

# Chapter 7

## From the Natural Attitude to the Life-World

Dermot Moran

Here I explore the deeper meaning of Edmund Husserl's breakthrough discussion of the "natural attitude" (*die natürliche Einstellung*) in *Ideen I* (1913)<sup>1</sup> in relation to his evolving conception of the surrounding world or "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*),<sup>2</sup> a term that emerges in his writings around 1917 (e.g., in Supplements XII and XIII to *Ideen II*)<sup>3</sup> and becomes perhaps the most prominent theme of the *Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften* (1936 and 1954).<sup>4</sup> I contend that the parallels between the "natural surrounding world" (*natürliche Umwelt*) of *Ideen I* and the "life-world" of the *Krisis* have not been sufficiently explored by commentators.

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<sup>1</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Erstes Buch: *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie 1*, ed. K. Schuhmann, Hua III/1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977); trans. F. Kersten, *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*. (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1983). Hereafter "Ideas I" followed by the page number of the English translation and the Husserliana (abbreviated to "Hua") volume and page number. Schuhmann's edition includes comments and corrections added by Husserl in his four different personal copies of the text.

<sup>2</sup> See Rudiger Welter, *Der Begriff der Lebenswelt: Theorien vortheoretischer Erfahrungswelt* (Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> See E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Zweites Buch: *Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, ed. Marly Biemel, Hua IV (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1952); trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer as *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*, Husserl Collected Works III (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989). Hereafter "Ideas II" followed by the page number of the English translation and the Husserliana volume and page number.

<sup>4</sup> The German edition is E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. Walter Biemel, Husserliana (hereafter "Hua") Volume VI (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954). This edition includes the published parts of the *Krisis* as well as a selection of associated documents.

D. Moran (✉)

School of Philosophy, University College, Dublin, Ireland

e-mail: dermot.moran@ucd.ie

I also want to mention the philosophical context that conditioned Husserl's contrast between the natural surrounding world and the world of science. Husserl's exploration of the experience of the natural world in the 1920s more or less coincides with the advocacy by the Logical Positivists of the Vienna School<sup>5</sup> of a "scientific conception of the world" (*eine wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung*), articulated in their Manifesto of 1929.<sup>6</sup> The Positivists advocated a scientific conception of the world to correct—or even replace—the naïve, natural, pre-scientific approach to the world and thereby to set philosophy and the other human sciences on the road to rigorous science.<sup>7</sup> Husserl's alternative, already in *Ideen I*, wants, on the other hand, to *re-situate* the scientific conception of the world *within* the life-world and show how the idealizing scientific attitude requires and cannot replace the natural attitude.

Husserl offers a devastating analysis of the problems imposed by a narrow promotion of the natural scientific outlook in all areas of life. From "Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft" (1910/1911)<sup>8</sup> to the *Krisis*, he builds a critique of *naturalism* and *objectivism* and defends the need for a rigorous transcendental science to replace the failed objective science of subjectivity that modern psychology purported to be.

In his later years, Husserl often reflected on and offered interpretations of his earlier efforts. Thus, in a very late text from summer 1937 entitled "Zur Kritik an den *Ideen I*" (Towards a Critique of the *Ideen*)<sup>9</sup>—perhaps the last text he ever wrote before

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It is substantially translated by David Carr as *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern U. P., 1970), although some supplements have been left out of the Carr edition. Hereafter the *Crisis of European Sciences* will be cited as "*Krisis*" followed by the page number of the English translation (where available) and the Husserliana volume and page number.

<sup>5</sup> On the complex history of the Vienna Circle, logical positivism and logical empiricism, see Thomas Uebel, "On the Austrian Roots of Logical Empiricism: The Case of the First Vienna Circle," *Logical Empiricism: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Paulo Parrini et al. (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003) and Alan Richardson and Thomas Uebel, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Logical Empiricism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). See also Friedrich Stadler, ed., *The Vienna Circle and Logical Empiricism: Re-evaluation and Future Perspectives* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004) and idem, *The Vienna Circle—Studies in the Origins, Development, and Influence of Logical Empiricism* (Vienna: Springer, 2001). For Husserl's relationship with positivism, see Manfred Sommer, *Husserl und der frühe Positivismus* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1985).

<sup>6</sup> See *Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung. Der Wiener Kreis* (1929); trans. "The Scientific Conception of the World. The Vienna Circle," *The Emergence of Logical Empiricism: from 1900 to the Vienna Circle*, ed. Sahotra Sarkar (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 321–40.

<sup>7</sup> Between 1928 and 1937, the very period in which Husserl was developing his views on the *Lebenswelt*, the Vienna Circle published ten books in a collection named *Schriften zur wissenschaftlichen Weltauffassung (Monographs on the Scientific World-Conception)*, eds. Moritz Schlick and Philipp Frank. These works have now been translated in the series *Unified Science: The Vienna Circle Monograph Series Originally Edited by Otto Neurath* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> E. Husserl, "Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft," *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1911–1921)*, Hua XXV 3–62, trans. Marcus Brainard, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science," *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* Vol. II (2002): 249–95.

<sup>9</sup> E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Ergänzungsband. Texte aus dem Nachlaß 1934–1937*, ed. Reinhold N. Smid, Husserliana Vol. XXIX (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992).

he fell ill—Husserl writes of devising various ways into transcendental phenomenology and characterizes the way in *Ideen I* as leading in “a single leap” (*in einem Sprunge*, Hua XXIX, 425) to a new form of experiencing. He also says that *Ideen I* provided a way from “the natural concept of the world” (*natürlicher Weltbegriff*, Hua XXIX, 425) which he characterizes as “the ‘concept’ of the world of the ‘natural attitude’” and parses as “the pre- and extra-scientific life-world or the world that, correspondingly, has always been and always will be, in all of our natural practical life-interests, the standing field (*das ständige Feld*) of our interests, our goals, our actions” (Hua XXIX, 425). He acknowledges further that this natural conception of the world was sketched “only in the roughest outlines” (*nur in rohesten Zügen*) in *Ideen I*. The systematic analysis and description of this “Heraclitean-moving world” presents a great and difficult problem. Finally, he writes that the reduction to the life-world restores the sense of history missing from the Cartesian way:

We shall see that the life-world (considered omnitemporally) is nothing other than the historical world. From this, we can see that a complete systematic introduction to phenomenology is initiated and carried through by a universal historical problem. If one introduces the *epoch* without the thematic of history, then the problem of the life-world, that is to say, the problem of universal history, will be entirely left out. The way introduced in *Ideen I* has its legitimacy, but now I maintain that the historical way (*den historischen Weg*) is more primary (*prinzipieller*) and more systematic. (Hua XXIX, 425–26, my translation)

This is an extraordinary admission. Husserl effectively admits that what he had uncovered in *Ideen I*, i.e., the natural concept of the world, would become clarified in his later analysis of the life-world as a *historical* concept. This “historical” way into phenomenology, moreover, is actually more primordial and all inclusive than the “Cartesian way”!<sup>10</sup> Husserl’s various ways to the reduction are well known, although there is dispute about their nature, number and interrelatedness,<sup>11</sup> but it is unusual to speak of a “historical reduction.” Husserl’s own students (Ludwig Landgrebe,<sup>12</sup> Alfred Schutz, and Aron Gurwitsch) read the *Krisis* as representing a novel point of departure with its interest in history and the life-world as an attempt to rebalance the Cartesian presentation of transcendental phenomenology, explicated

<sup>10</sup>I am grateful to LAU Kwok-Ying for his article “History and the Phenomenological Reduction in the Last Husserl,” presented at the Fourth OPO meeting, *Razón y vida*, Segovia, Spain, 19–23 Sept 2011.

<sup>11</sup>See for instance Iso Kern, “Die drei Wege zur transzendental-phenomenologischen Reduktion in der Philosophie Edmund Husserls,” *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, XXV (1962): 303–49; trans. as “The Three Ways to the Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction in the Philosophy of Edmund Husserl,” *Husserl. Expositions and Appraisals*, eds. F. Elliston and P. McCormick (South Bend, IN: U. of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 126–49; and Iso Kern, “The Phenomenological or Transcendental *epoch* and Reduction,” *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*, eds. R. Bernet, R. Kern, and E. Marbach (Evanston, IL: Northwestern U. P., 1993), 58–77. See also John Drummond, “Husserl on the Ways to the Phenomenological Reduction,” *Man and World* 8 No. 1 (February 1975): 47–69. Both Kern and Drummond agree in seeing *Ideen I* as primarily promoting the Cartesian way.

<sup>12</sup>See, for instance, L. Landgrebe, “The World as a Phenomenological Problem,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1/1 (Sept. 1940): 38–58; and Ludwig Landgrebe, “Husserls Phänomenologie und die Motive zu ihrer Umbildung,” *Revue internationale de Philosophie* 1/2, (Brussels, 1939).

in *Ideen I, Cartesianische Meditationen*<sup>13</sup> and reaffirmed in the “*Nachwort zu meinen ‘Ideen’*” (published in 1930 in the *Jahrbuch* and in English in Boyce Gibson’s 1931 translation of the *Ideen*).<sup>14</sup>

Thus Landgrebe connects Husserl’s interest in the life-world with the manner in which space and time are experienced by the embodied person. In this connection Husserl had written in 1934 a fragment “*Umsturz der kopernikanischen Lehre in der gewöhnlichen weltanschaulichen Interpretation. Die Ur-Arche Erde bewegt sich nicht*” that connected the life-world with the world as experienced prior to science.<sup>15</sup> Landgrebe writes: “Thus, in explicating immediate experience, the experience of our world as a ‘life-world,’ Husserl effects a reversal of the ‘Copernican Revolution,’ by the insight that every experience necessarily presupposes an ultimate unmoved basis, which is not itself objectivated. For ‘us men,’ this basis is ‘our earth’—as an actual exemplification of an essential necessity.”<sup>16</sup>

Commentators are not wrong to see as new in the *Krisis* the themes of life-world and history. Husserl himself, however, believed he had been moving in this broadly historical direction since *Ideen I*; indeed, there are undoubtedly tentative discussions in that work that anticipate the later explicit discussion (e.g., in the portrayal of phenomenology as a “science of origins” in *Ideen I*, §56).

In many later texts, Husserl regarded the Cartesian way into phenomenology as “one-sided” and deficient and saw the way into transcendental phenomenology through the life-world (sometimes called “the ontological way”) as more “basic” or

<sup>13</sup> E. Husserl, *Méditations cartésiennes: Introduction à la phénoménologie*, trans. G. Peiffer and E. Levinas (Paris: Almand Colin, 1931). The German text was not published until 1950 as *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, ed. Stephan Strasser, Husserliana I (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1950); trans. D. Cairns as *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960). Hereafter “CM” followed by page number of English translation, and Husserliana volume and page number.

<sup>14</sup> Husserl’s “Author’s Preface” was written in 1930 and was published in English translation in Boyce-Gibson’s translation of *Ideas I* published in 1931, see E. Husserl, “Author’s Preface to the English Edition,” *Ideas. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 5–22. Husserl’s German text is somewhat different, and was originally published in the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, vol. XI (1930). It is reprinted as “*Nachwort*,” Hua V 138–62, and translated as “Epilogue” in *Ideas II*, 405–30. Husserl had originally planned both a Foreword and an Afterword to the volume to explain the significance of *Ideen I*.

<sup>15</sup> Edmund Husserl, “*Umsturz der kopernikanischen Lehre in der gewöhnlichen weltanschaulichen Interpretation. Die Ur-Arche Erde bewegt sich nicht. Grundlegende Untersuchungen zum phänomenologischen Ursprung der Körperlichkeit der Räumlichkeit der Natur im ersten naturwissenschaftlichen Sinne. Alles notwendige Anfangsuntersuchungen*,” *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl*, ed. Marvin Farber (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), 307–25; trans. as “Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature,” *Husserl. Shorter Works*, trans. and eds. Frederick Elliston and Peter McCormick (Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 222–33; revised by Len Lawlor in M. Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*, eds. L. Lawlor and B. Bergo (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002), 117–31.

<sup>16</sup> L. Landgrebe, “The World as a Phenomenological Problem,” trans. D. Cairns, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1/1 (Sept. 1940): 46.

“primary” (*prinzipiell*) and more complete. Thus he contrasted the manner in which the phenomenological reduction is introduced, as mentioned, in “one leap” (a phrase repeated in the *Krisis*, §43—in *Ideen I* with the various ways to the reduction in later works including the *Krisis*. According to *Ideen I*, §56, it is precisely the natural world—including the physical, psychophysical, and cultural worlds—that must undergo “switching off” or “exclusion” (*Ausschaltung*, *Ideen I*, §56, 131; Hua III/1, 122) in the reduction. In *Ideen I*, as 2 years earlier in the *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (1910/1911)<sup>17</sup>—and indeed as in the 1907 *Idee der Phänomenologie*<sup>18</sup>—Husserl presents Descartes as the great originator of transcendental philosophy. Thus in the *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* he writes: “The first philosopher who achieved a phenomenological reduction was Descartes. However, he achieved it only to relinquish it immediately. It is a most noteworthy fact that the fundamental consideration that inaugurates the entire course of the development of modern philosophy was nothing other than the staging of the phenomenological reduction” (BPP, 41; Hua XIII, 150).

Husserl gradually became aware that the “Cartesian way” uncovered pure subjectivity but seemed to leave it without content, without connections to other subjects or to the world. The greatest danger of the Cartesian way is that it can invite a new consideration of consciousness precisely in the natural attitude and thus distorting its true essence. Hence, Husserl proposes a more “universal and radical epoch” in *Erste Philosophie* 1923/1924 (Hua VIII, 129),<sup>19</sup> for instance, which he thinks might uncover directly the transcendental spectator with its transcendental life (Hua VIII, 127). Only gradually, does Husserl come to realize that what one could call the “being-in-the-world-with-others” of the transcendental subject cannot be left to one side in the reduction. Husserl’s thinking about Kant, especially in his 1924 Kant lecture,<sup>20</sup> led him to reconsider the problem of the givenness of the world.

Husserl’s students and followers (from Landgrebe, Schutz, Gurwitsch, Patočka, Fink and Merleau-Ponty to Gadamer and Habermas) all recognised that one of the novel features of the *Krisis* is its account of the phenomenological reduction based

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<sup>17</sup> E. Husserl, “Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie,” *Zur Phänomenologieder Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass Erster Teil: 1905–1920*, Husserliana XIII, ed. Iso Kern (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973); trans. Ingo Farin and James G. Hart, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Husserl Collected Works XII (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006). Hereafter “BPP” followed by English pagination and Husserliana volume and page number.

<sup>18</sup> See E. Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*. Nachdruck der 2. ed. Auflage. Hrsg. W. Biemel, Husserliana II (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973), trans. Lee Hardy as *The Idea of Phenomenology*. Husserl Collected Works VIII (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999). Hereafter “IP” followed by page number of the English translation and the Husserliana volume and page number.

<sup>19</sup> E. Husserl, *Erste Philosophie (1923/24)*. Erster Teil: *Kritische Ideengeschichte*, ed. R. Boehm, Hua VII (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965) and Zweiter Teil: *Theorie der phänomenologischen Reduktion*, ed. R. Boehm, Hua VIII (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965). An English translation is currently in preparation for the Husserl Collected Works series (Springer).

<sup>20</sup> See E. Husserl, “Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy,” trans. Ted E. Klein and William E. Pohl, *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 5 (Fall 1974): 9–56; original collected in *Erste Philosophie*, Hua VII, 230–87.

on the life-world (as Husserl makes clear in *Krisis*, §43, where he explicitly invokes *Ideen I*) which is contrasted with the scientific world constructed on it. He writes:

I note in passing that the much shorter way to the transcendental *epochē* in my *Ideen toward a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, which I call the “Cartesian way” (since it is thought of as being attained merely by reflectively engrossing oneself in the Cartesian *epochē* of the *Meditations* while critically purifying it of Descartes’s prejudices and confusions), has a great shortcoming: while it leads to the transcendental ego in one leap (*in einem Sprunge*), as it were, it brings this ego into view as apparently empty of content, since there can be no preparatory explication; so one is at a loss, at first, to know what has been gained by it, much less how, starting with this, a completely new sort of fundamental science, decisive for philosophy, has been attained. Hence also, as the reception of my *Ideas* showed, it is all too easy right at the very beginning to fall back into the naive-natural attitude—something that is very tempting in any case (*Krisis*, 155; Hua VI, 157–58)

Indeed, the long discussion of the “primordial foundation” (*Urstiftung*) of modern mathematical science with Galileo in *Krisis*, §9 is similarly seen by most commentators as a novel development of Husserl’s late years. A re-reading of *Ideen I*, however, reveals that in 1913 he already recognizes the importance of the notion of the naturally-lived, naively-experienced, pregiven world (see especially *Ideen I*, §§39, 40) and also presents a brief sketch of the Galilean picture of objectivity in the natural sciences. Husserl is already preoccupied with the relation between what he calls the “world of experience” (*die Erfahrungswelt*)<sup>21</sup> and the scientific world, as his 1937 reflection confirms. Indeed, his view that *Ideen I* has its own “justification” (*Recht*, Hua XXIX, 426) must now be situated within the exploration of the genesis of the historical world which is “more primary” (*prinzipieller*).

*Ideen I* is—like the *Logische Untersuchungen*—“a patch-work” (*Stückwerk*), an Aladdin’s cave of phenomenological insights, supposedly presented in systematic form, although the progression of thought is not always obvious. I do not believe the greatness of the work lies in its introduction of the phenomenological *epochē*, the reductions, the noetic-noematic correlation, and so on. Rather I maintain the extraordinary breakthrough is to be found in Husserl’s discovery of the *natural attitude* (albeit already mentioned in print in “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft”<sup>22</sup>) and its correlate the natural world (*Ideen I*, §47), themes which lead him to conceive of a new way of uncovering the presuppositions of the natural attitude and of mundane life in general. We shall concentrate hereafter only on the notion of the natural attitude.

<sup>21</sup> The term “world of experience” (*Erfahrungswelt*) is frequently used by Husserl, see, for instance, *Ideen I*, §46, Hua III/1, 96 and §48; III/1, 102.

<sup>22</sup> Edmund Husserl, “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,” *Logos. Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Kultur* 1 (1910–1911), 289–341; reprinted in Edmund Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1911–1921), mit ergänzenden Texten*, eds. Thomas Nenon and Hans Reiner Sepp, Husserliana XXV (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987); trans. M. Brainard, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* II (2002): 249–95. Hereafter “PRS” followed by page number of English translation and Husserliana volume and page number.



*Ideen I*, §27 introduces very abruptly, and in a sketchy but evocative outline, the notion of the “natural attitude” and of normal sciences as carried out in this attitude and in its theoretical complement (“the natural theoretical attitude,” *Ideen I*, §1).<sup>23</sup> In this work, Husserl emphasizes the “worldly” (*weltlich*, later he often uses the word *mundane*)<sup>24</sup> nature of the sciences of the natural attitude and their dogmatic nature, which must now be confronted by a critical turn, activated by an *epochē* or “suspension,” which puts out of play all worldly “positings” (*Setzungen*) of consciousness (“the general thesis”) in order to grasp its very essence. The natural attitude is characterized as possessing a positing or thesis, something Paul Ricoeur questions, given the “profound” manner objects are present in our experience.<sup>25</sup>

Husserl’s concept of the “natural attitude” (*die natürliche Einstellung*) is a major discovery. Furthermore, its correlate—“the natural surrounding world” (*die natürliche Umwelt*), which eventually evolved into the notion of the “life-world” (*Lebenswelt*) in Husserl’s Freiburg era—is equally significant.<sup>26</sup> The term “natural attitude” emerges more or less alongside the *epochē* in Husserl’s thinking, probably around 1906/1907 in Göttingen (it is mentioned, for instance, in the *Idee der Phänomenologie*, 1907, §1, where it is characterized as a direct orientation towards things and not at all occupied with the critique of knowledge or the questions raised by scepticism, Hua II, 17).<sup>27</sup> The concept of the immediate subjective and intersubjective “surrounding world” (*Umwelt*) is given its first *published* characterization in *Ideen I*, §§27–31.

In *Ideen I*, a central characteristic of the natural attitude is its “general thesis” (*Generalthesis*), or overall intentional presumption or belief that the world exists, is actual, is really there. All attitudes built on or related to the natural attitude are also permeated with this general conviction. In *Ideen I* Husserl stresses that the particular sciences are involved in and supported by the natural attitude. The “exclusions” performed by the *epochē* are designed not just to exclude our assumptions about the

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<sup>23</sup> Husserl’s concept of the *natural attitude* (*die natürliche Einstellung*) includes the “pre-scientific” (*Krisis*, Hua VI 121, 152, 156) or “extra-scientific attitude,” the “natural theoretical attitude” (*Ideen I*, §50, 113; Hua III/1 94), the “natural-naïve attitude” (“Nachwort,” Hua V 148), the attitude in which I live my “natural worldly life” (*natürliches Weltleben*, *Krisis*, Hua VI 121, 152, 156), the “pregiven world of experience” (*die vorgegebene Erfahrungswelt*, *Krisis* Hua VI 120).

<sup>24</sup> In *Krisis* Husserl employs both the adjectives “*weltlich*” (Hua VI 178, VI 180) and “*mundane*” (VI 208) to characterize life in the natural attitude.

<sup>25</sup> *A Key to Edmund Husserl’s Ideas I*, trans. Bond Harris and J. Bouchard Spurlock, ed. Pol Vandavelde (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> Rudolf Bernet has denied that the life-world is to be understood as the correlate of the natural attitude but acknowledges that Husserl must have given rise to this impression since it is so widely believed. I can, however, document many places where Husserl identifies the natural world of naïve experience with the life-world. See also Sebastian Luft, “Husserl’s Phenomenological Discovery of the Natural Attitude,” *Continental Philosophy Review* (formerly *Man and World*) 31 (1998): 153–70.

<sup>27</sup> The term “natural attitude” does not occur in Husserl’s 1906/07 lectures, see Edmund Husserl, *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie. Vorlesungen 1906/07*, ed. Ullrich Melle, Hua XXIV (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1985).

real world, or “nature” but also Husserl wants explicitly to exclude the natural sciences, both formal (mathematical physics) and experiential (biology), as well as cultural sciences (*Ideen I*, §§56–60). According to the “Cartesian way” of *Ideen I*, what remains after the exclusion and suspension of this general thesis is the immanent domain of “pure consciousness” with its *cogitationes* and *cogitata*. Already in *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* Husserl makes clear that “[T]he correlate of the phenomenological perception is the *cogitatio* in the Cartesian sense, for which we can say instead: the pure, in contradistinction to the empirical consciousness” (BPP, 41; Hua XIII, 150). By the *Krisis* Husserl had come to see the distortion introduced by this move. The performance of the reduction does not so much uncover “pure consciousness,” in this narrow sense, as reveal an intentionally constituted life-world of significances, actions, and social intercourse in which the ego is at once embedded and contemplating. The problem is to articulate this movement from the natural world to the disclosing of the life-world without engaging in circular reasoning.

By contrast with the early emergence of the concept of the “natural attitude” and its correlated “surrounding world,” the concept of “life-world” did not take its precise form until after the publication of *Ideen I*, probably around 1917. In *Ideen I*, the concept of “world” is expressed largely through the concept of the “surrounding world” (*Umwelt*), e.g., in §§27 and 28, or “surrounding worlds” (*Umwelten*) in the plural: there is the “natural surrounding world” and there are “ideal worlds.” Husserl also invokes the “environment” (*Umgebung*) several times, meaning usually my immediate “surroundings” (*Ideen I*, §27), or, later, the “surroundings” of a perception (*Ideen I*, III/1, 257).<sup>28</sup> Much of the later discussion of *Umwelt* focuses on its role as the background of thing-perception (*Dingwahrnehmung*, see *Ideen I* III/1, 101). *Ideen I*, §53 deals with the nature of the world of real animals and other living things, but how does this relate to the material world and also to the world of absolute subjectivity? Later, Husserl will call the familiar surrounding world the “home world” (*Heimwelt*) or “familiar world” (*Nahwelt*, see *Krisis*, 324; Hua VI, 303) and will broaden this concept of “world” until it becomes the central theme of his late reflections.

An important discussion concerns the appropriate kind of *transcendence* that can be said to belong to the natural world. In *Ideen I*, §47, “The Natural World as a Correlate of Consciousness,” Husserl explicates the notion of *Umwelten* more specifically to be the correlates of possible consciousness. The actual *Umwelt* is one of many possible *Umwelten*. He elaborates:

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<sup>28</sup> Surprisingly only *Umgebung* and not *Umwelt* is listed in the index made by Gerda Walther to accompany *Ideen I*. *Umgebung* appears in *Ideen I*, §27 with the sense of immediate surroundings. But it is invoked relative to the “intersubjective” world we share with other “I-subjects” (*Ichsubjekte*) in *Ideen I*, §29 (*die intersubjektive natürliche Umwelt*, III/1 60). Avenarius speaks of humans belonging to an *Umgebung* that includes other humans. Husserl often uses the word “*Umgebung*” to refer to the habitats of humans and animals (cf. *Krisis*, Hua VI, 354).



But if the kinds of mental processes included under experience, and especially the fundamental mental process of perceiving physical things, can be submitted by us to an *eidetic* consideration, and if we can discern essential possibilities and necessities in them (as we obviously can) and can therefore eidetically trace the essentially possible variants of motivated experiential concatenations: then the result is the correlate of our factual experience, called “*the actual world*,” as *one special case among a multitude of possible worlds and surrounding worlds* which, for their part, are nothing else but the *correlates of essentially possible variants of the idea*, “*an experiencing consciousness*,” with more or less orderly concatenations of experience. As a consequence, one must not let oneself be deceived by speaking of the physical thing as transcending consciousness or as “existing in itself.” The genuine concept of the transcendence of something physical which is the measure of the rationality of any statements about transcendence can itself be derived only from the proper essential contents of perception or from those concatenations of definite kinds which we call demonstrative experience. The idea of such transcendence is therefore the eidetic correlate of the pure idea of this demonstrative experience. (*Ideen I*, §47, 106; III/1, 100–101)

This might be said to articulate the absolutely central tenet of Husserl’s transcendental idealism. Indeed, the exclusion of every transcendence regarding consciousness is precisely what Husserl calls “transcendental phenomenology” in *Ideen I*, §86.

In the *Krisis* Husserl continues to use more or less the same language as in *Ideen I*. In his 1931 *Nachwort* he indeed affirms that *Ideen I* is an essential if incomplete articulation of his transcendental idealism. What is interesting is that the notion of life-world does not just replace the notion of the natural world (as correlate of the natural attitude) but is also revealed as a transcendental-phenomenological conception. In other words, the transcendental-phenomenological *epochē* and reduction themselves reveal the life-world as the inescapable and unsurpassable ground of all experience. Husserl has shifted from a natural to a transcendental conception of “worldhood” or “worldliness” (*Weltlichkeit*, *Krisis*, 188; Hua VI, 192—the term does not appear in *Ideen I*) involves—a term he uses although it is more usually associated with Heidegger, and which appears in the third draft of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article, Hua IX, 274.<sup>29</sup> Generally speaking, Husserl continues to use *Umwelt* broadly to mean my overall surrounding world in contrast with *Umgebung* which he used for my immediate surroundings, my immediate context. But in the *Cartesianische Meditationen* (where it appears four times, including *Lebensumwelt*) and in the *Krisis* he makes deliberate use of a new term *Lebenswelt*.

Although Husserl is closely associated with the term *Lebenswelt*, the term did not originate with him, but can be found in a number of contemporary writers such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Georg Simmel,<sup>30</sup> Rudolf Eucken, among others, all of whom used the term in the first decade of the twentieth century. The term is already

<sup>29</sup> It would be interesting to compare Husserl’s and Heidegger’s conception of “worldliness” or “worldhood” (*Weltlichkeit*). See Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993); trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), §14.

<sup>30</sup> Georg Simmel, *Die Religion* (Frankfurt, 1912), 13. See Andreas Brenner, “Gibt es eine Ethik der Lebenswelt,” *Phenomenology of Life from the Animal Soul to the Human Mind, Analecta Husserliana* XCIII, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (2007), 253–67. See also Christian Bernes, *Welt als Thema der Philosophie: vom metaphysischen zum natürlichen Weltbegriff* (Meiner Verlag, 2004).

listed in Grimme's *German Dictionary* of 1885 (according to Hua XXXIX, xlvi). Ernst Wolfgang Orth writes: "The earliest known occurrence is found, as far as I know, in Hugo von Hoffmannsthal in 1907/1908 in his introduction to his Island Edition of 'One Thousand and One Nights' ... Hoffmannsthal speaks of poems that speak to us because they emerge from out of a life world that is 'incomparable.'"<sup>31</sup> As we have noted, the term "*Lebenswelt*" does not appear in *Ideen I*. Husserl does employ another similar term, "*Lebewelt*"—"the world of living creatures," or "biosphere"—in the three published editions of *Ideen I* (Hua III/1 115) in discussion concerning paleontology, but, the editor of the Husserliana edition, Karl Schuhmann corrected this as *Lebewesen* in his Husserliana edition, based on the occurrence of the word *Lebewesen* in Husserl's *Krisis* in a similar context. I believe however that *Lebewelt* is intentional and indeed the term "*Lebewelt*" (along with "*Landlebewelt*") was in use among German-speaking natural scientists (e.g., the Austrian geologist, paleontologist and mountaineer Karl Diener 1862–1928),<sup>32</sup> at times to refer to the whole biological world of flora and fauna (both past and present)—the biosphere or ecosystem.<sup>33</sup> One should also mention a possible influencer of the biologist and semiotician Jakob von Uexküll (1864–1944), an Estonian who became professor at Hamburg and established there an Institut für Umweltforschung and who published already in 1909 his *Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere*, followed by *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen* (1934).<sup>34</sup>

The term *Lebenswelt* first shows up in the draft manuscripts associated with *Ideen II* and Martin Heidegger was already employing the term in his early Freiburg lecture series of 1919. Possibly the first occurrence of the term in Husserl is in

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<sup>31</sup> Gerhard Preyer, Georg Peter, and Alexander Ulfig, eds., *Protosoziologie im Kontext »Lebenswelt « und »System « in Philosophie und Soziologie* (Frankfurt: Humanities, 2000), 29: Der früheste bekannte Beleg findet sich meines Wissens 1907/08 bei Hugo von Hofmannsthal in seiner Einleitung zur Insel-Ausgabe von "Tausendundeine Nacht." Fellmann (1983, 120) zitiert die Stelle (vgl. Hofmannsthal: Gesammelte Werke, Prosa II 1959, 276). Hofmannsthal spricht von Gedichten, die uns ansprechen, weil sie aus einer "Lebenswelt hervorstiegen," die "unvergleichlich" ist. Georg Simmel (Goethe, Leipzig 1913, 152) charakterisiert Goethes Menschengestaltung im Meister mit der Fähigkeit, "durch ihre [der Menschen] Wechselwirkung eine Lebenswelt erwachsen zu lassen" (vgl. Fellmann 1983, 120). In fact earlier references can be found. The theologian Ernest Troelsch uses it to describe the "Christian *Lebenswelt*."

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, Theodor Arldt, *Die Entwicklung Der Kontinente und ihrer Lebewelt: Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Erdgeschichte*, Volume 1 (Leipzig, 1907).

<sup>33</sup> Gerhard Preyer, Georg Peter, and Alexander Ulfig, eds., *Protosoziologie im Kontext »Lebenswelt « und »System « in Philosophie und Soziologie*, 29; 1910 wird der Terminus "*Lebewelt*" von Karl Diener (Paläontologie und Abstammungslehre, Leipzig 1910, S. 70) für vergangene und rezente Systeme von Floren und Faunen verwendet; er findet in diesem Sinne – auch als "*Landlebewelt*" – Eingang in Hörbigers, "Glacial-Kosmogonie" mit der berühmten Welteiszeitlehre (bearbeitet von Ph. Fauth, Kaiserslautern 1913, 382, 508).

<sup>34</sup> Jakob von Uexküll, *Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere* (Berlin: Springer, 1909) and *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen. Ein Bilderbuch unsichtbarer Welten*. (Berlin: J. Springer, 1934); trans. Joseph D. O'Neil, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans. with A Theory of Meaning* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). I am grateful to Jean-Claude Gens for bringing von Uexküll to my attention.

Beilage XIII of *Ideen II* (Hua IV, 372–77), written c. 1918–1920. Here Husserl writes:

The lifeworld is the natural world—in the attitude of natural life (*Einstellung des natürlichen Dahinlebens*) we are living functioning subjects together in an open circle of other functioning subjects. Everything objective about the lifeworld is subjective givenness, our possession (*Habe*), mine, the other's, and everyone's together. Subjects and possessions are not equal. The subjects *are*, without qualification, what is not personal is surrounding world (*Umwelt*), what is lived is lived experience of the surrounding world, and that holds also for what is seen and thought, etc. (*Ideen II*, p. 385; Hua IV, 375)<sup>35</sup>

Husserl writes in the same supplement that the worlds of the natural and the human sciences are correlative (*Ideen II*, 384; IV, 374) rather than incompatible. There is no straightforward clash between these approaches towards the world. Rather two different “attitudes” (*Einstellungen*) are involved.

Interestingly, Husserl—and later Heidegger—regularly use the verbs (or verbal nouns) *dahinleben*, *hineinleben* and *hineinhandeln* to refer to life in the natural attitude.<sup>36</sup> The primary meaning of the life-world is, for Husserl, the “world of everyday experience” (*Alltagswelt*), the “intuitive” world (*die anschauliche Welt*), or the “pregiven” surrounding world (*Krisis*, 47; VI, 47). In *Ideen I*, §30, Husserl speaks of arriving at the “entrance gate of phenomenology” when one grasps the “quite universal characteristics of the natural attitude” (*Ideen I*, 56; III/1, 520). The way of natural living in the world, follows the stream of one's interests, capacities, habitualities, and so on. Husserl even speaks in *Krisis* §72 of the “subscientific everydayness of natural life” (*Krisis*, 260; VI, 264), utilizing the term “everydayness” (*Alltäglichkeit*) more usually associated with Heidegger (see *Sein und Zeit*, §52).

Both Husserl and Heidegger speaks about absorption in everyday life, spontaneous absorbed “living along” (*Dahinleben*, see SZ, 396; 345). Life in the natural attitude is life driven by interests. Depending on what one is interested in, the world manifests or displays itself in a particular manner. Natural living is spontaneous “living along” (*im natürlichen Dahinleben*, *Ideen I*, 54; III/1, 50), just getting into it, throwing oneself into it, immersing oneself, literally “living into it” (*hineinleben*) as it were. To live in the natural attitude is to live, as Husserl puts it, “naïvely,” “spontaneously,” unquestioningly, with “blindness” (*Scheuklappen*) on. Indeed, to break out of the natural attitude is like someone blind who has suddenly been enabled to see (Hua VIII, 122).

<sup>35</sup> The German reads: “Die Lebenswelt ist die natürliche Welt—in der Einstellung des natürlichen Dahinlebens sind wir lebendig fungierende Subjekte in eins mit dem offenen Kreis anderer fungierender Subjekte. Alles Objektive der Lebenswelt ist subjektive Gegebenheit, unsere Habe...” (*Ideen II*, Hua IV, 375).

<sup>36</sup> The German verb “*hineinleben*” means literally “to live into,” “to immerse oneself into,” but it is used in colloquial German expressions to mean “to take each day as it comes” (*in der Tag hineinleben*). Similarly “*dahinleben*” has the colloquial sense of “to vegetate” or “to waste one's life,” to while away one's time in a less than fully committed manner. I am grateful to Julia Jansen for pointing out this somewhat negative inflection to the term “*dahinleben*.” The verb “*hineinhandeln*” (literally “acting into”) is used by Husserl with regard to natural acting in the world at Hua VIII, 122.

It is a somewhat difficult question to chart the exact relationship between the natural attitude, the “naturalistic attitude” (discussed already in “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft” and *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*) and the outlook of *naturalism*. All three are associated in Husserl’s account. In this regard Sebastian Luft has commented: “The natural attitude consists in viewing the world as ‘nature,’ hence as existing independent of an experiencing agent.”<sup>37</sup> But to see the physical, material world as really there, as present—which Husserl often characterizes as the main thrust of the natural attitude—is not enough. In *Ideen II*, §11 (and elsewhere), Husserl speaks of the “natural-scientific attitude,” and of the correlate of the modern natural scientific attitude as “the idea of nature” (*Ideen II*, §11). In this regard, he speaks of the *scientific* idea of nature as that of a closed domain of physical objects in the one space-time connected by laws of causation, whereas this “experienced world” also includes living things, animals, persons, social and cultural products, and so on.

Husserl becomes more focused on this issue in his later writings and on the connection between the natural, the naturalistic, and the personalistic attitudes. In *Ideen I*, §54, Husserl speaks of the reduction as removing everything that is “personal” (interestingly in his D copy of *Ideen I* Husserl had crossed out “personal” and substituted “human,” see *Ideen I*, 127 n. 95) from consciousness so we are left with a pure stream of experiences. According to this exercise, one can strip a lived-experience of everything personal, everything psychological, egoic, and reflect on it as a pure possibility of experiencing, as what he calls “the absolute mental process” (*das absolute Erlebnis*, *Ideen I*, 128; Hua III/1, 119). One cannot accept anything “personal” as anything but relative. Similarly, in *Ideen I*, §60, Husserl speaks in the plural of “transcendencities” (*Transzendenzen*) such as physical thing, psychic thing, and person as having to be excluded. Yet, in *Ideen II*, the personal world plays a major role.

In *Ideen II* (perhaps, in part, under the editorial influence of Edith Stein, and indeed the challenge of Max Scheler), the personalistic attitude emerges very strongly and originally. In *Ideen II*, in Supplement XIII (connected with Supplement XII and written sometime between the teens and the early 1920s, see the Editor’s comments at Hua IV, 423), Husserl emphasises that the life-world of *persons* escapes natural science and has to be understood in its own “spiritual terms”: “The life-world of persons escapes (*entschlüpft*) natural science, even though the latter investigates the totality of realities” (*Ideen II*, 384; Hua IV, 374).

In *Ideen II*, Supplement XII, Husserl had stated that persons as psychophysical organisms are indeed part of nature and are encountered in nature in the natural attitude. The “investigator of the world” or natural scientist (*Weltforscher*) sees persons as physical entities in this sense. Embodied subjects are simply encountered as part of the pregiven world (*Ideen II*, 363; IV, 352). Now, paradoxically, and going

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<sup>37</sup> See Sebastian Luft, “A New Look at Husserl’s Theory of the Phenomenological Reduction,” in *Anuario Filosófico* (Madrid), No. 36/1 (2004), *Intencionalidad y Juicio en Husserl y en Heidegger*, 65–104, see 75.

against the thought experiment in *Ideen I*, persons are perceived—like physical objects—to be more than their “appearances” and to have an “in itself” which is absolute over and against appearances. Husserl is explicit:

Things have a causal essence, absolutely, whether I experience it or not. They are, together with their determinations, without need of me. Subjects, too, have their mundane in-itself, and to a certain degree they have a “causal” essence, whether they know about it or not and whether I know about it or not. There exist, accordingly, psychophysical connections, whether or not they enter into the compass of actual intentionality. (*Ideen II*, Supplement XII, 364; Hua VI, 353)

Husserl then considers the psychophysical understanding of human beings as natural beings embedded in a physical world as an entirely appropriate way of considering them. Human beings are *conditioned* by physical, causal processes (what Husserl calls “psycho-physical conditionalities”) whether they know it or not. They belong to nature understood as the causally closed domain of space-time. Husserl is clear that, at one level, even the human sciences investigate humans as part of nature and that this nature has been discovered or revealed through the process of mathematization as inaugurated by Galileo and modern natural science (see *Ideen II*, 364; IV, 353, where he speaks of “mathematical naturalization”). But there are limits to that perfectly legitimate form of human science. There is another form of human science—operating in transcendental register—which sees human beings as self-conscious normative personal agents recognizing, cooperating and in conflict with other self-conscious personal agents: “The human sciences are, essentially, personal sciences. They deal with persons in personal associations and with the personal surrounding world, which arises out of personal acts in personal motivations” (*Ideen II*, 365; IV, 354). It is this latter sense of the person as free autonomous agent motivated by rational and irrational motives that escapes natural science.

Husserl contrasts the personalistic attitude with the naturalistic attitude in *Ideen II*. Already in “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,” all forms of *naturalism* (*Naturalismus*) or “naturalistic objectivism” are said to harbor an inbuilt “absurdity” or “countersense” (*Widersinn*), which he defines as an “evident inconsistency” (PRS, 254; Hua XXV, 9). This absurdity consists in the attempt to *naturalize* consciousness: “What characterizes all forms of extreme and consistent naturalism, from popular materialism on down to the most recent sensation-monism and energeticism, is, on the one hand, the *naturalization of consciousness*, including all intentionally immanent givens of consciousness, and, on the other hand, the *naturalization of Ideen*, and thus of all absolute ideals and norms” (PRS, 254; XXV, 9). Already in this 1910/1911 essay, Husserl acknowledges the hold of naturalism on our intuitions: “It is not easy for us to overcome the primeval habit (*die urwüchsige Gewohnheit*) of living and thinking in the naturalistic attitude and thus of naturalistically falsifying the psychical” (PRS, 271; Hua XXV, 31). The “spell of the naturalistic attitude” and “primeval naturalism” prevents us from grasping the psychical as such and indeed, in general, from seeing essences. Naturalism misconstrues the essential nature of consciousness and indeed the nature of the eidetic in general.

In “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft” Husserl shifts from talking about the *natural attitude* to the *naturalistic attitude*. In *Ideen II*, §49 he elaborates on the

distinction between the naturalistic attitude with the personalistic attitude. There has been considerable debate about the manner in which these attitudes coordinate or overlap. Possibly, then, these are two sub-divisions within the overarching natural attitude. While Husserl characterizes naturalism as at bottom countersensical, he does acknowledge one area where he thinks naturalism gets it right, namely, that it recognizes the necessary *embodiment* of consciousness: “The legitimate ‘naturalization’ of consciousness consists in the fact that [animate] body (*Leib*) and soul form a genuine experiential unity and that, in virtue of this unity, the psychic obtains its position in space and time” (*Ideen II*, §46, 176; Hua IV, 168). Husserl understands that the natural attitude approaches living things as psychophysical unities.

As the mature Husserl often insists, the natural attitude is, of course, an attitude that is, in its very naiveté, unknown to itself. The natural attitude is a kind of “primordial” (*urtümlich*) attitude (as Husserl puts it in his 1924 Kant lecture) that runs through every aspect of “worldly life” (*Weltleben*—a term that becomes prominent for natural living in the *Krisis*). Husserl speaks of our natural living in the world from childhood on in *Erste Philosophie* (Hua VIII § 45).

We know from *Ideen I*, §31 that it takes a radical change or alteration of attention or interest to bring the natural attitude to light. To illuminate the natural attitude as such is itself to effect the *philosophical attitude* (Hua II, 18). Thus, Husserl states that phenomenology is a science, but it is also “at the same time and above all a method and an attitude, the specifically *philosophical attitude of thought*, the specifically *philosophical method*” (IP, 19; Hua II, 23). More precisely, the attitude that illuminates the natural attitude is the transcendental-phenomenological attitude. In fact, in historical terms, it is the “breakthrough” of the “ancient Greek philosophers” (“a few Greek eccentrics” as he says in the Vienna Lecture, *Krisis*, 276; Hua VI, 321).

In his mature work, Husserl has a particular interest in the description of the natural attitude itself; indeed in the *Krisis* writings he speaks of a “science of the life-world” and an “ontology of the life-world” (see *Krisis*, §51). Rochus Sowa dates this project of a science of the life-world (understood as a rethinking of Kant’s transcendental aesthetic, i.e., the analysis of the a priori framework of sensible experience) to the early twenties and sees it as Husserl’s response to the twin challenges of Avenarius and Dilthey (Hua XXXIX, xxvi). Sowa correctly locates Husserl’s thinking here in the *Ding und Raum* lecture series (1907) where Husserl is discussing the constitution of the physical thing in perception. In *Ideen I*, however, he is far more interested in the manner in which this attitude can be bracketed, suspended, interrupted, put under erasure to gain access to what he will call the “transcendental” attitude.

As is well known, from the beginning of his career, Husserl’s overall concern is with science and how science is possible. To make the question more precise, his question is: how is scientific objectivity or the objectivity of knowledge possible? His overall aim was to develop a well-grounded *Wissenschaftslehre*, a theory of scientific knowledge. In order to make more precise the meaning of scientific objectivity, quite early on, probably in his early years at Göttingen, Husserl introduces a crucial and permanent distinction between experiential objectivity in naïve



experiencing in the natural attitude and the specific kind of scientific objectivity that comes about through the adoption of the special “theoretical attitude” (*die theoretische Einstellung*, mentioned right at the beginning of *Ideen I*, §1, and described as the “natural theoretical attitude” at *Ideen I*, §50, and discussed in more detail at *Ideen II*, §3). The point is well made (and crucially important for the planned *Ideen III*)<sup>38</sup> that Husserl wanted to ground not just the natural sciences but also the *human* sciences, but he is more interested in the relations between the natural and the theoretical attitudes. Husserl defines theoretical acts very broadly as *self-conscious* acts of perceiving, judging, valuing, etc. “Again it is one thing to be conscious at all that the sky is blue, and it is another thing to live in the performance of the judgement (that the sky is now blue) in an attentive, explicitly grasping, specifically intentional (*meinend*) way. Doxical lived experiences in this attitude, in this manner of explicit performance (*in dieser Weise des Vollzugs*) ... we term theoretical acts” (*Ideen II*, §3, 5; Hua IV, 3–4).

In the theoretical attitude (as described in *Ideen I* and *II*) the ego is explicitly *attentive*, engaged; it is in a genuine way “objectifying.” In this attitude, objects that will be explicitly thematized are also in a certain way laid out in advance. In *Ideen I*, the natural attitude is introduced precisely as a theoretical attitude (see §1). Certainly, the theoretical attitude belongs with the natural attitude as something that can be adopted prior to and independent of the reduction. In *Ideen II*, Husserl explicitly distinguishes between straightforward acts of, for example, perception and affection, and theoretical acts:

But we are no longer performing the seeing in this eminent sense when we see the radiant blue sky, live in the rapture of it. If we do that, then we are not in the theoretical or cognitive attitude but in the affective (*Gemüteeinstellung*). On the other hand, though we have adopted the theoretical attitude, the pleasure may very well be present still, as, for example, in the observing physicist who is directing himself to the radiant blue sky, but then we are not living in the pleasure. There is an essential phenomenological modification of the pleasure, and of the seeing and judging, according as we pass over from one attitude to another. This characteristic change of attitude (*Einstellungsänderung*) belongs, as an ideal possibility, to all acts ... that is all acts which are not already theoretical at the outset allow of being converted into such acts by a change of attitude. (*Ideen II*, §4, 10; IV, 8)

*Theoretical acts* achieve or constitute a new and higher level of objectivity, one divorced from practical involvements. What is objective becomes a theoretical object (*Ideen II*, §4, 13; IV, 11). Furthermore, and this is crucial, Husserl distinguishes carefully between this transition from the practical attitude to the theoretical and the transition from straightforward experience to reflection (*Ideen II*, §6).

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<sup>38</sup>E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Drittes Buch: *Die Phänomenologie und die Fundamente der Wissenschaften*, ed. Marly Biemel, Hua V (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952); trans. Ted E. Klein and W.E. Pohl, *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Third Book*. Husserl Collected Works I (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1980). Hereafter “*Ideas III*” followed by the page number of the English and the Husserliana volume and page number.

In the purified theoretical attitude (the attitude that is predominant in modern natural science), feelings are dropped, one no longer experiences “houses, tables, streets or works of art” (*Ideen II*, §11), but “merely material things” with their stratum of “spatio-temporal materiality.” The theoretical attitude is indifferent to the values of these things, but is not indifferent to the *value of knowledge* of them. In *Ideen II* Husserl sharply contrasts nature objects with everyday natural-attitude objects: “In ordinary life (*im gewöhnlichen Leben*) we have nothing whatever to do with nature-objects (*Naturobjekten*). What we take as things are pictures, statues, gardens, houses, tables, clothes, tools, etc. They are value-objects (*Wertobjekte*) of various kinds, use-objects (*Gebrauchsobjekte*), practical objects. They are not objects which can be found in natural science.” (*Es sind keine naturwissenschaftlichen Objekte*, *Ideen II*, §11, 29; Hua IV, 27.)

The theoretical attitude as a specific mode of *natural reflection* is inexorably moving towards becoming the scientific attitude. Husserl speaks of a certain *epochē* of interests and practical purposes already taking place in the theoretical attitude (and this even more so when the natural attitude is itself put in question, see *Krisis*, 138n; VI, 141). But Husserl is always insistent that natural reflection does not have the resources on its own to take the transcendental turn. An *epochē* is needed to effect an “unnatural” turn to transcendental reflection (see *Erste Philosophie*, Hua VIII, 121–22). Indeed, the phenomenologist must learn to adjust to the new world of constituting subjectivity, just as the “beginner in physics” has to learn to understand the spatiotemporal realm in a manner that lets go of the child’s naïve attitude to the natural world (see Husserl’s analogy at Hua VIII, 123). Phenomenology has its own “world of experience” (*Erfahrungswelt*, Hua VIII, 123) different from the natural world of experience of everyday life. The phenomenologist must leave behind his own *Weltkinschaft* (VIII, 123). Husserl writes: “In this manner the natural child, the child of the world, is transformed into the phenomenological child, the child in the realm of pure spirit” (*Erste Philosophie*, VIII, 123).<sup>39</sup>

Husserl is attempting to articulate a new insight, but is somewhat inhibited due to his retention of the metaphysically loaded terms “immanence” and “transcendence.”<sup>40</sup> In this part of *Ideen I* there are several different threads of argumentation conducted at the same time. On the one hand, Husserl is continuing his earlier critique (from the *Logische Untersuchungen*—especially the Second Investigation) of all forms of *representationalism*. He is specifically seeking the “clarification of a fundamental error” (§43); the “fundamental error” of modern philosophy being the assumption that perception does not reach the true thing in itself. The perceived thing, on this view, is just a place-holder for the thing in physics.

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<sup>39</sup> Husserl in this period speaks of the phenomenological reduction in religious terms as turning us into children in a new sense. He sometimes quotes Christian scripture—“unless we become as little children we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven,” cf. Hua VIII, 413–18.

<sup>40</sup> In *Cartesianische Meditationen*, §11, Husserl says that the concept of the “transcendent” has to be explored exclusively on its own terms.

Husserl has always been an opponent of the “sign” theory of perception. The thing is not a sign or cipher for something that lies hidden behind our experiences. As he writes: “Between perception, on the one hand, and depictive-symbolic objectivation, on the other hand, there is an unbridgeable essential difference” (*Ideen I* § 43, 93; Hua III/1, 79).

In contrasting the experienced thing with the thing as a scientific construct, Husserl adverts to the “well known distinction between primary and secondary qualities” (*Ideen I*, §40, 84; Hua III/1, 71), which claims the true physical thing is the one determined by physics. Husserl writes:

When physics determines the physical thing given exclusively by such concepts as atoms, ions, energies, and so forth, and as, in any case, space-filling processes for which only characterizations are mathematical expressions, it means them as something transcendent to the whole physical thing-content standing there “in person.” As a consequence, it cannot mean the physical thing as something located in the natural space pertaining to the senses. In other words, the space of physics cannot be the space belonging to the world given “in person” in perception: if it were, then the Berkeleyan objection would also apply to it. (*Ideen I*, §40, 84–85; Hua III/1, 72)

What is the Berkeleyan objection that Husserl is invoking here? It is the claim that the so called “primary” properties are as subjective-relative and perspectival as the secondary qualities. Primary qualities are relative to a perceiver; there are no “properties-in-themselves.” The space of physics cannot be the space of lived experience. This is surely the lesson of the *Krisis* and associated works, but here it is already explicitly stated in *Ideen I*. Indeed, rather than being an innovation in *Krisis*, §9, Husserl is interested in Galileo’s revolution in physics already in “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,” where he writes: “For the knowledge of external nature the decisive step from naive to scientific experience, from vague everyday concepts to scientific concepts with full clarity, was first made, as is well known, by Galileo” (PRS, 266; Hua XXV, 24).

What I want to stress here is the direct continuity, despite the gap of a quarter century, between *Ideen I* and *Krisis* in the analysis of the relation between natural and scientific experience of the world. In both *Krisis* and in *Ideen I* Husserl is struggling with the contrast between the naturally lived, naively experienced world (the world of “perception” in Husserl’s broadened sense that became Merleau-Ponty’s) and the world as projected in the theories of the modern mathematical sciences. Husserl is constantly questioning how the formally constructed world of science has come to be substituted for the ordinary world of experience. In *Formale und transzendente Logik*, §96,<sup>41</sup> for instance, Husserl speaks of “higher questions concerning the constitution of what we may call a theoretical world” (FTL, 243; Hua XVII,

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<sup>41</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik. Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft. Mit ergänzenden Texten*, hrsg. Paul Janssen, Husserliana XVII (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974); trans. Dorion Cairns, *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969). Hereafter “FTL” followed by English page number and Husserliana volume and page number.

250), i.e., the world as formalized by the sciences. According to this “idealization,” there is a “world in itself” and “the idea of exact nature” (*Idee der exakten Natur*, XVII, 250). This world in itself is precisely that which can never be experienced.

In *Krisis*, Beilage XVII, written around 1936–1937, Husserl insists all sciences are founded on the life-world and remain within the life-world:

Here is again something confusing: every practical world, every science, presupposes the life-world; as purposeful structures (*Zweckgebilde*) they are *contrasted* with the life-world, which was always and continues to be “of its own accord (*von selbst*).” Yet, on the other hand, everything developing and developed by mankind (individually and in community) is itself a piece of the life-world (*ein Stück der Lebenswelt*); thus the contrast is suspended. (*Krisis*, 382–83; VI, 462)

Husserl says this is only confusing for scientists because the life-world is not their subject matter no matter how it remains the “foundation” of their research. Scientific worlds are literally “pieces” (*Stücke*) of the life-world which provides a “fundament” or “ground” (*Grund, Boden*), and indeed “sub-soil” (*Untergrund*). I note here in passing that part of Heidegger’s implicit critique of Husserl is that he did not have an adequate conception of grounding (in *Vom Wesen des Grundes*—submitted to Husserl’s seventieth-birthday *Festschrift*).<sup>42</sup>

At the end of *Ideen I*, §151 Husserl returns to discuss the many levels or “strata” (*Schichten*) involved in the transcendental constitution of the thing (a topic he had also explored in *Ding und Raum*) from the lower level of the “sensuous schema” to the highest stratum of the “substantial-causal physical thing” (*Ideen I*, §151, 363; III/1, 316), a theme on which he will elaborate in *Ideen II*. Interestingly Husserl speaks of the “intersubjectively identical physical thing” as being on one level down from the highest level. This intersubjective world is the correlate of the world understood in *empathy* (*Ideen I*, §151, 363; III/1, 317). This identifies a particular problematic—why is the physical-causal thing in nature the highest level—surely the intersubjectively agreed thing should be on the highest level? Husserl states “very difficult problems are attached to the *interwovenness* of different regions” (*Sehr schwierige Probleme haften an der Verflochtenheit der verschiedenen Regionen* (*Ideen I*, §152; Hua III/1, 354)). He struggles to unite these different strata. At times—especially in his later work—he talks as if the physical thing gains its objective status precisely from the intersubjective agreement (or “triangulation” as Donald Davidson calls it), but here he makes intersubjective agreement to be a level below that of the highest stratum of the “substantial-causal physical thing”! It is the perceptual encounter with the physical thing that forms our dominant conception of it.

Husserl spends a long time discussing the constitution of the idea of *nature* and of the *natural thing* (*Naturding*) as well as the idea of exact *causality* in *Ideen II*—although the bare bones of the discussion can also be found in *Ideen I*, §47 (just before the notorious discussion of the annihilation of the world). In *Ideen II* he thinks that the scientific idea of a thing as not changing without a cause is not in fact in line with intuitive experience (*Ideen II*, §16, 53; Hua IV, 49). Naïve experience

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<sup>42</sup> M. Heidegger, *Vom Wesen des Grundes*; trans. Terrence Malick, *The Essence of Reasons* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969).

believes a thing *can* change on its own and finds nothing incoherent in that idea. Husserl writes:

It was the new science of nature which first grasped this idea of a strict identity in the absolutely determined and unequivocal dependencies of causality (an idea that has to be set off from any empirical apprehension) and which developed the demands implicit in this idea, demands which determine essentially the course of the scientific investigation into nature. (*Ideen II*, §16, 52; 49)

This statement could have been taken directly from the *Krisis* where Husserl writes: “One can truly say that the idea of nature as a self-enclosed world of bodies (*Körperwelt*) first emerges with Galileo” (*Krisis*, §10, 60; VI, 61).

In *Ideen II*, §16 Husserl states that modern mathematical natural science has prescribed the idea of nature as that which is governed by exact laws (especially causality) and that determines from then on what is even to be called a “natural thing.” In *Ideen III* Husserl distinguishes between “the world of actually present experience, the actual, subjectively and intersubjectively intuitive world” and the “objective, non-intuitive world of determinate mathematical-physical predicates” (*Ideen III*, 56; Hua V, 65, translation modified).

In one sense, the scientific apprehension of things builds seamlessly on the intuited experience. Certain apprehensions of science (e.g., that a thing is made of molecules and atoms) can also be justified on the basis of everyday experience because the thing is grasped as a complex composed of parts. So, in a certain sense, the scientific conception of body or aspects of it, are founded on sensory perceptual experience of bodies (for which *rigid, impenetrable, extended bodies* provide the criterion or the optimal case), but in another sense the scientific grid manifests and explores bodies in a way which is quite independent of and never supported by sensory experience. Husserl’s position, therefore, is not simply to contrast the naïve common-sense object with the scientific object. Modern philosophy since Descartes and Galileo had been attempting to explain natural phenomena, e.g., the rainbow, the rising and setting of the sun, in terms which challenged our natural conception of these things but were built on the observed phenomena. But there are other cases—and Kant of course also stresses this in opposition to Hume’s sceptical account of causation—where science applied a certain grid of lawfulness to nature and expects nature to respond to what is demanded by this grid (e.g. Hua XXIV, 348, where Husserl speaks of the “lawful nexus” (*gesetzliche Zusammenhang*) of nature).

Husserl returns again and again to meditate on this complex relation between things as they are encountered in the natural attitude and the formalized and idealized structuralization of those same things (confusingly called by the same *names*) as mediated by the scientific attitude. The key to the later Husserl is that he shifts to talking about the *attitude* rather than the *object* in his later works. His essays on the nature of lived space versus geometrical space (including the “Genesis of the Copernican world” paper from 1923/1924 *Erste Philosophie*, Hua VII) treat this topic over and over again.

The challenge is to state how precisely the life-world is *interwoven* with the scientific world, how lived space with its intuitive causal style experienced by embodied subjects provides support for scientifically described space, time and

causality (see *Ideen I*, §150). This issue appears in Husserl's correspondence with the physicist Herman Weyl (1885–1955).<sup>43</sup> In a 1918 letter Husserl expresses his appreciation that a mathematician—Weyl—could recognise the importance of a phenomenological treatment of fundamental scientific concepts. Following Husserl, Weyl thinks the a priori concept of space in mathematical physics (with its notions of congruence, etc.) needs to be aligned with the phenomenological conception of lived space.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, already in *Ideen I*, Husserl talks about the profound phenomenological problem of the “origin of the idea of space” (*Ideen I*, 362; III/1, 315) in relation to the experience of things as near or far, oriented in a certain way with regard to us. He returns to this problem in “Die Ur-Arche Erde bewegt sich nicht” (c. 1934), and most famously in “Ursprung der Geometrie” (1936), where Husserl talks about the manner in which, for example, surfaces experienced in daily life become selected for various practical purposes (e.g., smoothness) and then become idealized into the concept of a two-dimensional surface without a third dimension of depth. Then this concept of two-dimensional surface is—through an idealizing abstraction—constituted as an object in itself with essential properties to be determined by its own science.

In the end Husserl's *Ideen* offered breakthrough analyses of the natural attitude and the surrounding world that eventually would be reworked in the discussions of the life-world in his late philosophy. Husserl saw *Ideen I* as the first step on the path to the *Krisis*. But the problems opened up by the manner in which the natural attitude and natural surrounding world are introduced in *Ideen I* continue through to the *Krisis*. In Husserl's mature work, the real question is how to inhibit the manner in which the natural world of experience acts on me so that I can uncover my transcendental life and its world of experience. As he writes in his Author's Preface to Boyce Gibson's translation of *Ideen I*:

On the other hand by means of this epochē the regard is freed for the universal phenomenon, “the world of consciousness purely as such,” the world purely *as* given in the manifold flux of conscious life: that is, *as* appearing “*originaliter*” in a manifold of “concordant” experiences. In these concordances it is characterized, for consciousness as “actually existing.” In its details, however, but only in details, it can happen that this character of “actual being” is overturned and becomes “hollow semblance.” This universal *phenomenon*, “world existing for me” (and then also “existing for us”) is made the phenomenologist's new field of theoretical interest, the field of a new sort of theoretical experience and experiential research. (*Ideen II*, 412–13; Hua V, 145)

Husserl has shifted the emphasis from phenomenology as an a priori exploration of pure consciousness to phenomenology as the a priori exploration of the life-world. To set phenomenology on this transcendental path is, for Husserl, the true achievement of *Ideen I*.

<sup>43</sup> Hermann Weyl, *Raum Zeit Materie Vorlesungen über allgemeine Relativitätstheorie*, 1. Auflage (Berlin, 1918); trans. H. L. Brose, *Space Time Matter* (London: Methuen, 1922).

<sup>44</sup> See Weyl's letter to Husserl of 26/27 March 1921 in Dirk van Dalen, “Four Letters from Edmund Husserl to Hermann Weyl,” *Husserl Studies* 1 (1984): 1–12.