 'universal problem for philosophy' as such.¹⁰ This universal problem can be characterized generally as that of the relation between thought and

intuition, but the 'empty and vague notion of intuition'¹¹ – the implied reference is again to Kant – is now grasped as the problem of the life-world and its role in our experience.

It may be thought that the concept of the lifeworld really represents nothing new in Husserl's thought, even though the term assumes new significance in this late work. And indeed we have seen that Husserl's realistic view of perception, and even the ideas of passive synthesis and of bodily subjectivity, which are at the heart of his presentation of the lifeworld in the *Crisis*, had been developed before. But as Husserl's exposition unfolds it begins to take on features that distinguish it in more than just emphasis from what has gone before.

One such feature is the prominence of the notion of *Vorgegebenheit* or pregivenness. The section's title refers to the *vorgegebene Lebenswelt*, and the lifeworld is almost always referred to in this way, sometimes as *immer schon vorgegeben* – always already pre-given. It is likewise frequently said to be 'presupposed' and 'taken for granted'.

'Pre-given', of course, means 'given before'. Before what? In keeping with the focus on scientific realism with which the section begins Husserl obviously means 'prior to science', and that in the sense we have already outlined: people live in the real world of perception before they develop sophisticated theories about it or the 'reality' which lies behind it and causes its appearances, etc. Even after the development of such theories, the real life of any individual is still played out in the perceptual world. There is also historical sense to this 'before': 'as history teaches us, there was not always in the world a civilization that lived habitually with long established scientific interests. The life-world was always there before science, then, just as it continues its manner of being in the epoch of science'.¹²

But a stronger sense of pre-givenness begins to emerge as Husserl discusses the 'most general structures of the lifeworld'.¹³ The latter is taken for granted or presupposed in theoretical conscious activity, but it is also presupposed in perception itself. In perception we are aware of particular things and events, and we take them to be real. But this means merely that we count them as belonging to a world to whose reality we are committed beforehand. Particular real things are like so many aspects of the

real world that present themselves to us in turn, and yet the world is not itself a large-scale thing or even the sum-total of all real things, considered as an object. It is the *horizon* against which all things stand out and without which they could not appear to us. As horizon, the lifeworld is unique and unitary, it is not singular as opposed to plural, for 'the plural makes no sense when applied to it'.¹⁴ Furthermore, full-blooded as it is, the 'reality' of particular things is always to some degree provisional: the course of future experience may place in question even our clearest perceptions. But such revisions change only the details and in no way alter the 'ontic certainty of the world' as such.¹⁵ Our commitment to its reality is always linked to our ongoing perceptual experience, to be sure, but does not require any particular inventory of objects.

Those familiar with Husserl's works will recognize that even this theme is not new. In one of the best known passages of the *Ideas*, in which the *epoché* is first introduced,¹⁶ it plays an important role. There too Husserl stresses that in perception we are not merely confronted with this or that but through them have a direct experience of the world. Just as objects stand out from their background, so the particular perceptual acts in which they are given repose upon an underlying 'attitude' or 'standpoint' (*Einstellung*) which Husserl calls the 'natural' attitude. This is 'not a particular act' but a fundamental belief in or commitment to the world as such.¹⁷ It is our conviction that in and through each and all of our particular perceptions we have direct experience not only of particular things but of the world as their ultimate horizon.

But, as I have tried to show in detail elsewhere,¹⁸ this conception, after its brief appearance, is eclipsed by another description of the world, which is also developed in *Ideas* and which gains in importance in works like *Cartesian Meditations*. Husserl is so preoccupied with the move from perception to theoretical thought that he treats the objects of experience as if their sole function in our experience is to be integrated into a scientific theory. Not only does he suppose that the natural purpose of our consciousness is to know them in the full theoretical sense; he even proposes an idealized full theoretical knowledge of the totality of real objects and then identifies this latter as the world. The provisional or presumptive character of perceived objects is ex-

tended to the world as a whole, and world is now described as 'an *idea* correlative to a perfect experiential evidence'.¹⁹ Naturally, such perfect evidence is never forthcoming in our experience and remains infinitely distant. The world in this sense is the object of a concept that can never be fulfilled. This contrasts sharply with the description of the world of the natural attitude in the *Ideas*. The difference is between the direct experience of the world, which we actually have at every moment, and the *idea* of an experience, which in principle we can never have. Instead of being given in experience the world is an object of thought. It is to the former conception that Husserl returns in the *Crisis*. It is not merely that he places emphasis on modes of experience which are prior to scientific and other forms of theoretical interest. Husserl had always acknowledged that such forms exist. But he had treated them as in some way deficient and provisional for a consciousness whose primary aim is to surpass them toward a full theoretical comprehension. Now he not only stresses the enveloping, pre-given character of the perceived world and the pervasive and deep-lying character of our commitment to it; he is also convinced that in a certain sense we never leave this commitment behind, however sophisticated our thought about reality may become. Furthermore, he recognizes that an adequate description of consciousness in all its forms must not give exaggerated importance to one form – the quest for theoretical comprehension of the real – over all others.

A *second* feature which distinguishes the account of the perceived world in the *Crisis* from earlier accounts is that this world is repeatedly described as public or intersubjective: it is 'pre-given as existing for all in common',²⁰ as 'the world common to us all'²¹ 'even what is straightforwardly perceptual is communalized'.²² There is considerable ambiguity on this point in Husserl's earlier writings about perception. His direct realism would seem to suggest that the object I perceive is given as the same object you perceive. But this presupposes the availability to me of the concept and the actual experience of others within my world. Yet in the *Cartesian Meditations*, when Husserl finally gets around to a published discussion of intersubjectivity, he introduces it only after the subject of perception and its world have been introduced, and seems at times to suggest that we acquire or develop the

concept and the experience of others on the basis of a full-fledged perceptual world given beforehand. Husserl speaks of the 'sphere of ownness' with its 'transcendent objects'²³ as if these made up a concrete and self-sufficient world which we then surpass toward the other. Though it is possible to read the text in another way, such that the 'sphere of ownness' is a mere abstraction from the concrete (as Husserl indeed calls it at one point),²⁴ this difficult text is ambiguous to say the least. For example, Husserl says that the ownness sphere stands in a relation of *Fundierung* to the intersubjective world, which is to say that I cannot have the latter without the former, but I can have the former without the latter.²⁵ This directly contradicts the view that the ownness sphere is an abstraction.

While it is not possible to say that the question of what is abstract and what is concrete here is entirely cleared up in the *Crisis*, the order of presentation, at least, is very different from that of the *Cartesian Meditations*. The lifeworld is dealt with explicitly as an intersubjective world and described as being pre-supposed, with precisely this sense, in any and all particular experience. This is then found to include the problem, to be sure, of how I as an individual experience the others and 'constitute' the sense of their existence in my own consciousness. But the sense of the whole section leaves no doubt that the full concreteness of the lifeworld, including its public and intersubjective character, is pre-given in relation to this particular type of experience just as much as it is for any other.

A *third* prominent feature of the lifeworld can be seen as related to the second. In addition to stressing its pre-given character and its common or intersubjective status, Husserl attributes certain cultural objects and properties to the lifeworld as well. We already know that the concreteness of the lifeworld extends farther than the mere things given in bodily perception, since it also includes other persons. But persons come equipped with their own experiences, and presumably their thoughts too. Husserl is from the start concerned with the relation between science and the lifeworld, and has made the point that scientists too live in and experience the world as do the rest of us, whatever they may think about it in their theory. But he goes on to include in the lifeworld not only the scientists but also 'the sciences as cultural facts in this

world with their ... theories'.²⁶ He is obviously impressing on us the difference between conceiving the world *through* the scientists' theoretical concepts and encountering those concepts themselves as ideas put forward by persons in the everyday world and passed along to us in the classroom, in books, or by hearsay. We encounter them as 'human formations, essentially related to human actualities and potentialities'²⁷ and as such they have a reality which is integrated with the reality of concrete things around us. Naturally, the first things we think of when we hear of 'human formations' are artifacts, which are quite concrete and particular objects of perception. And we encounter them not merely as things with their spatio-temporal properties and relations to their surroundings, but precisely *as* the artifacts they are. Their cultural meaning is given along with their bodily status; we see them *as* houses and streets, tools and ornaments, cars and other machines. As for the products of theoretical activity, though they are accessible not through the senses but through the medium of language, Husserl seems to be saying, these products have a similar status within our world. Scientific theories are of course not the only cultural products that have this status; there are also other and sometimes conflicting 'views' of the world we encounter as well, such as religion and philosophy. There are other products which have the status of ideas, such as stories and poems, without being 'theories' or 'views'. Husserl doubtless puts so much stress on scientific and other theories because he wants to make clear the distinction between subscribing to such theories and living in a world in which they count among its constituents.

In these three ways, then, the lifeworld of the *Crisis* is both deeper and wilder than the perceptual world of earlier writings: deeper because of its *pregiven* character, that is, because of the strength and pervasiveness of our commitment to its reality, whatever theoretical view we may take up about 'reality' as defined by some theory; wider, because the world to which we are thus committed is so much richer than the previous discussions of perception would allow. It includes, as we have seen, not just things but also persons; and persons not just as minds but as bearers of experiences and thoughts; and it also contains the products of their activity and even the content or sense of their experiences and thoughts.

This is Husserl's new version of the 'natural standpoint' of consciousness, of the world which is the inalienable correlate of that standpoint, and of the nature of the relation between the two. And the development of this new version has certain consequences for the exercise of the phenomenological method. If phenomenology is to understand consciousness in its various theoretical and practical activities, and if it is to comprehend the sense of the objects to which consciousness stands related in all its possible modes, it must trace both to their origins in this original matrix, the 'natural state' of consciousness and the world. It is in this sense that Husserl calls the analysis of the lifeworld a universal problem for philosophy: it becomes the central theme of phenomenology itself.

II

I said earlier that Husserl's concept of the lifeworld had something valuable to contribute to today's philosophical climate, and I shall turn to that now. It can be seen first of all as an antidote to some of the excesses of continental philosophy as it has developed since Husserl's time. As indicated before, I am thinking of the predominance of a certain conception language as the exclusive key to understanding human existence and its relation to the world. Gadamer's concept of *Sprachlichkeit*²⁸ is very different indeed from Foucault's notion of the *epistémé*²⁹ but they have this much in common, that human existence and activity are conceived almost exclusively as the use of and understanding of language. Indeed, this use and understanding is in turn conceived largely on the model not of speaking and hearing but of writing and reading texts. Perception is either neglected altogether or viewed metaphorically as itself being a special version of the deployment of the concepts of our language.

Against this view, Husserl reminds us of the concretely and sensuously given, indeed *pregiven* reality of the world around us. Merleau-Ponty, of course, followed him in this, drawing on and enhancing Husserl's notion of the living body as the anonymous subject of perception. One wonders if the overemphasis on language is not merely the self-centeredness and even elitism of

philosophers and literary critics who spend their time reading and writing, and project their bookish world onto everyone else. Husserl was the first to conceive of perception as neither a weak version of conceptual thought nor a blind causal process but as embodying a meaning-structure of its own and deploying itself in a world which is presupposed by rather than created by thought.

But there is a second and more important sense in which the lifeworld is relevant to the over-intellectualized views of recent continental thought. The emphasis on language has brought with it a conceptual relativism so extreme that it no longer makes sense to speak of language, as we did above, as mediating between human beings and the world. Thought and experience are viewed as enmeshed through language in radically different conceptual schemes, whether discontinuous and self-contained or slowly developing in a continuous tradition. And these constitute our only access to what is. Different conceptual schemes make up so many different worlds or universes of discourse. Reality is fragmented or splintered into these different domains and the idea of a unity among them is no longer thought to make sense.

I am convinced that Husserl's concept of the lifeworld was meant to counter a conception like this, as well as the scientific realism Husserl actually attacks in the *Crisis*. In fact, these two are not as far apart as they may seem. We have already remarked the irony that the scientifically 'real' has retreated farther and farther from our actual experience of the world. This makes a view like Husserl's, which emphasizes the constructed and idealized character of the scientifically real, all the easier to accept. And indeed, whether due to Husserl's influence or not, this view of scientific 'reality' has gained ground among philosophers of science. But this, coupled with a strong historical sense of the changing character of scientific theory, recommends the view that modern science is merely one among many equally valid conceptions of the world, and we are left with a tolerant and open-ended pluralism of world-views. The difference between science, religion, superstition and magic becomes just a matter of opinion. These would be just so many languages or conceptual schemes which are in the end equivalent to worlds, just so many realities.

Such views are not unlike those of the skeptical relativism,

especially of the 'historicist' sort, which Husserl attacked along with naturalism in his early essay 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science'. The concept of the lifeworld would count against such conceptual relativisms by urging that different ways of conceptualizing reality are still different ways of thinking about *the* world, the very same world that we all encounter in our everyday experience. Husserl insists at one point that for all the differences that may exist between cultures and world-views, the lifeworld has an invariant structure in which all share.³⁰ This is precisely the basic relations of things, thing-experience, world horizon and intersubjectivity we have already discussed. Different persons and different peoples live amongst different ideas and views, just as their surroundings are composed of different objects and populated by different groups of people. But it is possible to reach beyond our particular enclaves and understand and communicate with representatives of different cultures, precisely in virtue of the common structure of the lifeworld.

A *second* contemporary strain to which the concept of the lifeworld is relevant concerns Husserl himself. Some philosophers take Husserl's concept of the noema, as developed in the *Ideas*, to be his most important contribution, and have recently written about it in connection with other theories of meaning.³¹ I made the point earlier that Husserl is being appealed to in this context to help solve certain problems which have arisen in the philosophy of language. In particular, he is seen as providing a supplement to Frege's theory of linguistic meaning. One advantage seen in Husserl's noema is that it derives linguistic meaning from a source outside language itself. This in turn makes it possible for Husserl to extend the notion of meaning to perception, where it is not necessarily linked with linguistic expression.³²

In moving from linguistic meaning to a broader conception of meaning these philosophers are, of course, following the path Husserl himself took, beginning with the First Logical Investigation. But in a sense they are not moving far *enough* with Husserl. They could be said to move from the *Logical Investigations* to the *Ideas*, where the noema is introduced, and to get stuck there. But the focus on the noema, which even in that work is not as central as some make it out, was a relatively brief episode in Husserl's development. This is not to say that he

dropped the idea; nor did he by any means solve all the problems surrounding it. But as he moved beyond the *Ideas* his main purpose was to integrate the noema (and the noesis) into a larger context. Objects with their meanings belong to regions of being, according to Husserl, and in works like *Ideas* II and III he sought to distinguish these regions and relate them to the sciences. Acts of consciousness are related not only to their objects but also to each other in a temporal flow; and Husserl also devoted himself to the study of the dynamics of consciousness in its active and passive forms. In a sense the *Crisis*, and in particular some aspects of the theory of the lifeworld, can be seen as the culmination of this search for the ultimate or full *context* of the noesis-noema relation.

Its relevance for those who focus on the noema is this: because they take their point of departure from linguistic meaning, they may view perceptual meaning on the model of linguistic meaning *even if* they hold that non-linguistic meaning is somehow prior.³³ This is especially true of those who hold that perception has a propositional content: but it is no less true of those who describe the perceptual noema as a 'singular meaning'.³⁴ Such meanings are treated in relation to their object and the act of perception itself, but what may be overlooked is the perceptual horizon of the world which belongs precisely to the meaning of any perceptual object. H. Dreyfus speaks of 'Husserl's insistence on the philosophical priority of the analysis of the representational content of individual intentional states',³⁵ but offers no textual evidence for this purported insistence. It is not Husserl but those who more recently focus all their attention on the *noema* to the exclusion of all else, who make this mistake. Smith and MacIntyre describe the phenomenological reduction, for example, as Husserl's answer to 'how to become acquainted with noemata and noematic *Sinne*',³⁶ as if these were individual items, to be discovered one by one. In fact, from the analysis of the natural standpoint and its world, in the *Ideas*, to the treatment of the lifeworld in the *Crisis*, Husserl always insisted on treating perceptual meaning – and indeed any other sort of meaning – in the broad context to which it actually belongs in the life of consciousness.

Husserl in the *Crisis* warned explicitly against a piecemeal

approach to meaning, as if the reduction were a matter merely of abstaining from and analysing 'individual validities' one by one, and leaving all the others intact. This is the sort of reflection which occurs in the natural attitude when we ask 'what did she mean?' or 'what did I actually see just then?' But this 'only creates for each instance a new mode of validity on the natural ground of the world'.³⁷ That is, it leaves intact and unreflected the overall realistic commitment of the natural attitude. Husserl insisted that the reduction be extended to include the whole world. But it is very important to see that this insistence derives *not* from a commitment on his part to idealism. Rather, its motivation is purely phenomenological. We need to include the whole world in the reduction because the whole world belongs to the sense of each and every perceptual act, and if we do not include it we have not understood that sense. When those who focus narrowly on the noema claim that their version of phenomenology can be reconciled with a physicalistic ontology,³⁸ they are missing the point made in the *Crisis*.

So far I have spoken of Husserl's concept of the lifeworld as a response to certain philosophical problems of his day and ours. But the lifeworld raises certain questions in its turn which Husserl either did not see or left inadequately treated. These are questions both about how to understand the lifeworld itself and about how to reconcile it with Husserl's overall conception of phenomenology. I shall conclude this essay with a brief sketch of the most important of these questions as I see them.

The *first* concerns the *pregivenness* of the lifeworld, the notion of its being presupposed and taken for granted by every particular act, whether of perception or of thought. We made the point that this can be seen as an expansion of the notion already included in the *Ideas* of the natural 'standpoint' or 'attitude'. This basic stance of consciousness is neither an 'act proper' nor is it the temporal multiplicity of acts and experiences: it somehow underlies them all. As we have seen, in the *Crisis* Husserl stresses more than before that this stance is literally embodied in the corporeal and 'anonymous' functioning of sense-perception, in the body as an 'I move' or capacity for engagement in its surroundings.³⁹ These surroundings, as they are geared to our bodily capacities, constitute the deepest-lying reality in our ex-

perience. Here is lodged our most fundamental prior commitment to the reality of the world as the horizon for whatever we do or think.

Now some argue – and this is one view of Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's revision of their predecessor's phenomenology – that Husserl here undercuts and finally renders inoperable his phenomenological program. For what he has done is to make the intentionality of consciousness depend upon certain non-intentional capacities and practices.⁴⁰ To be sure, Husserl in the *Ideas* tried to express the natural standpoint in a 'thesis', and in the *Crisis* he speaks of beliefs that have become 'sedimented' and can be reactivated and analysed intentionally. But these would make up at most a complex of particular beliefs, and even if these were somehow summarized in an overall 'thesis' of the natural attitude this would again be the particular expression of a belief. But is our perceptual or bodily engagement in the world just a belief that can be expressed? The argument here is that to treat it as such is to falsify precisely what Husserl was the first to discover.

It is to be recalled as well that in the *Ideas* it was *as* a thesis that the natural standpoint could be 'bracketed' and the phenomenological reduction initiated.⁴¹ It has been argued that 'only what is posited as an object can be bracketed ...'⁴² But the life-world, by Husserl's own account, is not an object but the prior condition for anything's being posited as an object. Our commitment to it is so deep we cannot detach ourselves from this commitment by an act of thought. Thus by penetrating to the level of the life-world Husserl seems not only to have tacitly questioned the pervasiveness and self-sufficiency of intentionality in mental life, but also to have deprived himself of the means for investigating it phenomenologically. This is often taken to be the meaning of Merleau-Ponty's famous dictum that 'the most important lesson which the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction'.⁴³

One way to counter this objection is to ask its proponents to tell us more about the nature of these capacities and practices that are presupposed by intentional acts. If they are not-intentional, what sorts of relation do they involve? Are they simply objective causal relations? It can be counter-argued that while Husserl's

concept of the life-world does indeed require going beyond a too narrow, noesis-noema concept of intentionality, it calls not for a rejection but an expanded and revised treatment of intentionality. And this is what Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have in fact given us. The latter, for example, roots consciousness in the body not as an objective automaton but as the subject of a type of intentionality all its own. Whatever Merleau may say about the phenomenological reduction, he still treats the perceived world not as a collection of objects but as a meaning-structure, and the bodily subject as what understands and grasps this meaning. To be sure, it does this not by observing, thinking and uttering sentences, but by moving and acting.

The *second* critical question raised by Husserl's concept of the lifeworld is not, I fear, so easily answered as the first. It concerns the fact that Husserl includes in the lifeworld, as we saw, not only perceived things and persons but also cultural properties and even ideas. Husserl is undoubtedly right that we tacitly and unquestioningly presuppose these too in our active mental life, that they too form the background for the development of scientific theories and the like. But this makes it harder for him to claim that the life-world has a universal and invariant structure, common to all, underlying whatever theoretical 'garb of ideas' we may cast over it.⁴⁴ For some of the ideas that populate our world are not merely encountered as items of its furniture but constitute, as in the case of science, religion and philosophy, interpretations of reality as a whole. Such ideas can become sedimented in such a way that they affect our 'view', our whole 'sense' of reality. Husserl seems to recognize this when he says that the results of theoretical accomplishments 'flow into' the very subsoil out of which they grow.⁴⁵ It becomes harder and harder to distinguish between the world as experienced and the world as interpreted by this or that theory. The theory has become part of our way of experiencing. Theory in this sedimented and appropriated form may affect the very structure, and not merely the content, of the life-world.

If this is so, the life-world may differ fundamentally from one cultural group or historical epoch to another, depending on the nature of the sedimented interpretations that have taken hold. And while it remains true that *some* world-structure is pre-given or taken for granted and serves as the background for any new

theoretical accomplishment, it will not always be the *same* structure that is thus taken for granted. For example, Husserl repeatedly speaks as if the notion of 'things' and the distinction between things and persons were a universal feature of the world. But do such distinctions exist for those who think of every being and aspect of the world as ensouled, or those whose world is organized in terms of the elaborate totemic systems the anthropologists have called to our attention? Could the thing-person distinction be the sedimentation of a system of thought we have inherited in the modern, western world, in part precisely thanks to the advent of objective science?

These considerations make it hard to consider Husserl's concept of the lifeworld, as Husserl considered it, a response to conceptual and historical relativism. Indeed many see Husserl as having contributed, along with other phenomenologists, to the widespread acceptance of such views. It is certain that he would not have approved of them. But it is also true that he does not provide us with arguments which would prevent his thought from being taken in this direction.

NOTES

1. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970) p. 5.
2. *Ibid.* p. 17.
3. Milan Kundera, 'The Novel and Europe' *New York Review of Books* vol. 31 n° 12 (July 19, 1984) p. 15.
4. Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (New York: 1975) p. 39. Quoted by Richard Rorty in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 168.
5. *The Crisis*, p. 106.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. First Book. trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), Part two, Chapter one.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
18. See my *Phenomenology and the Problem of History* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974) Chapter 6.
19. *Cartesian Meditations* trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Mart Nijhoff, 1960), p. 61.
20. *The Crisis*, p. 121.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
23. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 104.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
26. *The Crisis*, p. 104.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
28. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1975) pp. 345 ff.
29. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1970) p. XXII.
30. *The Crisis*, p. 139.
31. See Husserl, *Intentionality and Cognitive Science* ed. H. Dreyfus (Camb-

- ridge, Mass: the MIT Press, 1982) especially the reprinted articles by D. Follesdal; and *Husserl and Intentionality* by Ronald McIntyre and David Woodruff Smith (Boston: Reidel, 1982).
32. A similar strategy is followed by John Searle in his *Intentionality* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), though no debt to Husserl is acknowledged.
 33. Searle (op. cit. p. 5) explicitly follows such a model.
 34. The propositional view is held by Searle (op. cit. pp. 40 ff). The 'singular meaning' view is advanced by I. Miller in his *Husserl, Perception and Temporal Awareness* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1984) p. 55.
 35. Dreyfus (op. cit.) Introduction pp. 2 f.
 36. 'Husserl's Identification of Meaning and *Noema*' in Dreyfus (op. cit.) p. 91.
 37. *The Crisis*, p. 106.
 38. E.g. Smith and McIntyre in *Husserl and Intentionality* (op. cit) p. XV.
 39. *The Crisis*, p. 106.
 40. Dreyfus (op. cit.) introduction, p. 23.
 41. See *Ideas I* sections 30 and 31.
 42. See Ernst Tugendhat *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (2nd.ed. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970) pp. 263 f.
 43. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), p. XIV.
 44. *The Crisis*, p. 51.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

III. Husserl and Beyond

III.12. Time-Consciousness and Historical Consciousness

If we wish to reflect philosophically on history, one of the things we need to do is consider the nature of our awareness of the past. Husserl's 1905 lectures, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*,¹ are one of the most brilliant examples of phenomenological analysis, and he deals with just that topic. It is true that Husserl is concerned there with our consciousness of our individual pasts in memory, and that the historical past is usually thought of as that past which lies beyond our individual experience, the past of others. Nevertheless, I think our best clue to a phenomenological clarification of historical experience is to be found in those lectures – a better one, actually, than what Husserl says explicitly about history in his later works, and a better one, in my opinion, than what most phenomenologists have said about it. But what Husserl offers us is no more than a clue – or a series of clues – and in order to appreciate them we have to attend to certain aspects of what he says and be prepared to extend and revise this theory in important ways. One of those, of course, must be concerned with getting beyond our individual pasts to the past of others. But that is only the last step.

What I propose in the following is first of all a reading of Husserl's central time-consciousness theory – a very personalized and non-scholarly reading, I admit – which will bring out those features of the theory most useful for our topic; then I shall proceed to the criticisms, extensions, and revisions I think necessary; and I shall conclude with some suggestions as to how a revised time-consciousness theory can contribute to a phenomenological clarification of history as a phenomenon.

I. HUSSERL'S THEORY

The first thing that must be noted about Husserl's theory is that it is not an account of time itself but of how we experience time. And how we experience time is to be distinguished from how we may try to represent or conceptualize time. So far phenomenology's approach to time parallels its approach to space. And just as we have no experience of space except by experiencing things in space – things that take up or inhabit space, so we experience time by experiencing things in time, that is, things that take time, things that happen, events. The central core of Husserl's theory is its account of our experience of something *happening*, something that *takes place*.

This being so, the core of Husserl's theory is an account not principally of our consciousness of the past, but of our consciousness of the present. But of course, consciousness of the present involves consciousness of the past. So much had already been seen by Brentano and other predecessors. But they thought the simple distinction between consciousness of the past, called memory, and consciousness of the present was enough to account for our experience of an event. Husserl's great and most original contribution is to have recognized two distinct forms of consciousness of the past, which he calls retention and recollection, or primary and secondary memory. It is the former of these that figures in our consciousness of the present, while the latter is what we usually think of when we speak of memory or recollection.

It is easy to misunderstand this distinction, to take it for something like the cognitive psychologists' distinction between short-term and long-term memory. Even Husserl seems to have thought of it this way in some of his earliest reflections on time – he speaks in early manuscripts of 'fresh' versus 'more distant' memory² – and aspects of his terminology in the 1905 lectures contribute to this misunderstanding, as when he speaks of retention as consciousness of the 'just past'.³ The 1905 lectures are hobbled by the fact that the one notion which is in my opinion the key to the concept of retention, that of horizon-consciousness, had not been worked out by Husserl and was not fully at his disposal.

There is no doubt, however, that this is the key to the distinction. Retention is the consciousness of the past as the horizon or background against which the present stands out. The parallel to the experience of spatial objects is helpful. I cannot see an object in space except against a spatial background. Likewise, I cannot experience an event except against a temporal background. To experience an event is to be conscious of something *taking place*, that is, its *taking the place* of something else. What is replaced or displaced recedes into the background but is not lost from view; I am still conscious of it but in a different way.

The whole configuration, impressional and retentional consciousness, foreground and background consciousness, make up what is to *experience* an event in the sense of *Erleben*, to live through it. To *recollect* the event, by contrast, is to *relive* in memory an event that I am not living through. I reproduce it in memory, according to Husserl, including all its original temporal aspects, i.e., the original configuration of foreground and background. Thus, to recollect an event is to be conscious of a recollected now and a recollected horizon of retention.

Retention can be looked at as a horizon-consciousness, then, that belongs necessarily to the makeup of our consciousness of the present, and indeed, in a certain sense, of any consciousness whatever; whereas recollection is a particular mode of consciousness whose focal object is a past event. We *need* not recollect, as far as I can see, in order to be conscious of the present, in the sense that we must have retention; whether a full-fledged conscious subject must have recollections as well as retention is a question which, as far as I know, Husserl does not take up.

Once the distinction is put this way, it becomes clear that it is utterly different from the long-term short-term distinction. Whether I am conscious of some event in retentional or recollective consciousness is not a question of how far removed it is from the present; it is rather a question of whether it figures for me in the background of the present I am living through or whether I am attending to it in its own right by reliving it as a segment of the past.

This point can be clarified by returning for a moment to the comparison with spatial perception. My desktop is the immediate

background for the paper on which I write these words; the walls and bookcases of my study are further away, but they are likewise part of the background. Every perceived object must indeed have its immediate background, but that has a further background, etc. In time, whatever happens does so against the background of the 'just past'; but that has its own just past, etc., etc. As Husserl says, every retention is retention of retention.⁴

Retentive consciousness differs from recollection somewhat as my marginal awareness of my bookshelves differs from my imagining the Canadian Parliament Buildings a half-mile from my study. But it is not a question of distance; I can turn to the window so that the Parliament Buildings enter the margin of my vision while I conjure up an image of the bookshelves behind my back, or indeed the back of my own head or of the paper on which I'm writing. Likewise, I can recollect and vividly relive something that occurred just an instant ago; whereas something that happened quite a while ago may form the retentive background of my present experience.

Though he does not devote to it the analysis it deserves, Husserl recognizes that the *future* constitutes a similar horizon or 'background' for present experience. Whether the future 'in itself' is or is not completely undetermined, and whether or not it turns out other than I expect it to, I am conscious of it. But again one must distinguish between explicitly attending to the future – thinking about it, imagining it, worrying about it – on the one hand, and the immediate horizon-consciousness of the future, which Husserl calls protention, on the other. As with recollection, we need not be attending to the future in order to be conscious, but we always have some protention of it, however vague. The point to be stressed about this whole analysis is that experienced time, like experienced space, is a complex structure; one can no more experience the present in isolation from its past and future than one can see an object apart from its spatial surroundings. What I am doing, seeing, feeling *now* is part of a temporal pattern that makes it what it is for me, gives it its meaning. In Husserl's terms, time-consciousness is what *constitutes* the present as present.

II. CRITICISMS, EXTENSIONS, AND REVISIONS

Having laid out the core of the theory, we proceed now to some extensions and revisions. We have relied up to now rather heavily, perhaps even more than Husserl himself, upon the comparison between time and space-experience. But one must always remember Bergson's warning against thinking of time in terms of space; and indeed in many respects this comparison is misleading.

Husserl himself was misled, I believe, into conceiving of retention as constituting a *field* comparable to the visual field. One aspect of this comparison is helpful: as we shift our visual focus from one thing to another particular things can shift from a position of more or less vivid copresence in the background toward the vague margins and finally pass entirely out of view without ever crossing any distinct boundary.⁵ So the retained, metaphorically speaking, recedes from view until it passes into forgetfulness, no longer figures in the background. But we tend to think of the visual field as if it had a more or less fixed 'size' even though it has no sharp edges. Though this size might differ from one person to the next, and be severely contracted in some case of visual impairment, it could be measured in objective terms – indeed, that's the only way it could be measured – and the question of whether a given object was inside or outside it could be determined by measuring its objective distance from the center of focus, or perhaps the incidence of an angle formed by focus, eyes, and margin.

Actually, I'm inclined to suspect, without having ever tried to verify it empirically, that the objective 'size' of the visual field varies considerably depending on the nature of the focal object – whether it is near or far, large or small, etc. In any case I am convinced that the 'scope', as we might call it, of the *temporal* field varies considerably and expands and contracts depending on the nature of the temporal focus. Engrossed in a piece of music, to use Husserl's example, at any moment it is the entire piece, from its first note to that moment, which forms the vivid background of what I am hearing; the music is all around me, so to speak; what happened before it began has sunk without a trace. But depending on the length of the piece, this vivid horizon can be four minutes or 40 minutes long, objectively speaking.

Comparing the visual to the temporal field in another respect, Husserl commits a double error, to my mind. He speaks of a temporal perspective, comparable to spatial perspective, whereby objects 'contract' as a function of their 'distance' from the present.⁶ What he has in mind is perhaps a row of telephone poles, which, according to laws of perspective, supposedly seem not only smaller but closer together the farther away they are. But of course they seem nothing of the sort; what I see is a row of equally tall telephone poles equally far apart; and the laws of perspective are just rules to follow for creating the illusion of this appearance on a flat plane. What Husserl could have meant by applying this notion to time is hard to imagine; surely he didn't mean that the first few notes of a Sousa march seem in retention closer together in time than the more recent and the present ones. In fact, what I retain is the unfolding of a steady rhythm, not a march which began *molto vivace* and has gradually slowed down to a stately *maestoso*.

The example of a row of telephone poles calls to mind another instructive comparison which needs to be introduced by way of extending and revising Husserl's account. Consider an example of the well-known Gestalt-shift phenomenon in perception of space. Entering the cloister of a medieval monastery I gain a view of the lovely garden in the center, its fountain and floral arrangements illuminated by sunlight. But I view it through a row of arches, so that the spectacle is divided into a series of framed segments separated by black spaces. By shifting my focus and shading my eyes, these black spaces are recognized as intricately carved sets of columns, themselves now separated by gaps of empty space. When we shift our focus now to time, events similarly exhibit temporal gaps as we experience them, I think. I arrive at the theater, engaged with my companion in a heated discussion of an important matter. We take our seats for the performance of *Hamlet*. At intermission we continue our discussion, then return to the theater for the rest of the performance. Now when we resume our conversation at intermission, the genuine horizon of retention into which it fits is part of the conversation that preceded the play. We 'take up' the conversation, as we say, where we left off, not explicitly recalling its details but just continuing it. The intervening first part of the play is not obliterated, but it

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III.12. Time-Consciousness and Historical Consciousness

If we wish to reflect philosophically on history, one of the things we need to do is consider the nature of our awareness of the past. Husserl's 1905 lectures, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*,¹ are one of the most brilliant examples of phenomenological analysis, and he deals with just that topic. It is true that Husserl is concerned there with our consciousness of our individual pasts in memory, and that the historical past is usually thought of as that past which lies beyond our individual experience, the past of others. Nevertheless, I think our best clue to a phenomenological clarification of historical experience is to be found in those lectures – a better one, actually, than what Husserl says explicitly about history in his later works, and a better one, in my opinion, than what most phenomenologists have said about it. But what Husserl offers us is no more than a clue – or a series of clues – and in order to appreciate them we have to attend to certain aspects of what he says and be prepared to extend and revise this theory in important ways. One of those, of course, must be concerned with getting beyond our individual pasts to the past of others. But that is only the last step.

What I propose in the following is first of all a reading of Husserl's central time-consciousness theory – a very personalized and non-scholarly reading, I admit – which will bring out those features of the theory most useful for our topic; then I shall proceed to the criticisms, extensions, and revisions I think necessary; and I shall conclude with some suggestions as to how a revised time-consciousness theory can contribute to a phenomenological clarification of history as a phenomenon.

I. HUSSERL'S THEORY

The first thing that must be noted about Husserl's theory is that it is not an account of time itself but of how we experience time. And how we experience time is to be distinguished from how we may try to represent or conceptualize time. So far phenomenology's approach to time parallels its approach to space. And just as we have no experience of space except by experiencing things in space – things that take up or inhabit space, so we experience time by experiencing things in time, that is, things that take time, things that happen, events. The central core of Husserl's theory is its account of our experience of something *happening*, something that *takes place*.

This being so, the core of Husserl's theory is an account not principally of our consciousness of the past, but of our consciousness of the present. But of course, consciousness of the present involves consciousness of the past. So much had already been seen by Brentano and other predecessors. But they thought the simple distinction between consciousness of the past, called memory, and consciousness of the present was enough to account for our experience of an event. Husserl's great and most original contribution is to have recognized two distinct forms of consciousness of the past, which he calls retention and recollection, or primary and secondary memory. It is the former of these that figures in our consciousness of the present, while the latter is what we usually think of when we speak of memory or recollection.

It is easy to misunderstand this distinction, to take it for something like the cognitive psychologists' distinction between short-term and long-term memory. Even Husserl seems to have thought of it this way in some of his earliest reflections on time – he speaks in early manuscripts of 'fresh' versus 'more distant' memory² – and aspects of his terminology in the 1905 lectures contribute to this misunderstanding, as when he speaks of retention as consciousness of the 'just past'.³ The 1905 lectures are hobbled by the fact that the one notion which is in my opinion the key to the concept of retention, that of horizon-consciousness, had not been worked out by Husserl and was not fully at his disposal.

There is no doubt, however, that this is the key to the distinction. Retention is the consciousness of the past as the horizon or background against which the present stands out. The parallel to the experience of spatial objects is helpful. I cannot see an object in space except against a spatial background. Likewise, I cannot experience an event except against a temporal background. To experience an event is to be conscious of something *taking place*, that is, its *taking the place* of something else. What is replaced or displaced recedes into the background but is not lost from view; I am still conscious of it but in a different way.

The whole configuration, impressional and retentional consciousness, foreground and background consciousness, make up what is to *experience* an event in the sense of *Erleben*, to live through it. To *recollect* the event, by contrast, is to *relive* in memory an event that I am not living through. I reproduce it in memory, according to Husserl, including all its original temporal aspects, i.e., the original configuration of foreground and background. Thus, to recollect an event is to be conscious of a recollected now and a recollected horizon of retention.

Retention can be looked at as a horizon-consciousness, then, that belongs necessarily to the makeup of our consciousness of the present, and indeed, in a certain sense, of any consciousness whatever; whereas recollection is a particular mode of consciousness whose focal object is a past event. We *need* not recollect, as far as I can see, in order to be conscious of the present, in the sense that we must have retention; whether a full-fledged conscious subject must have recollections as well as retention is a question which, as far as I know, Husserl does not take up.

Once the distinction is put this way, it becomes clear that it is utterly different from the long-term short-term distinction. Whether I am conscious of some event in retentional or recollective consciousness is not a question of how far removed it is from the present; it is rather a question of whether it figures for me in the background of the present I am living through or whether I am attending to it in its own right by reliving it as a segment of the past.

This point can be clarified by returning for a moment to the comparison with spatial perception. My desktop is the immediate

background for the paper on which I write these words; the walls and bookcases of my study are further away, but they are likewise part of the background. Every perceived object must indeed have its immediate background, but that has a further background, etc. In time, whatever happens does so against the background of the 'just past'; but that has its own just past, etc., etc. As Husserl says, every retention is retention of retention.⁴

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background for the present without being the objects of an explicit recollective consciousness.

A final criticism of the comparison between spatial and temporal experience is much more far-reaching. It concerns the very notion of focus and horizon, or foreground and background. We maintained that this is the key to our understanding of Husserl's notion of retention, and so it is. But like Husserl we have located the temporal 'focus' or 'foreground' in the *present* and considered the past as its background. The future was then added on as a second kind of background from which the present stands out.

Now while this model is helpful in overcoming some misconceptions of temporal experience, it lends itself to others. It is too closely tailored to the kind of experience that serves as Husserl's prime example, the hearing of a melody, i.e., a relatively passive experience. But remember that we are trying to understand what it is to live through events; and many of the events we live through are our own actions. I would suggest that if there is a focus or a foreground for consciousness in performing actions, it lies in the *future* and not in the present. If that is so, and if the foreground-background image is to be retained, then we arrive at the odd consequence that the present figures in the *background* of our temporal experience, as does the past.

But I don't think we should find this odd. I believe Husserl may have been misled not only by the comparison with space, but by some ontological and epistemological prejudices as well. He correctly saw that time-experience must unite a consciousness of what *is* with that of what *is not*. A remnant of the view that actuality is prior to potentiality in the order of being may have led him to suppose that same priority for consciousness. Husserl's use of the Humean term 'impression' suggests another source of his view. Something like the distinction between vivacity and weakness may be at work in his theory. As we know, the Husserlian view that I am questioning becomes even more important in his later years. The *Quellpunkt* or bubbling fountain metaphor for the present, in the 1905 lectures, becomes the *lebendige Gegenwart* of the *C* manuscripts later on.⁸

Against all this I would claim that for consciousness, the protentional future is in some respects more vivid, more central, in our living through ongoing events than the present, and I find

no difficulty in conceiving of the present as *its* background. But we should go even further. What should be retained from the comparison with spatial perception is not so much the focus-background scheme itself, as the idea that the various elements in the scheme make up a *Gestalt*, a whole which is prior to these elements, and determines their sense as they determine each other reciprocally. The foreground-background analogy helps us to get beyond the naive linear model of time and the simple perception-plus-memory notion of time-experience. But a more sophisticated use of the analogy would recognize that future and present as well as past, can be considered the background against which the other dimensions stand out, just as each of the dimensions can be considered as the focus.

There is a further reason for reconsidering the foreground-background scheme, and this goes for experienced space as well as time. It should not be thought that all experienced space displays the foreground-background structure. If I start indulging in some mathematical reasoning, or if I begin to daydream about a sun-drenched beach in the Caribbean, and my eyes assume the well-known 'far-away look', what happens to the space I am actually inhabiting? The best way to characterize it is to say that this real space as a whole recedes into the background and that, if there is a foreground, it is not perceptual at all, not a part of the real space about me, but just those unreal or absent objects on which my mind dwells. The real space I inhabit by no means disappears; I continue to dwell in it bodily and to experience it. But in a certain sense I do not perceive it; I don't look at or even see anything in particular, nothing presents itself to my view.

Something similar happens, it seems to me, when we indulge in recollection, or what Husserl calls secondary memory. I still inhabit present time, I continue to live through it, but no part of it figures as the focus of my interest; present time as a whole sinks into the background while I dwell on the past. Yet all the dimensions of present time are functioning: though I focus on a past now, with its own past retentions and protentions, I am, after all, doing all this now, i.e., in the real now, and my present experience is continuous, with its own protentions and retentions. A past time can be the foreground, then, and present time is background. So

much to demonstrate just how confused the foreground-background analogy can become, useful as it may be.

This affords us the opportunity to sum up now the various criticisms and revisions of Husserl's theory that we have been proposing. In general they have been designed to overcome the tendency to construe the horizon of retention as short-term memory, and to combat some of the implications of this misconstruction. One implication, strongly reinforced by some of the things Husserl himself says, is to think of *recollection* as a mental process in which I retrieve something that lies *beyond* the horizon of retention, out there in the dark as it were, bringing it back into the light. But if we think of the horizon of retention as extending indefinitely, with its vague and sharp contours, its landmarks and obscure recesses, then we are more inclined to think of recollection as a process in which I pick out something *within* this horizon, something from the vast background of my present experience, and focus my attention upon it.

To make this point, the analogy with space can be useful one more time. When I exercise my imagination and daydream about that sunny Carribean beach, I am not only conscious of the bleak northern reality against which it so tantalizingly stands out; I am also vaguely aware, perhaps with some melancholy, of the vast distances I would have to cross in order to reach it. Note well: if I were daydreaming of Shangri-La or revelling in the delights of Plato's forms or Gödel's numbers, no such relation would exist. But here I am imagining a location in real space. What I am calling to mind lies within the ultimate horizon of my present space. Looked at the other way around, the imagined horizons of the imagined object extend to join the real horizon of the real present.

In time, similarly, when I recollect something, say my trip to Boston last year, the object of my present recollective experience is equally an element in the retentional horizon of my present experience. Or, again to reverse it, the past event I recollect has within its future horizon the very present act in which I recollect it. Husserl spoke of this in section 25 of the 1905 lectures. This is, of course, what makes it a case of recollection, and distinguishes it from my imagining some event in a past which is not my own, an event I never lived through. To genuinely recollect something I have to have experienced it in the first place. But this

means precisely, in our interpretation of Husserl's theory, that it lies inside, not outside the horizon of retention.

III. TIME-CONSCIOUSNESS AND HISTORY

How can all this contribute to our understanding of the historical past, or rather, our understanding of the nature of our awareness of the historical past?

This topic is often approached, especially in the context of the critical or analytic philosophy of history, in the following way: We assume the existence of a full-fledged historian, equipped with all the aims, interests, and skills of his profession, but of course firmly rooted in the present. We note further that within the scope of his present experience are some documents and ruins, and then we ask: How, on the basis of this meager evidence, can our historian reconstruct the events and persons of a past he can never experience? How does he move from ignorance of the past to knowledge of the past?

Against this approach, and in keeping with our treatment of Husserl's time-consciousness theory, I want to suggest that we have two distinct modes of being aware of the *historical* past, and that they differ somewhat as retention differs from recollection. The first of these, which amounts to a sort of background- or horizon-consciousness, is something we all have, whether historians or not. If I am right about this, we shall be forced to revise our conception of the historian's approach to the past, which is more akin to recollection.

But in what sense do we have a consciousness of the historical past that is comparable to Husserl's notion of *retention*? Once again we must avoid giving too much importance to the distance from the present. By 'historical' we do not usually mean only what happened before one's birth or a long time ago. Historical events are going on today. By historical events we mean not just human as opposed to animal or physical events, but those events that involve or affect society as a whole, either now or later. They may be earthquakes or diseases, actions of individual politicians or scientists, riots or elections or price increases – and so on. Excluded would be events that affect nobody's lives, but also events that

are quite significant for an individual or even a small group, but have no effect beyond that.

Given this understanding of historical events, how does the individual experience them? There is a kind of spectrum: I can read or hear about them, I can see them on television or hear them on the radio, I can be an eyewitness or a participant, or finally I can be one who singlehandedly carries out a historical action. As for participation, it is to be noted that I can participate in an historical event – in the sense of contributing to it – without realizing that I am doing so, as when I run up a large debt and this contribute to inflation without seeing my action as anything but an individual choice. I can also be an eyewitness to an historical event without recognizing it *as* one, such as a secret meeting of the emissaries of two countries at war. But in these cases I would not be experiencing the historical event *as* such. And our question here concerns experience: Husserl asked how it is that we experience events, and we are asking in particular how we experience *historical* events.

Let us now apply to such experience some of the things we said about the temporality of unfolding events. If I am hearing an important speech by a political leader, or participating in a demonstration or casting my vote in an election, each of these has its own internal or 'short-term' temporality in which each phase is experienced in the context of the unfolding event or action as a whole. But this event or action 'as a whole' is experienced against *its* background, which is not just a sequence of the various things that have happened to *me* leading up to it, but rather its own proper temporal context. The election is the conclusion of an electoral campaign; the demonstration is the collective response to a perceived situation, and the result of some planning; the speech is the prime minister's pronouncement on an increasingly aggravating economic situation, and so on. Note that each of these temporal 'contexts' or 'backgrounds' constitutes an *interrupted* sequence, like the play and the conversation of our earlier example. To experience a historical event is to experience it against not just any temporal background, but against the historical background to which it properly belongs. Or to put it another way, to be able to recognize an event *as* historical is to have at one's disposal the historical context which gives it its sense.

I want to claim that we all have such a context at our disposal, though its extent and details differ considerably from one person to the next. Our experience of events places them in different temporal contexts, as the example of the play and the interrupted conversation shows. There, we shift from the social and aesthetic event of the performance to the interpersonal event *à deux* of the conversation. Likewise, we have ability to shift from these varying social and personal contexts to that of the larger-scale social events that make up historical reality. The various events we experience are not simply in sequence, then, but take place on different levels, each with its own temporality.

If we grant this much, we can discern something like a retentional consciousness of the historical past. It may be thought that such awareness is extremely short-term and would consequently not encompass what we usually think of as the historical past. But here again I think we should take the spatial metaphor of 'background' seriously, in the sense that the immediate horizon has its own further horizons, and so on indefinitely. The social and political world in which we live and act, and in which things *happen*, is part of a continuum extending indefinitely into the past. And an awareness of this extended background is built into our experience, however vague its contours, however much it is riddled with obscurities, gaps, empty spaces.

Still, much as we want to insist on the potential vastness and indefinite extension of this historical background for our awareness, at the same time we must remember that it is precisely a horizon and an horizon-consciousness we are speaking of here. In other words, however extensive it is, it is inseparably linked to the present, and its status for us is precisely that of being the context for the present. What we are claiming is that independently of its becoming an object of explicit concern in its own right, whether in the discipline of history or in other ways, the historical past figures in our awareness in the manner of a horizon. Husserl showed that to experience the present we must be horizontally aware of the past. I want to say that to experience the historical present, we must be horizontally aware of the historical past.

But here a serious objection may be raised to the comparison we are proposing. Retention is a horizon-consciousness, but it is one in which we retain what we have originally lived through,

directly experienced, as present. The examples we used of historical events – the speech, the demonstration, the act of voting – are perhaps events that we may live through, directly experience. But what we called the proper temporal context of these events, what leads up to them, may not have been directly experienced at all. Such a background or context may consist of an amalgam of things heard about, read about, i.e. acquired second- and third-hand. Are we not running together here two things that must be phenomenologically distinguished, namely that which is, as Husserl would say, only 'emptily intended', i.e., that which we may merely think or know or believe, on the one hand, and that which is directly given, on the other?

It is true we are running together things that can be thus distinguished, but we need to do this because they are in fact run together in our experience itself, especially at the level of social reality. In his time-consciousness lectures, Husserl made things easy for himself by restricting his examples to sounds or notes in a melody and considering them as pure hyletic data. But he realized that the flux of consciousness he was describing consists of complex intentional experiences with objects, horizons, and contexts at many different levels. As we pointed out earlier, it was Husserl himself who taught us, by contrast to the simplistic sense-data theories of his predecessors, that perception is much broader, deeper, and richer than what is presented to the senses. At the level of social experience especially, it seems to me, we must recognize a complex interaction of the given with the merely meant. It is one thing to hear a person talking, another to hear the prime minister giving an economic speech; one thing to see a lot of people running, another to witness or participate in a demonstration; one thing to pull a lever in a booth, another to cast a vote. Or rather, these are not different things: I experience the one *as* the other, and I do this by virtue of including in the horizon of this particular event many things I have not directly experienced.

It is because experience at the social level is such an amalgam that the horizon of the historical past can extend so far, indeed into the distant past before one's birth, etc. Once we acknowledge that hearsay, acquired opinions, and beliefs belong to the context within which we experience events, our notion of what belongs to

the horizon of retention need not be limited to those events one actually has lived through. At the same time we must emphasize once again that it is a horizon-consciousness we are speaking of. In other words, it is not a question of explicitly thinking about the past; nor is it a matter of all those things I may *know* about the past – the dates and stories I remember from my history classes – and may be able to recite if asked. Rather, it is knowledge of the sort that Husserl called *sedimentation*. His well-known geological metaphor suggests that which has sunk below the surface but continues to support what is on the surface. Husserl availed himself of this metaphor in his later work precisely in order to elucidate what has the status of knowledge or belief rather than perception, but which recedes into a position comparable to a spatial horizon. It is that which *figures* in my awareness of the present, frames or sets it off without my having to think about it explicitly.

We have already attributed various features to this historical horizon which accord with our revised version of Husserl's time-consciousness theory: its status as background for the present, its character of extending indefinitely into the temporal 'distance', its comprising gaps, interruptions, vague areas, and sharp contours or landmarks. Let us add to this the fact that it seems to expand and contract, or to change its salient features, depending on the focus of the present. To give two examples of historical events lived through by Americans in the recent past: Demonstrations against the Vietnam War took place in the relatively short-term historical context of the war itself and the growing opposition to it; civil-rights struggles belong properly to a context that encompasses the whole history of racial oppression including slavery, abolition, and the Civil War. A further feature to be noted: to the extent that we are not passive observers but active participants in the historical scene, its proper focus is for us the future rather than the present. In any case its various dimensions – past, present, and future – are experienced as a temporal Gestalt in which each determines the nature of the others.

What all this amounts to is an attempt to cast light on the obvious truth that we live the historical past as part of the continuing present before we ever turn our attention explicitly to the past. We have seen how the horizon of the historical past may

be compounded of bits and pieces of hearsay, things learned in school, etc. It is also more directly encountered in the streets and buildings of our cities which comprise a social context for the most part older than we are. When we do turn our attention to the past, as in historical inquiry, we are not venturing out into an unknown domain to reconstruct something of which we are totally ignorant, on the basis of a few scraps of evidence; rather, we are picking out something from within a pre-given and familiar horizon of more or less clear shapes and contours. What we pick out may itself be some familiar landmark, like a recent war or famous political event; or it may be something hidden in the recesses amongst the familiar landmarks, something that puzzles us precisely because it is a gap in the terrain.

In these respects, our explicit attention to the historical past is like what Husserl called *recollection*. It is to relive or reproduce events I am not now living through. Of course, unlike recollection proper, the events in question may not have been lived through by *me*. But as belonging to the real past they are nonetheless continuous with the time I am living through, and they belonged before I explicitly turned to them, to the horizon of my present.

It may be pointed out that the purpose of historical inquiry is not merely to call to mind and bring into clear focus things we had only a vague awareness of; it is often designed to revise or even fully overturn our naive views of the past. Of course this is true; and historical inquiry, after it has carried out this task, can actually change even our background awareness of the past, once the knowledge it brings us has become sedimented. But to see all history as revisionist history merely confirms my point that such inquiry always begins with a conception of the past, and not in a vacuum. Also, while historical inquiry may set out to overturn our view of particular parts of the past, it nevertheless situates those parts within a larger historical context it does not question. Thus the retention-like horizon of the historical past encompasses and surrounds what we know or think we know explicitly about the past.

In this way we can gain a new conception of our relationship to the historical past, a relation that exists as a horizon-consciousness before becoming explicit in the form of historical inquiry. But the term 'historical consciousness' that appears in our title usually

means something much broader than either just consciousness of the past or historical inquiry. It indicates a preoccupation with the past, a fixation on it almost, that has run parallel with the growth of knowledge and is made possible by it even as it spurs it on. In all its forms – from veneration of the old, antiquarianism, preoccupation with restoration of the authentic, historical nostalgia with its concomitant devaluation of the present – in all these there is a note of desperation, as if we were trying to hold on to a past we have almost lost, one which is no longer continuous with the present as the background which gives the present its sense. Perhaps the present analysis can, among other things, help us to understand these phenomena. It seems we are living in an age in which the continuity with the past seems not to take care of itself and needs to be restored by voluntary action.

1. Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, Husserliana 10 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966); trans. J.S. Churchill as *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1964).
2. See, for example, p. 165 of Husserliana 10.
3. *Ibid.*, section 12.
4. *Ibid.*, section 11.
5. *Ibid.*, section 8.
6. *Ibid.*, section 9.
7. See *Ideas I*, section 27.
8. *Ibid.*, section 36.

III.13. 'Personalities of a Higher Order'

When he reaches section 56 of the Fifth Cartesian Meditation, Husserl claims he has completed the clarification of the 'first and lowest level' of intersubjectivity, or of what he calls the communalization of monads, and can now proceed to 'higher levels' that, he says, present 'relatively minor difficulties'.¹ Discussing various forms of communalization, Husserl mentions 'the pre-eminent types that have the character of 'personalities of a higher order''.² In using this phrase, Husserl is in effect attributing personal characteristics to certain kinds of social groups as well as to individuals. He does not follow up here on the precise manner in which such attribution is justified, and although the expression 'personalities of a higher order' makes its appearance in other works (e.g., *The Crisis*),³ they likewise lack any detailed justification of the use of such a phrase. We might thus suppose that Husserl is merely indulging in a *façon de parler*, but if we consult the manuscripts on intersubjectivity, in particular those of volume 14 of Husserliana, dating from the 1920s,⁴ we find that Husserl takes this expression very seriously indeed. There we find him attributing to certain forms of community not only 'personality' (199, 405) but also 'subjectivity' (404), 'consciousness' and 'unity of consciousness' (200), 'faculties' (*Vermögen*), 'character', 'conviction' (*Gesinnung*) (201), 'memory' (205), and even '*so etwas wie Leiblichkeit*' – something like corporality (206). Of course, we often use some of the terms to characterize certain social units in ordinary speech, but Husserl goes out of his way to insist that such talk is not inauthentic ('*keine uneigentliche Rede*' [404]), no mere analogy ('*keine blosse Analogie*' [201]). He mentions the use of the term *Gemeingeist* by the nineteenth century humanists under

the influence of German Idealism, and the tendency of modern, reductionistic psychology, reacting against German Idealism, to debunk such terminology as mystical or fictitious (404). But the attempt to reduce *Gemeingeist* to a collection of individuals is just as misguided, he says, as the analogous attempt by some of the same psychologists to make individual consciousness an epiphenomenon of matter (404).

I find it remarkable that Husserl seems explicitly to embrace in these manuscripts a conception that most phenomenologists and most other philosophers of the twentieth century have found uncongenial. Alfred Schutz, for example, rejects it in no uncertain terms, drawing on Max Weber for support.⁵ Even Dilthey, who became increasingly a source of inspiration for Husserl in his later years, especially when dealing with social topics, was suspicious of the notion of a superpersonal subjectivity, in spite of his closeness to German Idealism.⁶

Indeed, there is something *prima facie* unphenomenological about the notion. Husserl has a guarded respect for the German Idealists, but he always demanded that the paper money of their high-flown conceptions be cashed in for the hard currency of phenomenological analysis. But what this means is that anything whatsoever should be analyzed in terms of its relation to the conscious life of an individual subject. The very notion of phenomenological analysis would seem to prescribe that any treatment of transindividual subjectivity would make it subordinate to the subjectivity of the investigator. Perhaps these considerations have something to do with the fact that the concrete analyses that Husserl does devote to this topic in volume 14, which are in any case not extensive, are (to me, at least) so unsatisfying.

In the following I do not intend to present Husserl's analysis, or to criticize it, though I shall draw on it occasionally. I shall rather attempt on my own to test the degree to which one can make phenomenological sense of what we may call the subjectivity of certain kinds of social units. It is clear that ordinary language often deals in such a conception, and that it has also been used philosophically. But can it be understood phenomenologically?

The approach that immediately suggests itself – and this is largely Husserl's approach – is to proceed as usual in the first person singular, adopting the phenomenological standpoint to-

ward one's world, and inquiring after the manner in which social units make their appearance in that world. What sort of entity is the family, the university, the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, the working class, or the United States, and how do these phenomena fit into my perceptual and conceptual world? How do they figure in my spatial and bodily surroundings, how are they encountered, how are they given? In such a context of investigation one could then ask the crucial question: Do I experience, encounter, interact with such social entities, large or small, in ways which are importantly similar to the manner in which I experience, encounter and interact with individual persons?

Such an approach seems to present rich possibilities, but it is burdened with a difficulty that has already been hinted at. It tends to place the social unit over against me, as an object for my subjectivity, and thus suggests, for one thing, the scientific and detached attitude I might take toward a society of which I am not a member. To be sure, comparing the social unit with another person suggests other possibilities as well: struggling with it, being victimized by it, and so forth. But in these cases, the other person is still irreducibly other and 'over against' me, and in this analogy an important aspect of the nature of the social unit for the individual is being left out, namely, the fact that the individual can be a member of it. Although there are many different ways of encountering another person, there is no sense, that I can see, in which one can be a participating member of another person. Yet the notion of participation seems a better avenue to the putative subjectivity of the social unit than its givenness as an object. Let us try to consider the social unit, then, not as one which stands over against me but as one of which I am a member. Thus, one would be considering the possibility of a larger subjectivity in which one participates rather than as a subjectivity that one encounters as one encounters another person.

But such an approach has its own difficulties. Does it not run up against and reveal the limits of phenomenological analysis? Where does it fit into the scheme *ego cogitatum qua cogitatum*, which was Husserl's formula for the phenomenological frame of reference? A larger subjectivity in which I participate would seem to be neither *cogito* nor *cogitatum*. Nevertheless, I think some

progress can be made in this direction, starting with what Husserl calls the 'first and lowest level' of intersubjectivity.

This first level, which Husserl has tried to account for in the Fifth Meditation, is what Schutz later called the face-to-face encounter with another conscious subject. What has clearly emerged from Husserl's analysis is that this one-to-one encounter essentially involves a third element, the common surrounding world. The other is in my world, but as a consciousness he or she is also for the world and the world is for him or her as well as for me. No face-to-face encounter, then, without something in common – meaning, of course, not common characteristics or a common essence but something particular in common: this particular place in the world in which we stand and face each other. But again, we share this common place not as two pencils share a common desk top, but rather as a single environment consciously given to both of us – and one which, by the way, also *includes* both of us among its constituents. Simplifying, we could say that the encounter with another person is first of all this: the encounter with another perspective on the world, a perspective which is not my own.⁷

Now, Husserl often compares intersubjective experience with memory,⁸ and his point is this: memory offers us the example of a plurality of experiences of one and the same object. The object is both a unity and a plurality of ways of showing itself. In intersubjectivity, we also have a plurality of experiences of one and the same 'object' – at least, the common environment – but this plurality, instead of being spread out in time, is simultaneous. Another and more important difference, of course, is that in memory I have not only a single object but also a single subject, that is, the plurality of experiences are all my own; whereas in intersubjectivity this is not the case. In the face-to-face encounter, though, I am *aware* of the other's experiences even if I don't *have* them; and they fit together with mine in virtue of the common object and the kinesthetic-spatial interlocking of perspectives, into a single system of views on our common environment. Furthermore, this single system is given as much to the other as it is to me.

We can now take this simultaneity of differing perspectives on the same world and consider it as itself spread out over time, as

Schutz does when he considers two persons observing together a bird in flight.⁹ It is odd that Schutz should have hit on this marvelous example and yet failed to grasp the richness of its implications. His striking and much-quoted phrase 'we grow older together', used again in this context, I find very misleading. It suggests the clock, ticking away while our two streams of experience run along parallel to each other. Of course Schutz meant, in using the word 'together', to indicate the mutual awareness of this passing time, because it is also true, but irrelevant, that I am growing older along with everyone else in the universe. But what is crucial to this example is not that, along with the bird's flight, we are aware of *objective* time passing (which is what 'growing older' suggests to me), but rather that the structural features of what Husserl calls *internal* time-consciousness are shared. That is, the common object, *ex hypothesi*, is an event, something that unfolds in time. In order that there *be* a *common* object for us, each of the simultaneous phases of the experience of the event, my own and the other's, must bear within itself the retention of the past phases of the event and project before it the event's future. Again, as individual participant, I am aware of the intersubjectivity of the common experience in that I am aware of an interlocking system not only of perspectives but also of retentions and protentions, some of which are not my own, a single such system in which my own experiences participate.

It is the common object, along with the single system of perspectives and time consciousness it implies, which is the key, in my view, to what Schutz calls the *we*-relationship. Again I think Schutz got it wrong, because he defines this relationship simply as a reciprocal *thou*-orientation.¹⁰ For one thing, each of the two parties could be *thou*-oriented toward the other without knowing that the other was *thou*-oriented toward *him*. But that's a minor difficulty, probably an oversight on Schutz' part. More important is the fact, which Schutz fails to note, that it is the common object – whether object in the narrow sense or event or even simply the common environment – which gives rise to a single system of interlocking experiences in which we both participate. It is this single system that best corresponds to most of our uses of the term *we*, it is this system, in fact, to which the term frequently applies. Comprising two or more subjectivities, it requires a third thing, the

common object, in order to come into being. The object becomes this system's own object, the thing *we* see, the bird's flight *we* observe, the surrounding world which is *our* surroundings, not just mine. The we-relationship, then, is mediated by the common object. Schutz' description suggests a staring match or perhaps lovers gazing deep into each other's eyes. But in a staring match the other disappears as other, and lovers who do not get on to other things besides gazing will not have much of an affair.

Because every face-to-face encounter involves the common surroundings, and thus the common object in the broadest sense, every such encounter would seem to involve the establishment of a we-relationship, this sense that I am participating in a subjectivity larger than my own. We seem to have established the subjectivity of the social unit at too low a level. Yet Husserl called even this level *Vergemeinschaftung* – communalization or the establishment of a community. We have already discerned what we might call differing degrees of focus in intersubjective experience; and these may be seen to correspond to different degrees of communalization, even while remaining at the same level. A face-to-face encounter may be fleeting, its only object the totality of objects that is the common environment, including the participants themselves. But a common focus, that is, a particular object within that environment, can focus the we-relationship as well. Remember the famous example of what the traffic accident does to the collection of people at a sidewalk cafe. If the object is an unfolding event, like the bird's flight, it is spread out over time and the we-relationship is spread out as well.

The we-relationship is cemented even further if the common focus is not a perceived object or event but a common *objective* to be attained. Here the common object is not constituted as passively given, but is actively constituted as lying in a future to be realized. Constituted along with it are the means to its realization, the common project comprising various steps in the means-end relation, steps that are often tasks that can be divided up among the participants in the project. It was Heidegger, of course, who stressed the fact that others are encountered, 'proximally and for the most part', not as entities present at hand or standing over against me, but as it were obliquely, through the common project in which we are engaged.¹¹ Whether or not this

is the primordial or most authentic form of encounter with other persons, as opposed to other, possibly derivative forms, it seems certain that it is the key to the foundation of we-relationships that form a distinct class. The intersubjective unity of a common project is both more fragile and more concrete than that of a common perception. The observers of the bird in flight or the spectators at a football game or at the theater are fused by their common object, but they take the object to exist independently of themselves. For the participants in a common project, like a barn raising, their common object or objective is literally created by their commitment and their activity, first mental and communicative and then physical. For spectators and observers, their we-relationship seems called forth and sustained in being by the independent object. For the participants in a common endeavor, the object is called forth and sustained in being by their we-relationship. Thus, the latter form of relationship is not at the mercy of its object, as we might say, and is in this sense not subject to an outside reality. But at the same time, it receives no support for its existence from outside and is dependent on its own internal cohesiveness for its sustained existence.

It should be noted here that our attempt to attribute subjectivity and intentionality to groups by means of the we-relationship differs in at least one important respect from certain classical conceptions. In Adam Smith's notion of the invisible hand and Hegel's of the cunning of reason, groups act in furtherance of goals that are unknown to and even at variance with the purposes of the individuals who make them up. In the we-relationship, by contrast, participants are quite conscious of the ends pursued by the group; but it is still the group, and not the individuals serially or collectively, that pursues these ends.

It might be noted further that the common object, especially in the sense of the common objective, seems the key not only to the we-relationship but also to what might be regarded as its opposite, conflict between persons. Competition for a scarce supply of food, struggle over a piece of disputed territory, are cases in point. Even when the conflict derives from differing objectives, there is no conflict unless the differing objectives somehow involve the same elements, such as means. Here, of course, to say that there is a common object or objective is not to say that the objective

is to be realized in common. One party's possession and consumption of the food supply is meant precisely to exclude the other's attainment of the same objective. What is interesting about these two alternatives, conflict and cooperation, is that in either case we could say with Hegel that each consciousness seeks the death of the other,¹² in the first case by eliminating him as a threat to the attainment of my objective, in the second case by submerging his independence in the common project.

There is, of course, something intermediate between these two alternatives, and Husserl saw its importance as well as Hegel. Turning up at several points in the intersubjectivity manuscripts as an example of communalization is what Husserl calls *das Herr-Diener Verhältnis*, the relation of master and servant.¹³ As we might expect, there is no mention of Hegel, nor is there any evidence that Husserl acquired the term or even the idea from reading Hegel's work, though he was surely aware of its presence there. In any case, Husserl like Hegel sees this relation as significant in the formation of community or 'personality of a higher order'. What interests Husserl about it is that the master supplies the will and the servant provides the execution of the action,¹⁴ but because the action is the unity of will and execution, the action cannot be said to belong to either of them exclusively but is strictly speaking the action of the rudimentary community they form.

Again we see the common third element, in this case the action, as the key to the intersubjective relationship; and again we see that the action is a single system of subjective accomplishment in which each individual sees his own activity as a functioning part. It should be remembered that for Hegel, too, this all-important human relation is mediated by a third element, that is, nature, whose mastery is the common business of the two participants. There is another aspect of the relation that Husserl notes – one that is also taken for granted by Hegel – namely, that it not merely focused on a single common project but establishes itself as a generalized relation – habitual, as Husserl calls it – to be applicable henceforth to all future activities.¹⁵

Though he does note that the master-servant relation is commonly based on power and threat,¹⁶ Husserl does not bring out the explosive features of the relation, the internal contradictions that Hegel depicts so brilliantly. These have their source in the

changing view of the servant, who first sees his own contribution to the common action as 'inessential', then comes to regard himself as the true agent and the master's role as superfluous.¹⁷ Husserl simply contrasts the master-servant relation with what he calls a 'reciprocal relation'.¹⁸ But the master-servant relation has instructive force, just as it has dialectical force in Hegel. It is well known that for Hegel, in the community of mutual recognition, the master-servant relation is not simply done away with. It is *aufgehoben*, and that means both surpassed and retained. It is retained in the sense that the two functions, master and servant, are still present; but it is surpassed in that they are not vested in particular individuals or classes. Rather, each is for himself and for the others both master and servant. We can still distinguish between will (or formulation) and execution, but the individual participates in both. The genuine subject of the activity is the spirit of the community, which Hegel calls 'the I that is a We, the We that is an I'.¹⁹

For Hegel, of course, *Geist* in this sense is not only a genuinely subjective and conscious being but is even more genuinely and really so than the individual consciousness. But let us proceed more cautiously. Our task is to determine, on phenomenological grounds, the exact degree to which we can attribute subjectivity to any sort of social unity at all. Let us review what we have accomplished so far.

Beginning at the level of face-to-face encounter, we pointed out that part of the sense of the encounter for the individual, for me, is that I participate in a single system of perspectival views that is interlocked and unified in a way that is similar to the coordination of temporally spread-out views and perspectives within my own experience. The unity derives from or corresponds to the common object, whether merely as common environment or as common focus within that environment. The object is at once a unity and a multiplicity of ways of presenting itself. This is no less true of the object that is an unfolding event, like the flight of a bird. In the case of the common project, the unified system of subjective aspects consists not so much of perspective views as of actions that are functioning parts of a single total action. Again, the unity of this single system is derived from the common object – the objective in this case – but here the common object is itself

dependent on the intersubjective unity. In Husserl's language, here the common object is not passively, but actively, constituted, truly created.

We have hardly mentioned communication and language so far; but it is at this point, at the level of the common project, that it commonly becomes decisive.²⁰ This is a vast topic, needless to say, and we cannot go into it extensively. But what strikes me here is that the role of language in the intersubjective situation is oddly isomorphic with what we have been discussing so far. Our common language, if we have one, lies spread out around us like our common environment and like it forms a vast system of interlocking potentialities waiting to be activated. When we speak, our speech acts may be indications to each other of our intentions of psychic states; but we genuinely communicate in virtue of something distinguishable from both our words and our thoughts – the common meaning and though it the common referent. When I speak to someone I say *something* – *about* something. And I communicate with him to the extent that he understands what I am saying, about what. Again it is the third element, the common theme distinct from, but shared by, the two speakers, which provides the unity of their different subjective contributions.

Have we arrived at any phenomenological justification for attributing subjectivity, or indeed consciousness, to any sort of social unit? I think the key to intersubjectivity, as to subjectivity itself, is temporality. Husserl and other phenomenologists have taught us that the unity of consciousness at the individual level is not an abstract or timeless ego that stands above or behind the multiplicity of experiential phases. It is nothing but the internal temporal unity achieved when each phase resumes its own past and projects its own future, the phases being linked to the temporal persistence or the temporal unfolding of whatever object it is concerned with. The unity of intersubjective experience has the same feature. The single system of interlocking views in which I participate, while it has a simultaneous unity-in-multiplicity, has a protentive and retentive unity-in-multiplicity as well, again provided by the single object. The multiplicity of conscious experiences had by the individual parties to a common experience is no more a *mere* multiplicity than the object is a mere multiplicity of private and particular appearances. It is a system of conscious-

ness, a single one, which lasts just as long as its object is precisely a common object.

I think that in a certain sense we can attribute not only consciousness but even self-consciousness to certain forms of community. What is self-consciousness, phenomenologically speaking? Again, it is not the static conception of a self observing itself. It occurs rather when the unity of the temporal phases of experience is not only lived through but is made thematic. When I experience reflectively, or act deliberately, it means that I am not so much absorbed in the object of my experience, or the objective of my action, but am also attentive to the structure or flow of my experience itself, to the pursuit of my objective and its articulation into steps and stages, means and ends. In the case of the project, such attention is often necessary to its formulation, and often becomes necessary in the course of its execution, whether to remind myself of what I am doing or to revise my plan as I go along, perhaps in response to changed circumstances. This sort of reflection, whether prospectively, retrospectively, or both, draws together the disparate and fleeting elements and phases of my experience or activity and imposes on them – or discovers or rediscovers in them or reimposes on them – a sense, a direction, and articulated structure. Often requiring the use of language, such reflection consists in constructing as it were a *story* about myself that accounts for what I'm doing, a story that I may tell to others or merely to myself.

Now I want to maintain that something similar takes place at the intersubjective level too. It may be that only individuals tell stories, but they don't always tell them about themselves or use the first person singular. Often the storyteller speaks to, and on behalf of, the group to which he belongs; and the disparate elements he draws together into a temporally articulated whole are not the elements of his own experience only but those also to the other participants in the common project or course of experience. The experience described, the action proposed or articulated, is then not *my* action, *my* experience, but *ours*. Now to the extent that others subscribe to this account, *believe* this story about what is going on, we have, it seems to me, not merely a single object or objective, not only a single system of coordinated experience but also a single reflection or self-consciousness expressed in the

single story subscribed to by all. In this way the *we* can be seen not only as conscious, not only as active, but also self-consciousness and reflective. Such storytelling may take place in conversation, in the rhetoric of the political leader, in the writings of journalists and historians. It constitutes intersubjective self-consciousness, however, only to extent that it is taken up and believed by the other members of the group.

If we pursue far enough the role of storytelling and storybelieving in communal life, we arrive at the *historical* character of social existence and the origin of historical inquiry. But this would be the subject of another paper. We hope to have shown here how it is possible, despite appearances to the contrary, to make phenomenological sense of the idea of personalities of a higher order.

NOTES

1. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1960), pp. 128 f.
2. *Ibid.* p. 132.
3. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970) p. 188.
4. *Husserliana*, vol. 14, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität: Zweiter Teil*, I. Kern ed. (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1973).
5. Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, trans. G. Walsh and F. Lehnert (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 199.
6. See Wilhelm Dilthey, *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, ed. M. Riedel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), pp. 351–355.
7. The importance of the common world in this analysis reveals the limits and ultimately the inappropriateness, in my view, of the Leibnizian concept of monadology, which Husserl invokes in the Fifth Meditation and elsewhere.
8. Cf. *Cartesian Meditations*, pp. 115–116, 126 ff.; *Crisis*, p. 185; and *Husserliana*, vol. 14 pp. 199–200.
9. *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, p. 165.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
11. See *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 153 ff.
12. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A.V. Miller (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977), . 113.
13. *Husserliana*, vol. 14, p. 169.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 403.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 116 ff.
18. *Husserliana*, vol. 14, p. 193.
19. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 110.
20. Though not, of course, a necessary condition: there can be common projects without a common language.

III.14. Cogitamus Ergo Sumus: The Intentionality of the First-Person Plural

A survey of current attitudes towards the concept of intentionality provides for an interesting sociology of philosophers. One group regards the notion as a kind of ghost-in-the-machine redivivus, come back to haunt them. The spectral threats posed to a seamless materialist ontology by such things as immateriality, incorrigibility and privacy had seemed exorcised in the first round, at the hands of Ryle and Wittgenstein. But now it appeared that their opponents had been holding in reserve a much more sophisticated concept of mind that required such intractables as mental states that derive their identity from their meanings, meanings themselves as abstract and intensional entities, intentional as opposed to real objects, and the like.

For those whose first priority is ontological homogeneity such notions are like a lurid family scandal that has to be hushed up or explained away. Reaction among this group has ranged from a disdainful refusal to admit the problem – intentionality is declared without argument to be appearance, not reality (e.g. Quine)¹ – to elaborate arguments designed to reduce the intentional to the causal (e.g. Dennett).² The latter resemble nothing more than the gymnastics of theologians attempting to explain the presence of evil in a universe of whose uniform goodness they are convinced in advance. Another approach (e.g. Searle's) is to admit intentionality to the real world but to try to naturalize it, declaring it (but again without much argument) simply a property or function of the brain and nervous system, just as digestion is a function of the stomach and intestines.³ There is much skepticism about whether this will work.

If such are the difficult arrangements of those committed to a

matrialist ontology, one might suppose that intentionality would be embraced by those with an equally a priori commitment to idealism or dualism. Actually a good case could be made that the concept provides no more support for either of these views than it does for materialism.

In any case I would argue that intentionality is most welcomed by those whose first allegiance is not to ontological purity of any sort but who have a taste for the variety and even the irrepressible untidiness of things. For them intentionality is a tool for getting at and describing some of this variety. These are the true phenomenologists and even the true descendents of Husserl, I would argue, especially if one considers the *Logical Investigations* and the manuscripts (veritable models of untidiness) rather than the programmatic texts. For these philosophers the point is not to make intentionality disappear but to use it for all it's worth, wherever it will work, as a way of illuminating things.

Consider the work of Merleau-Ponty. Intentionality had been introduced by Brentano as a way of distinguishing the mental from the physical. Husserl likewise largely restricted its use to the mental or to consciousness. Merleau-Ponty boldly used it to characterize the body, attacking not the ghost but the machine of Ryle's cartoon Cartesianism. The result is a brilliant tour de force of description, whatever its faults. It fits neither idealism, nor materialism, nor dualism. But it reveals a lot about the body and about perception that we couldn't otherwise see.

Like Merleau-Ponty I want to take the concept of intentionality from its original home and try to apply it elsewhere. I want to see if we can consider it a characteristic not of minds or of bodies or even of persons, but of certain kinds of *groups* of persons.

I

Let us briefly consider intentionality as it has traditionally been treated. Regarded as a property of consciousness or of mental states – e.g. thinking, believing, desiring, intending, etc. – it has excited interest in different quarters for different reasons. Intentional mental states are those which are essentially directed at an object or content. It is primarily the ontological status of the

intended object which has interested analytic philosophers, because of the logical peculiarities of statements describing the relation between the mind and those objects: How to treat the fact that the existence of a mental state 'requires' an object, yet does not entail the existence of the object, or entails it only under a certain description?

Husserl by contrast finally decided that the ontological status of the objects of consciousness interested him not at all – except *as* intended *by* or *in* the intentional state in question – and he made this ontological indifference into a methodological principle, the *epoché*. What did interest him was the various *ways* an object could be intended: its givenness through a variety of perceptual appearances over time, its identity as an object now of perception, now of imagination, now of memory, the stipulation of its 'region' and its predicational possibilities through the 'noema', etc. – all those things that go to make up the complicated notion of 'constitution' in Husserl's middle and later work.

Thus we could say that the analytic approach tries to fit intentionality into an ontology of the real world, while the phenomenological approach explores the realm of intentions themselves, and the real world only *as* it is mentally intended. Each is interested thus in both the mind *and* the real world, but they approach their relation with different methods and different priorities.

While these differences concern intentions and their *objects*, similar differences attend the treatment of the relation between mental states and their *subject*. Analytic philosophers, on the whole, have ascribed them to 'persons', using a neutral term thought to be compatible with both a mental and a physical approach to the human subject. The long-range hope and expectation for many, of course, is that the details will be worked out by a more advanced brain-physiology, so that the brain will be the ultimate bearer or owner of intentional states. Husserlian phenomenologists have tended to speak of the I or ego, a much more abstract notion. Both sides agree on a one-many relation – many intentions belonging to one subject – but again the phenomenologists have been more interested in *how* this works than in the ultimate ontological status of the subject. Again their focus is on the intentional states and how they bear in themselves the sense of their subject as well as that of their object. Especially in

treatments of the temporal flow of experiences, the problem of the unity of consciousness has been treated as essentially just another sort of phenomenological problem, so that in Husserl, at least, the ego is in the end itself something constituted in consciousness rather than a postulated substance underlying it.

In spite of these differences, both sides seem to agree on one thing: it is to the I as an *individual* subject or person, rather than to any sort of plurality, that intentionality properly belongs. This is as true of Merleau's body-subject as it is of Searle's brain-subject. It may be argued that the so-called 'transcendental' ego of Husserl somehow lies beyond all individuality, and if the ego is considered as a methodological principle, there is a certain sense in which this is true. The fact remains that it is still called an ego, which at the very least is an analogue of the individual subject – an individual I, we might say, considered in a very special way.

Consider now the fact that in ordinary speech we often ascribe to groups some of the same kinds of 'mental' properties that we ascribe to individuals. Social entities of various sorts – families, cultural groups (the black community), political units (the American public) – have experiences, act, take decisions, express themselves, find themselves in moods and feel anger and animosity. What are we to make of this? Most theorists today are inclined to dismiss notions of a 'group mind' or 'collective consciousness'. Even those who argue for holism over individualism in the methodology of the social sciences tend to dismiss it. One reason is that the notion somehow suggests demagoguery and mob manipulation, another is that it seems so easy to view these mental ascriptions as short-cuts for describing the thoughts and feelings of the individuals that make up the groups in question. But probably the most important reason is a combination of ontological and epistemological principles: groups just *are* collections of individual persons; it may be true, as the holists argue, that the arrangements among them, such as institutional and economic relations, are just as real as the individuals and even help define the individuals' behavior. But these relations can be observed *in* people's behavior. We ascribe purely mental properties like thoughts and feelings to individuals because we the observers are individuals ourselves and consider the members of society as

analogues of ourselves. Thus the 'argument from analogy', which may not work as a proof for the *existence* of 'other minds', is used constantly in the ascription of mental content to others. This is at least one way of understanding the method of *Verstehen*. The mental states of other individuals are as real as our own. As for the group, it exists as a real (collective) *object*, but what sense does it make to consider it a collective *subject*?

These considerations show how closely the whole matter of ascribing mental properties is tied not only to the individual but also to a first-person method or point of view still ultimately descended from Descartes. Intentional and other mental states may be considered both public and corrigible – that is, another person may know as well as I do what my states of mind are and may even in some cases know better, since I can be wrong about them. Nevertheless I have a direct access to them others do not have and in most cases I do serve as the final arbiter of what they are. This would seem to add to the implausibility of dislodging intentionality from its link to the individual and applying it to the social. The paradigm for ascribing intentional states to some subject remains the case in which I reflectively consult my own experience. Other individuals are analogues of myself; but the idea of a social subject seems at best a *façon de parler*, at worst pure myth or construction.

II

Nevertheless, I think certain inroads can be made into the case that has built up against the notion of a social or collective subject and that we can make good sense of this notion. I propose to do this by beginning with the last-mentioned methodological point and proceeding from there to undercut the idea that talk of a social subject is just a short-cut for talking about individuals.

I want to focus attention on two things that are ascribed to individuals *and* groups and which are generally regarded as intentional or as involving intentional components. One is *perceptual experience* and the other is *action*. Consider now the business of ascribing these to some subject. So far we have considered cases in which I ascribe these to (or reflectively recognize them in)

myself, and cases in which I ascribe them to others, whether an individual or a group. But there is a third case which offers a compromise and a more promising avenue of approach: the case in which I ascribe the experience or action neither to an I, a thou, a they or an it but to a *we*. In this case I participate in the experience or action, which is then not merely my experience but *ours*, not *my* action but *our* action. If we take such cases as our focus we shall have the advantage that we have not left the first-person point of view behind, but merely exchanged its singular for its plural form.

What is in fact going on when we participate in actions and experiences in such a way that we attribute them to a *we*? There are, of course, different uses of 'we'. I may say of you and me that 'we saw' the Eiffel tower, but this implies hardly more than a common object. We may have seen the tower at different times, or at the same time but unaware of each other's presence. Little is lost if we substitute for the 'we saw' a simple conjunction: I saw the tower *and* you saw it. But if we see it *together*, something essential to the experience is lost when that substitution is made, since in this case each of us saw the tower and was aware that the other was seeing it too. *This* sense of seeing something together, as expressed in the use of 'we' by both parties in describing the experience, indicates that the experience is as much referred back to a common subject as it is referred outward to a common object. That is the *sense* it has for both parties.

What is contained in this sense? A la Husserl we can say that there is no perceptual object without its 'manners of givenness'. If I wander about, I see the same tower from different points of view. When *we* see the tower together, different points of view are simultaneous as well as spread out over time. They can be simultaneous because there are two individuals. But for each of us, the sense of the experience contains these two points of view at once. I may not see the tower through your eyes, but its being seen through your eyes as well as my own is part of the experience as *I* have it – or rather, as I participate in it. For manifestly, it is *not* just I that am having it. For each of us, there is a complex experience 'going on' of this one tower which can properly be attached to only sort of subject: the plural subject *we*.

Clearly we are dealing here with a special class of experiences.

It does not include all uses of the 'we' and requires more than a common object perceived by a plurality of subjects – even simultaneously, as we have seen. Our class is that of common or shared experiences, those of experiencing something together. But this is clearly a large and important class, and our analysis of it can be put this way: each participant experiences the object and is aware of the others in such a way that he cannot possibly attribute the experience to himself alone. After all, it has manifold phases and perspectives, and some of these are not directly available to him at all. The experience quite simply belongs to *us*; it is *ours*.

This notion of the different perspectives intersubjectively 'constituting' the object may appear somewhat abstract in the case of viewing a simple, stable object. But consider the experience of a complex event like a game of football before a crowd of spectators or a traffic accident on a busy street. Especially in the latter case, the strong sense of reciprocal awareness is manifested in the reactions of the spectators: turning to look, addressing each other, rushing to help, etc. The intersubjective constitution of the event may become manifest only later when these witnesses start telling about what they saw and revealing their different perspectives on the same event. But I would argue that this perspectivism is implicit in the circumstances of the event itself and the manner in which it is socially experienced.

If this analysis works well in the case of the relatively passive phenomenon of common experience, it works even better for common *action*. Again it will not work for all uses of 'we', or even for all instances of sharing an objective or goal. If *we* go to the store, even together, this may be more or less equivalent to my going *and* your going. But if *we* do the shopping, or if *we* play tennis, or if *we* build a cottage, the equivalence will not hold. Like a perception, an action is constituted in phases, in this case steps and stages, subsidiary projects, etc. If *we* divide this labor in building our cottage, it makes no sense at all to attribute the action to me or to the group's members serially or conjointly; it can only be attributed to *us*.

It may be argued that collective experience and action can still always be broken down into the perceptions or activities of the individuals involved, and that their 'plurality' can be accounted

for simply by referring to the way in which each individual includes the others in his individual understanding of what is going on. This may be true, but it would involve a third-person, external description of the scene. Our procedure, however, to repeat, is to consult our first-person experience of participating in experience or action. And what we maintain is that in using 'we' (in this special way) each of us construes the action or experience in question such that its proper subject is not I but we.

There are several parallels between the structure of common action and the structure of common experience. Corresponding of the common *object* of experience is the common *objective* of action. In both cases there is reference back to a common *subject*, a *we*. Between the two poles is the complex 'constitution': here coordinated perspectives, there coordinated tasks, which are distributed laterally or synchronically among the members of the group as well as being distributed temporally over the duration of the experience or project. Running like a line or arrow from the plural subject to the object or objective, of course, and uniting all the diversity in the process, is the *perceptual intention* in the one case and the *practical intention* (which, of course, corresponds to our usual or non-philosophical sense of 'intention') in the other.

Between the two sorts of intentions, perceptual and practical, there is of course the difference in what Searle calls the 'direction of fit'.⁴ We can express this difference by saying that in perception the experience is called forth by and tailored to the object, which exists independently of it; while in the case of action the object (or objective) is literally brought forth or produced by the action itself. This difference carries over in an interesting way to the subject (or agent) in each case, especially where we are speaking of a *plural* subject: in cases like the traffic accident the *we* is brought together by or formed around the object or event perceived; while in the case of common action, since the object has yet to be produced, the *we*-subject must exist independently of it – not independently of its conception, perhaps, or of the common intention and project of producing it, but at least independently of its existence.

III

These considerations permit us to move to another aspect of our topic. Up to now we have spoken of the *we* as subject of *particular* experiences or actions, and have tried to clarify what that means. But to be a genuine or full-fledged subject, the *we* must, like the I, persist throughout a multiplicity of experiences *and* actions spread out over time. Only in this sense does the group as such occupy a place analogous to the individual I. The foregoing remarks on the 'direction of fit' are relevant because in certain cases common experience can bring a *we*-subject into being, and a series of common experiences can sustain it in being. But only if it already has a stable existence, such as one brought forth by a series of common experiences, can a group undertake common actions. How are we to understand the stable existence we attribute to certain groups which makes them into enduring *we*-subjects?

Again the key is to be found not in observing from the outside but in consulting our own sense of participation. As described above, participating in an experience means that I understand or directly grasp its sense, and thus its objective reference, while attributing the experience not to myself but to a collection of persons of which I am part. Their experience and mine have the same object and the same subject – in fact it is the same experience – but this is the case only if it is reciprocal: they must include me just as I include them in the 'we'. Since even a particular experience is temporal we already have a temporal unity within diversity. What needs to happen further is that other experiences in which I participate are grasped as having this *same we* as their genuine subject. The sense of common experience has to endure long enough and be diverse enough to establish an enduring group of persons who mutually acknowledge their membership in something common.

The notion of mutual acknowledgement or reciprocal recognition recalls Hegel's concept of the community, and it is interesting to note that Hegel introduces the term *Geist* in the *Phenomenology* by calling it 'an I that is we, a we that is I'.⁵ This occurs in fact in the section leading up to his famous chapter on the master-servant dialectic, which strongly suggests that the commu-

nity of mutually recognizing members emerges out of the struggle of conflict and domination. One way of reading this is that the drama of mutual destruction and enslavement itself becomes the common experience in which both sides finally recognize that they share. Individuals who treat each other as objects to be dominated are transformed into co-subjects who can say *we*. Since the developing conflict has essentially been fought over the possession, habitation and exploitation of their natural surrounding world, one imagines the transformation of this territorial conflict into an organized economic community with divided labor. Common experience makes possible the establishment of a *we*-subject capable of common action.

Common action, and the community capable of it, have of course to be communicatively constituted. 'We' has to be *said* in certain ways and understood in the same ways on all sides. Thus the division of labor which is characteristic of common action carries over to the very discourse of the community: some individuals speak to and for the others, articulating what the group is about, not in their own name as individuals, but on behalf of all. This discourse is invariably a *narrative* discourse in which temporal sequences or phases of experience and action are tied together as beginning-middle-end configurations that make up the episodes and rhythms of life. Leaders, spokesmen and women, the formulators and deliverers of the common rhetoric, are story-tellers or narrators for the community, and the putative subject, agent, or hero of their story is the community itself, whose identity they express by saying 'we'. Naturally, for this putative subject to be real, their story must be not only told and heard but also accepted or subscribed to and then acted out by the others who are included in the plural subject.

Narrative structure is characteristic not only of the temporal unity of experiences and actions, but also of the subject or agent which lives in and through those experiences and actions. This is to say that certain groups we call communities are subjects for themselves of a kind of life-story, just as the individual is. They trace themselves to an origin, either real or mythical, and keeping alive the story of that origin is part of what keeps them together. Further, any community faces the possibility of destruction from outside or from its own internal centrifugal tendency; so that in

addition to its other common tasks it has the constant task of self-preservation. Thus the prospect of its death is just as important as its birth to the community, just as it is for the individual. Like the individual, the community exists as a coherent unity by composing and recomposing its own biography, projecting its future before it even as it interprets and reinterprets its past. Each of these is understood in light of the other, and the present in light of both. Just as the individual comes up with not only changing but also conflicting simultaneous stories about himself or herself, so too with the community. In the latter case it is different individuals, of course, who put forward these stories, each claiming to speak for all. Both individuals and communities can fly apart if these conflicting stories are not resolved. No community is entirely free of conflicting versions of what constitutes its life-story, its origins, tasks and prospects. But some communities are more coherent than others. In any case such coherence is never settled once and for all, but is a constant process of reciprocal narration, persuasion, negotiation, revision. Like the individual the community is not a fixed substantial entity but a project of self-unification and self-constitution which never really ends until its death.

IV

It is in this sense, then, that certain kinds of social groups – the ones we usually call communities – can be considered intentional subjects, analogues in some ways to individual subjects. This means first of all simply that intentional properties – beliefs, perceptions, actions, desires – are ascribed to them. Everyone knows that this *is* done; I have tried to show *how* this is done and have argued that in certain crucial cases such attribution is not reducible to or short-hand for similar ascriptions to individual members. I am thus arguing, if you will, for the legitimacy of such attributions: I am claiming that a certain kind of talk, in which we all frequently engage, is justified.

Some qualifications need to be made. Obviously, not all social groups are of this type. Persons may fall into groups according to height, blood-type, sex and economic class without thereby

constituting communities of persons who address each other as *we*. Even the address, as we have already pointed out, does not suffice. To say 'we ectomorphs' to a group of persons means little, even if they know what the word means and admit that they belong to the group in question. Clearly, however, some of these 'objective' properties, such as race, sex and economic class, can under certain circumstances become the basis of a community through common experience: e.g. when its members recognize that it is *as* blacks or *as* workers, and not just as isolated individuals, that they experience certain things.

Given such communities, it is obvious that intentional properties are not the only kinds properly attributed to them. Such groups are distributed in space, and many of their properties, possibly including even some 'social' ones such as economic or demographic characteristics, may be described in strictly causal rather than intentional terms. But then this mixture of intentional and non-intentional properties is characteristic of individuals too. Communities, like individuals, we might say, have bodies as well as minds. It should be noted, however, that some of the strictly 'mental' attributes of both individuals and groups, e.g. certain generalized moods and feelings, are commonly considered non-intentional. Since Husserl it has been recognized that intentionality is not, as Brentano thought, a way of dividing the mental from the physical, since some of these clearly 'mental' phenomena are *not* intentional. Since Merleau-Ponty, we can say further that some physical properties and relations, i.e. those of the lived body, *are* intentional.

It is just such considerations which permit us to say that, for all the qualifications and cautions that must be made, the community is *primarily* or *essentially* an intentional subject. Merleau-Ponty concluded this about the body, I believe, when *he* extended intentionality to it. Admittedly, he was speaking from the first person point of view of the body as lived. That is, each of us must consult his experience of his own body. His claim was that from this perspective, whatever else it may be, the body is first and foremost *of* something: of the world. That is, it exists primarily though those attributes – chiefly its sentience and its over-all coordination and motility – which orient it within the surrounding world and render the furniture of that world perceptually present.

My claim about the community is also, as I have said, made from a first-person point of view – though in this case plural rather than singular. It is substantiated not by considering groups as objects but by consulting our own sense of participation in them. From here, of course, it can be and is carried over to other communities as well, groups of which we who speak are not members. But our procedure takes its point of departure from a kind of pluralized reflexion.

To say on this basis that a community is primarily or essentially an intentional subject is to say that, whatever else it might be, it exists primarily though its intentional properties, – its experiences and actions – which give it the character of being *of*. It is characterized essentially or defined by its intentional orientation to a world: to things, instruments, events, persons and, of course, other communities. Of these it has experiences, about them it forms beliefs and feels emotions, upon them it acts. But to use the third-person 'it' in such descriptions is highly artificial and misleading. Better to say: for any such community of which I am a member, it is *we* who experience, believe, feel and act, it is in and through such intentional relations, and through the narrational form of reflection and self-constitution described earlier, that *we* exist and maintain our existence as a community.

The community's world, in turn, is itself an intentional world – that is, its constituents are bearers of meaning bestowed by the community's intentions, and these are more important than whatever objective or causal properties they may have. As a *world* they make up not a collection of objects and objective relations but a complex of meaning which is not detachable from the community intentionality which constitutes it. This, at any rate, is all that interests us about these objects, insofar as we are conducting a phenomenology or intentional analysis of the community. Their ontological status, in any absolute sense of that term, need not concern us.

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That this is also true of the common *subject* is a point I hope I have already made sufficiently clear. This feature of my argument

should allay some of the fears and suspicions many associate with the idea of a plural or collective subject. Conceptions of a 'group mind' are often presented as, or understood by others as, straightforward ontological claims: such a being simply exists; furthermore, it pursues its own aims, exploiting the individual members of the group for purposes unknown to them and usually opposed to the ones they themselves pursue. Such at any rate is the usual caricature of Hegel's 'cunning of reason', which echoes earlier conceptions of Vico, Herder and Adam Smith. More recently, J.P. Sartre envisages the transcendence of the 'seriality' of individual existence in what he calls the group-in-fusion, for which the storming of the Bastille serves as the paradigm.⁶ In these conceptions individuals are either unwitting dupes or they are swept up in an unruly mob which obliterates their individuality altogether.

These conceptions deserve the suspicion they arouse. The first is arrived at by *post hoc ergo propter hoc* reasoning, and the second, while doubtless corresponding to something real, is to be rejected as the paradigm for social existence and as the only alternative to 'seriality'. But these views are very different from the one advanced here. By abandoning and subverting individual subjectivity they take us from the I not to a *we* but simply to a putative large-scale I. Our view corresponds not to the caricature of Hegel, derived largely from the lectures on the philosophy of history, but to the genuine insights expressed, for example, as we said earlier, in the *Phenomenology*. There Hegel insists as much on the plurality as on the subjectivity and agency of the community, and the latter is not opposed to the individuals who make it up but exists precisely by virtue of their acknowledgement of each other and their consciousness of the *We*.

By following the first-person (plural) approach, by stressing certain uses of the *we* and by describing the narrative construction of the community, I hope to make it clear that I am presenting not a straightforward ontological claim about the real existence of collective or plural subjects, but rather a reflexive account based on the experience of the individuals that compose and constitute them. With the ontological flexibility that I think is, or at least should be, characteristic of a genuinely phenomenological account, I am claiming that the sense of the plural subject emerges

from certain experiences we have and actions we engage in; and I am trying to show *how* it thus emerges, how it functions and the role it plays in our experience, action and discourse. We do exist and participate in such communities – indeed they are very important parts of our lives. We do say *we* to each other and we mean something real by it. For the phenomenologist it is this reality that counts.

It may be objected that I have gone to such lengths to avoid reifying the communal subject that I have left it with no reality at all. It seems now to exist only as a projection in the minds of individuals, who turn out to be, after all, the real entities presupposed in my account. But what I have in fact said is that the *we* as plural subject is constituted in and through a series of experiences and actions by way of a reflexive, narrative account of that series; and it will be recalled that I said exactly the same thing of the I itself. Like the *we*, the I exists as the unity of a multiplicity of intentional experiences and actions, a unity not postulated in advance but constituted in and through that multiplicity. And if the narrative that constitutes the individual self is at least partly social in origin; if *my* possible ways of existing are delineated by what *we* as a community render conceivable, available and feasible, that is, if the self is indeed partially a 'social construction' – then clearly the *I* owes its narrative form of existence as much to the *we* as vice-versa. In fact they are intertwined and interdependent, and neither is more real than the other.

And what kind of reality is this? The reality of the intentional subject – singular or plural – may seem a pale thing to those whose notion of reality is tailored to the hard physical world. And it may be difficult for them to fit such ephemera into their seamless ontology. But that is their *theoretical* problem. For all of us, outside the constructed worlds of our theories, selves, our own and others, and the communities to which we belong, are as real as anything we know.

NOTES

1. The *Locus classicus* is Quine's *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass. The M.I.T. Press, 1960), p. 221.
2. Daniel Dennett, *Content and Consciousness* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969).
3. *Intentionality* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983) p. IX.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) p. 110.
6. J.P. Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960) pp. 392 ff.

Acknowledgments
and
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Acknowledgments

The papers in this volume were previously published in the books and journals listed below. I would like to express my thanks to the editors and publishers concerned for their kind permission to reprint them here.

- 'Husserl's Lengthening Shadow: A Historical Introduction' appeared under the title 'Husserl' World and Ours' in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1987, pp. 151-167.
- 'Phenomenology and Relativism' was published in *Phenomenology in Theory and Practice*, ed. William S. Hamrick, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985, pp. 19-34.
- 'The Fifth Meditation and Husserl's Cartesianism' appeared in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 34, no. 1, 1973, pp. 14-35.
- 'Husserl's Crisis and the Problem of History' appeared in the *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1974, pp. 127-148.
- 'History, Phenomenology and Reflection' was published in *Dialogues in Phenomenology*, ed. Don Inde and Richard M. Zaner, the Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975, pp. 156-175.
- 'Intentionality: Husserl and the Analytic Approach' was published in *Phenomenology and Philosophical Understanding*, ed. Edo Pivcevic, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 17-36.
- 'The Problem of the Non-empirical Ego: Husserl and Kant' originally appeared in German under the title 'Zum Problem des nicht-empirischen Ich' in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, Band 32, Heft 2, 1978, pp. 117-131.
- 'Findlay, Husserl and The Epoché: Realism and Idealism' was published in *Studies in the Philosophy of J.N. Findlay*, ed. R. Cohen, R. Martin and M. Westphal, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985, pp. 139-158.
- 'Interpretation and Self-Evidence: Husserl and Hermeneutics' was published in *Analecta Husserliana*, vol. 9, ed. A.T. Tymieniecka, Boston: D. Reidel, 1979, pp. 133-147.
- 'The Future Perfect: Temporality and Priority in Husserl, Dilthey and Heidegger' appeared in *Dilthey and Phenomenology*, ed. R. Makkreel and J. Scanlon, Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology / University Press of America, 1987.
- 'World, World-View, Lifeworld: Husserl and the Conceptual Relativists' was originally published in German under the title 'Welt, Weltbild, Lebenswelt: Husserl und die Vertreter des Begriffsrelativismus' in *Lebenswelt und Wissenschaft in der Philosophie Edmund Husserls*, ed. E. Ströker, Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 1979, pp. 32-44.
- 'The Lifeworld Revisited: Husserl and Some Recent Interpreters' was published in *Husserl's Phenomenology: A Textbook*, ed. William R. McKenna and J.N. Mohanty.

Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology / University Press of America, 1987.

'Time-Consciousness and Historical Consciousness' appeared in *Philosophy and Science in Phenomenological Perspective*, ed. K.K. Cho, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1984, pp. 31-44.

'Personalities of a Higher Order' was published in *Phenomenology in a Pluralistic Context*, ed. W. McBride and C. Schrag, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983, pp. 263-272.

'Cogitamus Ergo Sumus: The Intentionality of the First-Person Plural' appeared in *The Monist*, vol. 69, no. 4, 1986, pp. 521-533.

Since the essays in this volume represent the work of some fifteen years, it may be appropriate to acknowledge some long-term debts. In my work on Husserl I have learned from many philosophers and met many fine people. Five of these, whom I have been privileged to know as teachers, senior colleagues, mentors and friends, unite philosophical and human qualities in superlative fashion. They are: Herbert Spiegelberg, J.N. Findlay, Paul Ricœur, J.N. Mohanty, and the late Aron Gurwitsch. Personally, temperamentally and even philosophically they are as far apart as their diverse places of origin - Germany, South Africa, France, India, Russia. What brings them together is more than their conviction that interpreting Husserl is a worthwhile part of their philosophical endeavors. In doing so their abiding concern is never 'scholarship' but what Husserl called *die Sachen selbst*, to which they are utterly devoted without guile or vanity. Their importance and depth as philosophers and teachers is complemented by a rare generosity of spirit of which I have been one of the many beneficiaries.

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