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Edmund Husserl's *Crisis* : A Critique of Modernity and a Phenomenology of History

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Edmund Husserl's *Crisis: A Critique of Modernity* and a Phenomenology of History

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Edmund Husserl's *Crisis*: A Critique of Modernity and a Phenomenology of History

"You will never find the boundaries of the soul, even if you know every road; so deep is its ground"

Heraclitus

I

Introduction

Edmund Husserl's influence on twentieth century thinking cannot be overestimated. In his second introduction to *Being and Time* Martin Heidegger, himself a student of Husserl, claimed that "the following investigation would not have been possible if the ground had not been prepared by Edmund Husserl" (62). In fact, the book itself is dedicated to his teacher. Jean-Paul Sartre claimed that "Husserl had gripped me. I saw everything through the perspectives of his philosophy" (*War Diaries*, 184, cited by Annie Cohen-Solal, 92).

And Maurice Merleau-Ponty devotes much energy in his *Phenomenology of Perception* to making sure that he and his readers understand Husserl, before he begins his arguments. However, the influence of Husserl spreads further than this.

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1 There are two things wrong with this quotation of Heraclitus: first, in the context which Husserl cites this fragment in *The Crisis* (cf. 170), Husserl is speaking about the depths and complexities of the world and not the soul. Besides, Husserl sharply criticizes Descartes for reducing the pure ego to a soul of a tuly existing human. Secondly, Husserl misquote Deils' standard German translation of this fragment in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Deils renders the last phrase *so tiefen Sinn hat sie* whereas Husserl's version has *Grund* rather than *Sinn*. 
handful of philosophers. Besides giving philosophy new
directions, Husserl's phenomenology becomes an indispensable
concept for contemporary psychology, sociology, history,
natural science, legal theory, economics, linguistics,
anthropology, logic, hermeneutics and critical theory. Jacques
Derrida, Paul Ricoeur, Aron Gurwitsch, Emmanuel Levinas,
Alfred Schutz, Teodor Adorno and Jose Ortega y Gasset are
among the major forces in twentieth century thought who are
indebted to the phenomenology Husserl developed so
meticulously in the first three decades of this century.

Within this development, the place of Husserl's last
attempt to set forth systematically the principles of his
phenomenology, *The Crisis of European Sciences and
Transcendental Philosophy: An Introduction to
Phenomenological Philosophy* 2 is particularly interesting and
essential to an understanding of phenomenology in general.
More than any other of Husserl's works, *The Crisis* seeks to tie
phenomenology to its past and its future and its place in the
history of philosophy and European culture. In its excursions
into modernity--its culture as arising from philosophical and
scientific impulses--*The Crisis* finds itself at the end of this
great tradition and at the beginning of another. There is no
doubt that Husserl envisions himself as a Descartes of this new

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2 *The Crisis* was composed during the years 1935-1937. In 1937 Husserl's
terminial illness set in from which he was to finally die in 1938. At his death
*The Crisis* remained only about two-thirds finished. It first appeared in
German in 1954.
epoch in that he sees phenomenology as the radical redirection philosophy, and consequently human culture, must take.

Perhaps the urgency one senses from the pages of this work is that of a man terminally ill realizing that this is his last chance to present his life's obsession to the world. Perhaps it is a direct reaction to the humiliation he has suffered at the hands of the Nazi party and his former friend and student Heidegger and the general indifference on the part of the rest of the world to this impending catastrophe. Perhaps it arises from a consciousness, come too late in life, that the modern age in Europe and the West--its philosophy and its culture--has let humanity down, that it has disappointed reason and forgotten its telos.

In fact, all three and more may be behind *The Crisis*. What is certain is that this work presents new perspectives on phenomenology which were not present in the *Ideas* or the *Cartesian Meditations*. In these earlier works phenomenology was the study of the pure ego, as it is still in *The Crisis*, but as if this ego were separated from history and culture. The ego Husserl speaks of at this stage in his development could be anywhere at any time and this would not affect his argument in the least. In *The Crisis*, however, Husserl goes to great pains to come to an understanding of where he and his readers are in history--namely at the end of modernity and in crisis. Phenomenology's task is to initiate a new age and to rescue European culture from this predicament. Inherent to the
meaning of a philosophy is how situated historically; one must take cognizance of this historical background.

Husserl states, on page 70 of *The Crisis*, that

our task is to make comprehensible the *teleology* in the historical becoming of philosophy... and at the same time, to achieve clarity about ourselves, who are the bearers of this teleology.

History is not something that runs through its inevitable course out of our control and quite separated from human life. History in itself has no goal, no *telos*. In fact, one may offer as conjecture that Husserl would say that if history is divorced from the essence of the human, neither as such would exist at all. But as an essential part of the being of the human, and therefore as personal, history becomes, for Husserl, a task which it is the responsibility of each thinking human to take up with the utmost seriousness. The task is our own--to understand ourselves, and to do this we need to understand our history. That Husserl begins to speak of history and culture at this stage is not simply because he needs a new framework in which to present his theories, but, more essentially, because any phenomenology which doesn't is seriously incomplete.

Further, it is part of the task of the human not only to find the goals of his/her culture, but to create them in the image of freedom. Husserl states that the reshaping of cultural goals is
nothing other than the philosopher's genuine self-reflection on what he/she is truly seeking, on what is in him/her as a will coming from the will and as the will of his spiritual forefathers. (71)\(^3\)

What this means for Nazi Germany and what this means for Husserl are two quite different things. As David Carr, the translator of *The Crisis*, states in his introduction "antirationalism and antiintellectualism were everywhere...they were explicit elements of Nazi ideology and propaganda" (xxvii).

But we must take care not to read *The Crisis* as a manifesto against the Nazi party; it is more a critique of modernity and an analysis of an intellectual and cultural sense of hopelessness which Husserl sees. The phenomenon of Nazism for Husserl is a particularly striking manifestation of a more general European lack of hope and faith and self-understanding.

Husserl sees Descartes and his philosophy as the initial impetus for a new historical epoch--modernity. Cartesianism directed an entire line of science and philosophy up to the twentieth century, and in doing so, lead Europe through a period unprecedented in its technological and scientific advances. This tradition, as strong as it was, involved Europe in a crisis of its very humanity, a crisis which involves science but is essentially one of the European spirit. In its feverish

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\(^3\) I have taken the liberty to retranslate the words *sich* and *mensch* into gender inclusive language (thus, he/she, him/her, humanity, etc.).
attempt to brand the subjective as something to be "overcome" (126), and to improve the theoretical and technical sphere of existence--objective science--we have ignored what these advances mean for us and for our civilization. We become oblivious to the destruction of humanity through our machinery and the "banality of evil" which it facilitates. At Husserl's death in 1938, perhaps history's greatest challenge and lesson to philosophy was underway. Deprived of his rectorship at Freiburg and his right to teach by the Nazi party because of his Jewish heritage, Husserl realized first-hand that even though our objective sciences have given us much to be thankful for, the "metaphysical" questions--those of ultimate meaning--are not being asked, and when they are, a serious lack is discovered in their foundations. And because Husserl sees these questions as primary and fundamental to any healthy objective sciences, these sciences too lack foundations.

It is Husserl's project to provide these foundations in a way which is apodictically certain. It is the nature of phenomenology to be a continual introduction, a continual digging deeper into the phenomena; we are not looking for the final word on anything in Husserl's work because his project is to get us to the point where we can ask the correct questions of the phenomena and ultimately get a foundation from which to find the answers as well. He will show us a way to ground what we as philosophers do, and thus, what the objective scientists do as well. In reading Husserl, and in doing phenomenology in general, we find ourselves describing the
same mundane things over and over again, but each time with a deeper perspective, a more fundamental point of view. By becoming "scientific," rigorous in our apodictic search for such radical foundations, we ultimately come to ask about and understand the ultimate meaning of what we are dealing with. Since the "crisis" is a crisis affecting the meaning not only of science but also of life, it is imperative that we attempt to uncover a way to get beyond the practical and theoretical realms to the realm of human meaning.

_The Crisis_, much like phenomenology itself, is an unfinished and imperfect project. The polished, carefully revised and proofread work characteristic of the _Ideas_ and _Cartesian Meditations_ are not found in _The Crisis_. Often Husserl is repetitious and his thoughts are not always clearly formulated in this work. This thesis attempts, through a page-by-page analysis of the text, to explain and explicate the themes found in _The Crisis_. The overall task is three-fold. I will begin with an in-depth account of the nature of the crisis of European sciences itself as Husserl saw it. Secondly, I will trace Husserl's critique of modernity through Galilean physics, Descartes, empiricism and Kant with the idea of the objectification of nature as background. Thirdly, the way into phenomenological philosophy will be discussed with its various epochéss and the life-world given special attention. Husserl continues in _The Crisis_ to trace the development of phenomenology from psychology. Since much of this is simply a different perspective on Husserl's account of modernity and
phenomenology, a careful explication of this section is not necessary. However, included in this section is a discussion of the great teacher and motivator of the young Husserl, Franz Brentano, and his "psychologism" school. Brentano is of interest for both his positive and negative influence on Husserl in the development of phenomenology. We shall briefly here explore this relationship.

Brentano represented an essential shift in focus from the physical to the psychic element of human experience. Husserl praised this change of attitude after the physicalistic interpretations of experience so prevalent in modern times. This shift in attitude allowed Brentano to initiate the theory of intentionality which, in a later development, was to become central to Husserlian phenomenology. However, Husserl sees two major problems with the way psychologism did this. First, Brentano was still immersed in the Cartesian dualism between matter and spirit which Husserl saw as one of the particularly harmful problems of modernity. Secondly, and this follows from dualism, psychologism was a school of thought which attempted to reduce all phenomena down to psychologistic interpretations. Brentano represented a school which, because it remained embedded in a naturalistic exploration of the ego, could not engage in a truly transcendental analysis of it. In other words, it could not begin "inquiring back to the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge" (97); rather, it made knowledge a psychological function. What this meant to Husserl was that the analysis of the ego and the analysis of experience
become relative, contingent upon the subject's particular mental state. Because of this, psychologism could not come to a truly constructive theory of the subjective which Husserl will attempt to do through his phenomenology.

This critique will become clearer through this paper which more thoroughly explains Husserl's difficulties with modern thought and science.

At this point it may be instructive to recall Husserl's thesis of the philosopher as a continual beginner in his/her studies. We must begin again with no presuppositions or expectations of what philosophy is or what the answers to these questions are. As Husserl states in the opening pages of the *Ideas*,

> when all is said, this work of mine can help no one who has already fixed his/her philosophy and his/her philosophical method, who thus has never learnt to know the despair of one who has the misfortune of being in love with philosophy, and who at the very onset of his/her studies, placed amid the chaos of philosophies, with his/her choice to make, realizes that he/she has really no choice at all, since none of these have taken care to free itself from presuppositions, and none has sprung from the truly radical attitude of autonomous self-responsibility which the meaning of philosophy demands. (21)
II

The Crisis of the European Sciences

Husserl acknowledges that the concept of a "crisis" of the sciences is both an oft-heard and apparently absurd idea. He writes *The Crisis* in the mid-1930's in a period of great technological and theoretical advances is in all areas of Western human existence. Perhaps philosophy, in its splintering into myriad subdisciplines which either don't or can't enter into dialogue with each other and apparently do not approach truth any more closely or efficiently than they have in the past, indeed appears to be involved in some crisis of its "scientific character." And perhaps, since it so easily succumbs to what Husserl calls "skepticism, irrationalism, and mysticism" (3), we can intuit that Husserl finds the present state of philosophy (and also psychology) in the depths of a foundational crisis which threatens the very existence of philosophy as a discipline (indeed the ultimate one in terms of its search for truth).

But we realize that Husserl doesn't want merely to isolate certain sciences (meaning any academic and rigorous

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4 Science--*Wissenschaft*--is a major word throughout all of Husserl's work, especially in *The Crisis*. Unfortunately, for Husserl it carries at least three main meanings. First, it could mean "academic discipline" in its widest possible connotation. Secondly, Husserl sometimes uses it to mean the physical or natural sciences (physics, biology, etc.). And thirdly, science is a word which can be used to describe the character of a discipline. Sometimes he will call phenomenology a "rigorous science" which means it is an apodictic discipline which seeks ultimate grounding and certitude of method in all its forms of knowledge. The latter two meanings are the ones Husserl will use most often; I hope the sense will be clear from the context.
discipline)-philosophy or any other--and point out what it's doing wrong. We soon realize that Husserl's project has far broader implications. In fact he asks

But how could we speak straightforwardly and quite seriously of a crisis of the sciences in general--that is, also of the positive sciences, including pure mathematics and the exact natural sciences, which we can never cease to admire as models of rigorous and highly successful scientific discipline? (3-4)

The general *modus operandi* of mathematics, for instance, is one which Husserl believed is unshakable in its quest for truth for the mathematician deals with unassailable theorems or laws, which, when the appropriate methodology is applied, the "truth" or at least the true answer will always be available. Even if no such absolute development of these theorems exists, or as he terms it "an absolutely final form of total theory-construction" (4), we can still remain certain of the validity of the theorem's products and the process by which they were attained.

It appears indisputable that this talk of "crisis" was unfounded. The sciences work, their foundations, though obviously not perfect, are improving. we attain greater areas of knowledge and the technology which the sciences produce grows more and more impressive.

However, Husserl doesn't wish to analyze the success or failure of the products of the sciences to come to an understanding of the crisis; rather, the first step is an historical
one. He notes an "emergence of a set of world-enigmas which were unknown in earlier times" (5). He further clarifies these enigmas as dealing with subjectivity and psychological method and subject matter. "[These enigmas] concern not the scientific character of the sciences but rather what they, or science in general, had meant and could mean for human existence" (5). We have become so enamored of the overt successes of sciences--greater and faster machinery, more developments in medicine, more mathematical proficiency--that we no longer pay attention, or even ask, the most probing and essential questions pertaining to human existence--"questions of the meaning or meaninglessness of the whole of this human existence" (6). Husserl states that "merely fact-minded sciences make merely fact-minded people" (6). Western humanity has become preoccupied with what the mind is able to produce, the facts and fruits of its labor, the direct material consequences it can effect, and ignores what meaning these labors may have for humanity in general.

The questions which Husserl believes must be at the heart of science and indeed of all human endeavor are ones which "concern the human as a free, self-determining being in his behavior toward the human and extrahuman surrounding world" (6). And ultimately, a true science must be able to make substantive statements about the human being in his or her freedom in this "surrounding world." As it stands as Husserl writes in the last years of his life, science in general, and technology in particular are offering nothing about
"meaning," about "freedom," or any of these supposedly abstract or arcane ideas. These are dismissed prior to any reflection as "metaphysical" and of no real value to the man or woman of science or indeed to the human being for whom only what is objective and overtly practical has value; this present route which science has taken can only lead to "illusionary progress and bitter disappointment" (7).

The crisis of which Husserl writes "does not encroach upon the theoretical and practical successes of the special sciences, yet it shakes to the foundations the whole meaning of their truth" (12). Though in the above quotation Husserl denies it, it appears that the threat to the "meaning of their truth" inherently implies some threat--perhaps an indirect one--to both the practical and theoretical successes of the sciences. We see, when we lose the meaning of our technology or understanding of its value (both moral and practical), that we recast our definitions of "success." For instance, we consider the technology which is spawned of every large war as "successful." It works well, accomplishes the objectives we have assigned it. But it seems that we ignore what this aspect of success means, that in effect its only "success" is wanton destruction and mayhem. In this instance, do we really understand our machines? Do we have a concrete grasp of their "total meaningfulness of the cultural life, its total 'Existenz'" (12)?

At any rate, Husserl looks back upon the intellectual and social revolution which marked the Renaissance as a model of
the spirit he wishes to inculcate in his contemporary Europe. The Renaissance shakes off its medieval way of thinking and attempts to "shape itself anew in freedom" (8). This means, taking up the ancient spirit, to live under the banner of "philosophy"—not merely as an occupation, but rather as a way of life, of giving one's entire life to certain ideals such as reason or philosophy. This entails, of course, that the human should be changed ethically [and that] the whole human surrounding world, the political and social existence of humankind, must be fashioned anew through free reason, through the insights of a universal philosophy. (8)

Philosophy in this sense should not be taken as a separate discipline among many others; rather philosophy looked at as the science of totality, of universals and universal and apodictic knowledge which have arisen, not from some assumed or pre-existing realm of knowledge, but independently and which can serve as the ultimate grounds of any subsequently developing science. Husserl here reminds us of Descartes' new philosophy seeking nothing less than to encompass, in the unity of a theoretical system, all meaningful questions in a rigorous scientific manner, with an apodictically intelligible methodology, in an unending but rational ordered progress of inquiry. (8-9)

"Rational" or "reason" here should be taken in the broadest possible terms, encompassing processes such as immediate
intuition, values, etc., and not as it is usually taken as a merely logical, deductive process, although this too is involved. For Husserl the idea of reason, though rarely formally addressed, is of paramount importance, for at times it appears to be used, if not synonymously with meaning, at least analogously. For instance, Husserl writes that

it is reason which ultimately gives meaning to everything that is thought to be, all things, values, and ends--their meaning understood as their normative relatedness to what, since the beginnings of philosophy, is meant by the word 'truth'--truth in itself--and correlatively the term 'what is'.

(12-13)

If we as humans are ever to approach understanding of ourselves and of our meaning as existents, it is through the use of reason that this will be achieved. The questions which reason asks are ones dealing with temporality, history, God, immortality and freedom and presumably many more. In short, as Husserl writes, they "surpass the world understood as the universe of pure facts. They surpass it precisely as being questions with the idea of reason in mind" (9). We must have faith in reason; otherwise we lose faith not only in our being, but also in humanity, the meaning of history, freedom, etc.

However, Husserl notes that this Renaissance spirit was overcome by a new motive in the world brought up by the Enlightenment and in particular, Galileo. This period was marked, on the one hand, by repeated "failures" in
metaphysics—that is to say, theories which did not reap direct practical results—and on the other hand, by the astounding rush of major scientific advances, on both the theoretical and practical levels. What were the essential motives for this shift in ideals from metaphysics to physical sciences? What had happened to close off effectively all metaphysics and philosophy from serious consideration? Husserl characterizes the history of philosophy from Hume to Kant and even up to his own day, as the struggle of a few to understand what had happened and why.

The gravity of the problem which Husserl is outlining here deserves attention. The problem is not simply one of a lack of philosophers in relation to the abundance of physicists, but one which threatens the very meaning of existence for European civilization and the humans who inhabit it (and indeed the whole of Western culture). When the possibility of doing metaphysics is threatened, and if we are mindful of the essential relationships for Husserl between metaphysics and "the meaning and possibility of the whole problematics of reason" (11), then one quickly intuits that this has serious implications for those factual, objective-minded sciences which meanwhile are "progressing" at an ever-increasing rate. Husserl emphasizes the question: "Can reason and that-which-is be separated, where reason as knowing, determines what is?" (11). One must not, Husserl claims, divorce the metaphysical and practical realms; if this happens, the practical realm loses any meaning and significance beyond the mere thoughtless
accomplishments of tasks. Since thinkers of this age sense the very practical implications of this relationship of mutual "inner dissolution" (12) for the fact-centered sciences as well, radical attempts are undertaken to ground and fortify the ideal of a universal philosophy and what sort of method it should have. This philosophical task, as Husserl points out, is the motive, the guiding struggle, which launches the modern age. The task of modernity, which the genius of Descartes will take up in the 17th century and which will carry us through the empiricists to Kant and the German idealist school, is essentially and primarily a philosophical problem; a problem which, because it calls philosophy itself into question, must be solved by a new kind of philosophy and philosophical ideal. But it is also a problem which has implications for all aspects of European culture and existence, so philosophy will not remain a crystalline sphere of knowledge, but one which has implications in all spheres of life. In fact, this modern struggle is a struggle for one's true being, which, as Husserl points out, is not something one already has, with the self evidence of the 'I am,' but something one only has and can have in the form of the struggle for his/her truth, the struggle to make himself/herself true. True being is everywhere an ideal goal, a task of epistemé or 'reason.' (13), i.e., the struggle for existence.
What is involved in Husserl's conception of the modern period as the struggle for the meaning of humanity? First, Husserl takes a historical view, claiming that the only [struggles] which are significant, are struggles between humanity which has already collapsed and humanity which still has roots but is struggling to keep them or find new ones. (15)

In actuality, for Husserl this transition means the struggle between skeptical philosophy and a true philosophy which strives toward truth. It is this striving, bringing latent reason into the light, making metaphysics a true possibility, that gives a civilization its actual telos rather than one which is a delusion or an acquisition from another civilization. Husserl emphasizes the fact that essentially the human is a social being and if the human is a rational being... , it is only insofar as his/her whole civilization is a rational civilization, that is, one with a latent orientation toward reason or one openly oriented toward the entelechy which has come to itself, become manifest to itself, and which now of necessity consciously directs human becoming. (15)

The formulation of this telos is one which is, I believe, intimately related to the idea of philosophy which Husserl admires in Descartes so much so that he borrows it almost verbatim. It is a universal philosophy which leads to a rational, universal, civilization. Through this process we evaluate and finally see if our civilization "bears within itself
an absolute idea" (16), in short if the Europeanization of non-Western cultures has been, in the end, justified.5

The purpose of The Crisis is then, in short, to "solve" or offer a solution to this crisis of European sciences. It becomes a radical self-responsibility of the philosopher, in this case Husserl himself, to seek the single goal of all legitimate philosophy, that is, to search for absolute truth in an apodictically certain way. Husserl, noticing the importance of his task, calls himself, and the others who are engaged upon this quest with him "functionaries of humankind" (17). His responsibility is for the true being of humans, and in the larger picture, for the telos of a civilization which, if it is to come into the light at all, will do so through a radical revisioning of philosophy.

Husserl, through calling us to investigate our true being--what would amount to a radical self-understanding--calls us to an examination of history in order to get to a comprehensive understanding of ourselves, we need to grasp ourselves historically. In particular, since the history of modern philosophy guides that of history in general, he will analyze major currents of thought from Galileo to Descartes, through the empiricists and Kant, to the psychologism of his day.

5 Obviously this claim is problematic. Husserl is careful to be clear that the crisis and the overall historical themes he is dealing with are European (and Western in general). He makes no claims about the societies of Africa or Asia or any other cultures and there is no real evidence that he is interested in this question in any more than as an ancillary point. I read this statement to mean that through investigating the telos of European culture, we will come to a better understanding of the ramifications of our actions in the world and will be in a better position from which to judge ourselves.
Through this historical and philosophical critique, Husserl will analyze what the real goals of philosophy are and what is needed in the situation he finds himself in as he writes *The Crisis*. Ultimately, a dual undertaking is discovered: first, the "possibilities for a complete reorientation of view will make themselves felt" (18) (the phenomenological point of view); and secondly, through its execution, a new epoch is entered. Philosophy feels called to initiate a new age, completely sure of its idea of philosophy and its true method, and also certain of having overcome all previous naïvetés, and thus all skepticism, through the radicalism of its new beginning. (14)

In short, Husserl, in the spirit of Descartes, feels himself standing on the edge of a new era. For Descartes, obviously, it was the modern era. But as Husserl stands at the very beginning, he has no idea what new era he ushers in, what direction his work will push history; however, it is clear that the urgency that he feels is by no means diminished by the uncertainty of what is to come, for as he states, "the practical possibility of a new philosophy will prove itself: through its execution" (18). In other words, the process is the goal, and truth occurs—if it is to occur at all—in the search for truth even if no such goal exists or can be found by human beings.
III

The Ultimate Motive for the Crisis

In beginning his investigation of the crisis, Husserl briefly
discusses the development of ancient mathematics. Viewed
through our twentieth century eyes, familiar to complex
systems of calculus and other forms of mathematics, Euclidean
and Platonic mathematics (Aristotelian syllogisms are also
included) in the ancient world appear to be mere fragments
upon which subsequent thinking could develop. However,
Husserl notes that though this interpretation of the
development of ancient mathematics is true, and perhaps
because it is true, another more striking element of ancient
mathematics to the surface. "One must not overlook here the
immense change of meaning whereby universal tasks were set"
(21). Through these thinkers we have come to understand
idealized mathematical forms: shapes, numbers, lines, points,
measurement. But he notes too that all this remains within a
finite realm; ancient thinking never went "far enough to grasp
the possibility of the infinite task which... is linked as a matter
of course with the concept of geometrical space and with the
concept of geometry as the science belonging to it" (21-22).
Husserl claims that this notion of mathematics as developed in
the scientific era--mathematics conceived of as a coherent
system of infinity which pre-determines what exists in space--
is an incomplete notion of mathematics. In our thinking we
only discover what is already there in this ideal, infinite realm. There is a systematic, rational science which is constructed so that the mathematician can "discover" these "objects." In the modern age we see this introduction of the infinite in the form of algebra, the mathematics of continua and analytic geometry (22); through this, Husserl states, the idea of an all-encompassing, universal science arises in the modern age. This science corresponds to the infinite realm of pure mathematics and can apprehend the totality of this realm. This idea soon spreads to natural science and is brought to maturity in Galilean physics.

"Through Galileo's matematization of nature, nature itself is idealized under the guidance of the new mathematics; nature itself becomes... a mathematical manifold" (23). To clarify this claim, Husserl starts with the everyday experience of the world given in perception. One element that we immediately note in this experience is that the world is given specifically, in a subjective, relative way. I am given appearances which no one else can absolutely duplicate. They can be approximated and in the end, agreement can be reached about them, but there remains an essential discrepancy between my perceptions of the world and someone else's. "But we do not think that, because of this, there are many worlds. Necessarily we believe in the world, whose things appear to us differently but are the same" (23). Galileo, as Husserl interprets him, would claim that this belief in an objective world is not just an illusion of commonality; rather, in these myriad of
different yet similar perceptions of the world, some content does exist to which we attribute "true nature."

Why was this true nature assumed by Galileo? And how did this mathematization of nature take place? First, Galileo notices that it is in the nature of things in the surrounding world that they fluctuate. Things are changeable—we can alter the form and function of this piece of wood until it becomes like a bench or a table. This fluctuation can also be seen as a gradual process toward perfection. Perfection in this instance can be taken to mean nothing more than that sense in which the thing in question "fully satisfies special practical interests" (25). When the interests (generally agreed upon by a culture or community) change, the idea of perfection also changes; it is quite dependent on the culture it arises out of and is in operation prior to any science or reflection. We ask the simple question of the things in our everyday lives: does this thing work for what I intend? If the answer is negative, work must be done to approximate more closely the thing to the pole of perfection (the idea of a "limiting-shape," that which exists as it fulfills our idea of the fullest perfection of a thing insofar as our practical purposes go). This "pole of perfection" may not exist; regardless, the law of fluctuation of interests and needs necessitates that things in the world never reach it anyway. Thus, the entire endeavor is one of infinite approximation using the limit-shape, or pole of perfection as a model; there is forever "an open horizon of conceivable improvement to be further pursued" (25).
In other words, objects in the world cannot be "idealized." However, "there is the possibility of determining the ideal shapes in absolute identity" (27). Theoretically we can have an ideal square or tetrahedron, perhaps even an ideal chair or table, though not in praxis. But because there is this possibility of an ideal shape, in praxis we can approximate even more closely to perfection our objects via the process of measurement and surveying. Husserl states that it is only because "such measurement has its obvious origin in the essential form of [the] surrounding world" (27) that we can have any concept of an ideal shape at all. To further approximate the limit-shape, we measure; measuring thus becomes an art, a practice which must be cultivated and itself made more sophisticated and accurate. The idealization of the art of measurement thus becomes pure geometry in the search for "true," philosophical knowledge.

As a consequence of the original practical motives of geometry, we witness the rise of the use of geometry as a means towards technology. Approximation to the limit-shape now becomes something which is necessary for creating more effective and efficient technology. Ultimately, this results "in bringing the sensible surrounding world into univocal determination" (29). Through developing the art of measurement to a fine pitch, we are involved in a struggle against the relativity of individual perceptions. In effect, we determine the world with our geometry; we solve the problem—so Galileo would have thought, had such a problem been
evident for him--of subjectivity by simply very thoroughly measuring objects and the world and developing this methodology as applicable for all the natural sciences. Again, even now we are still dealing in the realm of ever-increasing approximations; however, the facility and success of the method is very convincing.

Husserl further describes this determination of the world in noting that our measurements can be counted upon to correlate to the thing. The range of an object's changeability is limited by that object's essence and in general, objects in the world fit, or belong together. He describes this phenomenon when he states that "our empirically intuited surrounding world has an empirical over-all style" (31). We can count on things to operate within predictable limits, according to certain empirical causalities; we can see that a piece of paper can never pound a nail in wood. More technically,

through a *universal causal regulation, all that is together in the world* has a universal immediate or mediate way of *belonging together*; through this the world is not merely a totality but an all-encompassing unity, *a whole* (even though it is infinite). (31)

But Husserl, never satisfied with mere approximations, laments the fact that we, in pre-scientific naïveté, remain at the level of empty world-causalities placed under the vague rubric of "empirical over-all style." Rather we must come to a "scientific" knowledge of these causalities by two steps of
mathematical verification. First, as hinted at we idealize mathematical bodies in an infinite totality. Thus we see that what was once simply subjective sense experience becomes a totality of ideal objects which are "determinable univocally, methodically, and quite universally for everyone" (32). And secondly, we cultivate the art of measurement, "thereby descending again from the world of idealities to the empirically intuited world" (32), thus creating objectively true knowledge of the surrounding world of things. Our powers of calculation and prediction are strengthened drastically and we can apply real world and its scientific problems. In other words, through this process, ideal geometry becomes applied geometry. Thus, our new-found certainty in an objective world which runs through all worldly and subjective changes is forever verified in continuing and flowering applications of an indubitable mathematical method.

This theory of the art of measurement holds for the world of objects, pure shapes and forms. However, Husserl now directs us to the "plena"--the multitude of sense impressions of color, heat, texture, etc. For the Galilean physicist, at first glance, the above method of measurement does not apply to this realm. For the art of measurement to be valid at all, it must be thought of as related to idealities. Since such idealities cannot be found in the world of the sense plena, we abstract them from the world of shape. Of course, it is part of the essence of bodies to have sensible characteristics attached to them, but "the limit-shapes of these [sensible]
qualities are not idealizable in an analogous sense [analogous to shapes]" (35). Thus the concept of approximation here has no meaning, for there is nothing to approximate; thus, nothing to measure. But the plena are "related" to their shapes in "a quite peculiar and regulated way with the shapes that belong essentially to them" (35). It is a relationship of mutual requirement if a thing is to be a thing at all. In fact, Husserl draws out the character of this relationship in terms of causality:

We are... a priori certain, not only that the total shape-aspect of the world of bodies generally requires a plenum-aspect pervading all the shapes, but also that every change, whether it involves aspects of shape or of plenum, occurs according to certain causalities, immediate or mediate which make it necessary. (35-36)

What this necessarily implies for Husserl is that the art of measuring is not, as we had originally assumed, merely that of measuring shapes in the world, but it is also essentially involved in measuring the "empirical causal constructions" (36). We must, as Galilean physicists, also become artists of measurement in both the realms of causal relationships as well as that of physical shapes in the world.

Now that this has been shown, Husserl pauses to ask how, in Galileo's mind, "the possibility of an indirect mathematization" (37) of nature finally arose. For this Husserl
turns to an investigation of Galileo's conception of nature and natural science.

Since, for Galileo, the focal point of philosophical knowledge is the realm of objective knowledge found in mathematics and the knowledge attained through mathematics is universally applicable, we see Galileo's hypothesis arise: "a universal inductivity obtains in the intuitively given world, one which announces itself in everyday experiences but whose infinity is hidden" (38-39). Galileo concentrates again on the perfection of the method behind this unspoken hypothesis, the means of measurement, and thereby approaches the task of understanding the essential causality of things in the world in terms of the dual aspect of shape and plena and of pushing the discoveries in this science further toward the ultimately unattainable pole of mathematical ideally (perfection).

Again, one must bear in mind the problematic which is behind this line of thought. The problem which Galileo is attempting to solve is that of coming to knowledge which is objective, rather than merely relative and random sense appearances. The initial impulse which Galileo here imparts to the modern age is one which continues to guide European thinking up through the time Husserl writes. The problematic of objective knowledge, the methodology of attaining it, and the subsequent technological advances which make the art of measurement and the fruits of its labor more and more successful, become the obsession of an entire historical epoch.
Husserl continues to describe natural science and its relationship to Galileo's hypothesis. In fact, natural science for Galileo "gives us a better and better 'representation' of what 'true nature' is" (42). But the hypothesis forever remains an hypothesis, and the verificational nature of science remains only a verification: that verifiability is "the peculiar essence of natural science" (42). It is the nature of Galilean physics, then, to theorize and create formulae.

If one has the formulae, one already possesses, in advance, the practically desired prediction of what is to be expected with empirical certainty for the intuitively given world of concretely actual life. (43)

Formulae, grounded logically and mathematically, become the impetus and possibility for technology and the development of technology can only serve to enhance and improve upon the formulae. Thus we can make sense out of the comment that "mathematization... with its realized formulae, is the achievement which is decisive for life" (43).

The meaning of science in general then, and correlatively, nature in general, as Husserl notes, falls to the interpretation of what can be plotted on a graph or formulized. Nature is that which science can mathematically account for. Geometry, as the guiding mathematical idea, becomes "arithmetized," that is, subsumed under the rubric of what is measurable. For Husserl, then, one may anticipate that
the arithmetization of geometry leads almost
automatically... to the emptying of its
meaning... one thinks, one invents, one may make great
discoveries—but they have acquired, unnoticed, a
displaced, 'symbolic' meaning. (44-45)
This symbolization in its further development becomes "pure
analysis" (45), a technique the results of which can only be
seen on the purely theoretical level; for Husserl this sort of
scientific thinking loses all thread of relation with human
existence and human civilization. This development of the
mathematization of nature Husserl terms "techization," the
application of formulae in achieving certain theoretical ends
through the method of geometry.

It should be noted that here as elsewhere Husserl is
careful not to downplay the importance of developing
mathematics (or any theoretical objective science) to a high
level of proficiency. Nor is he an opponent of the increasing
success of the technological sciences that he witnesses around
him. But, as he puts it, this
must be a method which is understood and
practiced in a fully conscious way. It can be this,
however, only if care is taken to avoid dangerous shifts
of meaning by keeping always immediately in mind
the original bestowal of meaning upon the method,
through which it has the sense of achieving
knowledge about the world. (47)
In other words, this work of the scientist and the scientist's questions of mathematics and technology which we have been describing must be seen as secondary to the questions of the philosopher--those which have to deal with the possibility of an ultimate meaning of existence and of the existence of a civilization. Perhaps Husserl would say that an authentic development and use of mathematics and technology would bring these questions into the light rather than overshadow them.

To clarify exactly what it is that the modern development of the natural and mathematical sciences have covered up, Husserl introduces his conception of the life-world. In Galilean physics,

the mathematically substracted world of idealities [is substituted] for the only real world, the one which is actually given through perception, that is ever experienced and experienceable--our everyday life-world. (48-49)\(^6\)

What is seen as the "material" of science becomes the purely ideal instead of the true base for any ideal, the real intuited world or nature which we wake up into each day and experience non- or pre-scientifically. This realm--the life-world--is where the purpose of science lies, and is where

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\(^6\) Perhaps a word on the life-world--an essential concept in this work--would be helpful. The life-world is the everyday, ordinary world of plain experience (as *erlebnis*) which surrounds us. It is the world we presume and rarely conceptualize. The life-world serves as the ground for any theorizing or scientific endeavors whatsoever. A further discussion of this concept occurs in section V of this paper.
science needs to direct its attention. Any meaning to be found in existence for Husserl is within the pre-given horizon of the intuitively experienced world. Physics, as Galileo saw it, is the science of prediction — "nothing but prediction extended to infinity" (51) — and this science of prediction, though it may be able to offer conjecture on the happenings of the physical world, does not change the life-world "in its own essential structure and its own concrete causal style, whatever we may do with or without techniques" (51).

Husserl expresses his concern about the process of mathematization in the claim that "in geometrical and natural-scientific mathematization... we measure the life-world for a well-fitting garb of ideas" (51); that is, we can very accurately measure the world, but this process of measurement merely "represents the life-world, dresses it up as 'objectively actual and true nature'" (51). A method becomes confused with true being. We, as scientists, must foster

the ability to inquire back into the original meaning of all [our] meaning-structures and methods, i.e., into the historical meaning of their primal establishment, and especially into the meaning of all the inherited meanings taken over unnoticed in this primal establishment. (56)

Husserl stresses over and over the importance of not merely achieving the technological results, but of understanding the meaning of these results as well. Without this essential understanding our mathematical method and all
its successes become unintelligible. The scientist must be able to account not only for the practical uses of his/her inventions and/or theories, but also of their implications for the surrounding culture and correlatively the whole of humankind. It is this quest for true meaning which not only marks a science as "scientific" (though not "mathematical"), but also, I believe Husserl would say, marks a culture as meaningful as well. These types of questions are not only of interest for the philosopher or metaphysician, but they arise as essential for the work of the pure natural scientist as well. These types of questions which have direct bearing upon any "interest in true knowledge of the world itself, nature itself" (57), for they find their ground in the everyday existence of the life-world as the basis for any scientific reflection whatsoever.

These considerations now lead Husserl into his thoughts on the problems of modern philosophy beginning with Descartes as the true originator and impetus of the modern age. We will be reminded that the historical discourse which Husserl is engaged in, while absolutely essential for a complete understanding of phenomenology, here serves as a tool for understanding the present crisis in European and Western culture.
IV

Dualism and the History of Modern Philosophy

In the geometrico-mathematical view of the world which Galileo develops, an abstraction of the life or spirit from human endeavors is effected. What is left over "is the things purely as bodies... taken as concrete real objects, the totality of which makes up a world which becomes the subject matter of research" (60). As a direct consequence, we actually have two worlds: "nature and the psychic world" (60). As a major motivation of the modern period this dualism as a theory of nature develops implicitly in the work of Galileo; however, this dualism reaches "scientific maturity" in the work of Descartes, which Husserl sees as the guiding spirit of the modern age, the philosophy which gives this new epoch its characterization, a problematic which is essentially its own, indelibly marking it as distinct and separate from all previous and subsequent historical periods.

The dualism of nature, then, creates and propagates the conception of "scientifically rational nature [as] a world of bodies existing in itself" (61), as opposed to that which exists psychically. This is the principle of the rationalistic and mechanistic philosophies which become prevalent in the modern age. Even though the problems of this dualism are soon felt and encountered in the work of the British empiricists and Kant, Husserl believes that the genius of these thinkers is held back by the trap of rationalism which so infects the
modern spirit that even these thinkers cannot fully disengage themselves from it.

Perhaps a reason for rationalism's appeal lies in the fact that it is a quite efficient framework within which to do natural science and develop incipient sciences. And the practical and theoretical successes of this age are indeed indisputable. However, running through all these victories of the natural sciences is a dualism which relegates the spirit of the human to a lower realm. When it is talked about at all—for instance in the psychology of Hobbes—"a type of being is ascribed to [it] which is similar in principle to that of nature" (63) and the events of the spirit become mechanized in the same way as the physiology of the body. (Husserl notes in particular the tabula rasa of Locke as representative of this phenomenon.)

Thus, not only natural science, but philosophy as well takes on the new method of mathematization as the way to determine the mechanisms of knowledge. In so far as the world is capable of being structured mathematically, it is also determinable via mathematical and inductive knowledge. We gain mastery over our world and eventually ourselves through this method—as Husserl terms it, "perfect cognitive power over the universe" (66). The endless progression of knowledge becomes the endless progression of power over the surrounding world. This method becomes valid, not only for physical and metaphysical knowledge, but for insights into morals and values as well. Thus, the moral philosopher is able to reduce his/her thinking into one ultimate law or formula
(e.g., the categorical imperative, or, more seriously, the idea of racial "purity" as the ultimate image of what a culture should be) and take on a cold mechanical view of human nature. The modern philosopher/scientist has mathematized him/herself and by necessary extension, his/her God (conceived of as "the infinitely distant human") (66) as the limit-pole, the final perfection of all our knowledge. Here it is easy to understand the development of the deist idea that humans can come to know god through knowledge of the mechanistic workings of the universe.

The dualism which infects psychology, making it merely a naturalism, is the problematic which leads eventually into an absurd skepticism which reaches its full development in Hume. Husserl, particularly in his earlier works, sees Hume as very instructive for transcendental phenomenology but also as a demonstration of the philosophical quagmire to which rationalism logically leads. Ultimately, Hume's work teaches us that "the entire philosophy of the past, the very formulation of the task of philosophy as universal objective science" (67), was called into question, in fact leads into skepticism even though the mathematical sciences were indisputable. And what was worse, as a necessary consequence, "the everyday world-consciousness and world-life, the pre-scientific world in the everyday sense" (68) was affected as well.

As a derivative of the dualism of material and spirit, Husserl directs us to his distinction between objectivism and transcendentalism. We may take "objectivism" in its standard
usage: objectivism as a philosophy "seeks what, in this world, is unconditionally valid for every rational being, what it is in itself" (68). On the other hand, transcendentalism claims that "the ontic meaning of the pre-given life-world is a subjective structure, it is the achievement of experiencing, pre-scientific life" (69). Husserl will stress the primary importance of this realm, that it must come before any objectivism, for in this life the meaning and ontic validity of the world are built up... Only a radical inquiry back into subjectivity can make objective truth comprehensible and arrive at the ultimate ontic meaning of the world. (69)

We see here, in this important distinction, the reason that the essential questions of being, of existence, of which Husserl makes so much, can quite easily be covered up in the modern emphasis on the objective realm of science. Ultimate meaning is not at all relative for Husserl; however, we must inquire into our own pure ego-experience in order to recognize it. Further, we must, while we are engaged in our very important scientific and technical work, continue to inquire into and re-examine the pre-scientific, purely experiential realm so we do not become--as Heidegger had justly critiqued modernity--forgetful of being.

This "forgetfulness" which originates in the beginnings of the modern age is so distressing to Husserl that he can boldly claim that
the whole history of philosophy since the appearance of 'epistemology' [Descartes] and the serious attempts at a transcendental philosophy is a history of tremendous tensions between objectivistic and transcendental philosophy." (70)

This contest seemingly reaches its conclusion in the skepticism of empiricism; however Husserl sees himself, as we have said, at the beginning of a new philosophical--and historical--epoch, one which will solve this problem constructively. However, a systematic critique of the modern philosophies of Descartes through Kant is necessary in order to clarify where he, and phenomenology in general, stand.

As the harbinger of the modern age and the struggle which defines it, Descartes' "new idea of universal philosophy: in the sense of mathematical or... physicalistic, rationalism--philosophy as 'universal mathematics'" (73) becomes as essential as the Galilean mathematization of nature. Even though Husserl views Cartesian rationalism as a theory which is not thoroughly thought through, he cites as perhaps its major achievement, the process towards the ego cogito, the "I think" aspect of human experience. He wanted to get to what was essentially involved in the process by which the experiencing subject can have any ideas at all. Is it possible, Descartes asks, that I can have any apodictically certain knowledge at all?

What is involved in these questions is an assumption (a valid one for Husserl) that "philosophical knowledge is... absolutely grounded knowledge; it must stand upon a
foundation of immediate and apodictic knowledge whose self-evidence excludes all conceivable doubt" (75). At each carefully considered step along the way we must continually be able to verify our findings upon these grounds; only thus will we find ourselves compelled to accept them as true. Thus, Descartes attempts to strip away all traditions, all prejudices, all previously acquired "knowledge" which does not stand this test. This step Husserl terms the "radical, skeptical epoché... Prior to the epoché '[one's] philosophy' is to be treated like any other prejudice" (76). This step is so radical because it encompasses all possible validities not only in the scientific realm, but the pre-scientific life-world as well. Even sense experience, so easily taken for granted as reliable and true, is here called into question and must be absolutely verified. This goes beyond the simple skepticism (Husserl here invokes the thought of Protagoras and Gorgias) which simply denies the possibility of epistemé, of a knowledge of the "in-itself."

However, the radicalism of Descartes, as Husserl so romantically puts it, is capable (if applied correctly) of "pressing forward through the hell of an unsurpassable, quasi-skeptical epoché toward the gates of the heaven of an absolutely rational philosophy, and of constructing the latter systematically" (77).

The obvious question is how this is possible, if, according to the methodical epoché, we put out of play all previous knowledge of the world and all conceivable methods or sciences which may be able to demonstrate to us how to attain
any new knowledge. I suspend any judgment of the world; however, "I, the ego carrying out the epoché, am not included in its realm of objects but rather... am excluded in principle" (77). I--as the purely experiencing ego cogito--am the apodictic ground which is necessary for any philosophy, I am the ultimate principle of any philosophy which claims to be "first" or "primary." In this, much is contained: "my whole life of acts-experiencing, thinking, valuing, etc. [in other words, all intentional acts]" (77). But the world becomes mere phenomenon, something which must be excluded from consideration. The ego cogito is "the sphere of being which is prior in principle to everything which conceivably has being for me" (78); it is that which is immune to all doubt, to any possibility of invalidity.

However, the immediate attraction to Cartesianism for Husserl wanes when the radicalism of this initial epoché is not carried through. Husserl sees Descartes as not radical and thorough enough in his application of the methodical doubt; everywhere Husserl sees scholasticism, prior opinions and worldly evidence infecting the original spirit of his thought. This is first evident in Descartes' questioning of what kind of an ego is left over after the epoché--is it a human being? In so asking, Descartes "excludes the living body--this, like the sensible world in general, falls under the epoché--and thus the ego becomes determined... as mens sive animus sive intellectus [mind as either spirit or understanding]" (79). Here Descartes becomes entangled in the
Galilean certainty of a universal and absolutely pure world of physical bodies... [And this sensibility] points to a realm of what is in itself, but that it can deceive us; and there must be a rational way of resolving this [deception] and of knowing what is in-itself with mathematical rationality."

(79)

In other words, through "Descartes' misinterpretation of himself" (78), his misinterpretation of his epoch, the philosophical division into dual regions of being--the spiritual and the physical--comes into play. This, fueled by the mathematical successes of Galileo and the other physicists of the day, becomes the impetus for a purely physical, and by extension, a technological view of science and nature. Granted, theories and the purely theoretical realm of science also become quite important, but only insofar as they can increase the proficiency of the technology. Subsequently, the ego in Descartes becomes "soul" and this soul must be understood as a secondary construction of the ego and thus subject to the époché as well, for the soul in Descartes "is the residuum of a previous abstraction of the pure physical body" (79-80) and thus a "complement" of the body and not the ultimate apodictic ego, the absolute ground of consciousness that Descartes had believed it was. The soul is "mere 'phenomenon' no less than the living body [is]" (80).

Husserl stresses that "the époché must seriously be and remain in effect" (79). Husserl sees Cartesian rationalism as an
early attempt at transcendentalism gone horribly wrong—an error the repercussions of which can still be heard in Husserl's time.

As Husserl is always interested in the real motive behind an historical and/or philosophical event, he asks what the real reason is behind Descartes' failure in this respect. In fact, Husserl finds that, for as interested as Descartes was in going back to the pure ego, he becomes stuck in objectivism. This problem is manifested "in the portentous form of a substitution of one's own psychic ego for the absolute ego, of psychological immanence for egological immanence" (81). Descartes should have investigated the pure ego, the ego of my cogitationes, under the light of the epoché; rather, he desires too hastily to ground objectivism as giving absolute, apodictic knowledge. What must come first—the science of the pure ego—actually is viewed by Descartes as a secondary field for further study.

The thought of Descartes influences two major schools of philosophy: the first school including "Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibniz, and the Wolff school to Kant" (83); and the second, the empiricist school, which is the philosophical dead-end to which Cartesians ultimately leads. However, this latter school (especially in the form of Locke and Hume) is particularly interesting to Husserl not only for this reason, but primarily because it serves as a route to "a transcendentalism which is more genuine and more conscious of its true meaning" (84).

Now that modern thought has effectively separated the mind from the body, Locke can inquire after "introspective
psychology in the field of the soul" (84). Locke doesn't revise the Cartesian thesis of the ego as soul, he simply takes the given data of experience, in the form of "ideas" as the basis and "material" for his psychology and begins his mapping (in a manner of speaking) of the human mental arena. Here the delineation of "inner" and "outer" experience becomes even stronger than it had been. The "sense-data... are affections from the outside and announce bodies in the external world" (85). The idea of intentionality (of cogitationes) in Descartes is forgotten as the soul becomes a self-enclosed monad, a tabula rasa "on which psychic data come and go" (85) rather arbitrarily. On this point, Husserl emphatically asks "how is the life of the soul, which is through and through a life of consciousness, the intentional life of the ego... how is it supposed to be seriously investigated if intentionality is overlooked?" (85). The answer is, of course, that such an attempt is absurd and impossible.

This problem is picked up again in Berkeley who continues to emphasize the passive reception of sensations. In fact, this premise is held so tightly by Berkeley that any "world" or consciousness becomes mere bundles of sense impressions which haphazardly correspond to each other to "create" the thing in the continuity of everyday experience. "Matter existing in itself... is [for Berkeley] a philosophical invention" (87).

From this stage, Hume carries this branch of Cartesianism to its ultimate conclusions. "All categories of objectivity... are
fictions" (87); mathematical concepts, scientific axioms, even any outside world are found to be mere psychical relations of sensations. All we have are appearances, manners of sense-appearing. Any thing which appears as a psychical identity, for instance, we find in Hume to be nothing other than bundles of data. "The world in general, nature, the universe of identical bodies, the world of identical persons, and accordingly also objective truth, are transformed into fiction" (87). And for Husserl, this naturally means that pure ideals (including the ethical) and finally, reason itself are also mere fictions of psychology.

It is easy to see why Husserl considers Humean psychology and the whole of empirical philosophy as absurd. Hume attempts to cover up not only the absurdity of his position, but what is worse, he refuses to or is unable to see the historical danger of his skepticism--what he has done to philosophy and what by extension this does to human culture in general. In Husserl's mind, the central problem in Hume is that "astounding as Hume's genius is, it is more regrettable that a correspondingly great philosophical ethos is not joined with it" (88). Lacking such an ethos of self-responsibility to the truth and to reason, Hume becomes dishonest to himself and to modernity. Rather than a philosophy which seeks the telos of European civilization, a philosophy which seeks to push itself toward a new epoch, Hume instead does not take his position in history seriously when he picks up premises which are patently absurd and insists on carrying them through. It
should be remembered that Husserl has a great deal of respect for Hume and the rest of the empiricist thinkers—in fact, particularly in his earlier work he sees them as early precursors of phenomenology—but ultimately, they were unable to deal with the essential differentiation between objectivism and transcendentalism of which we have spoken earlier. They have taken the Cartesian dualism of material and spirit and attempted to investigate the latter with all the baggage of conceiving it as a "soul" and a substrate of the body.

The danger of this, as Husserl sees it, is that by doing so, they find themselves locked within the idea of a mind which is passively receiving data. There is no conception of intentionality, and as we have seen, this monadism leads to a conception of the world as mere appearances of bundles of sense-data. We come up with the idea of the world as ideas or pictures and thus fictions.

A new motif is encountered in Kant. Though the tradition of which Kant is a member is not exactly that of the empiricists, Kant will agree, as the empiricists did, in the Cartesian "radicalism" and what it attempted to do philosophically. This task involved "inquiring back into the ultimate source of all knowledge: namely the absolute metaphysical validity of the objective sciences, or... of philosophy as the one objective universal science" (91). In other words, it becomes a problem of knowledge—"the right of the knowing ego to let its rational constructs, in virtue of the self-evidences occurring in its mens, count as nature with a meaning transcending this ego" (91-92).
Husserl sees this reflection on epistemology as leading to a reflection on the "praxis of knowledge" (92) in the form of technology. On the one hand we have the "systematic universe of 'logical laws,' the theoretical totality of the truths destined to function as norms for all judgments which shall be capable of being objectively true" (92). But the second Kantian consideration deals with "those who make judgments as those striving for objective truth" (92). Metaphysical truth is contained in the a priori laws of logic for Kant. With the knowledge of these laws we can make sense of the sense-data which affects us from the outside. We can have awareness of things through the naïveté of sensation, but to know them in their truth, we must be able to apply them to the a priori laws of logic. These a priori forms of knowledge necessarily always "bind" these sensations together or unify them; because of these forms' character of apodicticity we do not have the random data of Humean who must "naïvely read causality into this world and think that we grasp necessary succession in intuition" (93). To come to any true knowledge in the world—the noumena beyond the phenomena—Kant will say we need the laws of logic and nature to be at work in the world of phenomena.

The problem of rationalistic philosophy for Kant was the fact that it did not inquire into subjectivity as prior to scientific knowledge and how we can have any knowledge which is knowable a priori—an "exact science of nature" (103). Kant attempted to investigate these areas and thus developed his
"transcendental philosophy" but Husserl intends to show where Kant grounds his critiques of knowledge on unverified presuppositions. Kant saw the pure subjective realm rather than that of the life-world as the necessary ground for any objective truth and he delved into the exploration of this notion. Husserl agrees with Kant that we must think of what we find as our objective truths as "experiencing, knowing, and actually concretely accomplishing" (96)--in short, our "own life-construct developed within ourselves" (96).

Husserl considered Kant's philosophy (as a form of transcendental subjectivism) to be a major step on the way to "a clear understanding of one's self as the subjectivity functioning as primal source" (99) although Kant does not reach to the limits of this insight. Husserl praises Kant for regressing "back to knowing subjectivity as the primary locus of all objective formations of sense and ontic validities, [and undertaking] to understand the existing world as a structure of sense and validity" (99); however, Husserl sees in Kant, as we have said, a lack of radicalism, the exposition of which will "elucidate all earlier philosophical history" (100). In investigating this, we will come to a more developed understanding of objectivism with subjective life-experience as the ground. When we understand and take the final turn which Kant was unable to take, "we ourselves shall be drawn into an inner transformation through which we shall come face to face with, to direct experience of, the long-felt but constantly
concealed dimension of the 'transcendental'" (100). By "transcendental" Husserl means

the motif which... seeks to attain the genuine and pure form of its task and its systematic development. It is the motif of inquiring back into the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge, the motif of the knower's reflecting upon him/herself and his/her knowing life in which all the scientific structures that are valid for him/her occur purposefully, are stored up as acquisitions, and have become and continue to become freely available. (97-98)

Husserl critiques Kant for ignoring these sources and presuming them, rather than engaging in a systematic inquiry into what they may be.

The central issue in Husserl's critique of Kant's lack of sound philosophical foundations is the Kantian assumption of the surrounding subjectively experienced life-world as existing, as being real. Humans are existing in this world, as well as whatever else we may see in our naïve, pre-scientific experiencing: cultural objects, things, animals, etc. They are "out there" in the world and certainly they exist. And we as ego-subjects experience this reality and it has meaning because

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7 It should be kept in mind that Husserl supports Kant's effort to get to the transcendental ego. However, Kant errs when he says we cannot get to the thing itself and that the mind supplies the structures (the twelve categories) through which it must funnel phenomenal experience. For Husserl, it is the ego which constitutes the given within the infinite horizon of the life-world.
of our ability to experience, contemplate and place valuations on it.

Within this Kantian assumption, Husserl elaborates on the Kantian notions of perception as manifesting the primary mode of intuition which gives us perspectives on the object out there which we experience and the modes which give us temporality (the thing as that which "was-itself-there" or "will-itself-be-there"). In Kant, the senses play a necessary though not determinative role in the human experiencing act. We primarily intuit things in their bodily presence, as exhibiting this shape, this color, this texture, etc. These bodies "move" or "do"; but in this, we can still intuit them as identical, as the same thing that was there a minute before. However, "in terms of perception, physical and living body are essentially different" (107). My own living body is the only one which I can intuit as living; all other bodies are mere corporeal, physical bodies. These are two ways of being an ego, but there are many, which must be thought of as a unity. We are conscious of ourselves as "full ego-subjects, each of us as the full-fledged I the human" (108) and I realize that I am but one ego-subject in an endless horizon of others, that I am in a community of egos. "We, as living in wakeful world-consciousness, are constantly active on the basis of our having the world" (108) and we can thematize the world or things in the world and make them available for study or just for simple apprehension.
Likewise we ourselves as ego-subjects can self-reflect and consider ourselves and what we are doing. And as the world is pre-given and within it are many other egos, I realize that all this is not only valid for me, but necessarily for all others as well. Similar to the way I can direct and redirect my attention to and from an object, interested and disinterested in others, and I can take any number of attitudes to my surroundings and to those I experience. "Naturally, all these things are the most obvious of the obvious" (110). These are the constant presuppositions we automatically take for granted in everyday wakeful existence and indeed we must take these for granted for it is essential to life that we do so. All we do, not only in the prescientific life, but in the scientific as well, rests on these suppositions. All our natural science and even our pure mathematics and physics depend on the assumption that the world is. But we must set ourselves the task of transposing knowledge which is imperfect and prescientific in respect of scope and constancy into perfect knowledge—-in accord with an idea of... a world which in itself is fixed and determined and of truths which are idealiter scientific ('truths-in-themselves').(111)

In outlining in general what is taken as obvious, new and essential questions arise dealing with the being of the life-world. These questions address the essential problem of how the object (both prescientific and scientific) "stands in relation to all the subjective elements which everywhere have a voice
in what is taken for granted in advance" (111). In fact, this theme of finally investigating what has been assumed throughout history is the task of phenomenology; what Husserl terms the "anonymous subjectivity." All we do and all we think and all we experience in this existence presupposes this ground. Husserl uses the analogy of the biologist who dissects an animal from the outside and thus comes to some knowledge of it, but who must, to ground truly this knowledge, go "back to its hidden roots and systematically pursues the life, which, in all its accomplishments, is in them and strives upward from them, shaping from within" (113-114). But Husserl critiques Kant for still relying on empirical notions when he thinks of the soul as part of nature and a part of the "psychophysical" human and also for Kant's refusal to let go of the *tabula rasa* idea in Locke (115). Husserl believes Kant should have remained with the investigation of the *a priori* longer, but he should have done this in a truly radical way, rather than relying on empiricism and rationalism as he does. Kant, for Husserl, constructs "mythical" theories based on a method which allows for all sorts of inferences rather than a method which is apodictically sound and verifiable at every step using absolute insight.

Whatever was positive and constructive in Kant--the investigation of the subjective, the emphasis on a transcendental science--becomes hopelessly muddled and covered up in a culture which bases its ultimate verification of any theory on its practical repercussions in the world. The
techné-oriented modern mind cannot or does not understand that it is through the spiritual aspect of life that the technical can ever have any meaning. It only makes sense that "what could procure meaning and validity for the theoretical constructs of objective knowledge and [that which] first gives them the dignity of a knowledge which is ultimately grounded" (119) is the spiritual, for without it our machines and theories are empty—we become forgetful of what they are to us and of what their ultimate function in our culture is and can be. Without this knowledge our science and technology (and by extension, the men and women who operate it all) can turn horribly against us and become monstrous, rather than enhance human existence.

Here Husserl introduces his conception of the "life of the plane" and the "life of depth." He claims that modern science has remained on the plane, the presumed life, that which we take for granted—the "ends, means, processes of action, and final results related to these objects" (119). But this is merely the plane beneath which is the life of depth which needs to be explored before we can make sense out of our science and are able to consider the meaning or meaninglessness of what we create. How is this possible, to delve into the "latent' life of depth" (120) and then finally, to relate what is found there back to the everyday life of the plane? Husserl's solution to this problem "offers itself as one that can at any time be taken again. Indeed it is a path which at every step allows just this self-evidence to be renewed and tested as apodictic" (121).
Towards Phenomenology from the Pregiven Life-World

A) Subjectivity

As we have shown, science always presumes as its starting-point the pregiven life-world which is found in ordinary everyday experience. This life-world is precisely the world where I live, which antedates the world of the physics lab in which [the physicist] sees his/her measuring instruments, hears timebeats, estimates visible magnitudes... the world in which, furthermore, he/she knows him/herself to be included with all his/her activity and theoretical ideas. (121)

The scientist wonders about this world, he/she questions it, and even in the most theoretical and complex mathematical structures, never escapes it, but always finds it underlying his/her world of the physics lab. Although science has made a goal of objective truth, truth which can be seen as universal, no matter what this may turn out to be, it always rests firmly on the life-world. Even if, as many later thinkers would posit, there is no such thing as objective truth, at least at the primary experiential level this hypothesis about objective truth and the processes by which it comes into the light also rests upon the presumption of the life-world. Therefore, it is a natural step to
inquire first into the life-world and all of its structures and forms. Science has become problematic in its fundamental lack of understanding of the concept of objectivity, which at the same time is so essential to whatever tasks modern science has set up for itself. So "we must withdraw from the operation of it and take up a standpoint above it" (122) and from this vantage-point, not only can we look into the theories and results of science, but also the "life of acts practiced by working scientists... their setting of goals, their termination in a given goal, and the terminating self-evidence" (122). But also, we investigate the scientist's continued reference back to the life-world. But because the life-world is given prior to any scientific thinking, the "problem of the manner of being of the life-world" (123) becomes primary; in other words, how in ordinary experience we, as human beings, find ourselves in it.

Thus, Husserl embarks on a systematic outline of the structures of the life-world. The life-world is "what we know best..., [it] is always familiar to us in its typology through experience" (123-124), though it never becomes thematized. It seems paradoxical that of that which we "know" the most, we actually have thought little about it and are in the dark as to its very obvious structures. But this ignorance is perfectly acceptable for everyday life; in our living, our waking, our working, our playing, our combating boredom and anxiety, our simply passing the time, we have no need to understand how the life-world functions as "subsoil" for theoretical truths (124). However, for our purposes, such an inquiry is essential. But it
cannot be on the terms of the sciences—mathematical or logical or objective inquiries will get us nowhere for these are also based on the life-world and, as such at this point, remain on unclarified ground. We need something that is truly "first," truly "primary"—indeed "extra-scientific." What is necessary is a study of "the 'merely subjective-relative' intuition of prescientific world-life" (125). This subjective form of inquiry, as Husserl points out, unfortunately carries the connotation of being mere doxa (belief), and not actual knowledge; but in fact the subjective intuition of the life-world is the realm of verification in pure experience in every mode of perception, and functions as the primary mode of cognition, the ultimate source of self-evidence.

The reason why Husserl must revert back to the subjective as the source of any valid knowledge is inherent in the definitions of "objective" and "subjective." Objective is not experiencable, not perceivable and a logical construction, while the subjective for Husserl is by definition that which we experience. It must reside in the realm of pure experience (all the various forms of perception, memory, imagination, intuition, etc.), otherwise it ceases to be subjective and becomes something else. This table given to me in perception is the "thing-in-itself" with all its perspectives, its temporal nature, its continually changing and changeable appearances. The objective-logical table, as the system of geometrical theorems or sense experience applied to some a priori law of nature is never immediately experienced; thus it can never attain to the
thing-in-itself as it often claims to do. When I theorize about the table or do a geometrical analysis of the table, I can do so only by virtue of having some lived experience of the thing itself, the actual table. For this reason we must break away from our preoccupation with logic or techné as the final source of verification of the truth or untruth of an object. Rather, we must see that "such substruction [logic], insofar as it makes a claim to truth, can have actual truth only by being related back to such self-evidences" (128).

Husserl acknowledges here that we have effectively split the world into two worlds: the objective world and the life-world. However, these two realms must be thought of as intimately and mutually connected. Husserl is not, as we have said earlier, in the business of denigrating science or mathematical disciplines in favor of a philosophy which is "primitive" or anachronistic and desires to go back to a non-technological, "utopian" age. Rather, he is interested in The Crisis in laying the groundwork for understanding his age and the sciences and technologies which have created it and now inhabit it. Ultimately, Husserl wishes to make the sciences more successful, not only in their practical output, but also in self-understanding and self-responsibility to Western civilization.

The relationship of the scientific world to the life-world, the fact that the life-world at once grounds and also encompasses the scientific, that science enhances or destroys life in the life-world, yet would not exist at all if it did not
presume the existence of the life-world—all this points to the enigma of the being of both realms. "Thus [the idea of a] true world in any sense, and within it our own being, becomes an enigma in respect to the sense of this being" (131). For how can anything be objectively true while finding its ground in the subjective life-world? The paradoxes which Husserl sees involve the fact that while

merely subjective relativity is supposedly overcome by objective-logical theory... the latter belongs... to the merely subjective and relative and at the same time must have its premises... in the subjective and the relative. (133)

So we see that the need of an investigation of the life-world is not born out of a "mania, peculiar to modern life, to theorize everything" (132) and it is not merely a subsection, or an ancillary interest within the larger, more important realm of science, but is of "universal and independent significance" (133). And ultimately, Husserl argues, when the empty and vague notion of intuition [as it must be in previous philosophy]... has become the problem of the life-world... there occurs the great transformation of the 'theory of knowledge' and the theory of science whereby, in the end, science as a problem and as an accomplishment loses its self-sufficiency and becomes a mere partial problem. (135).
At first glance it may seem that we are at a great
disadvantage in this study for we are absolute beginners
historically, because we have no great body of work from
which to draw results or methodology. But Husserl would
rather see this as an advantage, even a necessity. For before
we even start we have already avoided presuppositions and
assumptions which plague those who follow in some tradition.
We hold nothing—be it logic, math, science or philosophy—
before us as a guide in this study.

To access this field of study, we engage in a series of
epochés, similar yet quite distinct in kind from the one which
Descartes used. As may be inferred from the previous
considerations concerning objective science we apply an épocié
in regard to these disciplines. It is not that we make believe
that they never existed or do not exist now; rather, we do not
allow ourselves to partake of any of their findings or methods.
We take up no stance whatsoever regarding them, their aims or
objectives. We do not consider them as "disappeared" or as
essentially changed into something new that they were not
before, but what has changed is our attitude towards them. We
have no attitude toward them, we suspend all judgment
pertaining to them. The sciences which are bracketed
themselves remain unaffected and their successes are not
altered or taken away in any regard. Neither do we take up
some oath forswearing us against science forever. Husserl
reminds us of the subtle truism "everything has its time" (136)
and says that
when we actualize one of our habitual interests and are thus involved in our vocational activity... we assume a posture of époque toward our other life-interests, even though these still exist and are still ours. (136)

Similarly, in this and every other époque, it is instructive to think of the "vocational character of even the 'phenomenologist's' attitude" (137). I temporarily suspend my scientific-logical life while I inquire into the primary structures of conscious life. Though this exposition of the époque in terms of vocation makes it sound quite mundane one should also think of it as a "calling." 8 In fact Husserl describes the phenomenological attitude as a complete personal transformation, comparable in the beginning to a religious transformation, which then... bears within itself the significance of the greatest existential transformation which is assigned as a task to humankind as such. (137)

But there is a difference between the initial époque and the study of the life-world as such. We know that thing-experience is subjective to individuals and even that once a community agrees upon an interpretation of a phenomenon, a different culture can interpret it as radically different. When one considers this, can there be a real study of this life-world at all? Husserl claims that "the life-world does have, in all its

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8 What Carr translates here as "vocation" is in the German Berufsziet which colloquially means "working hours." However, the root--Beruf--carries the meaning of a "calling." (cf. 136)
relative features, a *general structure* (139). And these structures are not subjective--neither individually nor cross culturally; we find these structures apparent in every moment of wakeful existence. These structures, generally speaking, are spatio-temporality, physicality of bodies, causality and spatio-temporal infinity. One may remark that these are the very *a priori* forms of which Descartes and objective science are so fond, but through the initial époché we can separate the *a priori* of the life-world from that of the objective world. If we conceive of all of the latter's discoveries as ultimately grounded in the former, then it is easy to see that these forms exist first of all in the pre-scientific world of life. In the outlining of the structures of the life-world we see these forms showing through.

Husserl begins, as always, in pure experience as lived-through experience [*Erlebnis*]. He looks around at the surrounding life-world and what is given within it and asks first of all what "remains invariant... throughout all alterations of the relative" (142). Finally he notices that the "world is the universe of things" (142), not merely in the sense of a grand collection of objects, but of objects in their spatial and temporal arrangement (position) and relation to each other--"the spatiotemporal *onta*" (142). We see right away when we are wakeful that this thing--this table--not only is here now, but that it was here before and will be after I turn my attentive gaze from it. And not only is this true for the table, but also for the world as the possible horizon of experience and praxis. I
can be certain of the solidity of this ground, that the world exists. "To live is always to live-in-certainty-of-the-world" (142). When we are wakeful we are necessarily conscious of: the table, that person sitting at the table, the chair she sits on, the book she is reading, her reaction to her environs, etc. Even when I am self-reflective and "oblivious" to my surroundings, I am being conscious of myself as a being in this world. Husserl allows for the fact that my being-conscious-of-the-world could be very different from his consciousness, or of a feminine consciousness, or that of a man living in Africa 2000 years ago, but nevertheless there is a unifying thread running through all these very diverse types. It is a difference in the way all of us are conscious of these structures, and what the world presents to us, but not in the structures themselves.

Husserl continues on to say that there is a difference between the way we are conscious of things and the way we are conscious of the world. Things are given to us "in such a way that we are conscious of them as things or objects within the world-horizon" (143). They are "of" the world-horizon, which, in turn, is only possible through the objects it contains. But it is a mistake to consider the world-horizon as just the collection of objects just as it is erroneous to consider it as an object itself. But rather, it is an open infinite horizon within which is the only possible context for experience.  

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9 Here is only one of the several places that the influence of Husserl's former student Martin Heidegger and his work *Being and Time* (which appeared in 1927--eight years before Husserl started writing *The Crisis*) can be seen in Husserl's late thought. This leads one to wonder if Heidegger's influence on Husserl was as negligible as Husserl insisted it was.
If we have just exposed the very general structures of the life-world, it becomes necessary to understand how this life is carried out. In other words, how am I conscious of the world and how do I live in the world? There are fundamentally two ways humans do this. First, there is what Husserl terms "straightforward living" in which we normally, naturally find ourselves. This is "normal, unbroken, coherent life" (144). This life is "coherent" in that it flows uninterruptedly, as we expect it to be. When I wake up in the morning and decide as a goal for the morning that I want to go for a walk and then eat breakfast I engage in this type of living. I get dressed, decide how cold it is outside, whether I need a coat, what sort of shoes would be most comfortable, which route I wish to take and then, after my walk is finished, I pour my cereal and sit down to eat it. My goal, completely and necessarily within the life-world horizon, has been accomplished. "All our theoretical and practical themes [in this case the walk and breakfast]... lie always within the normal coherence of the life-horizon 'world'" (144).

But there is a second way of having the world in which there is a "transformation of the thematic consciousness of the world which breaks the normality of straightforward living" (144). This way is actually a questioning of the straightforward life described above. We inquire after the "how" of the world's givenness, how we are aware at all of the horizon of the world within which we operated when we took our walk and ate our breakfast. "How, throughout the
alteration of relative validities, subjective appearances, and
opinions, the coherent, universal validity world--the world--
comes into being for us" (144). And consequently, this change
of interest is a questioning of the meaning of these ontic
validities I encounter in the world. We become interested in
the questions of "manners of givenness, of manners of
appearing and the modes of validity in them, which... brings
about the coherent consciousness of the straightforward 'being'
of the world" (146). These questions in fact become the basis
for a new science of the "how" of the pregivenness of the world,
how it is possible, after all, that the life-world is given to us
and given as the ultimate ground of life and of the sciences.

As we have clarified the true task of the
phenomenologist, we stand in need of a second epoché--the
transcendental epoché. The transcendental epoché involves
again a peculiar sort of suspension, this time not of belief or
judgment on anything, but of an entire attitude--the natural
attitude. The natural attitude is that in which we assume
ourselves to be existing humans situated in an existing world
which is "out there" as existing separated and distinct from me,
the existing ego. It is impossible to get beyond the
straightforward everyday life to an understanding of the "how"
of this life if we persist in this stance. If we propose to attempt
to understand the phenomenon of "the 'pregivenness of the
world as such': the world purely and exclusively as--and in
respect to how--it has meaning and ontic validity... in our
conscious life" (148) we need a new perspective. We are
asking how the world-horizon is possible at all, what "the ground-validity for natural life" (148) may ultimately be. Just as we could not understand what the ground of scientific-mathematic thought might be while still in the attitude of the scientist or mathematician, here too we cannot understand the life-world of our natural life while still in the natural attitude. Husserl here is demanding of himself and us as his co-meditators that we continue to dig deeper into life. We continually find foundations which are in turn in need of foundation.

What the transcendental epoché and its suspension of judgment allows for is what Husserl terms the transcendental reduction. The reduction is the clearing of experience so we can study the pure forms of the ego's experience of the world and its meaning-giving constitution of this world. It is important to think of the epoché and the reduction as one, for the cannot be separated even though Husserl feels the need to split them in order to clarify their meanings.

The transcendental epoché is an example of the internal investigation Husserl spoke of in his dissection metaphor. We need to get beyond just what science and the world of mathematics can tell us about the human experience. For centuries these studies were the realm of truth, the only way we felt we could understand anything at all about the world and the human being. But a new attitude toward the world and the mathematical-scientific approach to its understanding must be taken in which ultimate grounds are sought, grounds
which make science at all possible. What is it in the animal the biologist dissects which makes it possible, not only for it to be studied, but to come to awareness in the first place? How do the themes of everyday existence that the sociologist or psychologist studies arise?

In the natural attitude, we are conscious of, i.e. the "experiences, judgments, valuations, decisions" (149) of the ego. In this intentionality toward objects, we are directed to the world, to that table, to that person, etc. These cogitationes (to use Descartes' term) are incessantly flowing; when we engage in one, there is an infinite horizon of others which are latent, yet possible at the same time. A perception of a photograph can flow into a memory of an event, the memory can flow into an emotion, an emotion can flow into a valuation, and so forth. Now the epoché which is needed here is

one which puts out of action, with one blow, the total performance running through the whole of natural world-life and through the whole network... of validities--precisely that total performance which, as the coherent 'natural attitude,' makes up 'simple' "straightforward' ongoing life. (150)

In other words, the transcendental epoché is an attitude which gets beyond the everyday pregivenness of the world and our valuations and beliefs about it. The world is no longer "there," as affirmed in action, and our "life-interests" which go along with the world are also effectively put out of action. To find
how the life-world is possible for us at all, it is necessary to no
longer consider the world or anything which goes with it.

It should be noted that this epoché, unlike the earlier one
of the objective sciences, is not a vocational one which can be
picked up and discarded at will. Instead, the transcendental
epoché is an "attitude we resolve to take up once and for all"
(150) and we must remain within it as philosophical beings.
We cannot base any of our findings in this incipient study on
the existence of the world, of things or even of human beings
as human.

Though this seems to be, at first glance, a quite limiting
and absurd proposal, this epoché actually frees our gaze from
the world and "reduces" our perception of the world and
ourselves so that the "discovery of the universal, absolutely
self-enclosed and absolutely self-sufficient correlation between
the world itself and world-conscious" (151) becomes possible.
What is left after the epoché/reduction is the pure ego which
is, after all, the pure consciousness of— in other words,
intentionality: the absolute subjectivity which constitutes
meaning. The world becomes phenomenon rather than real so
that we can see the world not "in-itself" but as a correlate of
the consciousness of. We have not obliterated the world in our
transcendental epoché, nor have we affected the science or
spirituality of cultures; what we have done is situated
ourselves in a position above the natural life so that the nature
of our questions must change. Instead of questioning the world
as to its ontological validity or lack thereof, we question our
pure experience of it, we question the intentionality by which any world or other appearance can be given. In our study, we must still talk of the "world" or of the "human" but it will be with this new attitude in mind, that we resolve to not take up any attitude whatsoever towards the question of whether these are or are not actually existing; rather, while operating within the epoché, we will consider these to be mere phenomena of the pure experiencing act.

Again, within the scope of the transcendental epoché and the reduction which is concurrent, we investigate the conscious life. We take what ordinarily we accept as valid and make it a theme; we wish here to consider how it is at all so that it can even appear as a theme for validity or invalidity. When I consider a table, for example, I can consider it in a myriad of different ways: I can see it, touch it, feel it, smell it, etc. But I do not think that I am perceiving many different tables, I am conscious of one table with a multiplicity of ways it can be given. These different ways of "seeing" can be taken as phases which overlap and pass one into the other and then back again. If I redirect my mental gaze to the chair, I am making a theme of something else, and the chair which was background while I considered the table moves to the center of my attention, while the table fades into the background. A further characteristic is the fact that when I experience a table, I can only see a surface of the table. I cannot see through it and see all sides at once, I am restricted by my point of view. But here Husserl acknowledges that I am by no means completely in the dark as
to the totality of the object. In every case "while the surface is immediately given, I mean more than it offers" (158). I can make assumptions or educated guesses of what may be on the other sides or I can also easily encircle the table and perceive it first-hand in a unified synthesis of perceptions which I can retain and attach to each other. However, this possibility of syntheses does not alter the fact that when I perceive a physical thing, there is an inherent perspectivism which is always there.

What is essential to Husserl's understanding of this process is not exactly that I come to know the table, but rather, that I, in this process of unification of perspectives, of the different ways of "seeing," I am given the "sense" (or meaning) of the table as presented in each phase. Previously--that is, before the transcendental epoché--this description would be one of knowing the table as a thing and consequently the world as the region of things. Now--after the transcendental epoché and the reduction--we are describing how we come to the meaning of the table, the perspectives combine in an advancing enrichment of meaning and a continuing development of meaning" (158). I am still talking about the table, but I'm talking about it in a richer sense.

In these processes we can "correct" ourselves "through changing the sense in which the thing had been perceived" (162). At will we can change the table into an illusion of a table, into a memory of a table, into the prediction of a table and so on. Also, what we had assumed about an object, can, on
deeper investigation turn out to be not the case at all. Husserl
gives the example of seeing a man, but upon touching "the
man" one realizes that it was actually a mannequin and not a
person at all.

Here we come back to the ideas of the non-active spheres
of being (or background) which may not be a theme for us and
may never reach our consciousness directly. While I am sitting
on a chair at a desk, with a book in my hands, reading the
black words on the white page, my concentration fixed on these
words intensely, one can say that the only thing I am directly,
actively conscious of is the actual word I am looking at now.
However, as non-active (a background as we have referred to it
earlier) sphere of being are the words I have just read and
meanings I retain, the whiteness of the page which frames the
words and becomes the negative space, the actual heft and
texture of the book in my hands, the chair I take for granted
and the desk I lean my elbows on. All these things are
essential for my experience of reading—if all of a sudden one
were to be taken away, my experience of reading would be
violently and drastically altered—even if I never thematize any
of them. It is only in dreams where I can be conscious of
words or a table or anything else floating, unconnected to a
framework or background, but not in everyday, wakeful
experience.

Husserl notes further that what we choose to begin with
in our investigation always necessarily leads us on to further
themes. If I take a stationary table to be a theme, I do so
largely because it is a simple object which is not going to begin

to metamorphose into a bird or a cat. But, in taking a

stationary object, I am automatically lead to consider the

movement of the thing. Similarly, if I choose to consider a

table as it is now, in the present tense, I do so knowing that

"perception is related only to the present. But this present is

always meant as having an endless past behind it and an open

future before it" (160).

Husserl clarifies these obscurities by relating them to

what he terms the "perceptual field" (162). Within the field of

things are a myriad of ways of considering it. By considering

the intricate structures of consciousness in the only form it can

be really studied---in intentionally---Husserl acknowledges and

celebrates the fact that these structures lie within a seemingly

infinite field. Phenomenology as he presents it is a field of

study which is never complete. By definition, this finding leads

to that, this discovery must have some ultimate foundation

which needs to be explicated, this area of study needs to be

gathered under phenomenology's principles. But at this stage

we are still laying the groundwork and preparing for the true

phenomenologist's work.

B) Intersubjectivity

As Husserl has been considering very generally just the

sphere of the individual ego's cogitationes, he now turns to

consider the community life which is essential to it. As soon as
I am wakeful, I see that I am in a world with others, in some sort of community and that by this fact, I can take part in the life of another and vice versa. And just as, upon deeper and more thorough investigation, I can tell that that man is actually a mannequin, I can, in this communal, intersubjective life enter into "reciprocal understanding... [and] intersubjective harmony of validity occurs" (163). We thus decide the norm of a community, the cultural aspects of a community, and the things it will have as an issue. I take my own, subjective perceptions and experiences to the community (or family, friend, acquaintance, etc.) and have them verified, altered, or proven as erroneous and I can also take part in this process with the others I am involved with.

In these ways Husserl wishes to point out 'the' thing itself is actually that which no one experiences as really seen, since it is always in motion, always, and for everyone, a unity for consciousness of the openly endless multiplicity of changing experiences and experienced things, one's own and those of others. (164)

It follows from what we have said earlier that there is never a static thing, not because of any sort of mythical idea of physical philosophy, but because of the necessary a priori form of experience as being perspectival and subjective. If we took this to mean that immediate experience was wrong or imperfect or not to be trusted—as many previous philosophers did—we would be falling into the trap of the objective sciences
which seek to place laws of logic or mathematics as primary. Rather, we see, Husserl claims, the subjective experience as truly apodictic is the basis for any logic. The meaning of this table, or better yet, this painting by Picasso, is to be found in every perception of it. It is flowing and ever-changing, but this certainly doesn't detract from its power. Instead, the painting perhaps gains its perennial power through the fact that its meaning is growing and flourishing through the fruitful acts of experience.

Husserl reminds us here of the overlapping and combining of intentionalities which synthesize meaning and create ever-new meaning. If "intentionality is the title which stands for the only actual and genuine way of explaining, making intelligible" (168) then it is clear that we need to go back constantly to the intentional origins of an appearance if we want to attain any sort of actual understanding of anything at all. When it is seen and comprehended that intentionality, this peculiar relationship between noesis and noema,\(^\text{10}\) is "the function of forming ontic meaning" then it becomes the most important and fruitful field of study.

Husserl stresses that while intentionality is the theme, there are three parts to this. First, there is the ego of these intentionalities which is "the performer... of all validities" (171). It is that which can retain appearances and can expect what is

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\(^{10}\text{Noesis and Noema are words which play an essential role in works such as the Ideas and the Cartesian Meditations but they do not appear at all within the pages of The Crisis. They are used to describe the intentional relationship between the ego and the subject of consciousness. Noesis refers to the ego of cognitiones and noema refers to that of which the ego is conscious.}\)
to come. It is that which, through all the manifold ways of appearing, can unify the "Heraclitean flux" of experience. Secondly, the *cogito* as "the subjective, as tied together synthetically" (171). And thirdly, the *cogitatum* as "the objectpoles" (171) of our investigation. We separate the three in order to study them but they all must be thought of as a unity.

It is important to note briefly what Husserl says here about the ego and intersubjectivity. Because the ego persists through time, it never remains the same, but constantly is other than the ego it was earlier. Through the multiplicity of appearances in the life-world the ego changes, takes on new and ever-flowing meanings, but at the same time knows itself to persist, through all these alterations, and be "one and the same, which is and was and has its future before it" (172). I can "dialogue" with my past ego and know t as me, I can analyze and criticize it.

Husserl continues on to say "that subjectivity is what it is—an ego functioning constitutively—only within intersubjectivity" (172). Through this intersubjectivity we have a common life-world and common cultures, civilizations, societies, parties, groups, families, etc. We are all oriented toward this "communal" world, even the hermit who chooses to do without a culture. Even the hermit has a language, a way of doing things which he/she has gotten from his/her surroundings, systems of morals or values which he/she attained perhaps in a second-hand sort of way from the community of egos, etc. Phenomenology must concern itself
not only with the subjective life of the ego, but also, in doing so, the ego's social existence must also be uncovered as a fundamental form of study.

At this point, as Husserl draws to a close this particular way into phenomenology from the life-world, he sees a paradox emerging. Husserl wonders how it can be so that a "component part of the world, its human subjectivity, [can] constitute the world" (179). We have seen from everyday experience that when we are wakeful, we are constantly in a world, even a part of the world. But we can also see, from our previous discussion of intentionality, that we constitute the world through our consciousness of it and ability to "synthesize" meaning.

Even though Husserl claims that phenomenology as an incipient philosophy which seeks radically to create its own ground, is bound "to become involved and again in paradoxes" (181), we must not be content with this. The phenomenologist has a responsibility to delve into these paradoxes and see if they can be resolved. Husserl here offers a solution to this paradox, but it is, as his whole body of work is, an introduction, a pointing of a way for the future. Husserl, in attempting to point a way to a solution of this paradox, reminds us that it is "I" who effect the epoché and that all others fall under it and become, like the world we are in, mere phenomena. The "I" constitutes the intersubjectivity which it has even as phenomena. So to understand intersubjectivity we must start with the primal "I" of
constituting intentionality. But part of the ontic validity of the other ego is that it too is an ego as I am, constituting its world as I constitute mine, and just as that other is phenomenon "in" me, I am thus "in" it. So, the world cannot be seen as my invention or something that I can turn on and off at will, like a daydream or some other fantasy. But it is a world which is constituted by the entire world of constituting egos--perhaps in each case as slightly different from everyone else's world, but as the world all the same.

Though this paradox is not ultimately "solved" in a final way, Husserl's intent here is to show the problems and difficulties of phenomenology and to outline the themes which will serve to fill in the unclear areas. As we have said, those looking for "final answers" in Husserlian phenomenology will not find them; however, those looking for the questions to ask and a constructive framework within which to ask them will come away with insight.
VI

Conclusion: The Zig-Zag and the Circle

"The conviction has certainly become dominant that philosophy is a task for the human as struggling for his/her existence" (390). Though this statement is in reaction to the existentialist thought which has become popular in his day, Husserl would agree that philosophy can no longer remain a discipline with little or no pertinence for the human being in the world. The reason for this is two-fold. First, such a philosophy, which has little or no contact with or understanding of its ground--the life of human beings in the world--must necessarily be in error. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, any philosophy which does not address the difficulties and tensions of its day is not responsible towards itself or the community of beings in which and out of which my philosophy must grow.

Rather, the dream and the hope Husserl had for philosophy at the end of his life was one that envisioned above all a process and indeed an ethics of remembering. Surely "memory" is not of the standard vocabulary one finds in Husserl's work. Indeed, much energy is spent (as seen in this paper) critiquing the past and attempting to go beyond the traditions and prejudices which are embedded in us and hold us back from the pursuit of truth. However, memory is of a different category. Memory is that which makes reflection on a world or a self possible at all. Perhaps it is a necessary mode
of perception in our investigation of the ego and its surrounding world. We begin with a coming back to ourselves (as Descartes advocated), looking at ourselves as we find ourselves in a cultural context. We remember ourselves when we attempt to understand who we are and who we are becoming; we think of the past and how it has transformed us, we remember experiences, people, events, ideas, hopes--and this is as much as we can say at any given moment of what our lives mean to us, either as a community or as an individual. We must remember that once the world and human existence held meaning for us, but now we have forgotten it. Once, the objects we surround ourselves with and what they are used for had significance beyond the purely practical realm. This is what Heidegger means when, in the opening pages of Being and Time, he quotes Plato's "Sophist": "For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the term 'being'. We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed" (19).

For Husserl then, the task is to inquire back, to search our history and culture and to explicate them in an attempt to uncover finally ourselves as other than purely mechanistic, absurd beings, tied to our physical sciences and technology, understanding only how to devise the formulae and then apply them, but not what they mean to us. The task is fundamentally an historical one precisely because it is our future which is at issue.
But the study of history is not a linear, clearly defined process. One cannot simply go back to the origins of life and culture in Africa or Mesopotamia and systematically trace and analyze chronologically the events which lead up to the present day. As Husserl states in *The Crisis*, "we find ourselves in a sort of a circle" (58). Since we don't understand our origins and development—the purpose of our study of history in the first place—the development [of history] is mute as a *development of meaning*. Thus we have no other choice than to proceed forward and backward in a zig-zag pattern; the one [history as events] must help the other [history as development of meaning] in an interplay. Relative clarification on the one side brings some elucidation on the other, which in turn casts light back on the former. (58)

In other words, to truly grasp the subject of "modern philosophy" one must come to an understanding of not only the individual theories and personages of philosophy from Descartes to Kant, but one must understand this development and how this development forms the meaning of everyday life not only for the contemporary of Kant, but also for us, the inheritors of this tradition.

When Husserl locates himself and his fellow historical-phenomenological investigators in a circle, perhaps he is thinking in somewhat similar terms to those that David Michael
Levin uses when he discusses the hermeneutical method. He states:

As a symbol for the hermeneutical method, the circle demonstrates the fact that processes of reflection, and enquiry in general, can have no absolute beginning, no absolute end. It demonstrates, further, that every beginning is also an end, and every end is also a beginning... And the circle shows us that no matter how far we journey, we must always come back to ourselves... The circle reminds us that hermeneutics is a circuit of recollection: there is always a leaving and a returning; but somehow, the returning is never a full returning, and the leaving is never a final leaving. And this is how it is with the forgetting and remembering, or the rejecting and accepting, of any tradition. *(The Body's Recollection of Being: Phenomenological Psychology and the Destruction of Nihilism*, (163-4)

Because we begin with and continually come back to ourselves as reflective and self-reflective beings when we do phenomenology--and this self is never a static and predictable thing, but continually evolving and forming itself anew with each experience--Levin (and I believe Husserl would agree) argues that the circle is an essential notion to any methodology which believes itself true to the inquiry into human existence and his/her world.
However, the past was wrought with error and absurdities. The past often seems to be the realm of failed dreams and fallen icons. The pessimist would claim that if the past teaches us anything, it would tell us that such a project as Husserl's--the search for certitude, the quest for an apodictic ground for any and all knowledge--is doomed to failure from the start, as Descartes', Kant's and many others' were as well. Husserl himself asks if

the world, and human existence in it, [can] truthfully have a meaning... if history has nothing more to teach us than that all the shapes of the spiritual world, all the conditions of life, ideals, norms upon which the human relies, form and dissolve themselves like fleeting waves, that it always was and ever will be so, that again and again reason must turn into nonsense, and well-being into misery? (6-7)

But the circle and zig-zag pattern of historical and phenomenological inquiry is not a deterministic labyrinth, within which all human existence is subject to the same eternal failure as though we were the puppets of a cruel god. It is not this way precisely because of the telos of which we have spoken earlier. What are the goals of our culture? What is the task assigned to us? What is our responsibility to our civilization as a whole? For Husserl the answer lies in the ideals which first gain prominence in ancient Greek culture. For the first time in history a culture sought to define itself and
understand itself through the power of reason as manifest in the search for truth. As problematic as the idea of "truth" has become in the twentieth century (ironically, largely due to the development of phenomenology) Husserl seems to use the idea of truth largely as an expression of hope, particularly in his last works. This is not to say that Husserl does not fully believe in the search for truth, but that he believed in it as more of a circular image rather than a linear one. Husserl emphasizes the search rather that the absolute attaining of a goal.

Phenomenology, or philosophy in general for that matter, is not something for Husserl that could conceivably reach a final point beyond which there are no more realms of knowledge to explore. Husserl has far too much respect for the depths of human experience and the complexities and paradoxes it involves to fall into such a trap. At any point along this circular route, the hope is alive that we can describe experience and understand what it means after these centuries of misdirection and error.

We understand that just as the table does not appear to me in wakeful existence as floating in a sea of nothing; rather, the table appears as connected to other things and myself in some way. Similarly, I, as a human ego, do not find myself suspended above time and space. I am in a world, shaped by the events, people, ideologies, etc., of the day. Conversely, I shape or constitute all these as well. But this understanding is not enough. Without a telos or a
goal to grasp onto, the above formulation is meaningless. In an unpublished manuscript Husserl writes:

A vagabond who sets him/herself adrift without a goal has his/her experiences, deeds and misdeeds, but he/she has no history. He/she is not a possible subject-matter for a biography, if it is true that authentic historicity only for someone who has beforehand sketched out a unified sense of his/her life, as is the case of someone who has freely decided to devote his/her life to a vocation and has thus prescribed a rule, a norm for all of his/her future decisions and actions. By adhering to this rule throughout all vicissitudes, by remaining faithful to life full of meaning." (cited by Richard Cobb-Stevens, "Husserl on Eidetic Intuition and Historical Interpretation", Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, Vol. 23 #2, May 1992, p 261)

Husserl sees modern Europe as this vagabond. In the ancient period (and also the Renaissance as the resurgence of the ancient spirit) Europe knew its goal as a civilization based upon the principles of reason in accord with full human freedom (cf. 8). As is his habit, Husserl is evasive at best and silent most of the time when it comes to speaking specifically about historical or cultural matters. Thus, as expected, we get no specifics on what this means when applied to an historical period. However, we may well ask if the political and
humanistic crisis Husserl experiences first-hand in the mid-to late-1930's in Germany is not such an example of humans losing touch with the spirit of civilization and the understanding of what it means that a human finds him/herself in a world with others where he/she must make choices and decisions about how he/she is to live his/her life. For Husserl this entails a certain sense of responsibility toward the being of the world and the others within it.

Vagueness characterizes Husserl's comments on these subjects; however, this paper has attempted to address the philosophical and historical development of this line of thinking. We have seen how modernity has given rise to a crisis of meaning for European civilization; one which is not harmless or mythically constructed, but one which threatens not only philosophical thinking but the very existence of human beings. We have also seen how phenomenology is an attempt to give the human true grounding, a basis for self-understanding and understanding of the world—not merely in a scientific-mathematical way, but in a more fundamental way which deals with the ultimate meaning of existence. Further, this paper has attempted to clarify the place which Husserl envisioned for phenomenology to an idea of history, and fundamentally an historical movement--indebted to its past, clearing a way for the future.
Bibliography:


