A DEBATE ON THE THOUGHTS AND LEGACY OF EDMUND HUSSERL: PHENOMENOLOGY, MODERNISM, EUROPE AND POST-TRUTH

Seven questions proposed by the editors are discussed by:

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• What is left of Husserl's philosophical thought and ethos today?

> The heritage of [Husserl's] phenomenology is the painful awareness of the consequences of giving up the search for truth.
>
> ANDRZEJ GNIAZDOWSKI

■ ***Andrzej Gniazdowski:*** Husserl expressed the significance of the idea of truth for life in the most moving and convincing way. The heritage of his phenomenology is the painful awareness of the consequences of giving up the search for truth, considered by him (according to its idea) as being "identically the same, whether humans or non-humans, angels or gods apprehend it in their judgments" – even though this pain and this awareness are still not present enough in our contemporary thinking and acting.

■ ***Michael Gubser:*** Husserl's phenomenology is one of the master philosophies of the twentieth century. At the start of the century, it laid the groundwork for much of the Continental thought that shaped European culture in the next 100 years, influencing existentialism and postmodernism; Heidegger, Sartre, Derrida, and many others. Like much of Western philosophy, it tried to determine how we know what is real, but it did so in a distinctive way. In the modern era, many philosophers have treated reality as a mental construct, something created by the human mind. The most well-known

examples of this 'idealist' tendency are Descartes, who rejected empirical knowledge gained through the senses in favour of certainties deduced in the mind ("I think, therefore I am"); and Kant, who cast the external (or noumenal) world outside of human ken, in a realm of which we have no certain knowledge.

Husserl, by contrast, argued that every thought or perception is directed at some object (or 'phenomenon' – hence phenomenology) external to it. Every mental act is 'intentional,' to use his signature term, because human consciousness is always consciousness of something in the real world. Subject and object, self and world – these are not discrete entities separate from one another, but parts of a unified continuum that we often call experience. Far from being a filter or veil that blocks access to reality, therefore, experience is in fact the royal road to it. And phenomenology, through its careful analyses of experience, could lead us to "the things themselves" (to cite the movement's rallying cry).

This turn away from 'idealism' and toward the 'real world' had a profound effect on twentieth-century philosophy since it showed that man was not trapped in his own mind.

Equally important is that phenomenology was also an influential social theory. Phenomenologists sought to defend insights derived from concrete personal experience – indeed, the sanctity of individuals themselves – against a variety of threats arising in modern mass societies: authoritarian domination, technocratic disdain, and bureaucratic anonymity, to name a few. They also sought to reorient modern life away from extreme individualism and toward community involvement, which they considered an essential human need. And they tried to direct individuals and communities toward supposedly objective moral values that could be discerned, they believed, through the close analysis of conscience and experience. Combined, these convictions led them to advocate for communities of purpose that united people around common ethical commitments.

The most famous example of this social and ethical phenomenology is the Polish archbishop Karol Wojtyła, who, two years before his 1978 appointment as Pope John Paul II, described his theories of human nature as "phenomenological." An ethics professor as well as a priest, Wojtyła wrote books and essays that joined insights from the German-born philosophy of phenomenology with Church doctrine. In his 1969 masterwork The Acting Person – quintessentially phenomenological in its dense descriptions of subjective experience – Wojtyła argued that man's worldly activity depended on faith in God for its ultimate meaning. His papal encyclicals carried forward this allegiance by deriving moral recommendations from the extended analysis of modern experience.

■ ***Julia Jansen:*** Husserl's philosophical thought lives on in different ways and in different fields. The phenomenological method, which he pioneered, has been influential far beyond academic philosophy. It has been one strong factor in the design of so-called 'qualitative' methods in the social and human sciences. As antidotes to the increasing reduction, already observed by Husserl, to quantitative and causal understandings of, for example, the psyche, the human, or sociality, such methods stress the significance of first-person descriptions as starting points for analysis, over and above merely statistical approaches, or investigations into correlations and causal relations between different events. Within philosophy itself, this antidote also remains available and lives in a diverse range of phenomenological and existential approaches, which now also increasingly realize Husserl's interdisciplinary notion of phenomenology, for example in the critical

engagement with the cognitive sciences. Moreover, Husserl has introduced into the philosophical debates concepts that are now also taken up by philosophers who might otherwise be critical of Husserlian phenomenology, such as the idea that we do not only have bodies that we describe from a third-person perspective, but that we are, experienced from the first-person perspective, embodied, which first of all constitutes our individual perspectives and also constrains and enables what we do (Husserl speaks of the lived body (*Leib*) as the 'I can'). Another example is the notion of the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*), which is meant to capture a world, or environment, as it is experienced in its different natural, personal, cultural, and socio-historical dimensions, and which is central not only to many historical and sociological approaches, but also lives on in the thinking of, for example, Habermas. Further articulations of the lifeworld into a homeworld (*Heimwelt*) and foreign world (*Fremdwelt*) also inspire intercultural discussions in several sciences, amongst them philosophy. As a third example of Husserlian ideas that continue to exert conceptual and discursive force in contemporary debate, I would like to mention his account of the intersubjective constitution of both the shared world and of personal subjects themselves. This account provides important impulses for conceptions that leave behind individualistic paradigms in search of more appropriate and perhaps also socially and ethically more promising understandings of personhood, epistemic practices, and sociality. As a last example, let me mention Husserl's important distinction between passive and active dimensions of consciousness. The great force of passivity is, in my view, still widely underestimated in philosophical, psychological, and sociological research. Husserl has given us important clues in this respect in the domains of theoretical and cognitive consciousness, as well as in the domains of feeling and valuing, and of willing and acting. Finally, concerning Husserl's ethos: Husserl's ideal of 'ultimate responsibility,' which entails unconditional openness to the fallibility of one's knowledge claims and values, and his pursuit of 'infinite tasks,' which abandon the focus on individual 'genial' researchers for the sake of an 'ideal community' of transgenerational scientific collectives, might not be immediately observable in current practices within or without academia. This was of course also the case in Husserl's own time. However, there are also those, then and now, who were and are inspired by this kind of Husserlian 'idealism' to resist the cynicisms and nihilisms of their time.

■ ***Sandra Lehmann:*** It is hard to tell what the situation of today looks like, especially since today seems more than ever fragmented into countless minor situations that consider themselves the hub of the world. Therefore, it is also difficult to assess whether Husserl's thinking is still relevant. One might ask, relevant where? And to whom? And again, would that even matter? To venture a general diagnosis, however, there is much to suggest that the "drama of the subject" is over, a drama that has largely preoccupied phenomenology in one way or another and far beyond Husserl, including theorems of the subject's passivity and exposure to what befalls it. But it is probably only the ethical that counts anyway, and Husserl is still exemplary here. It is no exaggeration to say that Husserl stands out for his philosophical integrity. His work almost radiates this, the meticulous way in which he tirelessly and over decades rethinks and corrects his fundamental ideas. There is no false magic here, no rhetoric, no attempts at surprise, only loyalty to the cause of thinking. This simply evokes admiration, and one would like to see it also in the future as a guardian spirit of philosophy.

■ ***Sebastian Luft:*** Husserl's philosophical thought has undergone a remarkable resurgence in the last 20 years. This has to do, among other things, with the slow dying of postmodernism. So his thought is once again looked upon as being very timely, both within philosophy and other sciences that Husserl would have considered "applied phenomenology." It is becoming increasingly clear that Husserl was right to construe phenomenology as a research programme with potential for furthering the project of phenomenology. While most in the generations after Husserl were not willing to sign on to it, many today are in fact carrying the legacy of Husserl, some clearly without knowing it. Husserl thought of his own work that he was laying the foundations of a truly rigorous science and that he would begin building the foundations of the edifice of pure phenomenology. Others would have to continue building the foundations, then the building, which would then be the pure and pristine tower (or perhaps less ambitiously, a solid edifice) of phenomenology as a rigorous philosophical discipline.

Once this was finished, it could serve as a foundational and "feeder" discipline to other sciences, such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, essentially all sciences that we would today lump under the umbrella term "humanities." And indeed, this has happened to the extent that they have taken on the project of a descriptive account of first person experience. Precisely in this sense, many empirical scientists (psychologists, sociologists, literary critics, etc.) use phenomenological methods (whatever that means to them – the term is also sometimes used to indicate that what one is doing is not willy-nilly, but rigorous). And if every empirical science is dependent on an a priori equivalent foundational science, they (if ever so implicitly) are acknowledging the existence of the "mother science," phenomenology. Few today would perhaps be wary of a "first philosophy" (as Husserl also called his enterprise), but many of Husserl's insights are valid today because they have stood the test of time.

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As for the ethos of Husserl's thought, some might be a bit put off by his lofty remarks, especially in The Crisis, where he talks of phenomenology saving not just the sciences, but humanity as a whole. I personally am uncomfortable with such talk. I do not think that philosophy of any sort has the power to do that. But I think a less ambitious ethos, that of philosophy as a scientific (wissenschaftlich) undertaking with clearly defined methods, themes and possibly results is a good antidote to many things that are happening in universities today, such as the sell-out of scientific rigour for political purposes in the broadest sense. (The crisis of higher education worldwide can be summed up, in my opinion, as political activism and political agendas displacing scientific work. Of course it is naïve to think that what goes on in academe is, and has been, ever completely free from political agendas. However, such agendas have had to stand the test of the argument, instead of "subverting" the very idea of rationality and (mis-)interpreting it as an instrument of power.)

■ ***Hans Rainer Sepp:*** One should distinguish between what Husserl himself intended and how the phenomenology he founded actually developed. Even if Husserl's own conception of a transcendental philosophy of consciousness could not ultimately assert itself as the binding pattern of phenomenological research at large, it was precisely his

style of thinking and research that gave rise to this opening. For the special thing about phenomenology is that it is realised as an intermediate. It is neither a school in which only the basic intentions of its founder unfold, nor a mere collection of system formations that are relative to individual persons. Dialogue is rather an essential part of it and its scientific ethos style: this is reflected in the possibility that, on the one hand, every one of its representatives may announce a common space of research from his or her own perspective position; that, secondly, it is open to scientific disciplines from the outset and has developed early into interdisciplinary research; and that, thirdly, phenomenology has proven itself as an intercultural discipline – which is shown not only by the fact that phenomenologists from all over the world contribute to it with original approaches and that today there are about two hundred research sites on phenomenology worldwide, but that phenomenology has also done pioneering work in establishing the discipline of intercultural philosophy.

■ ***Marci Shore:*** This question reminds me of Günter Gaus's famous 1964 interview with Hannah Arendt: "*Was bleibt?*" (Arendt answers: "*Es bleibt die Muttersprache*.") I would mention two things. The first relates to phenomenology itself: the aspiration to *reines Sehen*, the affirmation and validation of experience, the value of pure description. There are moments when what we need is precisely to bracket the analytical, to put aside theory and interpretation, and simply *describe what we see*. And the second relates to Husserl's own existential stance, his acute sense of what was at stake, the Kierkegaardian Either/Or that Shestov understood so well: *either* we can achieve epistemological clarity and absolute truth, *or* truth is beyond our grasp and we resign ourselves to the madhouse.

■ ***Jan Sokol:*** As I never worked seriously on Husserl, so my answers shall be mere guesses. Husserl's big ideas – phenomenology as an unshaken foundation for science, back to the things! (Zu den Sachen selbst!), the crisis of science etc. – seem to me somewhat obsolete and abandoned. It is even as if the famous "Crisis" has evaporated among much sharper existential sorrows. What remains are – besides some brilliant analyses (e.g. of human temporality) – his intellectual honesty, meticulous care for clear argumentation and a firm belief in human reason and in philosophy as its guardian.

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> JAN SOKOL

■ ***Christian Sternad:*** There is something rather odd about the image of Husserl teaching at a present-day university. In a very deep sense, Husserl would be "out of date." It is quite likely that Husserl would have found it nearly impossible to obtain a permanent position at any academic institution at this time. In the intervening years between the Logical Investigations (1900/01) and the Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology (1913), more than a decade had passed during which Husserl did not publish any major works. The absence of publications comes, however, as no real surprise. Husserl rarely published or wrote to publish. In the present era of 'publish or perish,' one in which academics feel under unceasing pressure to publish as often and as much as possible, Husserl could serve as a healthy antidote to today's hyper-productive academic mindset. His notes and manuscripts were mostly research notes that he composed almost entirely

for himself. His research was intended for himself, as an attempt to reach ever greater clarity regarding the problems and shape of phenomenology. In that sense, Husserl's ethos is to a much greater extent more anachronistic in the present context than it had already been during his lifetime.

Already during his lifetime, Husserl was torn between two opposing (self-) impressions. On the one hand, he constantly struggled with the problem of not reaching the level of conceptual clarity to get this "idea of phenomenology" across to his readers and listeners. He feared his work would get lost amongst the thousands of unfinished manuscripts before reaching a final conceptual shape. On the other hand, especially towards the end of his life, Husserl thought phenomenology harboured not only a *scientific* contribution, but also a *cultural* contribution *to all humankind*. Already in his articles for the Japanese journal *Kaizo* (1923), he conceptualized phenomenology in terms of a cultural and ethical renewal that would help humankind out of its spiritual crisis, a crisis he later explicitly addressed in the so-called Crisis of the European Sciences (1935). Over the course of his lifetime, Husserl oscillated between phases of profound philosophical crisis and phases of megalomaniac proclamations concerning the purpose and task of phenomenology and philosophy in general. Given such tensions in Husserl himself, the great difficulty in pinning down Husserl's thought and ethos becomes readily apparent, a difficulty not only for us today, but already for those during his lifetime.

However, philosophically, I think that there is something to take away from these opposing motives in Husserl's thought. On the one hand, there is this level of deep (self-) critical reflection that never comes to a halt. His observations are driven by a constant and piercing doubt as to whether what has already been analysed has in fact been analysed properly. In Husserl, one can find a philosophical rigour that seems almost unsurpassed. The same rigour can be observed in Descartes or in Kant – two philosophers who were highly influential for Husserl. Philosophy in the Husserlian sense, therefore, has a very unique style that is quite different from that found in the majority of other philosophical texts. Husserl pushed philosophy into the scientific discourse and raised the question as to how philosophy can indeed become a "rigorous science." Husserl's work achieves this level of rigour without the verbosity or even the poetic character of so many philosophers before and after him. In stark contrast, his thought operates in experiments and observations that invite us to participate, and to critically question alongside him – instead of following his words and dogmatically repeating his ideas.

Yet, on the other hand, Husserl was very much driven by the idea that philosophy, as a science, is not composed of genius-like contributions by isolated thinkers. Instead, he conceived of philosophy as parts that contribute to a bigger whole. Philosophy for him, was an endeavour that implicitly includes progress. This is, of course, hard to comprehend: what exactly is progress in philosophy and how can it be measured? Certainly one of Husserl's contributions to philosophy was that he pushed philosophical discourse into the realm and ethos of scientific discourse. As already mentioned above, his philosophy does not operate as one monolithic text that is intended to be taken as a contribution. On the contrary, his philosophy operates in observations and experiments that we can take further, abandon, or even modify to get to the bottom of certain phenomena. Regarded in this manner, philosophy can take things further by building upon certain findings that come together in a unified process of accumulating universal knowledge. This may seem anachronistic to those in the realm of philosophy – however, it seems very common to those in the natural sciences. Nevertheless, I think

it is Husserl's great contribution to conceive of philosophy as science – whether we agree with him or not.

■ ***Anna Varga-Jani:*** Husserlian phenomenology is one of the most pivotal philosophical streams of philosophical thinking today. Even though an edition of Husserl's work is going to be completed soon, a new and increasing interest in Husserl's oeuvre puts it at the centre of research, with a focus on Husserl's philosophical heritage for future thinking. Transcendentality, intersubjectivity, reduction and constitution are the key notions of Husserlian phenomenology, which are all inherited by socio-philosophical and religious philosophical thinking, but also by empirical sciences like psychology. Traces of phenomenological methodology appear at each level of present-day continental philosophical thinking.

Another important approach to Husserl's thought is constituted by the researches among the Göttingen Circle of Husserlian phenomenology, which definitely contribute to the historical exploration of phenomenological methodology and phenomenological thinking in the broader sense, as well as to its impact on philosophical thinking. What we mean today by Husserlian phenomenology extends to Polish-born Roman Ingarden's phenomenological contribution, to Edith Stein's idea about Christian philosophy and the *philosophia perennis*, to Hedwig Conrad-Martius's empirical researches, to Max Scheler's ethics and Adolf Reinach's phenomenology of law, to Gerda Walther's social phenomenology, to Alexandre Koyré, and Jean Héring, whose paper on *Phénoménologie et philosophie religieuse* was the first publication on the topic of the ontological turn in phenomenological research in the Husserlian Yearbook for 1925. From this point of view, Husserlian phenomenology has explored from the beginning in an international atmosphere and has been divided into different philosophical problem fields. Internationality and the complexity of the research field in this one methodology are the main characteristics of Husserlian phenomenology.

■ ***Anna Yampolskaya:*** Thinking of Husserl's legacy I would say that there are two thinkers called Edmund Husserl: Husserl as he was known to his students and contemporaries, the Husserl of his books and papers; and a different Husserl, Husserl as he is known to us today, the Husserl of his lecture notes and manuscripts. During his lifetime he did not seem to be a prolific writer, but he left behind a vast amount of previously unpublished material which later appeared in the 42 volumes of Husserliana. The last volume became available only in 2014, and there are still some manuscripts to be discovered by the phenomenological community. The second Husserl differs considerably from the first one: he is a much more daring and provocative author than we used to believe. I could even call him the most thought-provoking philosopher of the 21st century.

In the second part of the 20th century, Husserl was partly eclipsed by the mighty figure of his controversial successor, Martin Heidegger, but in the last few decades we have witnessed a revival of interest in Husserl's writings. Husserl did not create a philosophical system – instead, he shaped a philosophy according to which such systems are no longer necessary. His phenomenological method applies directly to our experiencing of the world; it makes the world appear as an experience where meaning is constituted. This is a key moment in Husserl's thought that makes his phenomenology alive and relevant today.

• How would you assess the impact of phenomenology on 20th- and 21st-century philosophy and beyond?

■ *Andrzej Gniazdowski:* The unquestionable impact of phenomenology on the history of philosophy consists in the wide, even if sometimes silent, acceptance of his belief in the inalienability of philosophy. Even if Heidegger, like many other, speaks about the "end of philosophy" as well as its turning into independent sciences, he still insists that there is something like "the task of thinking" as its inalienable remainder.

■ *Michael Gubser:* I'll concentrate on the 'beyond' part of this question. Starting in the 1960s, many East European dissidents drew on phenomenology to mount their anti-communist campaigns. The Polish trade union Solidarity, for example, was a phenomenological concept in Wojtyła's thought before it became the name of an anti-communist movement. In addition to Wojtyła, Václav Havel – the Czech playwright-turned-president – credited the "atmosphere" of phenomenology for fuelling his advocacy of Charter 77, the Czechoslovak dissident movement that publicized the communist government's human rights violations. As opposed to official Marxism, which subordinated individuals to the laws of history, phenomenology valued personal experience and moral insight as sources of truth and knowledge. Jan Patočka, a Husserl and Heidegger student who became Czechoslovakia's leading philosopher, expounded similar phenomenological themes in two manifestoes praising Charter 77's defence of human conscience against authoritarian state power. As the Czech writer Eva Kantůrková put it, Charter 77's "main philosophical trend [was] phenomenology."

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MICHAEL GUBSER

To make sense of these claims, one must understand a key feature of phenomenological thought. As opposed to empiricists like David Hume, who argued that reality consists only of things we can verify with our senses, phenomenologists believed we could look beyond the visible world in order to identify the essences or innate necessities of things perceived, those characteristics that make something uniquely what it is. Moral values, they claimed, were part of the world's essential makeup, just as real as physical things.

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While the belief in essences is hard to defend on rational grounds, it had eminently practical implications. By revealing, for example, that a person's essence was not limited to his or her current circumstances, phenomenologists argued that people could alter their situations. They made a compelling case that reality encompassed not only facts that exist in the world, but also unfulfilled possibilities that could just as well exist. A person, they maintained, always has more potential than is apparent at any given moment, and this unrealized promise is part of their essence, part of who they are.

The insight that reality is greater than mere factual circumstance had extraordinary implications in a Europe where dictatorships regularly claimed a monopoly on truth. It

could encourage people to imagine alternate social and political systems, to live “as if” – in the poignant phrase of Czechoslovak dissidents – they were free to make decisions regarding policy and leadership. For many followers, phenomenology became a philosophy of liberty, one that could reveal human possibilities and defend man’s freedom.

■ ***Julia Jansen:*** The impact of phenomenology on so-called ‘continental’ philosophy as a whole has been, of course, immense; also, at least by contrast, in those approaches (e.g., the Deleuzian) that are highly critical of phenomenology while also remaining in its vicinity in certain respects. Increasingly, however, paradigm shifts in philosophy of mind, for example, towards embodied and extended models of mind, have stimulated a wider discussion of phenomenological analyses that traverses (somewhat old-fashioned) divides of the philosophical field. Another example is current debates in social ontology, which have been drawing not only on Husserlian reflections of intersubjectivity, but also on the phenomenological investigations by, for example, Edith Stein (empathy) and Gerda Walther (community). Finally, old divisions between, on the one hand, phenomenology and, on the other hand, discursive and critical studies (in, for example, the wake of Adorno or Foucault) are also increasingly breaking down, which, in the last fifteen to twenty years, has seen a stimulating exchange concerning, amongst other topics, the politics of embodiment and gender, and issues of normativity and normalization.

■ ***Sandra Lehmann:*** Phenomenology had a great impact on the so-called continental philosophy of the 20th century (i.e. philosophy in the Kantian and post-Kantian tradition), to the extent that some now inaccurately identify the two with each other. As far as the 21st century is concerned, things may still be open. The problem with phenomenology is that it became a school of thought. Therefore, its boundaries are more or less fixed. This orthodox character often prevents contemporary phenomenology from really getting involved in new possibilities of, but also new demands on, thinking, and challenges of some urgency, especially vis-à-vis the ecological crisis, and the blurring of distinctions between nature and culture, not to mention subject and object, or what is considered an actor. For too many contemporary phenomenologists, the only alternatives are “we already know” and sheer nonsense. On the other hand, the methodological focus on appearing remains the strength of phenomenology, against all kinds of naturalism and constructivism. In short, the question is whether phenomenology can once again transform itself from within.

■ ***Sebastian Luft:*** Phenomenology’s impact within academia has been huge. As I explain above, many scientific disciplines are either heavily influenced by phenomenology or are direct results of phenomenology. Less technically, phenomenology has had an impact on culture more widely. I don’t mean in the sense of insights that have carried over into the public sphere, but in the sense that phenomenology has helped sustain the role of philosophy in the larger public sphere. Phenomenology has always been a very technical and difficult philosophical enterprise, so to try to teach it to the broader public might be asking too much. However, some phenomenologists were quite successful in making the project amenable to

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SEBASTIAN LUFT

the general intelligentsia (people like Sartre in France or Savater in Spain). As a consequence, many intellectuals have been influenced by phenomenology in less direct and handed-down ways. For instance, many cinematic artists are "practical phenomenologists" in the way they shoot their movies. Another example is the now famous German writer Ferdinand von Schirach, who recently recommended (in an interview) pure description as a method for writing novels, instead of judging other people in a normative fashion. He did not mention Husserl or phenomenology, but his sentiment might be called "phenomenological" in a non-technical sense.

■ ***Hans Rainer Sepp:*** The potential with which phenomenology exerts and can continue to exert influence in an ever more converging world lies in this character of the intermediate or *inter*. That phenomenology itself stands in this in-between also makes it a subject for its own research; Husserl, for example, with his theory of the intersubjective. It should be remembered that the ancient philosopher Pyrrho accompanied Alexander on his campaign to India. In this first phase of a globalization emanating from Europe, Alexander, in his encounters with Indian (early Buddhist) wandering monks, developed the conception of *epoché*, which Husserl reactivated many centuries later and made the basis of his thinking (on Pyrrho's intercultural function cf. Christopher I. *Beckwith*, *Greek Buddha: Pyrrho's Encounter with Early Buddhism in Central Asia*, Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015).

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■ ***Jan Sokol:*** Against all the dirty demagogies of the various "post-somethings" Husserl is a lighthouse of clarity, never disposed to make the reader hostage to some sentiment. There is probably much more for philosophers working in epistemology.

■ ***Christian Sternad:*** Phenomenology, or better the "movement" of phenomenology as Herbert Spiegelberg called it in his now famous English introduction in 1960, is now more than a century old. With its inaugural text in 1900/01, the so-called Logical Investigations, Edmund Husserl laid the groundwork for one of the most important and lasting schools in philosophy today. With such a long tradition at its back, it goes without saying that phenomenology is anything but monolithic. Moreover, the most interesting aspect of phenomenology consists in its plurality of approaches, the different schools that it helped to shape, and the many more promising pathways that are still there to explore in the future. Among the many important branches of this "phenomenological tree," there are a number of main trends that deserve to be noted.

Husserl's work itself underwent major transformations already during his life. Whereas the Logical Investigations from 1900/01 showed an anti-idealistic approach to philosophy, his second major work The Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy from 1913 explicitly situated itself in the great tradition of transcendental philosophy, first and foremost in the transcendental thought of Immanuel Kant. However, it also set itself apart from this tradition by understanding the problem of idealism in an entirely new way, placing phenomenology in remarkably different critical relation to traditional metaphysics. It is in this sense that the early phase

of the phenomenological movement was characterized by a heterogeneous group of philosophers who had entirely different trajectories.

The aforementioned transformation within Husserl's own work caused the first rupture within the phenomenological movement, a rupture between those who wanted to pursue and those who wanted to reject Husserl's "transcendental turn." While "realistic phenomenology" holds that phenomena are independent from subjective processes of constitution, "transcendental phenomenology" shifts its focus entirely to the so-called "correlation a priori," i.e. the very relation between the subject and the object that is suspected to lie at the root of every phenomenon. The contemporary discussions on "new" or "speculative" realism (Quentin Meillassoux, Graham Harman, Ray Brassier and Markus Gabriel, among others) and their critique of what they call "correlationism" is in my eyes nothing but a repetition or iteration of this very early debate within phenomenology.

Another critical turning point within this movement of phenomenology is its relation to philosophical anthropology and, to a greater extent, to existential philosophy. Whereas Husserl was very critical of notions and ideas that rely uncritically on conceptions such as "man" or "human being," phenomenologists such as Max Scheler and Martin Heidegger saw in phenomenology a yet-unparalleled potential to reformulate questions of classical philosophical anthropology in an entirely new way. Though inspired by Husserl, these approaches call into question some of the main ideas of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. In fact, Husserl harshly criticised Heidegger's approach because it fell back into what phenomenology wanted to move away from. Although this may very well be the case, one has to acknowledge that these approaches opened Husserl's work to entirely different terrains and also gave Husserl's sometimes too-theoretical considerations a more "worldly" and existential spin that definitely helped phenomenology to reach a much larger audience, an audience much broader than the narrow circles of Husserl's scholars at that time.

Very much inspired by Husserl and Heidegger, it was Jean-Paul Sartre who inverted Husserl's paradigm. For Sartre, the central concern is not an account of essences (as in Husserl's eidetics) or how the shape of the experience of our existence is constituted, but rather the opposite: "Existence precedes essence," as Sartre famously claimed. With this inaugural phrase, he shaped what came to be known as "existentialism" or "existential philosophy." Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre's lifelong partner, reformulated this in an entirely new way in order to understand our gendered existence. A woman does not understand what it means to be a woman by virtue of some abstract essence of "woman," but rather she understands what it is to be a woman by becoming one – the initial idea of philosophical feminism that Judith Butler and many others would later develop further. Therefore, our existence shapes the way in which we conceive of essences. This idea gave rise to an entirely independent, predominately French school of critical phenomenologists who were often highly engaged politically, and often deeply entangled in Marxism. It was Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (himself known for his phenomenology of the body), for instance, who founded the very influential *Les Temps Modernes* – a very popular magazine in the French intellectual milieu.

It is especially this French connection to phenomenology which moved the phenomenological discourse not only into entirely novel directions, but also into some of the most fruitful new territories. For example, Michel Foucault, who claimed throughout his career not to be a philosopher but a historian, sought to understand this formation of human beings and their practices from an historical background. Whereas

Sartre and others shifted the focus on our existence to understand our formation of concepts and essences, Foucault wanted to understand our life-worldly practices by investigating how they developed historically and in particular socio-political contexts. It was, notably, this train of thought that connected phenomenology to history and sociology. The latter connection, however, had already been well-established by the Austrian phenomenologist Alfred Schütz, who in the 1930s developed a phenomenological grounding for sociology, a "phenomenological sociology."

In this very dynamic French intellectual environment, the term "post-structuralism" or "deconstruction" was very often linked to phenomenology. There is indeed a strong connection to phenomenology, mainly through the French reception of Heidegger, and especially through Jacques Derrida. In the case of Derrida, himself a scholar of Husserl and Heidegger in the beginning of his academic career, phenomenology comes close to structuralism and the philosophy of language. Also drawing upon the later thought of Martin Heidegger, the question as to how our language shapes our experience of the world becomes virulent. In his works, Derrida again and again shows that language and its intrinsic logic predefine the very ways in which we perceive the world around us. His "method" of deconstruction, although he claimed repeatedly that there was no such method, consists in disclosing these hidden mechanisms of semantic systems, and showing how to break them up in order to conceive of seemingly old things in new ways. This idea had a tremendous influence not only on philosophy, but also on pop-culture since the number of "interventions" into traditional systems of signs and thoughts seemed to be at least potentially limitless.

In recent years, phenomenology has become more technical and "scientific" again by searching for interdisciplinary alliances. Particularly in dialogue with the Anglo-American discourse of philosophy of mind and analytic philosophy in general, phenomenology has found ways to work with problems traditionally reserved for the disciplines of psychology, psychopathology, and neurology. Phenomenology has even embarked upon investigations into even more general problems concerning the very ways in which we understand fundamental notions such as the subject, the "I" and the "We", and how they all come together in the realm of our intersubjective lives. The work of Dan Zahavi and Shaun Gallagher, in particular, has been very influential in these aspects.

In summary, the purpose of this philosophical cartography has been to demonstrate that there is no one method, school, or thought of "phenomenology." There is for certain Edmund Husserl, the founder, and there might even be inaugural texts that laid the groundwork for it. Yet, even these texts were conceptualized in a way that made them very open to further development. I have found it crucial to the cultivation of the potential of phenomenology, a potential already found in its origins, to bring attention to these collaborative efforts and so-called construction sites. The many branches of phenomenology have made these new sites possible not only for our time, but will continue to do so for many centuries to come in fields other than philosophy and in fields still yet to be discovered.

■ ***Anna Varga-Jani:*** In my estimation, the greatest impact of phenomenology can be identified in the methodological consequences of phenomenological thinking, i.e. that it leads out from the ivory tower of philosophical thinking and offers a new methodology based on intersubjective world-constitution. Phenomenology, at its fundamental level, distinguishes the intention of the conscious and the transcendental being, which led

Husserl to the unsolvable relationship of the monadic life of the ego and intersubjective world-constitution in the Cartesian Meditations. This dichotomy reveals the major philosophical dilemma of sociality: the individual and his/her personal value system on the one hand, and the community life in its value judgements and expectations on the other. The dialectic of phenomenological constitution based on intersubjective world perception divides into special phenomenological tendencies as empathy, social-phenomenology, phenomenological aesthetics, and religious phenomenology (each of these schools regards the constitution of the transcendental world as the common centre of phenomenological research). Phenomenology, in this sense, makes it possible to explain phenomena – in the broader sense – which are concealed from the original phenomenological intention.

■ ***Anna Yampolskaya:*** Husserl dreamed about a community of phenomenologists who would join forces in working on his project of transcendental phenomenology. This dream never came true as none of his prominent successors practised phenomenology exactly in the way it was conceived. The phenomenological movement became extremely diverse as its method proved to be highly versatile and open to all kinds of productive adjustments. One could say that phenomenology constantly transcends itself, consistently gaining new territories of thought.

As a result, phenomenology became a major trend in the continental philosophical tradition as opposed to the Anglo-American one. Husserl and his successors heavily influenced not only existentialism and phenomenological anthropology, but also neo-Hegelianism and deconstruction. Even early structuralism (which is often seen as radically opposed to phenomenology) drew inspiration from Husserl's writings: one of the forefathers of structuralism, the illustrious linguist Roman Jakobson, was an avid reader of Logical Investigations.

Today's philosophy of art owes much to the phenomenological approach. Husserl compares the phenomenologist to the painter: both are interested not in the causal links between things but in the way these things are experienced, or lived through. The ground-breaking work of Merleau-Ponty gives us a language to describe how art affects and transforms us.

Husserl compares the phenomenologist to the painter: both are interested not in the causal links between the things but in the way these things are experienced, or lived through.

ANNA YAMPOLSKAYA

Phenomenology has also had a significant impact on religious thought. Pope John Paul II was a phenomenologist, a student of Roman Ingarden and thus Husserl's philosophical 'grandson'. He did much to propagate phenomenology as an appropriate way to speak about religious experience; he was especially interested in the ethical thought of Emmanuel Levinas and the phenomenological hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur.

To be a phenomenologist is to suspend one's participation in the world and one's natural captivation by the world: instead of being trapped in the cares of this world, the phenomenologist is to be situated *above* her own natural being and above the natural world, in order to give her a good position to observe the meaning of the world. This ethos of impartiality is incompatible with all forms of Marxism, where the philosopher is always engaged and takes sides in the political life. Throughout the communist rule of eastern Europe, this meant that phenomenology was viewed as a subversive activity

and most of the time was forbidden. Two students of Husserl, Jan Patočka and Gustav Špet, were murdered by the communist regimes in Russia and Czechoslovakia respectively; their work remained unfinished and has only recently attracted the attention of the philosophical community.

• What do you consider, from your point of view, in the field of Husserlian phenomenology as important for your own research?

■ ***Andrzej Gniazdowski:*** The background of my research practice was always an interest in the political significance of Husserl's idea of *epoché*. From my point of view, it is still worth thinking about the practical meaning of his idea, that "what is needed is not the insistence that one see with his own eyes; rather it is that he not explain away under the pressure of prejudice what has been seen".

■ ***Michael Gubser:*** Since I have written about Husserl's social and philosophical legacy, much of his phenomenological programmeis obviously relevant to my research. But perhaps what is more pertinent to this question is to indicate what interests me about phenomenology not simply as a research topic but as a way to think about historical and social life. I tend to think of phenomenology as an attitude toward the world, one characterized by deep attentiveness to the ever-changing details of experience and by an ongoing effort to translate that attentiveness into language that can shared with others. As part of this ever-ongoing process, one (hopefully) comes to realize that other people also experience the world in rich and deep ways, and as a result I think that a fundamental respect for other people's experiences is – or ought to be – central to Husserlian phenomenology:an ethical commitment to others, to put it in a catchphrase. This is of course an ideal and there were many phenomenologists – including, at times, Husserl – who closed themselves off to the experience of other cultures and people, but at its best, I think, the phenomenological turn to experience enables an appreciation of worldly diversity.

I also do research in the history of foreign aid and international development, a topic that is seemingly far removed from phenomenology. And yet phenomenology's commitment to otherness seems particularly germane in this arena. Evaluations of foreign aid are often driven by the quest for 'objective' quantitative data and tend to ignore the perspectives and experiences of peoples who participate in development projects, which are sometimes dismissed as merely 'subjective.' There is a branch of 'phenomenological' evaluation that, while drastically simplifying Husserl's views, does at least acknowledge something that I think is sorely needed in foreign aid projects: close attention to the experiences of people who participate in development projects (beneficiaries, project staff, etc.). In this way, phenomenology is relevant to me far beyond the intellectual histories that I write.

■ ***Julia Jansen:*** Amongst the Husserlian impulses that are most important for my own thinking are:

1. The conviction that even the most abstract philosophical and scientific concepts are either explicitly based on, or, which is much more common, tacitly derived from some more or less reflected, or merely assumed, experiential understanding. This

means for me that I approach whatever concepts are used in a specific philosophical or scientific study with a critical stance that asks after the possible genesis of these concepts and the (partial) experience they might reflect.

2. The inclusion of non-real objects in a comprehensive ontology, which includes not only real, but also ideal and irreal objects, and which takes seriously the mode of being of, for example, fictional or imaginary objects that do not fit a naturalistic world-view, but are nonetheless of critical significance for persons as well as for social collectives, but also reflects critically on the nature of idea objects that are central to scientific thinking, such as numbers.
3. The careful distinction between and detailed description of different 'acts of consciousness,' such as phantasy, memory, perception, etc., as well as an in-depth study of their interrelations with a view to a better understanding of the complexities of individual and social life.
4. The conceptual and systematic alternatives that a Husserlian approach provides in a contemporary philosophical and scientific milieu that is to a large extent still uncritically following some very Kantian assumptions, such as, for example, the assumption of a fundamental gap between sensibility and understanding; and the construal of intentionality as a one-directional, centrifugal relation, which, in my view, underestimates the ways in which intentional relations are in part constituted by social as well as natural environments.

In this context, I believe Husserl was a much less 'linear' thinker than some of our contemporaries, which might make his approach more fruitful for the complex, dynamic, and interconnected phenomena that we typically need to understand, whether on the local level of a single issue, or on the global level of a metaphysical view of the whole.

■ ***Sebastian Luft:*** I am less interested in furthering phenomenology as a rigorous science; instead I am interested in tracing how it has influenced later developments in philosophy, such as hermeneutics, post-structuralism, philosophy of mind, and other attempts in 20th- and 21st- century thought (both within philosophy and without). I also think that the paradigm of descriptive work can be applied to many areas that were not then (and could not have been) on the radar of someone like Husserl, who died in 1938, before the Second World War and the Holocaust, and the second half of the 20th century (with the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet empire, and beyond to 9/11, Trump, Brexit, etc.). These political phenomena surely could be assessed with phenomenological tools, for instance, to understand the mindset of torturers, mass shooters, dictators, and other such extreme examples. Such work is already ongoing, to be sure, but in many respects research is still in its infancy.

I see an especially fruitful application of phenomenology in psychology and psychopathology, especially in the attempt to understand mental illnesses. As we are just beginning to understand conditions such as autism, the phenomenological method of describing mental states and categorizing them into different species is especially valuable, if not indispensable here. It has also become clear that collaborations between (phenomenological) philosophers and empirical-applied scientists are especially valuable.

Another field of application is feminism and gender studies more generally. I don't think it is overly controversial to say that feminism would not have evolved the way it

did without phenomenology. One dominant area of feminism has always been political change and the fight for equality, which is of course very important and continues to be, despite its successes. But another area of research concerns the issue of the lived-body and its embodiment. Take one example of a key text of feminism, Iris Young's *Throwing Like a Girl* of 1980, in which Young performs what she calls "a Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility." This is nothing but a special direction of the research programme Husserl began when framing the human subject as an embodied creature. Although Husserl himself does not discuss gender (or sexuality, or race), the programme to give a descriptive analysis of the first-person experience of the human being as sexed is a direct consequence of Husserl's thought. Contemporary feminism (and, by extension, philosophy of race, gender and sexuality) would not exist in the way it does without the impulse stemming from classical phenomenology.

■ ***Hans Rainer Sepp:*** Due to the factuality of standing in interrelation, and due to its inherent capacity to manage it by theoretical means, phenomenology established a unique open whole of knowledge in which the approaches of all forms of knowledge of philosophy, science and religion in their relations, in the genealogy of their possibilities and limits, can be uncovered. I myself try to continue this in the concept of a so-called *Oikology*. Oikology as an immanent consequence of phenomenology redefines at its starting point the relationship between sociality and individuality by distinguishing two ways of the individual. While the self-perception of individual existence *as* individual is the late consequence of a certain social culture, in all cultural formations the individual precedes the social in principle: namely the individual as the fact that 'I' (and no one for me) breathe, eat, sleep, etc. The *house* is the institution with which corporeality (for individual existence is a bodily-corporeal constituted existence) tests its ability to socialize; it is the relay between a first purely bodily-corporeal being-in and a being-in that already functions in the context of a world, as being-in-the-world. Here the condition of culture itself is questioned, the function which in particular belongs to becoming sedentary (which also includes the nomadic as a modification). This also includes, for example, questions regarding the extent to which the *Urstiftung* of philosophy and science in Europe presupposes a sedentary culture, what the philosophical concepts of 'foundation' (*Grund*) and 'reason' (*Begründung*), the search for possession of knowledge, the concepts of 'theory' and 'practice' or the discovery of *theoría* as "theoretical practice" (Husserl), etc. mean in this respect. In this sense, oikology is also a philosophy of philosophy, and is not a cultural theory, which already presupposes a concept of culture, but still has to clarify the cultural itself (cf. *In. Grundrisse der Oikologie*, Freiburg/München: Karl Alber, 2020).

■ ***Jan Sokol:*** First of all, the probably definitive analysis of temporal consciousness and several deep insights into human sensual perception. All the purely mechanical (or optical) analogies to our senses lost their credibility thanks to Husserl.

■ ***Christian Sternad:*** I think that one does not grasp the true potential of phenomenology if we just reduce it to some key ideas and sentences. I am very fond of the idea that phenomenology is not a method created by some philosopher but more a scientific "attitude" (*Einstellung* or *Haltung* in German) that was initiated by but cannot be reduced to its founder, Edmund Husserl. As such, the term "Husserlian phenomenology" is in

fact an oxymoron – there is in my opinion not one type of phenomenology or different subtypes characterized by certain authors such as Husserlian, Heideggerian, or even Sartrean phenomenology. On the contrary, Husserl's idea of phenomenology was a very open system based on the idea that experience and its systematic explication are the key to our knowledge, and is in fact also the key to understanding ourselves, others, and the world we live in.

Taking this for granted, what I hold dear in phenomenology is that I do not have to believe and follow one philosopher to the grave, but rather to remain true philosophically to the problem I am investigating. Different phenomenologists from different times and areas offer me clues as to how to get closer to the problem or, shall I say, the phenomenon at hand. However, we do need to make sure that their words are held accountable and that they do the phenomenon justice. As such, it is also more a relentless and self-critical practice than a system of thoughts and beliefs. Our analyses must reach the depths of the problems at hand – if they fail to do justice to the phenomena, we have to think of ways in which they could. Sometimes this means that we can follow the guidelines of existing analyses and sometimes we have to start from scratch.

In my own research on death and human mortality in general, I have gone through different phases of research. The first phase was probably the phase in which one takes up what has already been written on a certain topic by certain well or lesser known philosophers in the field. The critical part, however, comprises the steps that follow. How to bring these often very different ideas together? This of course begs the question of why to bring them together at all. By going back and forth, or zig-zagging, as Husserl often said, one also goes further. What I hold dear in Husserl is that he gives one the courage to go further, to explore on one's own how to solve certain problems that seemed to be unsolvable before. Already during his times and among his scholars, there was a great plurality of topics and issues that these young students were investigating. Only if one understands philosophy as a common project that relies on an idea of a scientific community, only then can such a project like phenomenology be conceived of in the right manner.

■ ***Anna Varga-Jani:*** The common methodological background of phenomenological and hermeneutical questioning is what stands in the focus of my present researches. With regard to phenomenological methodology, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Roman Ingarden and Edith Stein reflected in the 1920s and 1930s on the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl. All criticized Husserl's methodology, outlined in the Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, that the real thing is independent from the conscious immanent thing (see: Hedwig Conrad-Martius: *Realontologie*,in: *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* VI, 1923; H. Conrad-Martius: *Zur Ontologie und Erscheinungslehre der realen Außenwelt*, in: *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* III, 1916; Roman Ingarden: *Schriften zur Phänomenologie Edmund Husserls*, W. Galewitz (ed.), Tübingen: Niemeyer 1999; Edith Stein: *Potenz und Akt*, Freiburg: Herder 2005; E. Stein: *Endliches und ewiges Sein*, Freiburg: Herder 2010). The phenomenological question concerning reality is, in its essence, an ontological question. However, the word "ontology" has different meanings in the history of phenomenology: it has linguistic and logical, as well as theological and ethical aspects, from my point of view it is relevant how the different generations of phenomenology identify the question ofreality with the ontological roots

of phenomenology, as the core problematic of the phenomenology. Therefore the methodological relationship between the Husserlian and the Heideggerian is an essential turning point in the question as to whether ontological questioning amounts to the common methodology of phenomenology.

Even though the traditional phenomenological viewpoints of Husserlian, Heideggerian and Ricoeurian phenomenologies have been extensively elaborated, no attempt has been made so far to extend these elaborations to include the common methodological background of these three philosophers. While international scholarship regards the history of phenomenology as a unified field of philosophy, Hungarian philosophical thinking divides among the hermeneutical and the phenomenological interpretations of the philosophical tradition. While the relation between ontology and hermeneutics is sufficiently investigated, the common methodological background of the hermeneutical and phenomenological traditions is far from being sufficiently evaluated either internationally or by Hungarian research.

■ ***Anna Yampolskaya:*** For me, Husserl's heritage is a constant source of inspiration and, indeed, of admiration. What he left to us is not only a precious treasure-trove of various phenomenological descriptions, not only his indications about the essence of phenomenological method. The very way he worked, his scientific honesty, his meticulous attention to detail, his readiness to look back and correct his previous findings – this is what makes me look at his work and go back to it again and again.

If I need to pinpoint one idea that particularly influenced me, it is his famous remark that one has to undergo a radical transformation in order to be able to do phenomenology. Husserl compares this radical transformation to religious conversion; the task of the phenomenologist is not just theoretical, it is very practical and very personal. The phenomenologist needs to displace her natural interest from things as they 'are' to the way in which they appear to her. Instead of 'reality' (or rather instead of what I believe to be reality) she turns to the experiencing of this reality; instead of asking 'what is this?' (which is often tacitly replaced by 'how does it work?') she asks 'what does it do to me?' In order to be a phenomenologist one has to work with one's own self: one's own subjectivity has to become a peculiar instrument of philosophical analysis.

This can also be reformulated as follows: one acquires knowledge *by* transforming one's own self. The self is displaced as one takes a new position in relation to the world. However, the way in which one is displaced, the kind of philosophical conversion one undergoes, is tightly linked to the theoretical problem one is trying to solve. To paraphrase Marx, one could say that the point is not to change the self *or* to interpret the world, but to do one *in order* to do the other.

- **The idea of Europe (and its crisis) was at the centre of Husserl's late philosophy. He concluded his Wiener Vortrag [Vienna lecture] (1935) with the words:**

The crisis of European existence can end in one of only two ways: in the ruin of a Europe alienated from its rational sense of life, fallen into a barbarian hatred of spirit; or in the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy,

through a heroism of reason that will definitively overcome naturalism. Europe's greatest danger is weariness. Let us as "good Europeans"do battle with this danger of dangers with the sort of courage that does not shirk even the endless battle. If we do, then from the annihilating conflagration of disbelief, from the fiery torrent of despair regarding the West's mission to humanity, from the ashes of the great weariness, the phoenix of a new inner life of the spirit will arise as the underpinning of a great and distant human future, for the spirit alone is immortal.[1]

Is this dramatic appeal still valid, and if so how can it help overcome the crisis of our time?

■ ***Andrzej Gniazdowski:*** Husserl was developing the idea of phenomenology not only *in* the time, but first of all *against* the time of growing national and racial chauvinisms. His idea of battle with the crisis of Europe and naturalism as its main factor in the historical costume of Nietzsche's "good European", who by the very nature of his origin from Polish noblemen "was allowed an outlook beyond all merely local, merely national and limited horizons", awakens in the Polish heart very ambivalent feelings.

> Husserl was developing the idea of phenomenology not only in the time, but first of all against the time of growing national and racial chauvinisms
>
> ANDRZEJ GNIAZDOWSKI

■ ***Michael Gubser:*** Although Husserl's 1930s lament that modern science had abandoned the human "lifeworld" – supplying us with explanations of nature, but precious little purpose or meaning – may seem foreign and melodramatic, it resonates in some ways with today's fears about the technocratic levelling of our societies. What are the roles of civic activism and democratic deliberation in a world of expert management? What is the appropriate balance between administrative supervision and personal choice in running our lives? These are still potent questions.

This could be seen in powerful ways in communist eastern Europe. Phenomenology's Czech and Polish disciples not only condemned Soviet dictatorship, but also questioned – as had phenomenologists before them – Western consumer societies, which, according to Havel, exhibited a "willingness to surrender higher values" before the "temptations of modern civilization." The "greyness" of the Eastern Bloc, he warned, stood as "an inflated

> Phenomenology's Czech and Polish disciples not only condemned Soviet Bloc dictatorship, but also questioned... Western consumer societies
>
> MICHAEL GUBSER

1 Die Krise des europäischen Daseins hat nur zwei Auswege: Den Untergang Europas in der Entfremdung gegen seinen eigenen rationalen Lebenssinn, den Verfall in Geistfeindschaft und Barbarei, oder die Wiedergeburt Europas aus dem Geiste der Philosophie durch einen den Naturalismus endgültig überwindenden Heroismus der Vernunft. Europas größte Gefahr ist die Müdigkeit. Kämpfen wir gegen diese Gefahr der Gefahren als «gute Europäer» in jener Tapferkeit, die auch einen unendlichen Kampf nicht scheut, dann wird aus dem Vernichtungsbrand des Unglaubens, dem schwelenden Feuer der Verzweiflung an der menschheitlichen Sendung des Abendlandes, aus der Asche der großen Müdigkeit der Phoenix einer neuen Lebensinnerlichkeit und Vergeistigung auferstehen, als Unterpfand einer großen und fernen Menschenzukunft: Denn der Geist allein ist unsterblich.

caricature of modern life," a signal to "the West" of "its own latent tendencies" to dismiss conscience in the pursuit of material advancement. Instead, east European dissidents sought to nurture new societies of hope and purpose, based on solidarity, not laissez-faire; community purpose, not individual greed. Only a vigilant focus on higher social and moral values, they believed, could maintain free and vibrant societies. Their appeal – and through them, Husserl's crisis formulation – still retains considerable validity.

■ ***Julia Jansen:*** I believe that one need not adopt Husserl's own offerings of 'solutions' to the crisis to feel a resonance between his contemporary diagnosis of the world and some concerns that a lot of us share today. 'Naturalism' here can be understood not only as a reference to reductionist scientism, which has its own detrimental effects as seen in a critical current condition often characterized as 'post-truth' (just think of, for example, vaccine hesitancy or a more general erosion of public support for science-led public policies). I am also thinking here of a vanishing of the significance and discussion of values in contemporary 'post-ideological' politics, which I believe is connected to the much lamented demise of democracy, and of European democratic thinking in particular, and even of the 'European project' itself. When Husserl here warns us not to tire in the face of the 'greatest dangers,' then he has, I think, understood something about the 'fight' that remains to be fought, and fought in perpetuity. In my view, we need to take seriously the kind of 'idealism' Husserl proposes and revalidate it against all calls for more 'realistic' attitudes, which often serve the purposes of interests whose identity is unclear.

■ ***Sandra Lehmann:*** One can only call Husserl's triangle of rationality, Europe and the West's mission to humanity unfortunate, even disastrous. The pompous language (which is unusual for Husserl, see above, and which is somewhat moderated by the English translation) already reveals that something is wrong here. A glance at real history, a history of violence, will prove it all too easily. Of course, Husserl had something different in mind. May thinking succeed in ridding itself of all ideological debris.

■ ***Sebastian Luft:*** In a time of attack from within and without, the invocation of "the West's mission to humanity" might sound quaint and distant. Of course, Husserl meant with the categories of "Europe" and "the West" no historically or spatially located periods or areas, but rather ideas, which happened to have played themselves out first in Europe and in modernity. "Europe" is, thus, not a continent, but an idea named after the place where it historically manifested itself for the first time.

Husserl's analysis of the crisis of Western or European humanity has an inherent ambivalence, however. Despite applauding it in its ideal shape, he also points out that the historical reality is far from its ideal shape and the crisis (or crises) that we witness in modernity are not accidental but rather necessary consequences stemming from the very "primal idea" of the ideal shape. So the crises are a direct result of the faulty "code" or "DNA" of modernity. This sheds an interesting light on the very idea of this ideal. Has it not been realized because we, as humans, are finite and make mistakes, or is it because the ideal can never be fully conceived by us; that we necessarily make mistakes in imagining this ideal? There is, thus, a deeply unsettling ambiguity in Husserl's very idea of "Europe" that must be weighed against his otherwise optimistic remarks about "mission" and "heroism."

■ ***Hans Rainer Sepp:*** By realizing the potential of the *inter* and thereby elaborating the relation (possibility and limit) of each form of knowledge, phenomenology turns against the constrictions of reason in science and life. Such a narrowing always means the absolutization of only a certain mode of knowledge, as Nietzsche was perhaps the first to express with his critique of the Apollinism of European culture. In his genealogical questioning, which traces forms of knowledge back to their origin and development, Husserl proves in his *Crisis* texts – unintentionally and unplanned – to be Nietzsche's sequel. For Husserl, the world is not finished, i.e. we cannot assume that a form of knowledge, e.g. the objectifying, mathematizing knowledge of natural sciences, will once and for all provide the valid template for knowledge advertising and the design of practical life. The development of knowledge is already in its forms – not only contents – open-infinite, and this leads to the fact that Husserl, similar to Nietzsche before him, radically changes the traditional conception of teleology and progress: what is important is no longer a certain guiding idea (a certain mode of knowledge), but the movement of knowledge itself to form different modes of knowledge. To live in this attitude of research and to comprehend the unfolding of knowledge is what Husserl calls "being teleological" in his book *The Crisis*.

■ ***Marci Shore:*** Husserl, like so many of the great German philosophers, was convinced (wholly un-self-critically) of the superiority of Europe. For Hegel, "world history" was essentially ancient Greece and a bit of ancient Rome, then fast-forward to the French Revolution and its more profound continuation in German philosophy. Husserl and Heidegger (and arguably Jan Patočka as well) held similar assumptions. "Reason" and "Civilization" could only be realised in Europe. Think about Husserl's tone (perhaps bracketing the clumsy, overwrought style) in The Crisis: "the *telos*which was inborn in European humanity at the birth of Greek philosophy– that of humanity which seeks to exist, and is only possible, through philosophical reason, moving endlessly from latent to manifest reason and forever seeking its own norms through this, in truth and genuine human nature– whether this *telos*, then, is merely a factual, historical delusion, the accidental acquisition of merely one among many other civilizations and histories, or whether Greek humanity was not rather the first breakthrough to what is essential to humanity as such, its *entelechy*."

In Ideen, Husserl sought a path to "pure phenomenology," which was to be "a science of Essential Being – as an *a priori*, or, as we also say, eidetic science." Husserl devoted a lot of attention to the relationship between the empirical and the eidetic. His examples were often things like "redness" or an apple, but the more poignant example would be Europe itself. There is the ideal essence of "Europe" as Husserl understood it: the expression of the telos of rational civilization. We could even further distinguish between this metaphysical *Eidos* of Europe as the carrier of the spiritual telos of reason and a kind of legal-political-moral *Eidos* of Europe as the carrier of the ideas of the Rights of Man, the rule of law, the dignity and autonomy of each person. This ideal essence of Europe was arguably the object of longing of Ukrainians who took part in the revolution on the Maidan. In contrast, there is the empirical, highly imperfect, often weak and hypocritical, actually-existing instantiation of Europe. If Husserl can help us now, perhaps it is in illuminating this distinction between the real-empirical and the ideal essence.

■ ***Jan Sokol:*** Yes and no. Yes in Husserl's faithful and staunch adhesion to Europe as to our common heritage, common virtue and common goal. Yes in his brave confession of the European merits in history and its uniqueness in the present.

No in his shared belief that a "rebirth" could emerge by itself from some (our own, natural) rationality, with no participation of love and similar not-merely-rational forces.

■ ***Christian Sternad:*** In order to propose a solution to a crisis of whatever kind, there first needs to be a definition of the crisis or of that which has given rise to the crisis. As already was the case in Husserl, we live in times where we are bombarded with solutions to problems that truly lack definitions. It is only possible to think of solutions if our aims are clear. I think it is philosophy's great potential to deliver these definitions, and not so much to propose solutions. Philosophy may not be able to solve poverty, for example, but philosophy's definition of poverty might enable others (like those institutions, people, branches that are specialized in these fields) to come up with viable solutions. In other words: philosophy does not solve problems, it defines them.

At the turn of the 20th century, the crises were multifarious and the philosophers addressing crises were numerous. These were the times of the so-called *Weltanschauungs-philosophie* (worldview-philosophy) to which Husserl composed many different critiques. Each worldview comes up with a different problem to which it already proposes a solution. That, to Husserl, was exactly the true horror of his times: A scattered, almost schizophrenic form of philosophy that constantly talks in different directions and (philosophical) languages, but without any solid basis. Taking this into account, it is of paramount importance to understand that Husserl did not want to solve just one particular crisis. Rather he wanted to address the thinking itself that manoeuvres us into crises over and over again. Hence, his definition of the crisis is indeed not that of a crisis of this or that particular problem, but rather the crisis of reason itself. It is precisely this connection between crisis and reason that bridges Husserl's late conception of Europe to his earlier project, where he defends philosophy against various forms of psychologism, naturalism, historicism and materialism, to name just a few. They all belong to the same "corruption" of reason that, in the long run, amount to the alleged crisis of Europe.

For Husserl, Europe is a genuinely spiritual project that originated in Greece with the Pre-Socratics and their genuinely "theoretical attitude."

CHRISTIAN STERNAD

When Husserl speaks of Europe, however, he is speaking of Europe in a polyphonic manner. Of course, he is alluding to a geographical and political entity called Europe. However, his conception of Europe is also a genuinely philosophical conception of Europe that traces a bigger arc spanning between the very nature of thinking itself to the specific cultural crisis of Europe in the 1930s. For Husserl, Europe is a genuinely spiritual project that originated in Greece with the Pre-Socratics and their genuinely "theoretical attitude." For him, this was the origin and birthplace since there, in its premature form, something like a scientific interest came into being. This scientific interest, or "attitude" as Husserl would call it, overcomes blind beliefs and myths and pushes towards a discourse of arguments and accountability – and this, at least in Husserl's thought, has no predecessor before Ancient Greece. At present, his philosophy situates itself in this vein and tradition. Phenomenology therefore, although overly theoretical at times, is and incorporates that spirit of Europe, i.e. this theoretical attitude towards the world.

The enemy of this attitude is a naïve form of thought that takes what is catches sight of for granted. In this naïve form of thinking, we hold to be true what we see. What we see is what it is, as is the case in a naïve form of materialism or naturalism, that Husserl also sees at play in the various branches of the natural sciences. It may very well be the case that this sentiment of Husserl's, if I may call it that, may not be valid any more today. Nevertheless, what Husserl fought against so vividly were naïve and omnipresent forms of reductionism that reduced complex forms to simple material substrata. Slogans such as we are nothing more than the consequence of our bodily reactions, we are merely a product of history, slaves of our drives, or even more recent slogans that we are nothing more than the product of our brain processes or nothing more than consumers, etc. – all of these would be ways of thinking that are corrupted by the same forms of reductionism that Husserl resisted. So, in a certain tragic sense, we still fight the same corruption of thinking that does not seem to be able, or does not even want to look behind the veil of deception. This latter would be the laziness that Husserl addressed in his Vienna lecture of 1935.

Is this appeal dramatic? It certainly is. Should it be dramatic? Very likely. If we believed Husserl's contention that all corruption has a single source, then why not be dramatic in the utmost sense? One also has to take into account that 1935 is not just any year or date: at this point, we are two years after Hitler's seizure of control in 1933, the year of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, and many more visible effects that Husserl alludes to in words such as "barbarism" and "hostility towards spirit." And, even more surprising for Husserl, many of his former colleagues within the academic establishment crumble one after another and join the NSDAP and the internal corruption of the academic landscape. He has been declared as "Jewish," even though he converted to Protestantism in 1887, and interpreted himself and acted as a German professor throughout his life. For him, it was even more surprising and shocking to have been stripped of all rights, erased from the list of professors, etc. because of some material (i.e. race) and not spiritual criterion. I think that one can easily see why he formulated his appeal in such a dramatic way: his entire philosophy was devoted to confronting an internal corruption of thought. At the outset, this corruption was only a theoretical concern, but by this point it had for Husserl infiltrated all the cultural domains and in the end became all too personal.

■ ***Anna Varga-Jani:*** Husserl's vision about the cultural and intellectual crisis in Europe is, on the one hand, historically determined, as it expressed his personal worries about the political situation in Germany and the consequences of the Nazi regime. On the other hand, what Husserl expressed in the lecture and also explained in the Crisis of the European Sciences has a timeless relevance for every cultural ideology. But the interesting thing is that Husserl already announced this philosophical programme in Philosophy as Rigorous Science in 1911 and argued for the "heroism of reason" which will "overcome naturalism". "What is more, it has claimed to be the science that satisfies the loftiest theoretical needs and renders possible from an ethico-religious point of view a life regulated by pure rational norms" – Husserl wrote at the beginning of Philosophy as Rigorous Science. The new perspectives and changes in philosophical thinking are based on the history of philosophy, which in this sense constitutes the cultural heritage of humanity and by the spirit of which humanity exists essentially. By this statement about the "immortality of the spirit" Husserl alluded to the Diltheyan thesis in The Formation

of the Historical World in the Human Sciences, namely that individually constituted culture and present individual decisions are responsible for cultural and historical consequences in the future.

- **What has become of the project of achieving Gewissheit, reaching epistemological certainty in an age of "post-truth"? How to re-assess Husserl's critique of objectivism at a time when objectivity is radically questioned?**

■ ***Andrzej Gniazdowski:*** Husserl's critique of objectivism, which culminates in the recognition, that "merely fact-minded sciences make merely fact-minded people", by no means misses its point also in the age of "post-truth", marked by subordinating science to social and economic ends.

■ ***Sebastian Luft:*** This is the project I personally, and probably most others working in phenomenology, are most uncomfortable with. I do not think it is possible nor indeed necessary to reach certainty in all aspects of knowledge nor even in all aspects of life. Some things don't need grounding and certain answers. On the other hand, this does not justify anybody playing fast and loose with facts, straight or alternative. But this is not an issue that has any bearing on Husserl in particular. Anybody in their right mind would have to say that a "post-truth" era is a fabrication of crazy politicians who want to hijack philosophers to help them justify irresponsible behaviour. The concern to safeguard philosophy from sophistry is as old as Plato.

I don't see Husserl making any special contribution to this issue. I also think (if I may say so) that the question is wrongly put. Husserl's critique of objectivism consisted in not seeing the subjective roots in any objective claim. He was not against the very idea of objective (= intersubjectively agreeable) truth. What people presumably mean by the "post-truth era" is that people feel the entitlement to just claim what they want and then to proclaim it as the truth, and if facts contradict it, to call it "alternative truth" supported by "alternative facts." But again, this is just political rhetoric which every enlightened person must fight.

Phenomenology opposes the alternative of either making truth dependent on a single mode of knowledge or not attributing truth to any mode of knowledge.

HANS RAINER SEPP

■ ***Hans Rainer Sepp:*** Phenomenology opposes the alternative of either making truth dependent on a single mode of knowledge or of not attributing truth to any mode of knowledge. If it is part of the finiteness of human existence that truth can always only be opened up in perspective, the enlightening task of phenomenology is to examine stocks of knowledge, i.e. to refer back to their *underlying experience* and to point out ways of hypostasizing the content of experience. What today is commonly referred to as 'objective' in science and life is itself only a relation. The really objective – in the sense of the call "to the things themselves" – is to examine the truth of knowledge in recourse to the experience on which it is based.

■ ***Marci Shore:*** For Husserl the search for truth was a passionate moral imperative. He wanted to have it all. He wanted (in defiance of the proverb popular in Polish and Yiddish) to dance at two weddings at once: he wanted all the certainty of absolute objectivity and all the depth of absolute subjectivity. He was the Obama– "Yes, we can!" figure.

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MARCI SHORE

In this sense, Husserl was the quintessential thinker of modernity: he insisted on the possibility of truth even in the absence (or, in his case, the bracketing) of God. Our present postmodern moment began when we gave up on trying to replace God and decided to embrace the consequences of what Derrida called "the absence of a transcendental signified"– a bit in the spirit of Zarathustra's "what is falling we should still push."

This is one reason why it feels especially urgent now to revisit the east European philosophy of the 1970s and 1980s. Leszek Kołakowski, for example, shared Husserl's implicit conviction that epistemological questions were always already ethical questions. And Václav Havel's interpretation of the phenomenological tradition was to insist that a robust subjectivity did not preclude an ontologically real truth, but rather grounded that truth. Truth and subjectivity were linked through responsibility. Truth was *active*; it demanded seeking and searching and "living in" – but was no less real for all that.

■ ***Jan Sokol:*** It seems to me that only philosophers and nobody else have some problems with "post-truth", whereas scientists and we commoners are still fully occupied by the much more important and urgent problem of (simple?) truth. Objectivity can be a misleading word, but which one cannot? In epistemological discussions it is perhaps better avoided, but if understood as a shorthand for "the ability and willingness to cognize *kata to auto*, according to the thing", it is not a taboo even in epistemology.

■ ***Christian Sternad:*** As with many popular concepts in the public and even more so the political sphere, they are highly charged and their gesture often counts more than what or how much content they actually convey. The notion of "post-truth" is a very good example for this since it is omnipresent and yet anything but clear. It designates a certain spiritual "situation" in which we find ourselves today socially and politically. Yet it is entirely unclear what kind of effects this will have and whether these effects will last beyond their proponents such as Donald Trump and others. However, I think that one thing is clear and this will lessen the hysteria that this so-called era or age of post-truth seems to cause: post-truth does not abolish or get rid of truth – it rather addresses the framework in which truth or truths are situated. In other words, it is not the case that all of a sudden $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ is no longer true. The problem is rather that certain people or instances of power do not respect or do not even have to respect the *value* of truth any more. Hence, it seems to me that this is more a political than a philosophical or even epistemological problem (although this should not devalue the current research on post-truth in philosophy today).

Once it is clear that post-truth does not affect truth as such but rather the *value of truth* in a given spiritual situation, it becomes clear that the philosophical response

should not address the epistemological quality of this era but rather the values that seem to overrule reason. In recent years, discourses in political philosophy in particular have analysed the return of political emotions. I think that in order to tackle the problem of post-truth, one has to address the framework of truth much more than truth itself. This is of course already being undertaken by the many "fact-checkers" that we installed in recent political debates. Indeed, these fact-checkers do more than just check the facts, they also (re-)establish truth as an important value within the political debate. Furthermore, one should not forget that Kellyanne Conway (who unintentionally started this debate by calling spokesperson Sean Spicer's falsities "alternative facts") was indeed held accountable in public for her flaw of expression. We only have a debate on post-truth because we immediately discussed the inadequacy of a designation such as "alternative facts" on TV, social media, newspapers, specialized journals, etc.

If one wants to place Husserl in this context, we can also see that his times were actually not that different from ours and that his lectures and texts from that period of his life actually addressed issues that were very similar to our situation today. One of his major works, The Crisis of the European Sciences from around 1935, warned of the spiritual corruption that European culture faced at that point in time. Of course, this type of corruption is bigger in Husserl's overall conception, but also, needless to say, Husserl implicitly addressed the heated political climate and the accompanying irrationalism that revolted, left and right, against the established political consensus. The antidote to subjective irrationalism is then indeed not cold objectivism but *accountability*. What one can learn from Husserl in this respect is that we must hold those accountable for every claim and every utterance they make. His conception of philosophy is a type of philosophy that not only formulates claims but one which constantly justifies and clarifies itself, or, in short, is being held accountable for the alleged findings it produces.

In a similar fashion, we have to intervene in our contemporary discourses and hold people and institutions accountable for what they say and do. Only if they can clarify and justify themselves and their actions, can we live in a climate that actually serves us all. It was again in these very lucid passages of The Crisis where Husserl transformed the role of the philosopher in a way that was unheard of in the history of philosophy, and to a certain degree, is still unheard of today. Husserl spoke of philosophers as "functionaries of mankind" who, in their research, contribute to the larger framework of humankind. Behind this idea, there is the simple thought that we do not only follow our selfish interests and turn and twist the facts to benefit ourselves. On the contrary, only in this process of constant clarification and justification can we contribute to the broader understanding of a universal knowledge that does not crack or crumble under scrutiny, but one that strengthens and deepens through its contribution and growth.

■ ***Anna Varga-Jani:*** Husserl's important programme in the Logical Investigations was to constitute a philosophical methodology which leads theoretical thinking "back to the things". Later, in Philosophy as Rigorous Science, Husserl extended his methodological project to the scientific norms of philosophy and separated philosophical methodology from the methodology of the natural sciences and historicity, which together caused the two major difficulties of contemporary philosophical thinking. In my opinion, this approach of Husserl is of essential significance concerning the real certainty of experiences. "Enough now of absurd theories" – Husserl introduced §24 of the Ideas I.

This statement did not delegitimate philosophical theories overall, but turned attention towards the coincidence of intuition and cognition within the phenomenological action, i.e. that the ontic-ontological aspects of constitution receive their apprehension in the "originary data", in the "absolute beginning", in the "foundation" which is truth "presented as being". The "principle of all principles" is, in this sense, the coincidence of the transcendental thing and the constituted thing in the constitutional act of original experiences: "every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, such that everything originarily (so to speak, in its 'personal' actuality) offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there. We see indeed that each theory can only again draw its truth itself from originary data."

■ ***Anna Yampolskaya:*** Philosophy is a quest for truth, and truth is much more than certainty, which is only a particular mode of believing. We strongly believe in some state of affairs, we are certain that our understanding is true and we do not doubt it; such a belief can possibly be confirmed later with a piece of additional evidence, or it can be corrected or even rejected. But we still can and, actually, should act and think according to our grounded beliefs on condition that we take them as beliefs and not as the final truth. We are sure, but to a certain degree. So our striving for truth presupposes a critical stance towards our beliefs and, indeed, towards our desires and fears, which always colour our understanding of the world. Our way to truth is not straightforward, it is indeed narrow and zigzagging: we must retrace our own steps in order to see things from a different angle.

However, there is also another kind of certainty: we are certain that our knowledge is limited, that there is a sea of unknown around a small island of what is known to us. Such certainty is a prerequisite for all possible knowledge; it is an open certainty which cannot be shaken. The pre-scientific world is infinitely familiar to us and yet unfamiliar; science offers to us a certain interpretation of this familiar world that is determined historically and constantly transformed by science itself. So-called 'objective science' tries to persuade us that it offers the only way to interpret and change the world; Husserl discarded this claim as philosophical naiveté.

Thus, we should not stick to our beliefs, even if we are sure that things are as they seem to us; neither should we discard them easily. One tends to absolutize one's own convictions (or rather the convictions of one's own group) or abandon one's previous views without a good reason. We need to be radically open, to get rid of all habits of thought in order to get closer to the naked reality, as if for the first time.

We are not just consumers in the market of beliefs and ideas; we are always taking part in the process of formation and enrichment of meaning in the world. I am responsible for the meanings that I adhere to, and I cannot delegate this responsibility to others (for example, to the editor-in-chief of my preferred newspaper). Openness, continuous adjustment of our beliefs, and responsibility: here are three big lessons that we can learn from Husserl.

- **Can we imagine a conversation between Husserl and Freud? Or between Husserl and Horkheimer/Adorno, authors of Dialektik der Aufklärung (1944)? Or between Husserl and Valéry (Krise des Geistes 1919; Europäischer Geist 1922)?**

■ ***Andrzej Gniazdowski:*** The memoirs of Edith Stein, Roman Ingarden, Gerda Walther and many other Husserl students bear witness to his not being a particularly attentive interlocutor. His phenomenology, nevertheless, is abundant with not only open but also hidden references to numerous philosophical traditions and conceptions, allowing us, indeed, to attempt to reconstruct such conversations, and the history of the phenomenological movement is nothing but the history of those attempts and imagined recon-structions.

■ ***Sebastian Luft:*** I don't know Valéry sufficiently to answer this question with respect to him. So let me try to answer the question with regard to Adorno/Horckheimer. Comparisons between phenomenology and the Frankfurt School have already been drawn. But what would Husserl have said had he read the *Dialektik der Aufklärung*? First off, one has to acknowledge that Husserl died before the war really began (1938), though he saw the catastrophe on the horizon. Still, despite his clear-sightedness, something like the Holocaust was probably inconceivable to Husserl, as to most. So the book by Adorno/Horckheimer was written, of course, in the face of the pending disaster, though they too didn't know all of it by far (especially the full extent of the Holocaust). So to imagine a conversation between these would require them all being on the same level of knowledge. Husserl was very clear-eyed about the pending disaster – that of Europe in general, but also that of Germany and European Jewry. The main thesis of Adorno/ Horkheimer's book is that the Enlightenment also has, as its "underbelly," a dialectical downside to it. Freedom and liberation for some meant oppression and unfreedom for others, on whose backs the positive things were achieved. Husserl, of course, was an unalloyed optimist about rationality and its progress in the world, although he was clear about the "disaster for humanity" that the Great War meant. However, rather than seeing the bad things of the Enlightenment as a *necessary* accompaniment of this movement, he probably would have seen the disaster of the 20th century as an unfortunate decline of certain tendencies, certain seeds, that lay in the very idea of the Enlightenment (going back all the way to the Greeks, in Husserl's narrative). These come to the fore and dominate when the basic idea (*Urstiftungsidee*) has been badly executed. So to him, the disasters would have likely been explained as unfortunate, tragic aberrations from the essentially well-intentioned basic ideas rather than the necessary dialectical opposite of positive events. He probably would have denied that "bad seeds" were necessary. In a *Neustiftung* of the basic idea of science as the pursuit of truth for the sake of the flourishing of humankind, these mistakes could presumably be avoided. But to achieve such a new idea and institute it would mean naming and identifying exactly the bad seeds of the first instituting. This is an arduous and difficult task, but one that would have to be done in the spirit of Husserl.

■ ***Hans Rainer Sepp:*** The reason why we can relate Husserl to Freud or Nietzsche or Marx, including Horkheimer and Adorno, and others, is the fact that there is a common age whose legacy is also Husserl and which begins to form in the 19th century: the era of

the *decentred subject*. The subject is no longer the autonomous subject that confronts the world but finds itself in the middle of the world. However, this is precisely one of Husserl's great achievements: he realized that this new subject is not simply in the world for its being in-between is in tension with itself as well as with others – in such a way that it 'has' neither itself nor the world simply but that it is given the opportunity to get to know the depth of the self and the world in a process that cannot be completed. In other words, the subject discovers that the positivity of its factual being-in includes a negativity, a *meon*, a *not*, that cannot be abolished, which, for instance, Fink and Levinas want to express with a "meontic" thinking, Nishida Kitaro with his concepts of "contradictory self-identity" and "discontinuous continuity", and Adorno with his "negative dialectic". It is always a matter of avoiding both the setting of identity and the keeping of oneself in endless difference, of bringing identity and difference together without letting one become relative to the other.

■ ***Anna Yampolskaya:*** Both Husserl and Freud were students of Franz Brentano and so there is much more affinity between the two of them that we used to think. Of course, Husserl would not subscribe to Freud's theory of the libidinal unconscious. However, to a certain extent both Husserl and Freud have inherited from Brentano his notion of consciousness and so shared some common presuppositions. On the one hand, our conscious life is mostly transparent to itself, that is, we are typically aware of our mental processes. On the other hand, there is a layer of our inner conscious life that stays unperceived by the consciousness, and this layer appears to the consciousness in a very particular way. In my opinion, these would be the points of agreement, and now are some of their disagreements.

This inner layer of conscious life – is it necessarily *un*conscious, that is, totally different from consciousness, or has it just not yet become conscious? Does the difference between consciousness and unconsciousness resemble that of foreground and background, or is the unconscious foreign to consciousness and so develops and appears according to very different laws? We know Freud's answer to this question: yes, consciousness and the unconscious *are* fundamentally dissimilar; this is why the unconscious can determine the conscious life of the subject. Freud insisted upon the radical heterogeneity of experience and thus upon the heterogeneity of the self. The life of the self is essentially multi-layered – what is more, it incorporates elements that are alien to it.

Husserl's answer, though negative, is more subtle. According to Husserl, consciousness is never completely present to itself; there are always patches of the non-present within the self-presence of consciousness. When I see a table, I am 'seeing' the whole thing, including its parts that are invisible to me: I 'see' more than I actually see. When I remember an event, I 'remember' more than my memory actually holds: I am able to remember that I have forgotten some details, and what is forgotten is somehow present to me, although in the mode of absence. Or I can 'repress' my perception of the real world in daydreaming. I can even live in the two contrasting flows of events simultaneously: for example, when I attend *Hamlet* in the theatre, I 'see' the actual actor and the prince of Denmark, pieces of wood and real swords at the same time, I sympathise with Ophelia and admire Shakespeare. So for Husserl, the life of the consciousness is also multi-layered, although not in the same way as for Freud. There is no dramatic conflict between different forms of the inner life, as in Freud, but rather a peaceful albeit unstable coexistence.

- **Husserl, Mahler, Freud are often regarded as the Moravian Trinity of modernism. However, one can arguably detect certain Romantic traits in their works. How do you view Edmund Husserl in that regard?**

■ ***Andrzej Gniazdowski:*** Husserl's writings are permeated by quotations from Goethe, Fichte, Schelling as well as from numerous other works, the authors of which are considered to be the representatives of German Romanticism. Perhaps the most distinct Romantic trait of his work is the idea of man as a "ray of divine light", borrowed from late Fichte and being the world-view frame of the idea of phenomenological transcendentalism.

■ ***Michael Gubser:*** I'll approach this question from the side by indicating what I find compelling about Husserl's project at an emotive level. I first read Husserl in a class on Heidegger, and the two are inextricably joined in my mind. If Husserl was thick, frustrating, and hard to read, Heidegger felt like a sorcerer trying to enchant me with his language. At first, this comparison fell in favour of Heidegger, but over time I have come to appreciate Husserl more and more: brilliant, self-doubting, pompous, turgid, maddening, insightful, despairing, verbose and frequently confused, Husserl's struggles for insight and clarity also felt very human, and to read him was not just to decipher a philosophy but to experience the maddening process of philosophical thinking itself, with all its ambitions and shortcomings out in the open. Heidegger too is of course brilliant, but to this day reading him makes me feel as if I am falling under a spell, a philosophical incantation cast by a master who in some ways stands a bit beyond human mortality. Husserl is very mortal, very imperfect. But his very inadequacies – of which he was acutely aware – his inability to encapsulate his ideas in words, the excessive density of his prose, the tendency to try and try again to give a fair enunciation of what phenomenology is – all these challenges draw me to his project at an emotive level. He is, in this sense, tragic, in that he never succeeds at fulfilling what are perhaps impossible philosophical aspirations. But the depth and intensity – and even the stumbles – of his effort give him, for me, a kind of Romantic air.

■ ***Sebastian Luft:*** I must confess that I cannot see Husserl as fitting into this trinity (perhaps Brentano rather than Husserl). Clearly, there are some "Romantic" traits in some of his high-flying and lofty remarks about the idea of Europe and that of rigorous science as he celebrates them. But neither Mahler nor Freud have much patience for rigorous science or, in general, science as the saviour of humankind. To the extent that Husserl sees himself as a scientist first and foremost, he is rather "Austrian," if one buys into the tired dichotomy of the "Romantic Germans" and the "Austere Austrians," a distinction that I find rather ridiculous. On the other hand, Husserl was a secular modernist and saw secularization – if one means by that a liberation of the human being from the shackles of religious dogmatism and a delivery into secular scientific tackling of the "big questions" – as a necessary and undoubtedly positive development in modernity. In that sense he can at least be compared to Freud, who also saw his psychoanalysis as liberating the human being from mythical constructions that constrain our freedom. In general, in his cultural and moral sentiments, I see Husserl more as a Protestant German rather than as Austrian or even, more narrowly, a Moravian.

■ ***Hans Rainer Sepp:*** The decentralized subject is the legacy of Romanticism, especially in the context of the „Romantic Irony" from Friedrich Schlegel in 1797 to the early Kierkegaard, since the solutions Hegel offers around and after 1800 no longer convinced many of the younger generation. The same is repeated around 1900, when Husserl searches for a new foundation for the subject, which has now become almost homeless; and with the decisive shift of the subject from the status of absolute self-confidence, which Descartes has naturally claimed, he unwittingly adopts the legacy of Romanticism and strives to problematize subjectivity, which he consistently pushes forward right up to his late research on the genealogies of life-worlds. This is also the deeper reason why Husserl's conception of an "absolute transcendental subjectivity" is no longer the subject of German idealism.

■ ***Jan Sokol:*** As far as my rather weak acquaintance with Husserl goes, I don't see in him a romantic – in sharp contrast to Freud. Though I would have difficulty accepting his rationalism, I do highly appreciate his firm stand against all the irrationalities of the 20th century. With his mathematical background, his inclinations toward Platonism are only natural. On the other hand, as a mathematician, he was not prone to consider reality as a domain of mathematics. Compared with the simplistic ideas of the Vienna Circle, Husserl was a stout defender of European rationality in a much broader sense. As created by the divine word, the world is knowable by the "light of reason", but cannot be reduced to an axiomatic construction.

■ ***Anna Varga-Jani:*** I don't think Husserl was a romantic thinker in the sense of Goethe or Kierkegaard. However, there are elements in his thinking, especially in his letters to his family members, which manifest the typical romantic lifestyle, and his formulations are sometimes very old-fashioned in this way. But I would saythathe was also not a characteristic modernist like Heidegger or the students of the Munich-Göttingen Circle. The best characteristic of his life attitude is the disturbed modernist whose acceptation of the cultural and technological changes comes to be expressedby some sparse reflections on the best days of romanticismpast. An example of these reflections comes from a letter to Malvine Husserl from 15 March 1915, in which Husserl describesthe circumstances of his stay in Cologne (I quote here the original German version of the letter): „Man tritt aus dem ungeheueren, unruhigen, von Menschen erfüllten Bahnhof heraus, und gegenüber der Kölner Dom in seiner unglaublichen Größe, wiederum umwogt von Menschen, die wie Käfer daneben aussehen. […] So etwas von Menschen-strömen habe ich selbst in Berlin nie gesehen. Und dabei eine Unruhe, ein Lärm der Zeitungsausträger, Extrablätterverkäufer etc. – unglaublich. Das Volk kommt mir hier überhaupt lärmend vor. Massenhaft Kino's, Cafés mit Musik, vergeblich suchte ich ein ruhiges Restaurant. Überall tausend Menschen und kein Platz frei."

"One leaves the enormous,restless railway station, filled with people, and opposite [is] the Cathedral of Cologne in its unbelievable height, again engulfed by people who look like beetles compared to it. [...] I have never ever seen such masses of people even in Berlin. And, with them, restlessness, the noise of the newspaper delivery people, those selling special editions etc. – unbelievable. The people appear to me as noisy in general. Cinemas, music cafés come in huge numbers, I looked in vain for a quiet restaurant. Everywhere thousands of people and not a single empty seat."

(From Husserl's report to his wife about his journey in 1915 to visit his younger son Wolfgang, who had been shot through the lung and was recovering in a field hospital.)

■ ***Nicolas de Warren:*** Although Husserl spent the majority of his intellectual life in Germany, after having studied in Vienna during the 1880s, first with he mathematician Leo Königsberger and subsequently with the philosopher Franz Brentano, much of the creative energy and critical vision of Husserl's philosophical thinking embodied a distinctly, and eventually tragic, Austro-Hungarian dynamic. As with his contemporary, Sigmund Freud, Husserl conceived of his philosophical enterprise in terms of both revolution and reformation, as revolutionizing philosophical thinking through the foundation of a "new science" and as ushering in a reform of humanity and European civilization As with Freud's psycho-analytic exploration of the far reaches of consciousness, the scope of Husserl's thinking progressively expanded over the course of its development to encompass and engage social and cultural life, or "civilization," as much with its discontents, or "crisis," as with its teleological promise. As with his other contemporary Gustav Mahler, the full range of Husserl's phenomenological thinking, as composed in his published texts, but most significantly in his research manuscripts and lecture courses, still remains before us, not entirely mapped, explored, or understood. In Husserl's thinking, as with Mahler's music, the 19th-century becomes bridged as well as surpassed by a 20th-century understanding and sensibility that already moves beyond its destitute end. Whereas Mahler creatively weaves together sonorous strands from the classical tradition, folk dances waltzes and military marches into lush orchestrations, the elegance of which belies their complexity, Husserl, in his compositions, wove together a disparate array of different philosophical vocabularies: Kantian, Cartesian, psychological, mathematical, Leibnizian. All three figures, Freud, Mahler and Husserl, can in this regard be seen as responding to what Ernest Gellner has dubbed the Habsburg Dilemma, namely how to institute a universal language and mode of thinking from regional languages and particular forms of thinking – of how, in other words, to maintain a multi-lingual empire united under one national language. Especially in Husserl's case, phenomenological discourse, in its endeavour to institute a universal, foundational and new "science" of thinking, becomes materialized through a creative form of philosophical multilingualism, not only in combining different philosophical ways of speaking but, just as significantly, through a host of neologisms, displacement and shifting of signifiers and idiosyncratic uses of traditional terms. The emerging polyphony of concepts opens up a new way of thinking, by realizing the original idea of philosophy by modern means, to wit, by means of the modernism called phenomenology. In this manner, as with Freud, there is both a return to something archaic and primitive as well as an avant-garde gesture towards a future yet to come within the philosophical drive, or eros, of Husserlian phenomenology. As Husserl envisioned in his unfinished and final work, The Crisis of the European Sciences, better rendered as "the crisis of

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European intelligibility," as the intelligibility of Europe and the intelligibility of rationality, this phenomenological modernist project of commitment to life in truth, to an indispensable trust in thinking (in its theoretical and practical domains), and to a cosmopolitanism of humanity, represents an idea that, issuing from the origins of Europe, still awaits as the future of Europe, as the responsibility for an idea before which we still stand, even and especially when it has been forgotten, obscured or perverted. In returning to Vienna in 1935 to deliver his lecture "Philosophy in the Crisis of European Humankind," Husserl unknowingly wrote the final chapter in the tragedy of his own vision, mirroring the broader tragedy of Viennese modernism in addressing a world that had already passed into yesterday, as the lasting and last memory of a world that once was.

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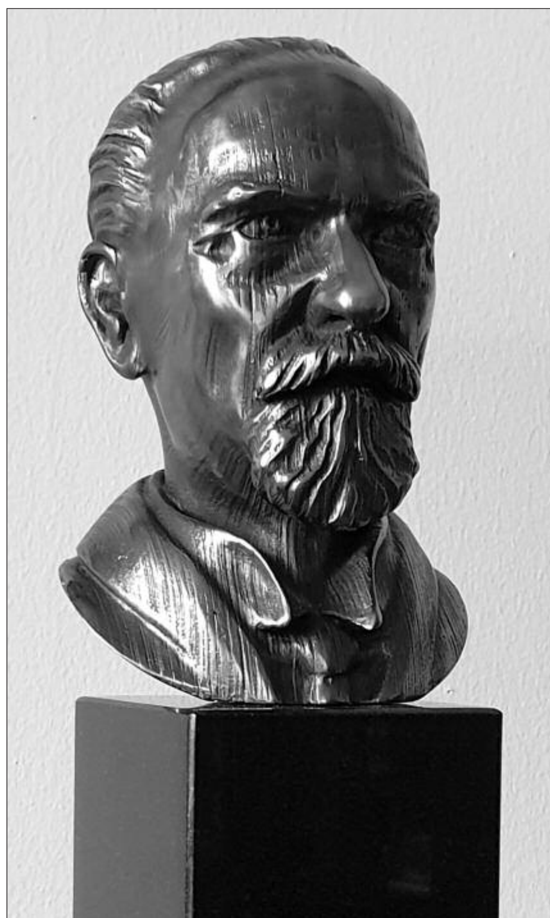

Edmund Husserl (Miloš Karásek)