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Three Views of the One True World and What They Make of Mere Worldviews: a Husserlian Approach to *Weltanschauung*

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ABSTRACT

The problem of worldview is crucial to Husserl's conception of phenomenology as an *immanent* critique of modern scientific rationality. According to Husserl, our scientific traditions tend to frame the distinction between mere worldviews and the one true world in a way inimical to the aims of science itself. It is thus an important task for the phenomenological critique of reason to rehabilitate this distinction. This paper outlines three ways to do it. The first two define world-directed sciences in the customary sense (objective and critical-historical sciences, respectively); the third defines phenomenology and opens up the phenomenological view of the world.

Introduction

The problem of worldview [*Weltanschauung*] is crucial to Husserl's conception of philosophy. Unlike his most influential successors, Husserl saw phenomenology as an *immanent* critique of modern scientific rationality that would clarify and progressively realize its guiding ideal of universal knowledge. In light of this ideal, *Weltanschauung* refers to a limited understanding of the world, relative to the particular traditions of experience and praxis in which it takes shape and functions. Phenomenology thus joins in the general scientific effort to rise above "mere" worldviews in order to discover the one true world.

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According to Husserl, however, our scientific traditions tend to frame the distinction between mere worldviews and the one true world in a way that detaches the latter from the sphere of intuition [*Anschauung*] available to the reflecting individual, whose life in the world inevitably develops a subject-relative perspective. When framed in this way, the distinction results in speculation and skepticism inimical to the aims of science itself. It is thus an important task for the phenomenological critique of reason to rehabilitate the distinction between mere worldviews and the one true world. In what follows, I outline three ways of framing this distinction. The first two define world-directed sciences in the customary sense (objective and critical-historical sciences, respectively). The third defines phenomenology and opens up the phenomenological view of the world. The question of where and how this view of the world takes place, and what it makes of mere worldviews, is best answered by approaching the phenomenological reduction as a new way of seeing the lifeworld. In his 1911 *Logos* essay, Husserl outlined the task of a «rigorous philosophical world-science» (HUA 25, p. 48).¹ The following reflections incorporate later manuscripts and writings into a general account of phenomenology's stance toward this project.

1. An Initial View of the World

Wakeful life constantly enjoys a view of the world. Let us reflect on how this view appears prior to any critical distinction between the one true world and mere worldviews. When I look around, I am aware both of things and of my particular view of them. Under normal conditions, the particularity of my view does not speak against the reality of worldly being, but is rather my natural access to it. Those things I experience as most real are encountered in light of a “can” and a “could” that point to other possible views. The perceptual scene is shiftable in definite ways relative to the movements I can accomplish, and would appear otherwise if I were where that other person is. If I guess about how things might be from these other perspectives, I explicate latencies already inherent what I now see. My most immediate view on things unfolds in the midst of other valid views, which I presume to be realizable either directly or through communication. In the course of these realizations, I may privilege my

¹ References to Husserl cite the Husserliana edition, as indicated by the abbreviation “HUA” followed by the volume number. Translations are my own.

present perspective above those of others, or of my own past. But my present perspective is itself defined by the conviction that it belongs to an open system of compossible perspectives. Perception, our most direct encounter with worldly realities, involves what Husserl calls horizon-consciousness. A core of real presence is framed by the realizable presence that it indicates.

As we ordinarily use it in the singular, “the world” expresses something all-encompassing. If we search our naive experience for what answers to this sense, we are thus directed away from particular realities. Every object, property, foreground, and background, every relation of indication between the experienced and the experienceable is “in” the world. On the other hand, we cannot equate the world with the totality of realities and relations because while such a totality may be hypothetically postulated, it is never experienced; everything we say to be in the world is rather encountered in an openness pointing to further realities and revisions of established realities. But finally, the world cannot simply be the spatiotemporal openness in which all realities and indications appear. It would then be incorrect to speak, as we naively do, of our seeing and touching *it* in particular perceptions. Reflecting on our naive experience of things, “the world” seems to answer to an underlying conviction that already frames our discovery of discrete realities. This is a belief in a unitary togetherness or «universe» of compossible realities², discoverable in an endless continuity of concordant perspectives, in which any and every thing has its place. Thinking of those living in far away places, shifting our gaze from background to foreground, ruminating on the past and future history of our surroundings, we constantly traverse spatiotemporal horizons by means of our belief in the one world onto which they open.

Because every particular appearance of the world is nested in other realizable appearances, there is always room for further world-determination. In our unceasing commitment to the one world, we automatically privilege as normal

² In the late *Lebenswelt* manuscripts collected in *Husserliana* 39, Husserl frequently describes the world with the term «universe», often employed in the phrases «universe of determinable being» or «universe of appearances». The term is felicitous because it evokes uniqueness and cohesion. It is preferable to “whole”, which can be confused with totality, as well as “context” and “background”, both of which are confusable with sectors of the world. I agree with Bernet that characterizing the world as “horizon” is misleading. The world is given horizontally, as further determinable, but is itself the unique unity of realities that is so given. Bernet’s own phrase, «order of things», also captures what I take to be Husserl’s intent (Bernet, 2005, pp. 23–25). In any case, it bears emphasizing that world-horizons function in the direct experience of the world, and are not world-images or pictures [*Bilder*].

the determination that occurs in the harmonious overlapping or deepening of perspectives. When incompatible views emerge within individual or communal life, there is a tug to resolve them such that they are understandable in relation to the one unity of realities in which we continue to believe. Of course, some diverging views do not require resolution because they refer to familiar differences of interest or to forms of normality and abnormality that we already apprehend as typical features of the one world. Still, even cases of genuine disharmony [*Unstimmigkeit*] do not unseat the tacit belief in the one world of concordant perspectives. They are interruptions of a previous harmony and point toward its reinstatement. Further, these interruptions themselves appear as occurrences within the one world, the determination of which has become questionable only in certain details. Husserl thus describes *Unstimmigkeit* as the interruption of a harmony that remains in effect (HUA 39, p. 676). On the other hand, coherent views are restored in corrective experiences (memories, perceptions, etc.) that are necessarily relative to a particular perspective, and are thus themselves provisional (HUA 39, pp. 676–677). The world is the presumed nexus of all relative views of the world, but is experienced as such only *in* a relative view.

2. The Objective World and Its Subjective Appearance in *Weltanschauung*

According to Husserl's historical interpretation, the primary reaction of Western philosophy to the relativity of world experience has been objectivism. In sum, objectivism accepts world-determinations based on intuitive experience as sufficient for ordinary purposes, but seeks the truth of this world by determining it with respect to a self-identical, stable reality:

The characteristic of objectivism is that it moves upon the ground of the world that is pre-given as obvious through experience and seeks the “objective truth” of this world, seeks what in this world is unconditionally valid for every rational being, what is in itself. (HUA 6, p. 70)

For Husserl, objectivism in this broad sense encompasses most of philosophy since Plato, including those idealist approaches that remain guided by the notion of a reality “in itself” (even if only to conclude that reality is inaccessible or an illusion). More decisive for our contemporary situation, however, is a specification of this objectivism motivated by the success of modern mathematical physics. This «physicalistic» objectivism underlies essentially new philosophi-

cal doctrines that «dominate all further developments of world-understanding up to the present» (HUA 6, p. 54).

In one sense, physicalistic objectivism is this-worldly. It seeks objective being at the heart of our naive world-experience: sensibly intuited, spatiotemporal objects. It thus borrows its impulse from the implicit ontology of common sense. In ordinary perception, value and use qualities are immediately present in things. We are also familiar, however, with the constant variation of these qualities according to interest, aptitude and attitude, both within ourselves and within communal experience. Evaluative and practical apprehensions of things and situations indicate, as a structural moment of their reference, sensible qualities belonging to bodies in connection with their surrounding environment. Although these qualities also vary according to conditions of perception and the sensibility of the perceiver, they make up a relatively stable core of world-experience to which our everyday efforts of verification have recourse (HUA 6, p. 108). Because physicalistic objectivism looks for true being in this dimension of experience, it resonates with our ordinary interest in world-determination, in contrast to those «metaphysical» theories that retrain our attention on some other ontological domain in which sensible realities participate.

On the other hand, this objectivism correlates sensible nature to *its* true being in such a way that the latter can never be directly experienced. In *Crisis* §9, Husserl carefully examines this interpretation of true nature and the historical motives that made it possible. His focal point is the mathematization of nature that occurs in Galilean science. In this mathematization, Galileo is guided by the tradition of pure geometry and its application to the sensible world. Husserl's crucial insight here is that although this continued application leads us to apprehend sensible shapes "as" geometrical entities, the latter are themselves strictly non-sensible, incapable of being perceived or imagined. It is precisely by not appearing in world-intuition that they can function as substrates for properties reconstructable as exactly identical. Through a process of «idealization» that Husserl argues has never been rightly understood, original geometrical thought posits its shapes by conceiving an infinite progression toward the actually unreachable limits of "perfect" shape-qualities, which it then treats as positive determinations exhibited in sensible models. The basic hypothesis of Galilean science is that *all* qualities and changes in sensible bodies are related in a lawful way to the extensional forms that underlie them, and are thus mathematically determinable in idealized space-time. What does

Husserl object to in this remaking of nature? It is not the method of idealization as such. Nor is it the experimental methods that discover how typical patterns in perceived nature might correlate to mathematically exact qualities and connections expressible in formulae. Nor is it the methods of measurement and prediction that treat the exact determinations as optima to which perceivable things are approximated. It is rather the interpretation of the success of these methods that attributes to them the discovery of the one true world.³ For the physicalistic interpretation, the world is a mathematically rational totality of bodies, the lawful regularities of which are progressively discovered through the inductive methods of natural science (HUA 6, pp. 61, 66). These methods thus take on a kind of ontological prestige. Their predicative power in the sphere of possible experience is seen to stem from their going beyond possible experience to discover the world as it really is. The one world to which our experience commits us is finally determined apart from its perspectival manifestation in pre-scientific life.

As a matter of historical judgment, Husserl argues that physicalist objectivism emerges by establishing an ontological distinction between the real world of mathematically rational bodies and the mere appearances of subjectivity. What is new here in comparison with pre-modern forms of objectivism is that experience as such, in all its forms, is inserted in a reality of which it can have no direct intuition. This results, as Husserl writes in a late manuscript, in «a complete dislocation of meaning that nullifies the being-sense of the world and its realities» (HUA 39, p. 731). The open horizons of naive world-experience, in which reality is ever further determinable, are now seen to afford mere appearances, indications of what exists in-itself according to exact properties in a space-time that transcends possible experience. One may question to what extent this ontological interpretation still governs the philosophical understanding of physics and the everyday judgments of educated individuals. For Husserl, it was in any case decisive in determining the problematic for the major philosophical movements of the modern period through Kant. I would ar-

³ We here overlook Husserl's analysis of the increasing arithmetization, algebraization and formalization of the mathematics underlying natural science. This process encourages the objectivist interpretation by distancing physical formulae from their grounds in pure intuitions pertaining to the spatial phase of material being. The deduction of possible formulae on the basis of given formulae creates the appearance that the experimental confirmation of the former is an incidental discovery of a truth itself independent of world-experience.

gue, however, that the most important target of Husserl's critique is not the ontology of a mathematically rational in-itself behind the scenes, but the basic attitude toward world-experience from which it arises, and which is also compatible, for instance, with a pragmatic account of natural scientific truth.

This attitude is characterized by its devaluation of naive world-experience as a problem for scientific investigation. It is supported by the seemingly obvious dependence of the experientially given world on the natural world (HUA 6, p. 61). One assumes that experience happens in a human or animal, a psychophysical being in the physical world. Experience thus occurs within the nature investigated by the natural sciences. One is free to abstract from this total reality in order to study "first-personal" world-appearances, but this is precisely to refrain from considering the connections that actually obtain between experience and its physical conditions. The modern science of experience is thus from the beginning understood as a specialized inquiry overshadowed by the problem of its connection to the mathematically interpreted nature that encompasses it. Even where experience is investigated apart from its physiological ground or an analogically constructed causal nexus, the overriding attitude is that the goal of lawful explanation requires transcending world-appearances toward objectively measurable regularities pertaining to them. Husserl's basic critique of modern experimental psychology is that its scientific interest does not actually terminate in lived experience. In directing its efforts toward fixing regularities pertaining to experiences, it is content to make use of «crude concepts» (perception, other person, etc.) taken from our non-scientific talk about the world (HUA 25, p. 18). Husserl's problem is not experimentation per se, but rather that modern psychology has largely neglected the more fundamental task of grounding those concepts describing subjectively relative world-appearances in laws inherent to lived experience itself.

A similar point underlies Husserl's critique of natural-scientific inquiry in *Crisis* §34. Objective natural-scientific truths are only verifiable through experimentation that constantly makes use of world-intuitions. Scientists communicate, read instruments, etc. Husserl makes two observations here. First, these intuitions are made use of according to the meaning they have for us in naïve experience, not according to their objective-scientific interpretation. Communication between colleagues exhibits dissenting or assenting opinions. Vision of the instrument shows the reading as it itself is. Although objective science can apply its methods to these phenomena as well, it is always in their pre-scientific meaning that they function in the scientific judgments. Second,

the specific function of these pre-scientific evidences in objective-scientific judgment is that of a grounding premise. The validity of experienced worldly realities is actually the premise for every objective-scientific conclusion. The evidences of communication and normal vision, for instance, are presupposed in order to draw conclusions about the mathematical properties of physical nature. The “mere” world-appearances undergird the objective truths.

This critique is trivialized if reduced to the claim that objective science cannot tolerate a hyperbolic doubt directed at the world the objective truths *of which* it seeks to determine. If one is prepared to deny the evidence that we constantly make use of in everyday life in the world, then clearly the objective truths about this world are also falsified. If one believes in this evidence, then the truths of objective science obtain. Belief in the world of appearances as the setting of subjective life is naturally the basis for a scientific interest in determining the truths pertaining to it. But Husserl’s aim is not to raise doubts about the obvious evidence that functions in objective-scientific judgment (e.g. that my colleague is now speaking his mind). It is rather to show that the orientation of objective science prevents it from developing a scientific interest in world-experience in its original modes of validity and meaning, and that it thus makes use of it naively, as simply available. The proper ground of objective science is indeed the world that appears in experience, but the objectivist impulse to go beyond this ground precludes its scientific appropriation in universally valid judgments.

3. My Surrounding World and the Historical Lifeworld

In our initial description, we defined the one world as the correlate of an endless concordance of realizable perspectives. We did not pay attention, however, to how this endlessness is ordinarily centered on familiar surroundings relevant to the established interests of everyday life. In this familiar world [*Umwelt*], things and others are immediately understood in terms of the typical contexts of praxis in which they are involved. Everything has a name by which it can be readily pointed out for others, and its meaning is explicable in terms of other established meanings. Against this assumed background of coherent realities, one knows how to proceed in order to resolve anomalies, and is free to focus on what is interesting or urgent. In reflection, we can recognize the *Umwelt* as an inner-worldly accomplishment of practical life, built up through the habitual direction of interest to particular things, ends and values in communi-

cation with particular others. But for everyday praxis, the possibilities of communication with remote others in remote surroundings are blankly «irrelevant» (HUA 15, p. 431). One lives toward what Husserl calls the «inner-horizon» of the *Umwelt*, which is indefinitely open, but which bears the unknown within the generally familiar (HUA 15, p. 219). In numerous writings of the 1920s and 1930s, Husserl considers how the *Umwelt* gets distinguished from the lifeworld [*Lebenswelt*], the one true world of historical intersubjectivity.

Husserl consistently privileges the encounter with the foreign as the experience in which *Umwelt* is distinguished from *Lebenswelt*. We can capture the scope of his analyses by schematizing the foreign into three *Umwelt*-horizons suppressed by the movement of everyday life into the inner-horizon: the depth, marginal, and outer horizons of the *Umwelt* (each of which is plastic and defines community at various levels). The depth horizon bears historical experience the recall of which as a past present is irrelevant to our everyday world-life. The marginal horizon bears abnormal experience that contributes to this life, but in a problematic way (child, drunken, deranged experiences, etc.). The outer horizon bears alien experience that does not directly contribute to this life because it is wrapped up in its own *Umwelt*, with its own depths, margins and outside. In everyday life, the foreign appears in a domesticated guise because the *Umwelt* can contain well-known, constantly verified facts pertaining to the depth, marginal and outer dimensions.⁴ Indeed, everyday praxis often reckons with these facts *as relevant*. There was no television in the 19th century; the blind cannot see; the Iraqis live in a warzone. Such facts are familiar features of *Umwelt* reality.

Every such fact, however, refers to a foreign perspective that is itself not in the depths, margin, or outside, but is the life for which another *Umwelt* unfolds, another everydayness and urgency where things cohere according to different meanings and activities. Facts about the foreign that lie in the inner horizon of the *Umwelt* thus indicate the possibility of pursuing encounters with the foreign perspectives to which they refer. To actualize this possibility, the interests that define what is relevant in “serious” everyday life have to be temporarily set aside, a suspension requiring the combination of levity and atten-

⁴ Husserl often abstracts from the foreign in order to examine the possibility of its original discovery on the basis of a familiar world that historically or structurally precedes it. For the distinction between historical and structural precedence, and the parallel in the latter case between the home/alien problematic and the analysis of empathy in the Cartesian Meditations, see Held, 2005, pp. 39–40.

tion characteristic of curiosity. The encounter with foreign perspectives occurs in empathetic experiences that cannot be harmoniously fulfilled because they intend persons as subjects of a foreign surrounding world that is *valid* in its *own* interwoven meanings (HUA 15, p. 433). Since this foreign validity is empty intended, one enters a situation where one does not know how to proceed in order to resolve *Unstimmigkeit*. Empathy, through which I intend the other as such, thus opens into a hermeneutics of understanding at a distance.⁵ But this distance is necessarily also a connection by which the possibilities of the remote world reach into our own, the very obviousness of which now becomes strange. This movement can be a momentary flight of fancy, but it can also spur a disciplined inquiry aimed at critical historical-cultural understanding of our serious everyday life.

Everyone knows that our *Umwelt* is one among others. But the critical historical attitude stays close to the realization pointed to by this triviality: what we ordinarily take for the one world is merely a coherent context for a tradition of practical life. Our *Umwelt* as such, with exactly these depths, margins and outsides, emerges in its contingent particularity and can be evaluated as a historical product. In this awakening, Husserl sees an original discovery of «history» or «culture» as related to a particular community (HUA 15, p. 216). By stepping back from the *Umwelt* into historical connections and contrasts that normally go unnoticed, critical understanding brings worldviews in the customary sense to explicit awareness. Our ways of making sense of things on the basis of everyday experience are revealed in their utility and narrowness, as products of our belonging to traditions of practical life (HUA 25, p. 50). Even in going beyond “mere worldviews”, this attitude remains cognizant of a universal historical relativity, and interprets its world-knowledge as the expression of broadened *Umwelt* horizons, not as their transcendence (HUA 25, p. 52). After all, the exploration of depths, margins and outsides has an inalienable starting point in the everyday life of our *Umwelt*. The one *Lebenswelt* shines through in the estrangement that reveals this life as a contingent but unshakable perspective on the whole of historical experience. But it cannot be directly grasped in terms of the native conceptualities from which we inevitably begin.

⁵ Steinbock’s study strongly emphasizes the «transgression» that reveals the inaccessibility of the alien and the non-reciprocal hermeneutics that follow from it. Steinbock (1995, pp. 257-270) eventually likens phenomenology itself to such a hermeneutic. The final section of this article should indicate our disagreement with such a characterization.

It is instead intended as the *telos* of an infinite inquiry that would discover ever more encompassing continuities and contrasts in which our local realities have their true place.

In his 1911 *Logos* essay, Husserl argues, with reference to Dilthey, that this formation of historical consciousness becomes a motive for historicism, a relativist position that, if consistent, restricts the validity of all knowledge to the historical-cultural worldview in which it functions. Perhaps Husserl's best known position on the topic of *Weltanschauung* is his demonstration of the absurdities involved in inferring the impossibility of universal world-knowledge from the fact of historically relative worldviews. It is equally important to note, however, that Husserl acknowledges the historical relativity of world-knowledge as a fact. Indeed, this fact is rooted in the nature of worldly reality itself. Husserl writes in a late manuscript that truths asserted about worldly realities are «final» only relative to governing interests or factual constraints; they are never final in themselves (HUA 39, p. 707). And correlatively: «the world of being is nothing outside of this relativity» (HUA 39, p. 726). If we abstain from objectivist constructions and justify knowledge claims solely with reference to the *Lebenswelt*, the world we intuitively experience, it seems that the assertion of universal truth is necessarily the premature closure of an infinite process of historical discovery. However basic the features proposed as universal to the *Lebenswelt*, such as space, time, subjects and objects, it is impossible to accord any definite content to these conceptions beyond an *Umwelt* in which their meaning is relative to a particular tradition of practical life.⁶ Identifying common ground within the world of experience is legitimate as a practical goal for cross-traditional understanding, not as a theoretical goal for universal science.⁷ The interest in the one true world that arises from the historical attitude has immense critical power. It even seems to dissolve physicalist objectivism into an interpretive episode in the vast plot of human history. But it, no less than the Galilean orientation, points away from a philosophically rigorous world science.

⁶ Carr (1987) implies that phenomenological world-science aims at a «neutral» world lying «underneath» the various conceptual schemes that passively inform our world-experience (pp. 215–219). We will argue that this is not the case.

⁷ In the *Crisis*, Husserl argues that the effort to identify this ground is already «on the way» to objective science (HUA 6, p. 139). One surpasses relativities by positing universally identifiable qualities, devising ways of measuring them, etc. This project is consummated only through objectifying measurements that take non-experienceable qualities as optima.

4. The Lifeworld Taken for Granted and Seen in the “How” of its Relativity

The world that embraces objective science is subjective-relative through and through. Critical historical understanding achieves clarity within this relativity by making us aware of our place within the vast reaches of possible experience. Husserl himself acknowledges this relativity as a fact, and employs critical historical analysis in order to grasp the scientific situation of our time. And yet, he sees these critical analyses as preliminary to a science composed of universal insights into the essence of the *Lebenswelt* as such. If this science does not penetrate the depth, marginal, and outside horizons of our world, and if it is not the notorious “view from nowhere”, then where do its reflections occur, and what do they reflect upon?

In the *Crisis*, Husserl presents this science as concerned with worldly realities in their very subjective relativity. It is the structures of this relativity itself that will become the subject-matter for universally valid judgments (HUA 6, p. 142). Ordinarily, our relative views are our natural access to worldly realities. Our interest is in determining things on the basis of our views. When we reflect on these views, it is in order to decide what they are views of. Husserl introduces the phenomenological reduction by shifting our attention away from objects onto the inherently relative ways in which they are given in experience. The target of reflection is no longer, for instance, the perceived object, but rather the sides or aspects that actually appear and that, in the anticipated continuation of their harmonious unfolding, exhibit one self-same object. In shifting attention from various kinds of objects and validity-modes to the “how” of their appearance, one becomes attuned to the ever-presence of an intentionality that animates presenting appearances with a sense that unifies them, namely the object that appears as it appears in *its* unfolding aspects. Presenting appearances thus bear an objective sense that betrays a subjective life of meaning. The primary insight into the essence of the lifeworld is not that it contains this or that sort of reality, but that all of its realities lie in intentional experiences that synthesize manifold appearances. Though Husserl recognizes an ontological task in the eidetic description of lifeworld entities, this task is a mere guide for the reflection on the structures of intentional life in which all such

entities exist. This latter reflection reveals the essence of the lifeworld as such, and is identical with phenomenology.⁸

We have said that the subject-relativity of worldly being is a fact. As a fact, it is established in certain world-directed experiences in which relativities are revealed: spatial perception, memory, empathy, imagination, etc. When we live through and reflect upon these experiences we ordinarily take them to be events in the world. But phenomenological reflection holds fast to the realization that it is *in* these experiences that the world is originally there in its native relativity. This is the case not only for encounters at the fringes of the *Umwelt*. It is already the case for the perception in which I see this ordinary thing from my particular perspective, for the empathetic apprehension of this body as belonging to a person with her own view, for the memory in which the past present appears as such. In their original functioning, these experiencing are not facts in the world, but are the transcendental life through which the world counts as being there in its subject-relative modes of validity (*qua* far off, for the others, past, etc.). Experience is originally a movement of world-showing or discovering. If we completely shut down our interest in world-determination, we cease reflecting on experiences as events in an already discovered world, and are free to reflect on them in their world-discovering function. There is thus a stark difference between synthetically identifying lifeworld realities by researching the relative views of various traditions, and reflecting on the structure of the experiences in which these views are originally given *as relative* to time, place, community, etc. The depth, marginal, and outer horizons, in which the discovery and synthesis of relativity occurs, require a transcendental clarification of their possibility. In the phenomenological science of the *Lebenswelt*, theoretical interest does not curiously traverse world-horizons, but reflects on the experiencing in which they are first of all given as traversable.

It is this naive life of world-showing that methods of essential insight will attempt to articulate into «an immense system of novel and highly astounding a priori truths» (HUA 6, p. 169). These truths are ramified with respect to categories and modes of entities, but first of all in terms of the general divisions pertaining to experiencing as such. Husserl describes these integral moments

⁸ Landgrebe (1968, p. 156) states the situation clearly: «The philosophical fundamental science of the lifeworld is thus nothing other than the carried out transcendental phenomenology itself, with its task of discerning the world-constituting accomplishments of transcendental subjectivity...».

of intentional life according to the threefold Cartesian model of *cogitatum-cogito-ego*: the objectivity as intended, the subjective appearances in which it is intended, and the subject that performs the intention. Husserl's presentation of this threefold in the *Crisis* explicitly reverses the order of discovery he employed in *Ideas I*, where the ego of intentional life is discovered prior to the reflection on *cogitata qua cogitata*. In the *Crisis*, Husserl begins with the correlation between that which appears and the subjective appearances in which it appears, only then discovering the intentional life latent in this correlation and finally the ego to which it refers. But this new approach is a pedagogical strategy for avoiding basic misunderstandings of phenomenological doctrine, not a new doctrine. The problem with the old approach, Husserl says, is that it presents the ego of intentional life as «apparently empty of content», such that it is hard to see how phenomenological subject-matter is crucial to the aims of universal science (HUA 6, p. 158). By moving backwards from worldly realities, one is constantly aware that the reduction is the way of access to «the absolute sphere of being in which they ultimately and truly are» (HUA 6, p. 193). The reduction is the method that lets the true world appear to reflection.

Still, even if I first discover the transcendental ego as the source and bearer of worldly validities, I am nevertheless free to question the status of its intentional life vis-à-vis the world it discloses. One can see Husserl's infamous *Weltvernichtung* in §49 of *Ideas I* as an attempt to answer this question. While Husserl does not repeat this exercise in the *Crisis*, it is perhaps the most forceful way to illustrate phenomenology's comprehensive view of the lifeworld beyond its stepwise illumination of world-intuitions. Husserl argues that reflection on the nature of intentional life shows that it does not essentially depend upon the world of appearances, and correlatively, that I cannot derive an appearing world from the essence of this life as such (HUA 3, pp. 103–104).⁹ In short, a life of consciousness is conceivable in the absence of a world. In the context of the critical-historical aims of the *Crisis*, this reflection decisively distinguishes phenomenology's worldview not only from the objectivist construction of a world beyond experience, but also from Kantian-style approaches for which the world of experience is a formation of «concealed transcendental functions» that operate «with unwavering necessity» (HUA 6, p.

⁹ Husserl's *Weltvernichtung* stays within the framework of intentionality, indeed of intuition. For a brief treatment true to this point, see Sokolowski, 1974, pp. 196–197. For a dissenting view, see Bernet, 2005, pp. 21–23.

120). The intentional nature of consciousness does not rule out the pure possibility of an experiencing for which appearances do not cohere into an order of realities, a world. The discovering transposition of the world into a phenomenon for my transcendental life thus includes the realization that this life, according to what makes it essentially life and what makes it essentially mine, neither requires nor necessitates the world it displays.

What does this imply for the possibility of rigorous philosophical world-science? The world has no conditions of possibility beyond the flow of transcendental life in which it concretely appears. This life is the only proper object for a science aiming at the ultimate grounds of worldly being. Philosophically rigorous world-science cannot secure the being of the one world that our experience continuously motivates us to presuppose. It rather discovers the truth of this world by explicating the structures in which it appears as a contingent revelation to conscious life. This contingent revelation is appreciated as such in the attitude of wonder. Husserl's much-maligned *Weltvernichtung* has the virtue of making clear that every essential necessity about regions of worldly-being is an articulation of the essential contingency of the world itself. For phenomenology, the primary deficiency of all "mere worldviews" is not their narrowness compared to the open horizons of history, nor their naïveté compared to the experimental findings of objective science, but rather their insensitivity to the wonder of the pre-given world, which they take for granted in pursuit of more interesting or relevant problems. But what problem is more interesting or relevant than our original contact with the world, the myriad forms of which we sum up with the expression "life"? Phenomenological interest treats each episode of world-disclosing life as an event that requires understanding and faithful expression if I am to know what the world truly is.

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