Edmund Husserl's *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transcendentale Phänomenologie*

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Introductory Note[1]

This paper is Jan Patočka's review of the first version of Husserl's *Krisis*, as published in the journal *Philosophia* I (Belgradi 1936), the organ of The International Society for Philosophy (*Internationale Gesellschaft für Philosophie*), established in 1935 by the former president of Germany's Kant Society, Arthur Liebert. Liebert emigrated from Berlin to escape the political oppression of the Nazi regime, and became professor at the University in Beograd. The text in *Philosophia* I is the transcript of Husserl's presentation in Prague; he had been invited by the Philosophic Circle of Prague, a union of Czech and German philosophers living in Czechoslovakia. (To keep the balance between Czechs and Germans, the official language of the Circle was French, as well as its title, *Cercle philosophique de Prague pour les recherches sur l'entendement humain*). The transcript in *Philosophia* was the only publication of Husserl's work entitled *Krisis* during his life. At the beginning of this volume of *Philosophia* there is a declaration by J.B. Kozák and E. Utitz, the Czech and German presidents of the Prague Circle, stating that the essays that follow (including Patočka's *Der Geist und die zwei Grundschichten der Intentionalität* (*Spirit and the two basic layers of*

Review of the first part of Husserl's *Krisis* as published in the Belgrade journal *Philosophia* 1 (1936): 77–176. First published in the book review section of the periodical *Česká mysl* 33 (1937), no. 1–2: 98–107. Translated by Erika Abrams and Martin Pokorný from the reprint in J. Patočka, *Sebrané spisy*, Vol. 6: *Fenomenologické spisy I*, ed. I. Chvatík and J. Frei, Prague: Oikoymenh, 2008, 366–78. Unless otherwise indicated, all footnotes have been borrowed from this second edition and are the work of the editors.

[1] Supplied by Eds.

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Ľ. Učník et al. (eds.), *The Phenomenological Critique of Mathematisation and the Question of Responsibility*, Contributions to Phenomenology 76,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-09828-9_2

intentionality)) are "the first contributions to the research of the essence of spirit" to bear witness to the existence and activity of the philosophic society established recently in Prague for the same reason as Liebert's society in Beograd.

Readers of the journal *Česká mysl* have had the occasion to hear more than once about Husserl's Prague lectures,[2] originally entitled *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die Psychologie*. The yearbook *Philosophia* has meanwhile published the first part of the lectures, dealing mainly with the historical analysis of the critical situation of present-day science, a state of crisis which has long been a major theme in Husserl's meditations. The systematic considerations on the problem of subjectivity, of which I have already spoken as profoundly metaphysical, will appear in a future issue. The presently published text is, however, sufficient to justify this opinion.

Like so many of Husserl's works, this latest publication too is an 'introduction' to phenomenological philosophy. The fact has already been remarked upon and has given rise to the quip that, what with writing introductions, Husserl will never get down to his actual philosophy. Why does phenomenology need so many introductions? Because, far from being a mechanical explication of any one principle, phenomenology focuses all its attention on the central principle of philosophy as such. Radical philosophy arises only through taking the radical stance which – more important than any singular thesis – it bears in itself, just as the seed contains the future fruit. The radical stance which Husserl sees as philosophical par excellence is the standpoint of phenomenological reduction. Reduction is a process which has for Husserl the same fundamental significance as the discovery of the good-in-itself for Socrates, the turning away from the cave and toward true being for Plato, or again, for Kant, the turn from the investigation of nature to an inquiry into its conditions of possibility – though it is, of course, identical with none of these attitudes. (Much has been written about this even among Czech philosophers, but since the same mistake is made over and over, it should be called to mind once again that the phenomenological reduction is not a method for obtaining 'essences', it is not eidetic seeing, which is a procedure in its own right. The latest recurrence of this confusion is in Professor Tvrdý's *Logic*.)[3] Reduction is thus the point on which everything depends, the decisive point for the understanding or misunderstanding of Husserl's philosophy and its most difficult problem, all the more so since it stands at the very beginning of this philosophising while at the same time containing the whole of it *in nuce*. We see here why there are so many introductions, so many paths leading from non-phenomenological thinking to phenomenology: they are many because no single one of them can completely fulfil the task, no single one is the royal road.

[2] Patočka himself published at the time a short note on the event: "Edmund Husserl v Praze" [E. H. in Prague], *Česká mysl* 31 (1935), no. 3–4: 252 (reprinted in J. Patočka, *Sebrané spisy*, Vol. 12: *Češi I*, ed. K. Palek and I. Chvatík, Prague: OIKOYMENH, 2006, 496).—See German translation by L. Hagedorn in *Jan Patočka. Texte – Dokumente – Bibliografie*, L. Hagedorn and H. R. Sepp (eds.), Freiburg: Alber, 1999, 233–4. *Trans.*

[3] J. Tvrdý, *Logika*, Prague: Melantrich, 1937, esp. 29–30.

What is the reduction all about? This question cannot be answered by any thesis in the sense of a specific answer to a specific question. In philosophy and all the sciences, we ask questions and answer them in the knowledge that we can so inquire, that the matter in itself is in principle already clear to us, within the grasp of our reason; as the poet Otokar Březina once put it, the answers come before the questions.[4] Before we can put a question, we must know already what we are asking about and what ways of finding an answer are available to us. In philosophical 'intuition', on the other hand (and that is essentially the problem we are dealing with here), what matters is not to answer 'the perennial questions' but to raise a new question, or rather to make possible new modes of questioning. Plato, in posing the question of the Idea, was not giving a new answer to an old question but rather raising a new question. He discovered a new dimension of inquiry, the investigation concerning the overall character of being. The Idea was of course, in a sense, already there; it was contained in language, in every general linguistic expression and in every general meaning; but it had not been grasped, explicitly reflected upon, it was merely a self-evident milieu, not a problem – just as, analogously, an animal's instinctive action is no problem for it. With the Platonic beginnings, a wholly new principle was thus brought to light – living with things essential, making knowledge possible in the broadest sense, along with the idea of a reform of human affairs grounded on knowledge of them, this great, inspiring teleological idea of Western European civilisation which Husserl, too, ultimately made his own, and of which he appears to be the last great and, I believe, original and fully committed servant. But Husserl's endeavour cannot be identified with the Platonic doctrine of Ideas: Husserl's fundamental intuition, though also theoretical, is profoundly different from Plato's. Husserl starts from the Cartesian *cogito*; it is, however, characteristic that he interprets Descartes rather freely, lending him motifs that are not his own. (Josef Beneš, e.g., is therefore not unjustified in remarking, in his book on Descartes, that he "does not see Descartes' meditations on the line of development leading to transcendental philosophy"[5] – lines of development can be drawn fairly arbitrarily, and Husserl substantially availed himself of this tolerance.) Descartes' reasoning was guided by the motif of certainty, of reaching some one indubitable bit of being, without at the same time questioning the validity of the traditional ontological interpretation of this being as substance. Husserl, on the contrary, asks how certainty and uncertainty concerning the existent are in general possible; the overall character of being, and of our experience of it, becomes a problem, the philosopher pursuing with his revealing eye all the presuppositions, apperceptions and models which characterise the 'evidences' and self-evidences of our experience. In this process, he uses 'doubt' or 'suspension of belief' as a methodical means. Indubitable knowledge is not, for

[4] O. Březina, "Tajemné v umění" [The Mysterious in Art], *Rozhledy* 4 (1897), 337; recently reedited by P. Holman in O. Březina, *Eseje* [*Essays*], Olomouc: Votobia, 1996, 7.

[5] J. Beneš, *Descartesova metoda ve vědách a ve filosofii* [*Descartes' Method in the Sciences and in Philosophy*], Prague: Nákl. České akademie věd a umění, 1936, viii (Preface).

him, a goal in itself; the procedure is not intended to free from doubt, but rather to reveal. And what does it reveal? Subjectivity in its relation to the universe, the world as a function of subjectivity and subjectivity as the wellspring of the world. What does this mean? Husserl's philosophy should not be identified with standard subjective idealism as in Berkeley or Fichte. We must insist that phenomenology does not apodictically assert any version of *esse est percipi* (which, translated into phenomenological terms, would mean that objects are mere intersections of subjective intentionalities), nor does it necessarily incorporate the material world into the subjective in an unequivocally teleological manner (e.g., as the "material of our duty").[6] These are open questions in Husserl's transcendentalism, whose fundamental thesis is simply that the world, in its ultimate sense, can be understood solely as the work of transcendental individuals and individualities, asserting themselves in association with one another. It is a non-substantialist monadology; non-substantialist inasmuch as the transcendental individualities are self-creators, their being deeper than any substance in the sense of the enduring, invariable substratum of less enduring determinations.

Those who are incapable of giving the words 'origin', 'principle', 'explanation' another meaning than the one they have in our everyday thought-functions (just as Hippias, in Plato's dialogue, cannot think of taking the word 'beautiful' in any other sense than its general use to denote beautiful objects)[7] are necessarily blind to this particular mode of understanding the world. Yet, paradoxically as it may sound, the meaning of these terms in phenomenology is more original and deeper than in normal speech – albeit the system is incomplete and many problems remain unsolved. It is clear, e.g., that transcendental phenomenology cannot decide concrete scientific issues, such as the applicability of Einstein's theory or questions of the corpuscular character of matter, the essence of evolution, a unitary construction of history. Nonetheless, it brings valid subjects and impulses in all domains; linguists, e.g., know from Bühler's work[8] what the *Méditations cartésiennes* have meant for them, just as readers of Landgrebe's article in the last issue of this journal[9] now know the relevance of Husserl's way of tackling the problem of subjectivity for the question of the underlying foundations of the so-called sciences of the spirit, where he is close to Dilthey (Husserl mentioned this point too in

[6] J. G. Fichte, "Über den Grund unsers Glauben an eine göttliche Weltregierung," in *Gesamtsausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Vol. I/5, ed. R. Lauth, Stuttgart: Frommann, 1977, 353; English: "On the Basis of Our Belief in a Divine Governance of the World" (1798), in *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings, 1797–1800*, ed. and trans. D. Breazeale, Indianapolis IN: Hackett, 1995, 150. *Trans*.

[7] *Hippias Major*, 287 C ff.

[8] K. Bühler, *Sprachtheorie. Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*, Jena: Fischer, 1934. [English: *Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language*, trans. D. F. Goodwin and A. Eschbach, Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 2011.]

[9] L. Landgrebe, "Filosofie Viléma Diltheye" [The Philosophy of W. Dilthey], *Česká mysl* 32 (1936), no. 3–4: 138–45.

Prague, in his lecture for the Linguistic Circle).[10] If we add to this the importance of Husserl's pre-phenomenological struggle against psychologism and his renewal of 'ontology' in the traditional sense, a motif by no means abandoned in transcendental phenomenology but rather raised to a higher power and loaded with new and different questions (let us just recall that the struggle against psychologism led to its retreat all along the line, that anti-psychologism gained ground not only in logic but also in aesthetics, in the philosophy and psychology of religion, in law, in the philosophy of mathematics and the natural sciences – H. Weyl[11] and many others refer here to Husserl; the wealth of motifs taken from his work is well-nigh boundless), we get at least some idea of the universality of the scientific-philosophic interest associated with his venture. Husserl's is a philosophy which embraces all world problems through the motif of transcendental subjectivity. Transcendental subjectivity is the ground he means to penetrate, on which he thinks to discover fields left unreaped for lack of radicalism in his great predecessors. And since phenomenology pursues a task either missed or neglected by its predecessors, one can also write a historical introduction to it; such is the object of the volume under review.

Husserl begins his exposition with the statement that science is at present undergoing an acute crisis of its scientificity. The crisis first appears to the eye as a loss of the meaning of science for life; science has nothing to say to us about the difficulties and anxieties of our existence. It is, precisely, an 'objective', impartial science of pure facts; and purely fact-minded sciences make for purely fact-minded people. In contrast with this emasculated science, how powerful appears the *idea* of science conceived by Renaissance and post-Renaissance philosophy, which set out to freely shape the world through the autonomous understanding of pure reason! Here, all disciplines are but the parts of one whole, formed by a single encompassing reason. This great conception was the source of the energy and enthusiasm which so irresistibly spread to wider and wider circles in the eighteenth century; a greater contrast than between the Enlightenment and the present day is hardly possible. Husserl wants now to renew the idea of modern philosophy and to attempt a revival of the Enlightenment, asking anew the great questions that lie at the basis of metaphysics, the *philosophia perennis*.

Enlightenment and modern science failed because they were unable to realise their ideal; the scientific ideal was left to disintegrate from within, as attested by modern humanity's loss of faith in universal philosophy as its guide, i.e., basically, the breakdown of faith in reason, in an 'absolute' reason giving 'meaning' to the

[10] On 18 November 1935 Husserl lectured to the Prague Linguistic Circle at the invitation of Roman Jakobson on *Die Phänomenologie der Sprache*; such at least is the title mentioned in Jakobson's review for the journal *Slovo a slovesnost* 2 (1936), no. 1, 64. Patočka, in the above-mentioned article "Edmund Husserl in Prague," cites the same lecture under the title "O filosofii a duchovědách" [On Philosophy and the Sciences of the Spirit].

[11] Cf. H. Weyl, *Philosophie der Mathematik und Naturwissenschaft*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 1927, 85–87. [English: *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science*, trans. O. Helmer, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949, 62–63.]

world, to history, to mankind and its freedom. Modern philosophy became a casualty of the struggle for human meaning which, from the very beginnings of Greek philosophy, runs through history as its rational entelechy; philosophy is the historical movement of manifestation of the universal reason 'innate' in mankind as such. If philosophy is to be something more than a mere particular feature of a certain cultural circle, the struggle for it in *its freedom* will have to be rekindled again and again until it ends in success – any other mode of relation between the philosopher and his problem would mean shunning the task to which he is called and in which he is a functionary of humanity. The philosopher cannot give up the idea which forms life by its own power, scientificity which forces with apodictic certainty the will to go its way – such is the existential pathos of philosophy, as opposed to all the pathetic mysticisms and irrationalisms of the present day. This means going back to the great original idea of science, going back especially to the sources of its successes but also of the severe contradictions impairing it, which we shall have to try to eliminate. This is where the analysis of the idea of modern science and its fundamental antinomy begins.

At the dawn of the modern age, mathematics take on a new, universal significance, alien to Greek mathematics. Science becomes infinite, entrusted with an infinite task, while at the same time held together by a unitary bond of rational deducibility. Rather than individual mathematical theories, what comes to the fore is one general formal mathematics. And this process, once begun, leads straight to another stage of the unification of science, i.e., Galileo's mathematisation of nature. The meaning of this mathematisation is the object of a separate phenomenological study focusing on its presuppositions, which is inserted here. This text is unprecedented in the whole of Husserl's work, proof that his creative force has continued to bear remarkable fruit up to the latest day.

The mathematisation of nature presupposes that the geometrically formulated properties of natural bodies have intersubjective significance, that they are, therefore, *objective* in the proper sense of the word, as opposed to those aspects of our experience of the world which we know already from everyday experience to be relative to a person or a standpoint. What lies in this truth, tacitly assumed in the process of mathematisation?

First and foremost: the world of shapes of our naive experience is by no means a world of purely geometrical shapes. (This truth needs to be recalled to mind, since Plato is nearly the only important philosopher before Husserl to have been deeply preoccupied with it.) Naive shapes are not a realisation of geometrical forms; Plato already distinguished the former from the latter by their oscillations and inexactness. (Of course, they do imply a certain regularity, conspicuous even to those who have no idea of geometry and exact thought; the sphere, the cube, etc., are typical rough shapes whose regularity lies rather in intuition itself than in the geometrical properties of things. In Greek philosophy we still find this original, almost sensual feeling of shape in action – the circle as a form 'without end', uniformly curved throughout, the 'straight' line as possessing end-points. We find this same sense of shape used, e.g., in the descriptive sciences, botany, zoology, where the original distinction between organic and inorganic shapes is also frequently applied.) The

application of geometry to the world of our everyday experience thus implies an underlying process of exactification, an approach to exactness which has its practical origin in the measurements used even in the most primitive conditions, just as the whole domain of quantity is originally founded already in our elementary life, in the sphere of space and causality; the boundary of inexactness is continually pushed back until there takes place a passage to the limit – to the idea of absolute quantitative identity, which first founds geometry in the scientific sense: an achievement which is not a piece of the history of this science, is not associated with the name of its inventor, as are certain famous theorems, and yet is more important, since it must be understood by each and all before even beginning to practise the science as such. Euclid's axiom of equality presupposes that equals are given, and hence it presupposes the passage to the limit. The exact apprehension and elaboration of the relationships of elementary figures and the construction of all possible exact shapes – this is geometry. The idea of the mathematisation, of the mathematical objectification of the universe is implicit in geometry as a science at once ideal and yet related to our concrete life-space. This idea Galileo amplifies in an extraordinary way.

With Galileo, the idea of passing over into a limit of exactness affects the whole sphere of objective causality. Things of everyday experience have, so to say, their 'habits', not only a typical look but also typical behaviour. (The association of a typical aspect and typical behaviour under the single concept of form – *eidos* – is in fact already the work of Greek philosophy.) And this typical behaviour obtains universally, for all things, so that the world, even in its pre-scientific form, cannot be imagined without the overall connecting network of universal causal unity. Thus, the idea of universal causality is not yet in itself an approach to exactness. Exactness is initially introduced by geometry, which first makes of the spatio-temporal world a universal totality of objective, univocally determinable ideal objectivities. Geometry shows further that the exact knowledge of relationships between spatial figures makes possible a completely new kind of prediction: one can *calculate* the relationships non-accessible to direct measurement on the basis on those that are accessible. This then raises the question whether the same does not obtain necessarily for the entire concrete world. Cannot all rough predicting be replaced with pure calculation? The difficulty is that once we introduce geometrical exactness into natural shapes, they break down into pure forms and intuitive 'filling' (secondary qualities), and the filling, which is of course also primitively given in certain qualitative gradations (especially intensities), is not directly accessible to measurement. This then leads to the question of indirect mathematisation. For the fillings, the 'plena', we have only one universal form of the world, only one (intuitive) geometry; all we can do is to univocally correlate them to certain directly mathematised spatio-temporal configurations, in such a way that each qualitative event acquires a mathematical index. The application of mathematics means already an idealisation of the *plena*, i.e., a projection into the infinity of space and time, exceeding all possibilities of intuition; now there is added to this the idealisation of causality, universal exact causality. All the rest is a matter of

invention, which is "a mixture of instinct and method"[12]: the discovery of ever-new methods of measurement and new forms of mathematical dependence. Galileo himself applied his anticipations to processes of our most common experience and actually found exact correlations which could be expressed in formulae.

Galileo's exactification of natural causality is, of course, a hypothesis, and remains such indefinitely; this is a character peculiar to natural science – to be unendingly hypothetical and unendingly verified. 'True nature' is correlative to an infinite historical process of approximation. *In concreto* the scientist ignores this; he throws himself with all his passion of knowledge into the task, now made possible, of outlining the regularities of our life-world, i.e., onto formulae. In the course of time, the formulae undergo yet another profound change, which leads to enormous progress in the special sciences but, philosophically, worsens the unclarity. This change is the arithmetisation of geometry, which goes along with the emptying of its meaning: science abstracts from extension, and geometrical forms, mathematical expressions acquire a new, 'symbolic' meaning. This process reaches its consummation in a universal 'formalisation' that leads to 'pure analysis', a 'theory of manifolds', a 'logistic' whose ultimate sense is to construct the formal-logical idea of a world-in-general (in definite manifolds). Mathematics becomes more and more a simple 'technique', an art of carrying out operations that achieve results as in a game, while all material meaning, even that of the purely formal ontology which lies at the basis of the *mathesis universalis*, is evacuated. And as both experimental and mathematical physicists aim, in their efforts, at ideal poles of exact dependencies, all the discoveries of physics are in fact discoveries in the sphere of a world of formulae coordinated with nature. The actual fundament of the whole process of idealisation, i.e., the non-idealised nature of the naive world of everyday experience, is thereby forgotten: this is the true world which, far from taking its meaning from formulae whose function is exclusively that of an exactifying outline of anticipation, first gives the formulae their meaning. This world is dressed up by natural science, especially physics, in a garb of ideas (we could almost say, with Bergson, a *vêtement de confection*)[13] which then makes us take for true being what is merely a method. Reason here worked instinctively, without rational clarity about its own accomplishments. Galileo is a genius both of discovery and concealment. We stand, to this day, in his ambivalence (worsened by the formalising of geometry into analysis); the so-called 'crisis of the concept of causality' makes no difference, since the idea of mathematical nature in itself remains. This situation has resulted in innumerable obscurities and problems, in particular the problem of the relation between the mathematical *a priori* and natural science, between pure and applied mathematics, *a priori* and *a posteriori*, mathematical and real existence, and many

[12] E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Philosophie*, Husserliana VI, ed. W. Biemel, The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1954, 39. English: *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr, Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970, 40. *Trans.*

[13] H. Bergson, *Matière et mémoire*, Paris: Alcan, 1908, 270. (English: *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer, Mineola NY: Dover, 2004, 321.) *Trans.*

more stemming from formalisation – all due to the hypostatising of mathematical nature. The idea of natural science has thus fallen into confusion and crisis; natural scientists naively believe they can overcome the crisis by turning away from any 'metaphysics' that might claim to meddle in their affairs; they forget that the direction of inquiry necessary to achieve clarity here is quite the opposite of that implemented in physics. But philosophers too have let the new natural science lead them astray from their task, and this from the very beginning of modern philosophy, when they envisaged the rationality of the world *more geometrico*.

Here Husserl brings to a close his critical reflection on the crisis of scientificity in modern natural science and turns to his second major pole of interest, the world and sciences of the spirit. We shall give a more succinct account of these considerations, many aspects of which are already known from other publications. The creation of a unified natural science entailed a splitting of the world, familiar to us from the Cartesian dualism: the élan of the unified physical science, which Hobbes already introduced into the sciences of the spirit via his physicalistic psychology, was stymied by the problem of subjectivity. Physicalistic psychology led straight to skepticism, the final conclusions of which were drawn by Hume. Yet Descartes's *cogito* already sets a problem that physicalism (taking the word, not in the sense used by contemporary proponents of the 'Vienna Circle', but rather as referring to the universal unified science which apprehends the world *more geometrico*) cannot handle. The birth of an epistemologically oriented philosophy confirms that this is indeed the case, inaugurating the turn which gives its character to modern philosophy: from objectivism, which inquires after the 'objective truth' of the world on the ground of which it moves self-evidently, to transcendentalism, which inquires into the meaning of the being of the world and regards this meaning as a 'subjective formation' – subjectivity as primary by nature. The immanent meaning of this whole turn is transcendental phenomenology, in which Husserl sees the final form of psychology, epistemology and metaphysics all at once. Here, starting once again from the beginning, Husserl inserts a reflection on Descartes as the philosophical forefather of the two fundamental ideas of the modern age, transcendentalism as well as geometrical objectivism. As in the *Méditations cartésiennes*, he explains once again the significance of methodical skepticism by means of the *epochē*, elucidating in greater detail how Descartes went wrong: Descartes, before performing his *epochē*, was already dominated by the Galilean idea of the rationally ideal bodily world, this idea was the goal he strove to attain in absolute evidence; the *epochē* is here misused as means to an end, while the philosopher should carry it out seriously and remain within it. (Husserl has more than once had the occasion to show summarily that this does not entail solipsism.) Descartes nonetheless did present in his *Meditations* at least a fundamental piece of psychology, discovering also, especially, the profound philosophical significance of intentionality (in this assessment of Descartes as a psychologist, Husserl finds himself in agreement, in particular, with the Brentano school; Brentano himself was the first to call attention to the significance of intentionality in Descartes; as for the fact that Descartes

became one of the fathers of 'analytical' psychology, that he was by no means an 'understanding' psychologist in Dilthey's sense, we see this too as linked with his objectivism – intentionality itself, which appears in him to be a mere remnant of the life-significance dominant, e.g., in the medieval doctrine of the soul, is actually, as Husserl remarks, a concept he hardly developed),[14] which Locke unfortunately did not take up in his so influential *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, no more than the transcendental motif of the *cogito*; this is what brought him to his particular agnosticism, limiting the pretensions of the modern scientific ideal; Berkeley's sensualist critique then had a dissolving effect on the conceptuality of rational science, and finally Hume, one of the greatest modern thinkers in Husserl's eyes (more important than Kant, a point on which Husserl and Masaryk strangely meet), declared objective knowledge bankrupt. Objectivism was shaken – this is Hume's genuine philosophical motif. His philosophical ethos was, however, not commensurate with his skills, and he contented himself with the comfortable role of an academic skeptic, eschewing all 'abysmal' problems. Kant, on the contrary, started from the abyss opened up by objectivism between pure mathematics and natural science, and showed nature to be the work of an unconsciously functioning reason, the conscious production of which is mathematics and natural science constituted with its help. Thus Kant in his own way, remaining within the tradition of rationalism, shook objectivism and rediscovered the transcendental motif lost since Descartes. Husserl concludes the recently published text with these preliminary remarks on Kant, with whom he will deal more extensively in future parts of his work.

Before moving on to critical comments – we shall present here only a select few, given the difficulty of the subject matter and the necessity, for some objections, to go into details with which the reader cannot be supposed to be familiar – we would like to call attention to one misunderstanding that must be nipped in the bud, especially in the Czech milieu. It has become a commonplace among Czechs, more particularly under the influence of Masaryk's essay *Modern Man and Religion*,[15] to regard subjectively oriented philosophy as related to 'titanism', to the decadent megalomania of modern man, deprived of firm certainties. Masaryk holds Kant to be a skeptic. I have already had the occasion to explain (in my article 'Masaryk's and Husserl's Conception of the Spiritual Crisis of European Humanity')[16] that Masaryk (submitting to the influence of his times) did not take the problem of subjectivism at all seriously; when all is said and done, his objections have to do only with Kant's inconsistencies, with the role of the objectivist dross in

[14] Cf. E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*, §§19–20.

[15] T. G. Masaryk, *Moderní člověk a náboženství*, ed. V. K. Škrach, Prague: Laichter, 1934; reedited in *Spisy T. G. Masaryka*, Vol. 8, Prague: Ústav T. G. Masaryka, 2000. [See English translation by A. Bibza and V. Beneš, London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1938.]

[16] J. Patočka, "Masarykovo a Husserlovo pojetí duševní krise evropského lidstva," *Kvart* 3 (1936): 91–102; reedited in *Sebrané spisy*, Vol. 12, 21–33. [See English translation by E. Kohák in *Jan Patočka. Philosophy and Selected Writings*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, 145–56.]

his thought, and he regards Kant's subjective world as not essentially different from an "illusion" (*Hirngespinst*). This whole argumentation is clearly based on a *quid pro quo* – that much should be stressed against all preconceived notions. The word 'objective' has in fact two different meanings: that which is accessible to all possible subjects – objective truth, and that which is independent of any subject whatever – objective being. Subjectivist philosophy by no means precludes absolute objectivism of truth, on the contrary, it is a better guarantee for it than the objectivist variety which, as history shows, leads either to skeptical positivism or to fancy. As to the difference between reality and illusion, it is *given*, demonstrable in experience, and, therefore, it too, subjectively analysable and ultimately definable therefrom. To berate subjectivism and equate it with titanism, decadence, etc., is simply unphilosophical, unless all these headings cover a serious philosopheme, capable of fundamentally refuting 'subjectivism'; in actual fact, the dividing line between the absolute and the finite spirit was never erased in the subjectivist philosophies of a Fichte, a Schelling, or a Hegel – man was never deified here, not at least as an individual; and when it comes to deifying the finite, objectivists are more than a match for subjectivists – let us only think of Comte, Proudhon, Stirner, Nietzsche. Above all, let us not charge Husserl with representing decadent subjectivism; let us seek to think through his ideas, rather than taking an 'existential' stance.

Now what about Husserl's theses themselves? Historians will surely find much to criticise: Husserl's fresco includes precise and grandiose visions as well as fogginess and lack of accuracy – his Galileo is certainly not the historical Galileo, his Descartes not the real Descartes, though even here his views are always deep; to wit, his agreeing with – and surpassing of – Gilson[17] in seeing Descartes as possessed by the spirit of modern physics; to wit, the broad-mindedness, though sketchiness, of the lineage he traces from the Renaissance to the seventeenth century and through to the Enlightenment. At the bottom of all these great philosophical-historical insights lies, of course, Husserl's rationalism. Husserl is perhaps the last principled rationalist among outstanding European philosophers; that is to say, he views autonomous human reason and its functionary – philosophy as the immanent meaning of Western European civilisation and, through the irreversible process of Europeanisation of the earth, as the immanent meaning of humanity in general. This teleology is part of the confession of a great philosopher – in actual fact, we philosophers should never think otherwise, the slightest counter-argument smacks already of skepticism; but this is perhaps precisely why it is so difficult and painful to practise philosophy today, because we are constantly obliged to ask whether reason truly is, whether it can at all be the immanent *telos* of humanity. Europe is rationalistic, there is no doubt about that; but is its rationalism a rationalism of means or of ends? Considering that Europe has been Christian for nearly 2,000 years, it would seem to be rather a rationalism of means; for if there is

[17] Cf. É. Gilson, *Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien*, Paris: Vrin, 1930. *Trans*.

reason in religion, it is decidedly something more than the mere theoretical *logos* sought by science, seeking to control reality, and by philosophy, striving to penetrate its essence. Religion itself can be part of the process of rationalisation and even contribute to it, but it also contains an atheoretical core which philosophers, with their interpretations, will apparently always misrepresent, just as Hegel presented the exact opposite of Christianity in interpreting it as a preliminary stage of his own philosophy. We prefer therefore to take Husserl's exposition, not primarily as a philosophy of history, but rather as a contribution to human liberation, as a piece of human freedom – reason as a task that man is free to take hold of and that raises him heaven-high if he succeeds in actively mastering its inner peril. This interpretation is confirmed by the whole (so to say) existential character of Husserl's statements; their pathos attests that they are no mere stating of facts but rather a *summons* in the garb of statements of fact, a call meant to change man in his inward make-up; insofar Husserl would be right, too, in stressing, as he has done more than once in answer to various objections, that existential problems do indeed exist for him and are solved in his philosophy (albeit not universally and not always thematically in the philosophy he has himself realised).

May we add yet a few more remarks. Husserl traces the development of the idea of modern science as if no theological issues came here into play – this is related to our previous remark that Europe is Christianity, rather than rationalism – and as if there were no continuity with earlier ontological philosophy. Here too, historians will surely find matter for disapproval. Modern science and philosophy did not originate directly from the process of progressive idealisation of the life-world as depicted by Husserl, Husserl's description is itself an idealisation. The very idea of substituting mathematics (a 'formal' ontology in Husserl's sense) for ontology was part and parcel of ontological thought, though the transposition took place in fact in the sphere of physics, and hence athematically.

One last word before I conclude. Does the world of our natural life (*unsere Lebenswelt*), into which theory has not yet brought its exactness, differ from the theoretical world only by this lack of exactness? Or is 'inexactness' merely one of several 'moments' which, taken together, make up the general character of being in this world? In that case, the passage from surveying to geometry would imply, in addition, connecting links which Husserl does not mention, links which mark in general the movement from praxis to theory.

Husserl's work has, once again, surprised our expectations. We can imagine, accordingly, the rich fountain of philosophical reflection to be found in his concrete analyses still in manuscript form! The publication of these manuscripts has been in preparation for some time. It rests with the philosophical public to contribute to hasten the undertaking (it is to the credit of the Czechoslovakian philosophic community to have been the first to seriously concern itself with it) and to prove by its interest that the idea of forming life on a theoretical basis – this idea so forcefully stressed by T. G. Masaryk, F. X. Šalda, Edvard Beneš – is still alive amongst us.