

Review of Edmund Husserl's Book: Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology

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ABSTRACT

All objective philosophy and positive science are unreal, that is, they all depend on pre-givens that are subjective in nature. To question the pre-givens is to enter phenomenology, and it is here that psychology transforms itself into Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. All "objective" science requires its purification by a transcendental psychology. Husserl (page 257) writes: "a pure psychology as positive science, a psychology which would investigate universally the human beings living in the world as real facts in the world, similarly to other positive sciences (both sciences of nature and humanistic disciplines), does not exist. There is only a transcendental psychology, which is identical with transcendental philosophy." You can find this book at Amazon http://www.amazon.com/Crisis-European-Sciences-Transcendental-Phenomenology/dp/081010458X/ref=cm_cr-mr-title.

Key Words: Edmund Husserl, crisis, European sciences, transcendental phenomenology.

Edmund Husserl's "The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology" resonates well. The following are my impressions and reflections after reading this very interesting book.

Every object-subject composite (relation) is a "phenomenon", and Husserl begins his phenomenology from Descartes' doubt that cannot be doubted. Husserl notes that the phenomenon is open to exploration. We explore so we can discover what is pre-given, so we can find our preconditions. Husserl reminds us that Kant was stirred from his slumber by Hume's skepticism. Kant's "appearance" is embedded in a space-time manifold, and as such it represents a phenomenon that hides the "thing-in-itself". The phenomenon is a composite uniting the provisional with the universal, and Kant had to feel it to be so reactive once Hume and Leibniz made their points known. Husserl reminds us to look beyond the ego-soul of Descartes, and to look beyond the dualism where Kant got stuck.

Every feeling is such a composite, so every feeling is also a phenomenon. Every feeling holds the slightest spark of awareness. I might add that every law of nature given by an equation is experiential in the sense that the law is first conceived in the mind, and then later is it empirically verified. Therefore, the law as an equation is abstraction that forgets the experiential. Because natural laws are experiential they involve feelings, and therefore these laws are phenomenological too. It is not surprising that Husserl is very critical of objective philosophy and positive science that has lost track of the subjective ingredients that come with all phenomenon.

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Husserl tells us that meaning may become lost in history, and meaning relates to the preconditions of history which has to do with the geometrical horizons that history grows into. Husserl (page 49) is translated to write: "The geometry of idealities was preceded by the practical art of surveying, which knew nothing of idealities. Yet such a pregeometrical achievement was a meaning-fundament for geometry, a fundament for the great invention of idealization; the latter encompassed the invention of the ideal world of geometry, or rather the methodology of the objectifying determinations of idealities through the construction which create `mathematical existence.'"

Science grew out of traditions, and geometry is no less a tradition. The pre-givens are found sleeping, Husserl tells us that the pre-givens are taken for granted. Husserl (page 69) writes: "Only a radical inquiry back into subjectivity - and specifically the subjectivity which ultimately brings about all world-validity, with its content and in all its prescientific and scientific modes, and into the `what' and the `how' of the rational accomplishments - can make objective truth comprehensible and arrive at the ultimate ontic meaning of the world."

In Husserl day (right before World War II) positivist science and existential philosophy lost their meaning (I add that the meaning is still lost today), as these were all about extensions of the status quo that were no longer connected to their original preconditions.

To find the original meaning there must be a reactivation of the construction of geometry, among other exercises. Husserl tells us that meaning is discovered by reactivating the construction that have hid themselves in history. This leads us to what is self evident and beyond doubt.

The precondition of history is the stark reminder that the universal has connected with the provisional; this is the stark mystery of life, the relation again.

Husserl's phenomenology studies the precondition as it is, rather than through presumptions that derive from an extended historicism that has lost its meaning.

Husserl has much to say about intentionality, and the validation that is always sought when truth statements are attempted. And we all see people that seek validation; the pay received for a hard days work; the affirmation that is required when gifts are exchanged; the suicide note that betrays its own reason for being, as no message is needed to announce a departure unless the issue of validation is found even in the confused.

We see the need for validation in others, but can we also see it in ourselves too? Ask yourself if you seek validation in all your activities? Am I to expect an angry reaction, a denial? If so, an emotional reaction (the phenomenon again) that denies validation is an emotion that is found announcing its need for validation. In which case, the announcement is only concealed from you, but the meaning is clear to me and others that the answer is found to be yes again. If emotion is not expressed, and the answer is - yes -, then there is no disagreement. Therefore, the challenge remains to answer - no - while expressing a more reflective emotion. This challenge may be impossible to meet, as a calm denial today may follow by an angry release tomorrow, and this will cause me to return to my original conclusion: that the intentionality that seeks validation is a universal, and leads to Husserl's intersubjective person. But note also the emotional issues. It is no wonder that Husserl takes his phenomenology into psychology.

This drive to seek validity is what gives birth to our "objective" meanings, according to

Edmund Husserl, but note I put objective in quotations to refer to the observation that I am referring to a subjective transcendentalism rather than an objectivity that Husserl tells us is illusory. Science and logic can give us no help if the emotional temperament is missing, yet scientism is found today expressing its need for validation. Dawkins's "The God Delusion" is an expression that is asking religiosity to love science too. But how can religion love science if scientism lacks the emotional certitude to deal with its own pre-givens? It is not unsurprising that atheist Sam Harris is now making a call for contemplation within atheistic circles. Contemplation delivers the reflective capacity to deal with our drive for validation, for both believer and nonbeliever.

Husserl (page 168) writes on elementary intentionalities that seek validity: "The being of these intentionalities themselves is nothing but one meaning-formation operating together with another, 'constituting' new meaning through synthesis. And meaning is never anything but meaning in modes of validity. Intentionality is the title which stands for the only actual and genuine way of explaining, making intelligible."

All objective philosophy and positive science are unreal, that is, they all depend on pre-givens that are subjective in nature. To question the pre-givens is to enter phenomenology, and it is here that psychology transforms itself into Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. All "objective" science requires its purification by a transcendental psychology. Husserl (page 257) writes: "a pure psychology as positive science, a psychology which would investigate universally the human beings living in the world as real facts in the world, similarly to other positive sciences (both sciences of nature and humanistic disciplines), does not exist. There is only a transcendental psychology, which is identical with transcendental philosophy."

All of our beliefs are dependent on Husserl's pre-givens, and to explore the pre-givens is to enter the transcendental world that rediscovers hidden meanings of dimensionality. This activity engages our emotions, and so it is that the innate feeling is found supporting a universal grammar. As long as we remain true to our purpose, to love our self, to love others, to love God, we may always re-look at our slumber and find the hidden dimensions in our own mistakes; we can always overcome our feelings of doubt in this way, finding a deeper feeling expressed in a deeper beauty. This allows us to purify our feelings, by referring to the original intention that was never meant to do harm to ourselves, others or God. Husserl's universal drive that seeks affirmation is no more than the past that seeks wholeness with the present, it is no more than what I call the affirmation of Trinity, it is the work of the Holy Spirit among our vast plurality. This insight was meant to be shared, but in sharing this expect the emotional outcries that are found seeking their own validation.

References

Edmund Husserl, 1970, *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Northwestern University Press.