

Lacan, Levinas, Derrida, Kristeva – each has his or her own inimitable voices.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that continental philosophy does not arise in a vacuum. True to its conviction that *thought is always situated*, the predominant mood of such philosophy, from existentialism to postmodernism, is one deeply committed to moral and political questions. Thinking is no longer regarded as some neutral exercise in cognition but an intervention in the 'lived world' of history and society. This responsiveness of ideas to the *Lebenswelt* was, in the case of modern continental thought, radically informed by the experience of two world wars on European soil – and the corresponding horrors of Auschwitz and the Gulag. Husserl was one of the first to register this sense of breakdown and disorientation when, fleeing from Nazi Germany, he called for a fundamental rethinking of the western intellectual tradition. And most continental philosophers after him have shared this persuasion, advancing forms of inquiry that are increasingly exploratory, tentative, iconoclastic, *engagé*. Critical theorists from Horkheimer to Habermas, existentialists from Merleau-Ponty to de Beauvoir, structuralists from Barthes to Foucault, not to mention postmodernist thinkers like Lyotard and Vattimo, all demonstrate a keen preoccupation with social and political issues. The common challenge is to start all over again, seeking alternative modes of questioning. Totalizing Archimedean principles are renounced. Meaning and value are to be reinterpreted from first to last. Recurrent crises call for perpetual revision. And it is perhaps this urgency to respond to the trauma of historical change that has compelled so many continentals to abandon the metaphysical obsession with foundations in favour of post-metaphysical experiments of thought.

The fourteen essays in this volume outline and assess some of these experiments. The first five span the twin movements of phenomenology and existentialism, running from Husserl and Heidegger to Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas. Subsequent essays deal with specific currents of continental thought in such areas as science, Marxism, linguistics, politics, aesthetics, feminism and hermeneutics, while a final essay on postmodernism highlights the manner in which so many consens of continental thought culminate in a radical anti-foundation-alism. Each study speaks for itself; but I wish to thank the contributors, drawn from six different countries, for their co-operation and collegiality in putting this volume together. It has been a gratifying reminder that for all the controversies surrounding continental philosophy, it remains a forum of debate where critical intelligence, scholarly expertise and a passionate commitment to the burning issues of our time are still alive and well.

in Richard Kearney's *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*
CHAPTER 1

The beginnings of phenomenology

Husserl and his predecessors

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Edmund Husserl was the founder of phenomenology, one of the principal movements of twentieth-century philosophy. His principal contribution to philosophy was his development of the concept of intentionality. He reasserted and revitalized the premodern thesis that our cognitive acts are intentional, i.e., that they reach out beyond sense to things in the world. When we think or speak about things, and when we perceive them, we deal with those things and not with mental intermediaries. Intentionality is our openness to the world, our transcending mode of being. Husserl also developed the implications of this fundamental thesis. He repudiated Locke's interpretation of 'mind' as an inner space set off from the rest of nature, and he rejected Kant's distinction between phenomena and things-in-themselves. He also rejected the view that the task of philosophy is to guarantee that our concepts and theories somehow mirror the world.

These themes brought a sense of liberation to many philosophers who by the early decades of the twentieth century had become weary of the insoluble problems generated by the modern account of cognition. Husserl's analysis of signs and semantic systems had a similar effect in the fields of linguistics and logic which had been dominated by associationist and psychologist accounts of the production of meaning. His interpretation of the complementarity of pre-scientific and scientific modes of rationality contributed to the demise of positivism and inspired new and fruitful approaches in the social sciences. His theories of time and ego-identity provided much-needed correctives to reductionist tendencies in psychology. Finally, his balanced interpretation of the interplay between historical horizons and the drive for

truth offers a reasonable alternative to the contemporary tendency to regard all truths as relativized by their historical conditions.

It is unfortunate that Husserl's writings had little influence on the development of the tradition of analytic philosophy, the other major movement of twentieth-century philosophy. Husserl himself engaged in spirited but amicable debate with Gottlob Frege, who is generally considered to be the proximate founder of analytic philosophy. However, such exchanges became increasingly rare among their followers who have tended on the whole to ignore one another's works. This breakdown of communication was due in part to an early misunderstanding. Frege thought that Husserl was a proponent of psychologism, i.e., the view that numbers, propositions and logical laws are reducible to mental states. Frege's critique of Husserl's alleged psychologism was decisive for a whole generation of analytic philosophers whose goal was to defend rationality from relativism by detaching logic and semantics from all dependence on what they took to be irreducibly subjective intuitions. On the other hand, Frege's decision to divorce logical analysis entirely from cognitive intuition alienated philosophers within the phenomenological tradition who saw in this strategy only a revival of Hobbes's preference for an exclusively calculative rationality. Ironically, Husserl's critique of psychologism was in fact more coherent and more complete than that of Frege and his followers, for he showed how propositions are grounded in cognitive intuitions without thereby being reduced to merely subjective phenomena. In recent years both phenomenological and analytic traditions have found themselves increasingly vulnerable to contemporary forms of historicism and relativism. This situation has had the felicitous effect of encouraging within both traditions a reappraisal of the reasons for their mutual distrust. Considerable progress has been made of late in restoring a climate conducive to renewed dialogue.

In the judgment of many, the originality of Husserl's thought and the rigour of his analyses guarantee him a place among the greatest of philosophers. However, his writings tend to be excessively abstruse and technical. As a result, his readership has generally been limited to professional philosophers. By contrast, Martin Heidegger's more evocative philosophical style and Jean-Paul Sartre's literary brilliance assured for the subsequent phenomenological tradition a wider audience and an unusually immediate cultural influence. This is not to say that these thinkers were merely commentators on Husserl (indeed, many regard Heidegger as a more profound and original thinker), but only that they often succeeded in communicating the basic insights of Husserl's phenomenology more clearly and forcefully than did Husserl himself. There is another reason why Husserl's writings often failed to convey to his readers the full force of his criticism of the modern

epistemological perspective. It seems clear, in retrospect, that he was not sufficiently sensitive to the gravitational pull that the language of modern philosophy exercised on his thought. He explicitly modified the senses of such key modern terms as 'presentation', 'content', 'immanence', 'subjectivity', 'phenomenon', but he never completely jettisoned the lexicon of modern philosophy. Indeed, he always maintained a conservative stance with regard to innovative philosophic language, preferring to take familiar terms to their limits rather than to introduce unusual metaphors and neologisms. He therefore failed to appreciate the extent to which the familiar linguistic matrix of modern philosophy conceals a long history of accumulated premises which determine the kinds of questions that readers would bring to his texts. His goal was to call those premises into question, but his philosophical vocabulary tended too often to reinforce them. It is unfortunate, too, that Husserl seems to have had little first-hand familiarity with ancient and medieval philosophic texts. He was always more at home with the traditions of British empiricism and Kantian criticism. Had he been more attuned to the weight of words in the development of philosophic concepts, and better informed about the ancient and medieval traditions, his breakthrough would no doubt have been less plagued by ambiguities and less subject to misinterpretations.

Husserl was born in Prossnitz, a town then located in Austria. He took courses in mathematics at the universities of Leipzig, Berlin and Vienna. In Berlin, he studied with the renowned mathematicians Leopold Kronecker and Karl Weierstrass, and also attended occasional lectures in philosophy by Wilhelm Wundt. He received his Ph.D. in 1882 from the University of Vienna for a dissertation entitled 'Contributions to the Theory of the Calculus of Variations'. After a year in Berlin as assistant to Weierstrass, he returned to Vienna to study philosophy with Franz Brentano, who had recently resigned his chair of philosophy. In 1886, on Brentano's recommendation, Husserl went to Halle to work with Karl Stumpf, who supervised the thesis submitted for his *Habilitation*, a study of the concept of number. From 1887 to 1928, Husserl held teaching positions at Halle, Göttingen, and Freiburg im Breisgau.

As a Jew, Husserl was increasingly the subject of harassment during his retirement years in Freiburg. It must have been an especially cruel blow to have found himself denied access to the library of the university he had served so well. After his death in 1938, Husserl's unpublished manuscripts were saved from destruction by Hermann Van Breda, a Belgian priest and philosopher, who also arranged for Husserl's wife and daughter to be sheltered in a Belgian convent during the occupation. Van Breda subsequently founded the Husserl Archives at Louvain.

Husserl was a person of high moral character and of impeccable intellectual integrity. He looked upon philosophy as a vocation, and felt personally called upon to defend reason against the various forms of relativism prevalent in his day. However, his was never a merely defensive or narrowly conservative project. Indeed, he often expressed admiration for the sceptical tradition in philosophy, and thought that Hume's radical critique of presuppositions made him the greatest of modern philosophers. He also rejected the arrogance and chauvinism of those who claimed that philosophy had achieved its culmination in German thought and expression. Philosophy, he argued, cannot be the exclusive property of any single culture or language, for the emergence of the philosophic spirit introduced a new mode of teleology characterized by the complementary traits of universality and infinity. The telos of philosophy is universal in that it strives to attain an identical truth which is valid for all who are no longer blinded by traditions, and infinite in that this goal of truth can never be fully realized and thus remains always a regulative idea. By reason of its universality, therefore, philosophy cannot be limited to a particular period or people, and by reason of its infinity philosophy remains always an unending process ([1.33], 286; [1.89], 151-60).

During his lifetime Husserl published several books and also left an extraordinary number of manuscripts, lecture notes and working papers. Both the published works and the unpublished materials contain many repetitive passages, tantalizingly unfinished descriptions, and agonizing reappraisals of earlier positions. As a result, it is often difficult to co-ordinate earlier and later works, or even to be sure of the direction ultimately taken by his thought. Husserl would not be entirely displeased by this situation, for he concluded finally that there can be no totalizing syntheses. We must strive for objectivity, and hope for progress towards that goal, but we must also acknowledge all the while that the goal of truth functions always as 'the idea of an infinite task' ([1.33], 291).

EARLY WORKS: INFLUENCE OF FREGE, BRENTANO, HERBART, STUMPF AND LOTZE

Husserl's first published work, *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1891), was a revised version of his earlier analysis of the concept of number. Adopting a distinction first made by Brentano, Husserl distinguishes between intuitive presentation and symbolic intention of numbers. He describes how our primitive intuitions about numbers and their interrelationships are based upon the experiences of counting, comparing and collecting, and how we think in symbols of more complex numbers for which

there can be no such authenticating intuitions. Unfortunately, he makes several remarks which give the impression that he conflated numbers and their presentations. For example, he refers to the unity of a number as a psychic relation, and claims that understanding the concept of a number requires reflection on its presentation in relevant acts of collective combination. In 1894, Frege called attention to these compromising remarks in a critical review of Husserl's book. He objected that Husserl's analysis blurs the distinction between subjective and objective domains, and concluded that his work was a typical example of psychologism ([1.65], 200-1). While Frege's critique finds some justification in Husserl's text, this extreme conclusion is unwarranted. Frege was inclined to regard as psychologist any attempt to relate the status of numbers to the activities of counting and collecting. Hence, he was not likely to be attuned to the nuances of Husserl's intention which was surely not to collapse the objectivity of numbers into their acts of presentation but rather to describe just how their objectivity manifests itself to us. At any rate, Husserl later distinguished clearly between numbers and their presentations, and between the concept of number and the concept of collective combination ([1.35], 784; [1.86], 24). Frege also criticized Husserl for holding the view that numbers are totalities (determinate multitudes) comprised of mere 'somethings' having no specific content and yet somehow differing from one another. However, this is a caricature of Husserl's position, for he clearly maintains that objects are always identified by way of their features. His point is simply that, once we have identified objects to be counted, we prescind from the determinate content of those objects in the instance numbering them.

It took some time, however, for Husserl to clarify the ambiguities generated by his continued dependence on the linguistic and conceptual framework of the empiricist tradition, which was the remote forerunner of late nineteenth-century psychologism. In his essay 'Psychological Studies in the Elements of Logic' (1894), he makes the unequivocal claim that our cognitive intuitions truly present the things intended by our speech acts. Moreover, he distinguishes clearly between mental acts and their contents, a distinction that had been blurred by the empiricist notion of a mental 'process', which in effect reduces cognitive acts to the mere having of associatively modified impressions. Nevertheless, he constantly uses the term 'contents' in an ambiguous fashion, sometimes to refer to ill-defined mental representations and sometimes to refer to things in the world in so far as they are known. Hence he does not yet make it clear that the intended objects of both our signitive and intuitive acts are, ordinarily at least, things in the world rather than mental substitutes ([1.40], 126-42; [1.122], 34-8).

These ambiguities testify to the influence of Brentano on the early

Husserl. Brentano rejected the empiricists' reduction of mental acts to associative reactions, reaffirmed at least vaguely the medieval distinction between acts and contents, and retrieved in part the ancient thesis that cognitive acts reach out to the intended objects themselves. He is therefore rightly celebrated for having revived the theory of intentionality. However, his interpretation of this notion intermingled modern and premodern themes. His early writings described intentional contents in ways that evoke the modern notion that impressions and ideas function as intra-mental substitutes for inaccessible real objects of reference. He said, for example, that every intentional experience 'contains something as its object within itself', and referred also to this 'immanent objectivity' as the 'intentional in-existence of an object' ([1.45], 88-9).

Although Brentano explicitly related his account of intentionality to the scholastic tradition, and traced its origin to Aristotle's books on the soul, he unfortunately tended to read the modern interpretation of immanence into the medieval theme of *esse intentionale*. It is true that the Scholastics used the term 'intentional' (and more frequently the term 'objective') to refer to the mode of being had by things known, in so far as they are present in the knower. The point of the medieval distinction between intentional (objective) being and real being was to clarify Aristotle's claim that the knower 'is somehow' the form of the thing known, without thereby entering into physical identity with the thing. It was thought that the intentional object ('inner word', 'formal concept', 'expressed species') functions as a unique sort of intermediary, i.e., as a transparent sign through which the mind is related to reality ([1.101], 62 n. 3). Although this emphasis on the mediating function of formal concepts may well have prepared the way for the modern thesis that to know is to have a representation of something (its 'idea' or 'concept') within the mind's interiority, the medieval thinkers themselves clearly maintained that the intentional object is the very thing itself, considered as known (Aquinas, *De Veritate*, IV, 2 ad 3).

Aristotle does not seem to have thought it necessary to postulate any intermediary, however special, between intellect and thing known. Indeed, he suggests that the intellect must itself be free of formal structure, and hence empty of content, so that it can become the forms of all things. The intellect, says Aristotle, possesses the same sort of adaptability as the human hand. It takes on the forms of things in the way that the human hand grasps tools (Aristotle, *De Anima*, 423a 1-3; [1.90], 132-7). Thus, the intellect operates within the realm of nature itself rather than within some subjective enclosure. Its mode of being is its transcending function. Aristotle further describes a thing's form as its sortal feature, its 'look' (*eidōs*). The look is *what* we know when we know *this* particular thing. Although there is a difference between intuiting an individual *qua* individual (the primary substance), and intuiting

its species-look (the secondary substance), these modes of intuition are complementary and interdependent. We grasp the species-look both as a surplus whose sense exceeds the particularity of this instance and as a condition for the manifestation of the particular (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1042a 17-49). Aristotle also emphasizes the continuity between perception and predication. Predicative discourse gives syntactical articulation to the inarticulate nuances of intuition (Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 16b 25-6). Judging is therefore directed primarily upon things and their perceived features, not upon propositions as such.

Brentano revived the Aristotelian notion that the intellect's intentional targets are things in the world, but he imagined the intellect's grasp of forms as taking place within the mind's inner space. He therefore concluded that the intellect could never effectively reach those targets. Brentano also subscribed wholeheartedly to the modern interpretation of perception. He claimed that our perceptions yield merely subjective appearances, and he appealed to physical causality alone in order to account for the relationship between these appearances and real objects. Corresponding to perceived colours, he claimed, there are only the 'vibrations' which emanate from the interaction of atoms, molecules and forces. A thing's true being, therefore, is its hidden quantifiable reality accessible only to the methods of the natural sciences. Perceived objects do not exist really outside of us; they are *mere* phenomena ([1.45], 9-10). In his later works, Brentano nevertheless claimed that linguistic references are ordinarily directed upon transcendent real entities, rather than upon mental contents. However, there is no indication that this new position entailed a critique of the empiricist account of intuition. Everything suggests a compromise: we refer to real things, but we see only phenomena. Moreover, Brentano adopted the modern interpretation of the relationship between assertive and predicative moments of judgment. Judgment, he says, is an act of acceptance or denial directed upon some presentation. This definition implies that judging is not primarily directed upon things and their perceived features, but upon intra-mental or ideal contents ([1.45], 198-9).

Dallas Willard's historical research has demonstrated how the influence of Johann Friedrich Herbart, Karl Stumpf and Hermann Lotze helped Husserl to make a more decisive break with the empiricist tradition than that achieved by Brentano ([1.122], 30-4). Herbart defined 'apperception' as the 'awareness of what is going on in us', and subsequently distinguished clearly between awareness of the activity of thinking and awareness of its content ([1.72], v, 43). Stumpf, to whom Husserl dedicated his *Logical Investigations*, held that second-order representations (such as the idea of a causal nexus) may arise out of first-order representations, and that the former are not reducible to

of expression is a kind of indication, in the sense that spoken or written words are indices of the existence of the speaker's hidden and therefore 'absent' thoughts. He adds that many philosophical errors arise from the failure to distinguish properly between indication and expression. He takes Mill's account of naming as an example. Mill held that proper names denote but do not connote. They point to an object without in any way presenting or conveying information about the object. Proper names, he added, are like the distinctive chalk-marks made by the robber (of a popular tale) on a house that he intended to plunder at a later hour. Husserl observes that this comparison unfortunately suggests that proper names function only as indications. It is true that when the robber later sees the chalk-marks, he recalls by association his earlier thought 'This is the house I must rob'. But in relation to its object a name does not function as an indication or signal. An indication always motivates belief in the existence of whatever it indicates. However, a name does not similarly entail the existence of the object named ([1.35], 295-8). Named objects may be real, ideal, imaginary or even impossible. Thus, meaningful reference to an object does not perforce entail the existence of the object. The context of its use determines the kind of ontological commitment entailed by a linguistic expression. Husserl thus elegantly avoids the paradoxes that Bertrand Russell later discovered were implicit in Mill's view that names are like purely indexical signs.

The second investigation makes a convincing critique of the empiricist reduction of universals to blurred particulars. Husserl contends that recognition of some particular feature requires a grasp of the primitive relationship between species and instances. We could not discern a distinctive particular feature as such (e.g., this particular red) if we did not also intuit the corresponding universal (the species, Red). The two modes of intuition are interdependent. We grasp the particular feature as an instance of a range of similar instances in which the species is realized, and we grasp the identity of the species as the condition for the possibility of identifying the particular as such an instance.

The third investigation deals with the relationships between parts and wholes. Husserl first distinguishes between independent parts, or 'pieces', and non-independent parts, or 'moments'. Pieces are parts that are separable from their wholes. Moments are parts that are so inter-related with one another, or with their wholes, that they cannot be given separately. We learn to recognize the various relationships between parts and wholes by attempting successfully or unsuccessfully to vary these relationships in imagination. For example, we may conclude that the colour of a thing is inseparable from its surface (or

extension) because we cannot successfully imagine eliminating one without also eliminating the other.

The fourth investigation discusses the relationship between grammar and logic. Husserl contends that grammatical laws governing distinctions between complete and incomplete expressions, and senseless and absurd expressions, are grounded in ontological structures. Laws governing the compounding of meanings are also similarly grounded in the way things are. All such rules have their origins in the interplay of parts and wholes given in perception. Husserl acknowledges that various languages may organize perceptual part-whole complexes differently. He suggests, however, that a study of the different ways in which various languages accomplish this task will reveal common categorical structures concealed by empirical differences ([1.35], 526; [1.100], 206).

In the fifth investigation, Husserl objects to the above-mentioned expressions that Brentano had used to describe the status of intentional objects ('immanent objectivity', 'intentional in-existence'). He points out that these phrases suggest that the intentional object enters into consciousness as a component of the flux of experience and that it functions within the enclosure of the mind as a substitute for the object of reference. Husserl insists, on the contrary, that the intentional object and the object of reference are one and the same: 'It need only be said to be acknowledged that the intentional object of a presentation is the same as its actual object... it is absurd to distinguish between them' ([1.35], 595). He thus affirms unequivocally that our intentional acts target things in the world. Husserl also clarifies the relationship between intentional contents and intentional objects. He says that the term 'intentional content' may legitimately be interpreted in the following ways: (1) as the intentional object (either the object *tout court*, or the object considered as it is intended); (2) as that feature (the act's 'matter') in virtue of which the act achieves determinate reference; (3) as the 'intentional essence' of the act, i.e., the 'matter' combined with its 'quality'. The term 'quality' refers in this context to the type of intentional act, e.g., question, wish, statement, etc. ([1.35], 578-80, 589, 657; [1.54], 26-36). These distinctions are consistent with Husserl's claim, in the first investigation, that propositions are related to the acts in which they are expressed in a manner comparable to the way in which species are related to their instances. Considered as an intentional essence, the intentional content (matter and quality) is an ideal proposition that is independent of particular intentional acts. Taken as instantiated, the matter and quality are non-independent 'moments' of a particular act ([1.35], 330).

Many commentators have rejected this thesis on the grounds that it seems to commit Husserl to the questionable view that ideal propositions may somehow be particularized as moments of individual

intentional acts. John Drummond has called attention to two passages that suggest that Husserl eventually modified his position. A note in the second edition (1913) strongly implies that the intentional content should not be regarded as a particularized feature of the intentional act ([1.35], 576; [1.54], 26-36, 39-42). Moreover, in *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (1913), Husserl adds that what he had formerly taken to be a property of acts was really a property of the 'meant as such' ([1.41], 308; [1.54], 41). In other words, Husserl finally identifies intentional matter and intentional object (in the sense of the 'object considered as it is intended'). This is an important statement, for it effectively eliminates any residue of the medieval notion that we must postulate some sort of intermediary content in between intentional acts and their objects.

Husserl agrees with Brentano that we must distinguish between predication and judgmental assent. However, he disagrees with Brentano's view that judgment is the acceptance or rejection of a neutralized presentation. According to Husserl, judgment is an assertive attitude which pervades the achievement of predication. This attitude is determined by anticipated or concomitantly experienced intuitions of things and their features, rather than by some sort of appraisal of the sense of the sentence. Husserl also agrees with Frege, as opposed to Brentano, that judgment is always a positive attitude, even when the content to which it assents includes a negation. In the context of discourse, assertoric statements make truth claims by reason of their form, not by reason of their predicative content as such, nor by reason of some tacit prefixed existential proposition ([1.35], 612-16). He thus firmly rejects the modern view that judgments are appraisals of nominalized propositional contents. In our straightforward dealings with the world, we are ordinarily preoccupied with things and their properties, rather than with what we are saying. Our speech is guided not by a scan of meanings but rather by anticipated or achieved intuitions of the essential structures of things. It follows that we need not postulate mediating structures (ideas or concepts) between words and things, nor do we need to speculate about a 'place' in which they dwell. To know something is simply to possess its form, to intuit it through its essence, i.e., its intelligible structure. Speech acts express meanings as ideal objects, but meanings are not grasped as such in the instance of articulation.

Husserl also develops more in detail the guiding metaphor of his account of intentionality. He contrasts the 'emptiness' of symbolic intentions with the 'fullness' of intuitive presentations. An empty act is directed toward an object in its absence. A fulfilling act registers its presence. Symbolic intentions may be either nominal (simple) or propositional (complex). A nominal act is single-rayed and directed towards a whole. A propositional act is multi-rayed, since it articulates

discrete parts within a complex object. Intuitive presentations may be either perceptual or categorial.

These distinctions prepare the way for a discussion of truth in the sixth investigation. According to Husserl, the experience of truth occurs when we recognize the identity of an object in the transition from empty intention to fulfilling intuition ([1.35], 621-4, 765-70). This description displaces the problem of truth from its traditional locus in the judgment, since the identity-synthesis may occur both in nominal and propositional contexts. Truth is achieved on the predicative level in the identity-synthesis of an empty nominal intention and its correlative perceptual intuition. If judgments achieve truth in a comparable sense, it is not by reason of their propositional structure but by reason of a parallel intuitive fulfillment of their empty intended objects ([1.76], 68).

The sixth investigation also offers a more extensive critique of the restrictive account of intuition proposed by British empiricism. Husserl approaches this issue indirectly by first criticizing the interpretation that the empiricist tradition had given to the role of those components of a proposition that belong to its categorial form, e.g., prepositions, conjunctions, cases and the copula. According to Locke and Hume, these syntactical operators refer to intra-mental processes rather than to aspects of the world. Husserl dismisses this thesis on the grounds that, when we use such expressions, we are directed towards things rather than towards inner processes. For example, if we say 'This paper is white', it is because we find that the property 'white' belongs to the paper. Hence we surely use the term 'is' in such a sentence to refer to the objective situation rather than to some inner psychological happening. Besides syntactical terms, he adds, there are other formal components of propositions that cannot find their fulfillment in ordinary simple intuitions. Nouns, verbs and even adjectival expressions introduce senses which cannot be fulfilled by simple intuitions: 'The intention of the word "white" only partially coincides with the colour-aspect of the appearing object; a surplus of meaning remains over, a form which finds nothing in the appearance itself to confirm it' ([1.35], 775). Husserl concludes that we must acknowledge the role of non-sensuous or 'categorial' intuitions which function in conjunction with simple perceptions and which bring the formal components of predication to intuitive fulfillment. The fulfilling intuition of any expression describing a particular thus involves the intuition of formal senses that exceed what is intuited in the simple perception of the particular. These expressions refer to particular things by way of accidental or essential descriptive features whose surplus senses function as conditions for the manifestation of the particulars as such ([1.114], 70-1). Categorial intuition is therefore the first step in the process of discernment of

essences, for to grasp the essence of some thing or situation is first of all to grasp its sortal property, i.e., its specific form. Translated into Aristotelian terms, intuition of the looks of things (secondary substances) is the condition for the presentation of particulars (primary substances).

THE TRANSCENDENTAL TURN

During the period from 1900 to 1913, Husserl developed more fully his criticism of the modern account of cognition. He spelled out his new position in a series of five lectures which introduce the theme of transcendental phenomenology for the first time. Given in Göttingen in 1907 and later published as *The Idea of Phenomenology*, these lectures are devoted to a clarification of the notions of immanence and transcendence. According to Husserl, modern descriptions of the relationship between immanence and transcendence tend to invoke two complementary themes: inside versus outside and accessibility versus inaccessibility. When immanence is described as an enclosure containing mental processes and impressions, transcendence is correspondingly defined as whatever remains outside of that enclosure. When immanence is described as a region of indubitable givenness, transcendence is defined as a region populated by unknowable things-in-themselves. Most epistemologies combine these two senses of the relationship between immanence and transcendence. They first conflate mental acts and their contents by describing both as 'contained' within the mind's psychic processes. They then construe the enigma of cognition as a problem of how to establish a connection between intra-mental representations and extra-mental things. The 'unspoken assumption' of these theories is that our cognitive processes are devoid of intentional import. This, according to Husserl, is the 'fatal mistake' of modern philosophy. Husserl praises Hume for acknowledging that this way of formulating the problem would in the end lead only to scepticism, but he adds that Hume's scepticism is itself riddled with contradictions. On the one hand, Hume degrades to the status of fictions everything that transcends impressions and ideas. On the other hand, he ascribes to the processes of mind the same sort of reality as the transcendent things that we would reach if we could somehow break out of the circle of immanence. Husserl concludes that whenever philosophers ask about the possibility of cognition in a way that implies that 'cognition is a thing apart from its object', or that 'cognition is given but the object of cognition is not given', they introduce an inappropriate notion of transcendence, which in turn entails an inappropriate interpretation of immanence ([1.34], 27-30).

According to Husserl, philosophy needs to adopt a new way of thinking and a new critique of reason: 'philosophy lies in a wholly new dimension. It needs an entirely new point of departure and an entirely new method distinguishing it in principle from any "natural" science' ([1.34], 19). He therefore proposes a new and radical method which requires the bracketing (*epoché*) or suspension of natural convictions: 'At the outset of the critique of cognition the entire world of nature, physical and psychological, as well as one's own human self together with all the sciences which have to do with these objective matters, are put into question' ([1.34], 22). Husserl immediately distinguishes his new method from Descartes' doubt. Descartes' goal was to establish certitude about the existence of the thinking self and transcendent things. Husserl has no interest in such a project. His goal is simply to uncover the essence of cognition. He points out that Descartes failed to grasp the essence of cognition because he defined himself, *qua* inquirer, as a 'thinking thing' having the same status as the transcendent things whose existence he had called into doubt ([1.34], 5-7). The purpose of the new method is to free us from this incoherent interpretation of transcendence, and consequently to enable us to redefine both transcendence and immanence. When we bracket everything within the realm of transcendence (as it is understood by Descartes and Hume), we in fact exclude nothing more than the incoherent interpretation of transcendent being as a region situated beyond the range of our knowledge. In so far as the mind's 'inside' is interpreted as having the same sort of ontological status, it too must be bracketed. This approach permits us to redefine immanence, in a broader sense, as the zone of all manifestation, wherein both immanent objects (considered now, in a narrower sense, as reflectively intuited experiences) and their intentional correlates (transcendent things) appear to us. Immanent and transcendent objects are now distinguished in terms of their different styles of appearing, rather than by appeal to the difference between intra-mental appearance and extra-mental being.

In the first volume of *Ideas*, Husserl describes this broader field of immanence as a realm of transcendental consciousness. He distinguishes in this work between the 'natural attitude', in which we are preoccupied by things in the world, and the 'phenomenological attitude', in which we reflect on the intentions at work in the natural attitude and on the objective correlates of those intentions. We achieve the latter transcendental point of view by suspending our natural attitude of belief in the reality of things and the world. Husserl emphasizes once again that the purpose of this procedure is not to call natural convictions into doubt but rather to achieve a distance that will enable us to reflect upon them. He adds that the method may also be called 'reduction', for it 'leads back' from lived acts and attitudes to reflective

consideration of those acts and attitudes. After longer live in our intentions. We step back from reflect on them in their full concreteness. For from our participation in the positing of things to maintain that positing as something upon which maintain our contact with things. The same still there for our consideration, but the change the reduction now permits us to appreciate them objects. We now notice them as perceived, as doubted, as imagined. Husserl calls any object so and he calls the correlative intention a *noesis* ([1, 45-256-7]).

Many commentators equate the phenomenological reduction with the reflective turn of consciousness away from things towards concepts and propositions. They contend that the purpose of the reduction is to orient philosophical analysis towards semantic issues. Proponents of this view find striking similarities between Husserl's concept of the *noema* and Frege's concept of 'sense' (*Sinn*). They hold that both Fregean senses and Husserlian *noemata* ordinarily serve as intermediaries between our linguistic expressions and their referents ([1.61], 680–7). Frege claimed that the sense conveyed by an expression shapes or determines its reference. Certain passages from *Ideas* seem to assign an analogous role to the *noema*. For example, in one passage Husserl speaks enigmatically of a 'determinable X' that functions as a centre for the noematic contents which present an object in diverse ways ([1.41], 313–14, 320–2). Proponents of the Fregean interpretation of the *noema* suggest that Husserl meant to say that the noematic 'X' functions like the sense conveyed by a demonstrative pronoun. It identifies the object of reference not through its properties but as the bearer of properties ([1.95], 195–219). On this interpretation, the role of the phenomenological reduction is to disclose the semantic entities through which intentional direction to objects is achieved.

Robert Sokolowski points out that this interpretation fails to take into account the later Husserl's remarks, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929), on the difference between the kind of reflection that yields access to propositions and the properly philosophical reflection made possible by the reduction (I.1-3, 110-27, [I.100], 45-7). Husserl makes it clear in this work that there is nothing specifically philosophical about propositional reflection, i.e., the reflective turn away from the 'ontological' realms of things and facts towards the 'apophantic' realm of concepts and propositions. This shift in focus occurs quite naturally whenever we reflect on what we ourselves or others have said, in such a way as to take what has been said as a mere supposition or proposal, i.e., as a proposition. It also occurs regularly in the context of

of scientific inquiry. Scientific verification requires a constant oscillation between investigation of facts and reflection on propositions. Both ordinary and scientific forms of propositional reflection take place within the natural attitude, and therefore do not require the phenomenological reduction as their condition.

What then is the difference between propositional reflection and philosophical reflection? Propositional reflection turns our attention from things and facts to concepts and propositions. Philosophical reflection focuses on the correlation between intentional acts and attitudes (*noeses*) and the ways in which things are presented (*noemata*). It considers things and facts as the correlates of the attitude of straightforward involvement in the world, and it considers propositions as the correlates of the intentional attitude of propositional reflection. We may therefore conclude that, for Husserl, the noema is simply the object itself, considered under the reduction *as* presented. It follows that the 'determinable X' is not a semantic entity that functions as a medium of reference. It is the intentional object itself considered as an identity genuinely given in each of its presentations ([I.54], 181-91).

Husserl's description of the relationship between the ontological and apophantic domains reinforces his thesis that concepts and propositions do not function as mental intermediaries. Concepts and propositions emerge only when we shift from an ontological to an apophantic focus. Hence, they do not serve as mediating entities that somehow link speech acts to their intentional referents. As we have seen, Husserl explicitly rejected Locke's view that concepts are mental representations, and implicitly rejected the medieval view that concepts are transparent media of reference. Moreover, he never claimed, as does Frege, that concepts and propositions belong to a 'third realm' (the first realm is the outer world of physical things; the second realm is the inner world of psychic processes) that functions as a non-subjective medium of reference. Robert Sokolowski suggests that the tendency to regard concepts and propositions as reified intermediaries is probably due to a confusion between object-oriented and reflective stances of consciousness. We enjoy a marginal awareness of what we are saying in the process of saying it. However, we do not at that moment objectify what we are saying as a proposition, for our consciousness remains directed towards the world. We can, none the less, easily shift back and forth between ontological and propositional attitudes. The very mobility of our consciousness inculcates a forgetfulness of the change in attitude requisite for the manifestation of concepts and propositions. Concepts and propositions then easily come to be thought of as having a status analogous to things and facts. We thus come to think of them as separate entities situated in some psychic or semantic realm. For those who are looking for a solution to the modern epistemological

problem of establishing a link between our speech acts and their targets, it is then perfectly natural to assign this mediating role to concepts and propositions. According to Husserl, however, there is no such need for mediation. Our consciousness is intentional by its very nature ([1.101], 110-11; [1.106], 451-63).

This does not mean, of course, that there is no mediating role for language. Husserl draws a distinction between genuinely thoughtful speech and routine linguistic performances. He observes that when we speak, we ordinarily focus upon what we see, or anticipate seeing, and only marginally upon what we are saying. Though marginal, our consciousness of the meanings of linguistic expressions testifies to a familiarity with a vast network of culturally established distinctions and nuances whose ultimate justification lies in the intuitive disclosure of the looks of things. Once in command of the standardized senses of words, we need no longer focus on those senses. When we speak about things, we let ourselves be guided only by our categorial intuitions. Our choice of words is governed directly by the looks of the things we struggle to describe. Sometimes we simply repeat standard formulae. We then fail to exercise the potential for clarity or distinctness provided by the linguistic code. Sometimes we are more conscious of making linguistic choices. At such moments, we shift our focus away from things towards the senses of words ([1.31], 56-60). Husserl thus suggests that our ability to shift back and forth easily between these orientations accounts for the interdependence of intuitive and linguistic discriminations. Finding the appropriate word, therefore, is not just a matter of familiarity with the rules of a language-game. An exclusively pragmatic account of linguistic use amounts to a nominalism that rejects any link between predicates and the intuited forms of things. Thoughtful speech is the product of an artful integration of seeing and saying. Mastery of an extensive linguistic repertoire makes for more nuanced perceptions, which in turn call for more nuanced linguistic options.

In the first volume of *Ideas*, Husserl takes up again the effort to redefine the notions of immanence and transcendence. He attempts to bring the reader gradually to the realization that the new dimension revealed by the reduction is not a region comparable to other regions of being. He first defines a region of being as a specific domain of objects (e.g., the regions 'material thing' and 'culture') whose unity is determined by some maximally broad genus. He notes that empirical sciences which deal with a given region of being ought to be grounded in a corresponding science of essences which he calls a 'regional ontology'. The task of a regional ontology is to specify the essences that structure all objects in its domain, and to spell out the hierarchically ordered relationships between them. In addition to the various regional ontologies, Husserl proposes that there should be a new

science, called 'formal ontology', devoted to the study of the fundamental categories that govern the relations and arrangements between objects in any region whatsoever. He then criticizes the thesis, common to most epistemological accounts, that consciousness is confined within a psychic region, opposed to the region of things. Whenever consciousness is described in this manner, there is a tendency, he argues, to reduce intentionality to representation within the enclosure of the mind. Repeating the themes developed earlier in *The Idea of Phenomenology*, he then describes the transcendence of things as a mode of givenness within immanence, now more broadly understood as the range of intentionality's transcending power. He again stresses that the reduction does not exclude anything that is genuinely given. Finally, he points out that this new dimension of immanence cannot coherently be understood as situated within the co-ordinates of a pre-given world. Even the horizon of the world is given as such within the sphere of immanence. Unlike all other regions, therefore, the transcendental domain is absolute and all-inclusive. It has no perimeters, no outside. Husserl thus takes the metaphor of 'region' to its limits, in order to demonstrate that it is, in fact, incoherent to think of immanence as a sector within a broader whole. Any attempt to conceive of a dimension of being beyond the zone of possible consciousness is nonsensical. Consciousness and being belong together. Their ranges are co-extensive. There can be no outside for a being whose mode of being is to be open to all things.

EGO AND WORLD

One of the most controversial theses of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is his claim that both ego and world may be considered as noemata by the transcendental inquirer. He frequently distinguishes between the ego considered as part of the world and the transcendental ego for whom the world itself is a *noema*. He contends that our capacity to function as transcendental subjects permits us to achieve a reflective distance from our own natural way of being in the world, and therefore to understand that way of being more fully. Husserl develops these themes in *Ideas II*, *Cartesian Meditations*, and in a manuscript published posthumously under the title *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*.

Ideas II introduces the theme of the human ego in an oblique fashion by first describing the role of corporeal orientation and intellectual perspective in the presentation of things. Things appear to us in quite different ways, depending on the condition of our sense organs, on variations in our kinesthetic orientation, and especially on whether

we take a pragmatic or theoretical attitude towards them. Husserl situates his analysis within the context of an *understanding* of nature that has been substantially affected by modern science. The contemporary sense of nature, he contends, is the *intentional correlate* of an attitude which he describes as both 'doxic' and 'theoretical'. It is doxic because it is permeated by an unthematic belief in the *existence* of its objects; it is theoretical because it prescind from the *practical*, aesthetic and ethical features of its objects. While ordinary *experience* does not constantly maintain an exclusively theoretical stance, none the less the influence of science has generated the everyday conviction that the true sense of the thing is what remains when we bracket the useful, the beautiful and the good ([1.5], 1-11; [1.89], 39-40). Further analysis of the presentation of things reveals that the full sense of their objectivity is dependent upon a recognition of intersubjectivity. For example, a sense of relatively fixed spatial positions is essential to our sense of objectivity. It would surely be difficult to develop this notion from an exclusively private perspective. We manage eventually to locate ourselves within a public system of co-ordinates by first recognizing that one individual's 'here' may be another's 'there', and then agreeing upon some convention for relating all positions to a stable network of places. This is a typical example of phenomenological analysis. Husserl's goal is always to unpack the layers of meaning sedimented in the senses of various types of objects, and thus to reveal the intentional acts and attitudes tacitly at work in the presentation of these objects.

In *Cartesian Meditations* (1931), Husserl continues his analysis of intersubjectivity by introducing a modification of the bracketing technique that he calls 'reduction to the sphere of ownness'. He proposes to abstract from everything in our experience that testifies to the presence of others. The purpose of this strategy is not to describe the production of meaning by a subjectivity actually cut off from others and the world, or to assure us that we are really in contact with other people. Despite its title, *Cartesian Meditations* is not motivated by any such epistemological concern. On the contrary, Husserl's purpose is simply to uncover the contribution of the sense that there are other selves to the individual's sense of self and of world. Phenomenological analysis is a reconstruction, not a creation of meaning.

In his *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Inner Time-Consciousness* (1928), Husserl claims that a second-order reflection reveals a level of time-consciousness that accounts for the identity of the transcendental ego. He first distinguishes between transcendent temporal objects, such as musical performances or public lectures, and immanent temporal objects, such as our perceptions of these events. He then points out that the perception of a temporal object may itself be taken as temporal object. Whenever we perceive the elapsing of a speaker's

words into the past, we also experience the fading of our perceptions of those words into the past. We thus learn to situate transcendent happenings within the context of objective time, and also to locate our perceptions of those events within the horizon of immanent time. Finally, he claims that reflection on the correlation between the flux of immanent temporal objects and our experience of that flux reveals that we are conscious of a deeper level of time which accounts for our sense of the temporal flow of our intentional acts. We experience this primal flux as the basic form within which all experience occurs. This form is composed not of the basic temporal phases (past, present and future), but of the conditions for their possibility, i.e., a primal impression, 'retention' of the just-past, and 'protention' of the just-about-to-be. Awareness of the concatenation of these components makes it possible for us to experience our own intentional life as temporal, and to grasp intentional objects as the same again throughout their successive presentations ([1.14], 378-82; [1.46], 298-326; [1.100], 138-68).

ESSENCES

Husserl claims that we are sometimes able to discern the essential structures of things. In *Experience and Judgment*, he distinguishes between the grasp of empirical universals and the fully-fledged intuition of essences. A preliminary awareness of empirical universals occurs when we make the transition from merely associative judgments, which express perceived likenesses among things, to those judgments which explicitly identify particulars as instances of some category. Once we have discerned what is the same among many individuals, we may then thematize the universal itself and begin to make scientific judgments about it. The goal of science is to specify ever more completely the characteristics of such empirical universals. According to Husserl, however, science never fully realizes this ideal, for it is impossible to achieve a truly exhaustive and definitive determination of all of the features of any empirical universal. The determination of every empirical concept is 'always in progress, always being further fashioned, and also refashioned' ([1.35], 116; [1.36], nos 80-98; [1.100], 58-62).

We make the transition from the grasp of an empirical universal to the intuition of an essence when we move from the perceptual to the imaginary mode of consciousness by submitting the universal to a process of 'free variation' designed to reveal an invariant structure. Husserl describes this technique as follows. We attempt to imagine successively the subtraction of one after another of the various features of the object under consideration. In this way we eventually isolate those invariant features without which the object in question would

cease to be what it is. We need not consider every conceivable variation. Indeed, in most cases it would be impossible to carry out an exhaustive survey of every possibility. What matters is that the manner of variation should be such that not only do we have the sense that the process could go on indefinitely, but also that it would in fact be fruitless to continue. As Husserl puts it, the process of variation should have a character of 'exemplary arbitrariness' ([1.36], no. 87b). Eidetic intuition is therefore a product of method. As Husserl puts it: 'The inward evidence on which all knowledge ultimately reposes is no gift of nature, appearing together with the idea of states of affairs without any methodically artful set-up' ([1.35], 63; [1.110]).

Husserl does not, like some contemporary philosophers, extend the method of free variation to the consideration of improbable scenarios imagined as taking place within possible worlds. His imaginative variations, like Aristotle's, are generally guided and limited by our ordinary intuitions of things in this world. Moreover, he never attempts to provide anything like a clear-cut rule for deciding when the process of 'free variation' ought to come to an end. He tells us only that there comes a point in any enquiry when it is reasonable to conclude that there are no further pertinent questions to be asked. It is then imprudent or even pathological to consider additional alternative possibilities. In short, discernment of essences requires both method and judgment. A sense of the mean between extremes is as necessary in intellectual enquiry as it is in practical affairs.

Husserl claims, moreover, that the kind of certainty that we should assign to the results of this procedure varies in proportion to the type of access that we have to the objects under investigation. Our apperceptive access to the basic structures of consciousness yields a different sort of evidence than is available in our perceptions of things in the world. Ordinary perceptions are perspectival and therefore necessarily incomplete. However, the philosophic recognition that all such perceptions are perspectival is not itself perspectival or incomplete in the same fashion. Ordinary perceptions are perspectival in the sense that they present only one side of their objects at a time. Philosophic descriptions of the structure of perception are 'perspectives' in the sense that they are influenced by historically conditioned questions and methods. Husserl suggests that it is just as inappropriate to blur these differences by asserting that all forms of cognition are similarly perspectival, as it is to look for mathematical certitudes in the ethical and political domains.

Husserl at first held that the relative immediacy of access to the structures of cognition provided by our tacit awareness of intentional performances makes for apodictic certainty. He eventually acknowledged, however, that even the privileged access of consciousness to its

own structures does not guarantee the perfect accuracy of reflective descriptions of those structures. Given the oblique and unthematic character of our tacit awareness of intentional acts and attitudes, and given the distorting influence of prevalent philosophic categories, our reflective descriptions are often vague and confused. Indeed, the history of philosophy testifies convincingly to the fact that no philosophic reflection can dissipate all vagueness. In any case, Husserl adds, philosophic differences are never settled by sweeping refutations, but rather by the elaboration of strategic distinctions that reveal the partial, vague or confused character of opposing positions. This is why philosophy must be a co-operative effort of a community of investigators.

~ LIFE-WORLD AND HISTORY ~

Husserl's later works are largely devoted to the themes of life-world and history. He hoped that his phenomenological analyses of these topics would serve as correctives to the naturalism and historicism which he recognized as two of the most powerful themes of modernity. Naturalism is a philosophic position consequent upon the mathematization of nature achieved by the new scientific method at the beginning of the modern era. Its thesis is that the entire realm of nature, including human nature, is comprised only of entities and processes susceptible of such quantitative analysis. Historicism may be defined as the tendency to regard the conceptual systems of both the natural and the human sciences as world views whose presuppositions are determined by contingent historical transformations.

Husserl traces the drift of modern science towards reductionism to Galileo's failure to relate scientific truths adequately to their sources in the life-world, the pre-scientific world in which we live. He calls attention, in particular, to the ambiguous implications of Galileo's bold decision to overcome the obstacle which perceived qualities presented to calculative rationality by treating them as subjective indices of objective quantities. This decision had the effect of concealing the priority of perceived over mathematical objects. Husserl contends that two factors contributed to this concealment ([1.33], 21-60; [1.89], 162-7).

In the first place, he observes, we must not forget that Galileo was heir to a relatively advanced tradition of 'pure geometry', which by reason of its very advances had already lost contact with the fundamental insights on which it was first constructed. Geometry most likely had its origins in the invention of practical techniques of surveying and measuring. Its ideal figures were thus first derived by abstraction and progressive idealization from the perceived forms of things. Once having acquired the notion of a field of pure 'limit-shapes', mathematic-

ical praxis was able to achieve an exactness and a freedom that is denied to us in empirical praxis. This ideal geometry was subsequently translated into applied geometry in the field of astronomy, where it became possible to calculate 'with compelling necessity' the relative positions and even the existence of events that were never accessible to direct empirical measurement. This achievement constituted a partial fulfillment of the dream of the ancient Pythagoreans who had observed the functional dependency of the pitch of a tone on the length of a vibrating string which produced it, and had therefore evoked the possibility of a generalized theory of correlations between perceived properties and measurable changes in geometrical properties. All of this, Husserl speculates, inclined Galileo to bracket the problem of the original derivation of geometry from the perceived qualities of things, and to interpret such qualities as merely subjective indicators of the true quantitative being of the world ([1.33], 29).

In the second place, Husserl continues, we must take into account the 'portentous' influence on Galileo's thinking of the new algebraic formalization of geometry. The development of algebra in effect liberated geometry from all intuited actuality and even from the concept of number. Although it was only with Descartes' invention of analytic geometry that the full implications of this move would be realized, Galileo had already clearly understood that Euclid's geometry could now be interpreted as a general logic of discovery rather than as a theory limited to the realm of pure shapes ([1.33], 44-6). Husserl's argument may be confirmed by considering the role of Galileo's diagrams for his theorems about uniformly accelerated bodies. It is clear that the lines and angles of these diagrams no longer refer literally to spatial shapes created by geometric relations between linear magnitudes but rather to a sequence of ratios between time and velocity. Galileo therefore implicitly considered such 'geometric' diagrams as expressive of relationships among any magnitudes whatever. Although this realization contributed significantly to the advance of modern physics, it also initiated a process of further alienation of scientific method from its roots in the perceived world. Unlike traditional geometry, which requires insight into the reasons for every step in its demonstrations, algebra lends itself to the development of techniques of calculation which no longer demand such comprehension but require instead only the blind implementation of procedural rules.

Galileo himself continued to employ the more traditional geometrical style of demonstration, and hence demanded of his readers conscious insight into the point of each transition. Nevertheless, his method took modernity further along the road towards the reductionist interpretation of reason as an adaptive power whose operations are mechanistic processes devoid of intuitive insight. Husserl cites as an

example of this account of reason the tendency of some twentieth-century logicians to conflate computing procedures with authentic deductions, and even to interpret the rules governing such procedures as a genuine logic ([1.37], 117). He concludes that the great discovery of modernity, i.e., the emancipation of mathematics from the constraints imposed by the intuition of Euclidean shapes, was both an advance and a setback. On the one hand, freedom from servitude to intuited forms would give to the geometer a greater potential for mastery over nature. On the other hand, it also further promoted the modern forgetfulness of the priority of insight into perceived structures over technical virtuosity. This forgetfulness would eventually lead to a bracketing of those acts and attitudes of the human spirit that render scientific and other modes of cognition possible. Naturalism forgets the role of the inquiring subject whose intentional acts remain inaccessible to empirical observation.

Husserl calls attention to the irony implicit in this history of modernity. He observes that it is unlikely that Galileo was ever aware of the hidden 'motivation' of his project. The seeds of reductionism and even of scepticism were, of course, already present in Hobbes's rationalistic exaltation of the power of reckoning. Hobbes had dismissed the whole sphere of pre-scientific experience and discourse. Whatever cannot be quantified he assigned to the realm of illusion. Moreover, Hobbes clearly regarded reason's calculus as an outgrowth of our biological drives and needs. For a long time, however, the success of the new sciences obscured the implications of this naturalism. Hobbes thought that calculative procedures could succeed where the ancient and medieval quest for essences had failed. Reckoning would reveal the hidden structures of reality. It required a genius such as Hume, says Husserl, to take the naturalism initiated by Hobbes to its logical conclusions. Hume realized that if cognitive intuition cannot break out of the circle of impressions and ideas, there is no justification for supposing that reckoning can yield any less fanciful results. The fundamental categories requisite for a mathematicized version of nature must somehow be derivable from information provided by the manifold of impressions. According to Hobbes, however, sensory impressions yield only illusions. It follows that scientific theories too are productions of fancy. This realization is the key to Hume's scepticism: 'Hume goes on to the end. All categories of objectivity - the scientific ones through which an objective extra-psychic world is thought in scientific life, and the pre-scientific ones through which it is thought in everyday life - are fictions' ([1.33], no. 23). Scientific descriptions are useful fictions, but they nevertheless remain fictions. The high hopes of modernity thus culminated finally in a thoroughgoing pragmatism. It seems clear in retrospect that the hidden intent of Galileo's fateful

decision, and indeed of the entire project of modernity, was to give up on truth and settle for power.

Husserl therefore thought that the most urgent task of philosophy was to restore confidence in the rationality of our ordinary intuitions about the life-world. We must demonstrate how scientific accounts of nature are always dependent upon the evidences of ordinary experience, and show how the success of Galileo's method in some areas does not justify an unlimited application in all fields of enquiry. Phenomenological analysis reveals, for example, that human acts have a conscious dimension that cannot be reduced to quantifiable processes, or explained as a product of causal sequences. This is especially true of the procedures of scientific discovery which require a disciplined detachment from biological needs and environmental stimuli. In short, the acts prerequisite for the emergence of things as empirical objects cannot coherently be taken as exclusively empirical processes.

Husserl also makes some interesting remarks on the implications of his own method of historical interpretation, as exemplified in the above analysis of the unintended project concealed by Galileo's manifest intentions and accomplishments. He observes that whenever we engage in an historical analysis of this type we always find ourselves in a sort of circle. We can only understand the past in the light of the present, and yet the present has meaning only in the light of the past. 'Relative clarification' in one direction brings about 'some elucidation' in the other, and vice versa. There is no tone of pessimism in Husserl's description of this methodological predicament ([1.33], 58). He suggests that his 'zigzag' method of historical interpretation makes it possible to achieve ever more comprehensive historical understanding, but he never claims that it will yield definitive truths. He does not lament this situation. He simply calls attention to the kind of truth that is available to historical interpretation.

These remarks suggest that, in his later works at least, Husserl was sensitive to the hermeneutic circle implicit in all human enquiry. His comments on the historicity of the life-world confirm this impression. Although he sometimes describes the life-world as a horizon of experience common to human beings in every historical epoch, at other times he speaks of multiple life-worlds and hints that every life-world is conditioned by layered sedimentations of meaning produced by forgotten cultural achievements. He even goes so far as to say that we must look for truth 'not as falsely absolutized, but rather, in each case, as within its horizons' ([1.20], 279). This passage suggests that all evidence is subject to correction by further evidence. Husserl adds, moreover, that it is in accordance with the nature of a horizon that 'it leaves open the possibility that conflicting experiences may supervene and lead to corrections in the form of a determining as

otherwise or else in the form of a complete striking out (as illusion)' ([1.20], 281; [1.110], 50).

Husserl's reflections on these issues did not cause him to repudiate the original project of phenomenology. Indeed, in the same passages which call attention to the role of intentional horizons he constantly reaffirms the phenomenological goal of uncovering and 'explicating' the sedimented senses of these horizons. Husserl therefore apparently saw no conflict between this goal and his properly hermeneutic discovery that all inquiry takes place within an historical context. Jacques Derrida contends that this attitude indicates that the entire enterprise of phenomenology was founded on an uncontrolled presupposition. Husserl tacitly took for granted the trans-historical validity of the ideal of universal truth, even though his own historical interpretation established that commitment to this ideal is an historically conditioned attitude. His description of this ideal as a regulative idea effectively exempted him from the task of justifying it ([1.51], 154). It seems more likely, however, that Husserl always understood that the ideal of universal truth functions more as a moral imperative than as a demonstrable or self-evident principle. He was convinced that our experience of the world yields enough intelligibility and direction to encourage the expectation that further investigation will yield further progress in truth. However, his choice of the Kantian notion of a regulative idea to describe the telos of philosophy suggests that he regarded the expectation of progress in truth as a postulate of rationality rather than as a metaphysical principle.

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