

## EDMUND HUSSERL: PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE SEARCH FOR FOUNDATIONS

Husserl came to philosophy from mathematics and psychology. His early works dealt with the relationship between mathematical concepts and mental processes. While he was working on his Logical Investigations at the age of 39 he had an insight into what he called the “universal a priori of correlation between experienced object and manners of givenness.” In a footnote written about 35 years later he says this insight, “affected me so deeply that my whole subsequent life-work has been dominated by the task of systematically elaborating on this a priori of correlation.” (Crisis 166) Husserl called the systematic elaboration of this insight “phenomenology.” Even though his writing and teaching spawned disciples and multiple schools of phenomenology, Husserl appears to have felt misunderstood and relentlessly reformulated the presentation of his ideas. His major works were all presented as introductions to phenomenology. In addition to the frustration of feeling misunderstood, he was driven as much by his own self-critical questioning as he was by a conviction that he had discovered the means to rescue philosophy from the skepticism and historical relativism that so permeated philosophical thought towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Even though phenomenology is still regarded as a viable “school” or “method,” I have the impression that Husserl’s main influence is much more pervasive and stemmed from his remarkable descriptive or analytical powers. The phenomenologists who Husserl felt did not really understand the core insight of his philosophy latched onto his

call to return “to the things themselves” and learned from him a new way of unpacking the various components implicit in a seemingly simple concrete experience or idea. I suspect that what he gave the world was really a new freedom in the use of language, a form of description which opened up a territory between literature and systematic philosophy or psychology.

It is not hard to imagine why Husserl’s core insight might have been misunderstood or even dismissed if it was surrounded by brilliant descriptions of particular phenomena. The terminology he chose to elaborate on his basic insights practically begs to be misunderstood. I suspect the difficulty is aggravated by the translation into English, but for many readers the use of a term like “Transcendental Ego” is bound to be problematic. Any sampling of Husserl’s work can quickly give the reader a sense that Husserl is painting himself into some corner because of the terminology he seems forced to use and the traditional associations it had. Husserl was well aware of this.

To be sure, words taken from the sphere of the natural world, such as “component” and “stratum,” are dangerous, and the necessary transformation of their sense must therefore be noticed. (Crisis 174)

One example of the misinterpretation of his terminology is the continuing debate over whether phenomenology is a form of “realism” or “idealism” despite Husserl’s explicit warning regarding such theories:

All previous discussions of idealism and realism have failed to penetrate to the consciousness of the genuine problem which lies, sought for but undiscovered, behind all theories of knowledge; much less have they

grasped the transcendental reduction in its difficult sense as the gate of entry to genuine knowledge of self and of the world. (Crisis 263)

What is most impressive about Husserl is not the systematic explication of his core ideas, but the sense one gets of the radical nature of his insight and the total commitment he has to the task of philosophy as he understands it. Despite his seemingly unwavering conviction that he has found the key not just to the restoration of philosophy but to the salvation of humanity, there is nothing arrogant or egotistical in the way he comes across. One senses above all the relentless struggle to understand and explain the intuition which has possessed him and an absolute moral commitment to the duty imposed upon him by that gift.

This aspect of Husserl is probably strongest in his last major work, even though it is unfinished and often reads like a first draft. The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology was written when Husserl was in his seventies. He had retired from teaching and had been ostracized because of his Jewish parentage, even though he had converted to Christianity when he was 27. Part of the crisis he describes is the same problem he saw with philosophy and positivism at the turn of the century, but part of it also the obvious problem he saw around him in Nazi Germany during the early Thirties. For Husserl the irrationalism of the Nazis was an extension of the fact that science had lost its connection to philosophy and philosophy had lost its faith in absolute reason:

Skepticism about the possibility of metaphysics, the collapse of the belief in a universal philosophy as the guide for the new man, actually represents a collapse in the belief in “reason,” understood as the ancients

opposed *episteme* to *doxa*. It is reason which ultimately gives meaning to everything that is thought to be, all things, values, and ends – their meaning understood as their normative relatedness to what, since the beginnings of philosophy, is meant by the word “truth” – truth in itself – and correlatively the term “what is” – *ontos on*. Along with this falls the faith in “absolute” reason, through which the world has its meaning, the faith in the meaning of history, of humanity, the faith in man’s freedom, that is, his capacity to secure rational meaning for his individual and common human existence.

If man loses this faith, it means nothing less than the loss of faith “in himself,” in his own true being. This true being is not something he always already has, with the self-evidence of the “I am,” but something he only has and can have in the form of the struggle for his truth, the struggle to make himself true. True being is *everywhere* an ideal goal, a task of *episteme* or “reason” as opposed to being which through *doxa* is merely thought to be, unquestioned and “obvious.” (Crisis 12f)

One of the most striking features of The Crisis... is Husserl’s uncharacteristic focus on history and the relevance of certain moments in the history of philosophy to an understanding of the present situation in which philosophy finds itself.

Only an understanding from within of the movement of modern philosophy from Descartes to the present, which is coherent despite all its contradictions, makes possible an understanding of the present itself. (Crisis 15)

Most of Husserl's writings can be viewed as a reaction to the kind of historicism epitomized by Dilthey. He emphatically rejected the idea that the best philosophy can offer is a survey and classification of "world-views." In summarizing the development of philosophy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he says:

More and more a skeptical mood spread which crippled from the inside the philosophical energy even of those who held fast to the idea of a scientific philosophy. The history of philosophy is substituted for philosophy, or philosophy becomes a personal world-view, and finally some even try to make out of a necessity a virtue: philosophy can exercise no other function at all for humanity than that of outlining a world-picture appropriate to one's individuality, as the summation of one's personal education. (Crisis 196)

Husserl's obvious ambition from the beginning was to repeat the Cartesian project of founding philosophy on the certainties which can be discovered through meditation or introspection and which have an a priori or eternal validity comparable to the validity of mathematical concepts. Philosophy needed to be restored to its status as a "rigorous science." By science Husserl does not mean the natural sciences, but rather the broader idea of universally valid knowledge founded on absolute certainty which underlies the project of natural science. He shares Dilthey's conviction that the natural sciences can never satisfy the need which motivates philosophy, but he also goes one step further and rejects for similar reasons the "humanistic sciences."

The natural sciences have not in a single instance unraveled for us actual reality, the reality in which we live, move, and are. The general belief that

it is their function to accomplish this and that they are merely not yet far enough advanced, the opinion that they can accomplish this – in principle – has revealed itself to those with more profound insight as a superstition. The necessary separation between natural science and philosophy – in principle, a differently oriented science, though in some fields essentially related to natural science – is in process of being established and clarified. As Lotze puts it, “to calculate the course of the world does not mean to understand it.” In this direction, however, we are no better off with the humanistic sciences. To “understand” humanity’s spirit-life is certainly a great and beautiful thing. But unfortunately even this understanding cannot help us, and it must not be confused with the philosophical understanding that is to unravel for us the riddles of the world and of life.

(Rigorous 140)

This is not to say, however, that Husserl had no appreciation for *Weltanschauung* philosophy; he simply saw its limitations and the dangers of the skepticism or relativism which it engendered. Before making his case against historicism in Phenomenology as Rigorous Science, Husserl provides an excellent summary of Dilthey’s point of view and even praise for his accomplishments.

Every spiritual formation – taking the term in its widest possible sense, which can include every kind of social unity, ultimately the unity of the individual itself and also every kind of cultural formation – has its intimate structure, its typology, its marvelous wealth of external and internal forms which in the stream of spirit-life itself grow and transform themselves, and

in the very manner of the transformation again cause to come forward differences in structure and type. In the visible outer world the structure and typology of organic development afford us exact analogies. Therein there are no enduring species and no construction of the same out of enduring organic elements. Whatever seems to be enduring is but a stream of development. If by interior intuition we enter vitally into the unity of spirit-life, we can get a feeling for the motivations at play therein and consequently "understand" the essence and development of the spiritual structure in question, in its dependence on a spiritually motivated unity and development. In this manner everything historical becomes for us "understandable," "explicable," in the "being" peculiar to it, which is precisely "spiritual being," a unity of interiorly self-questioning moments of a sense and at the same time a unity of intelligible structuration and development according to inner motivation. Thus in this manner also art, religion, morals, etc. can be intuitively investigated, and likewise the *Weltanschauung* that stands so close to them and at the same time is expressed in them.. It is this *Weltanschauung* that, when it takes on the forms of science and after the manner of science lays claim to objective validity, is customarily called metaphysics, or even philosophy. With a view to such a philosophy there arises the enormous task of thoroughly investigating its mental connections and of making historically understandable the spiritual motivations that determine its essence, by reliving them from within. That there are significant and in fact wonderful

things to be accomplished from this point of view is shown by W.

Dilthey's writing, especially the most recently published study on the types of *Weltanschauung*. (Rigorous 122f)

The problem with the historicism involved in *Weltanschauung* philosophy is that strict adherence to its point of view results in a radical relativism and skepticism which is, in Husserl's eyes, absurd or self-contradictory. If every *Weltanschauung* is an expression of its time and of the historical circumstance in which it arises, there is no universally valid point of view. The logical extension of this is a conundrum comparable to that involved in the assertion "All men are liars." If there is no absolute validity, there is no basis for claiming that there is no absolute validity.

The ideas of truth, theory, and science would then, like all ideas, lose their absolute validity. That an idea has validity would mean that it is a factual construction of spirit which is held as valid and which in its contingent validity determines thought. There would be no unqualified validity, or validity-in-itself, which is what it is even if no one has achieved it and though no historical humanity will ever achieve it. Thus too there would then be no validity to the principle of contradiction not to any logic, which latter is nevertheless still in full vigor in our time. The result, perhaps, will be that the logical principles of noncontradiction will be transformed into their opposites. (Rigorous 125)

While Husserl acknowledges that there are valuable insights to be gained from a study of the history of philosophy, he insists that philosophy should not be confused with the history of philosophy. One must be able to evaluate the ideas of thinkers in the past



and criticism or evaluation implies some grounding for validity. The problem with thinking in historicism is that it is not sufficiently self-aware. It is focused on “facts.”

Naturalists and historicists fight about *Weltanschauung*, and yet both are at work on different sides to misinterpret ideas as facts and to transform all reality, all life, into an incomprehensible, idealess confusion of “facts.”

The superstition of the fact is common to them all. (Rigorous 140f)

To be valuable for philosophy historical research must overcome this fetishism and be guided by something other than the collection of empirical facts. Cataloguing the world-views found in the history of civilization may be useful as a preparation for philosophy, but philosophy looks for a different type of “origin” in ideas.

The impulse to research must proceed not from philosophies but from things and from the problems connected with them. Philosophy, however, is essentially a science of true beginnings, or origins, of *rizomata panton*. The science concerned with what is radical must from every point of view be radical itself in its procedure. Above all it must not rest until it has attained its own absolutely clear beginnings, i.e., its absolutely clear problems, the methods preindicated in the proper sense of these problems, and the most basic field of work wherein things are given with absolute clarity. But one must in no instance abandon one’s radical lack of prejudice, prematurely identifying, so to speak, such “things” with empirical “facts.” To do this is to stand like a blind man before ideas, which are, after all, to such a great extent absolutely given in immediate intuition. (Rigorous 146)

Unfortunately the ideas which are given in immediate intuition have not been blatantly obvious for all men or at least they have not been brought to full consciousness and clarity. They have been perceived vaguely and expressed in ways that are not fully articulated. Their expression often conveys a sense of depth or profundity which has been highly valued but which Husserl believes must be dispelled.

Profundity is a mark of the chaos that genuine science wants to transform into a cosmos, into a simple, completely clear, lucid order. Genuine science, so far as its real doctrine extends, knows no profundity. Every bit of completed science is a whole composed of “thought steps” each of which is immediately understood, and so not at all profound. Profundity is an affair of wisdom; conceptual distinctness and clarity is an affair of rigorous theory. To recast the conjectures of profundity into unequivocal rational forms – that is the essential process in constituting anew the rigorous sciences. (Rigorous 144)

The key to phenomenology is a meditative technique Husserl calls *epoché*, a term used in ancient Greek philosophy to indicate a kind of suspension of judgment or disengagement that could lead to peace of mind. It is sometimes described as a way of “bracketing” the contents of consciousness in order to access “pure” consciousness, and the application of the technique makes possible a process he calls “reduction.” (I suspect the English connotations of “reduction” are misleading in this context. It is reduction in the culinary or chemical sense of distillation or purification that seems apt rather than the more common meaning of lessening in some way.) Even though the systematic application of this technique is intended to result in phenomenology as a “rigorous”

universally valid form of knowledge, Husserl is careful to distinguish it from the process of abstraction by which the general or universal is derived from the specific. Husserl is not just offering a conceptual schema for the “structure” of mental processes or the mind. He is calling for the practice of a form of meditation which transforms the mind and makes accessible what he can only label the “transcendent.” If Husserl was misunderstood, it is perhaps because his prose is unable to lead the reader through the steps which can reproduce the breakthrough he experienced in his own awareness.

There are passages in which Husserl leaves little doubt about the radical nature of the transformation produced by this technique.

Perhaps it will even become manifest that the total phenomenological attitude and the epoché belonging to it are destined in essence to effect, at first, a complete personal transformation, comparable in the beginning to a religious conversion, which then, however, over and above this, bears within itself the significance of the greatest existential transformation which is assigned as a task to mankind as such. (Crisis 137)

One is tempted to conclude that phenomenology is what results when a brilliant mathematician drops acid. At the very least it seems as reasonable to compare phenomenology with the great systematic expressions of Vedanta or Mahayana Buddhism as to interpret it by reference to Kant or German Idealism. Needless to say Husserl saw himself strictly in terms of the tradition of Western philosophy from the Greeks through the Enlightenment to his own time, and he struggled to express his breakthrough in terms of language from that tradition.

All the new sorts of apperceptions which are exclusively tied to the phenomenological reduction, together with the new sort of language (new even if I use ordinary language, as is unavoidable, though its meanings are also unavoidably transformed) – all this, which before was completely hidden and inexpressible, now flows into the self-objectification, into my psychic life, and becomes apperceived as its newly revealed intentional background of constitutive accomplishments. (Crisis 210)

Husserl indicates the nature of this new awareness by contrasting it to “naïveté” or the “natural attitude.” He also invokes the metaphor of being “aroused” from “dogmatic slumbers.” (Crisis 193) What starts as a project of regrounding philosophy in certainty or self-evidence by questioning everything and shedding all inherited belief leads to a radical awakening to the nature of experience and the “objective” world.

[I]t is only absolute freedom from prejudice, freedom gained through the unsurpassable radicalism of the full transcendental epoché, that makes possible a true liberation from the traditional temptations; and this is to say that it is only by being in possession of the totality of the subjective sphere, in which man, the communities of men intentionally and internally bound together, and the world in which they live, are themselves included as intentional objects – it is only by being in possession of this totality that one becomes capable of seeing and systematically investigating what we characterized as the “*how* of manners of givenness.” It was in just this way that one could first discover that every worldly datum is a datum within the *how* of a horizon, that, in horizons, further horizons are implied,

and, finally, that anything at all that is given in a worldly manner brings the world-horizon with it and becomes an object of world-consciousness in this way alone.(Crisis 263f)

The experience of seeing the how of manners of givenness sounds to me like something akin to *satori* no matter how systematically one investigates it with the help of philosophical terminology. In existentialism the gateway to a sense of the how of manners of givenness is often an experience of despair or anxiety. There are suggestions in Heidegger that it can also be a primal sense of wonder. Husserl seems to have found it in extreme cerebral concentration fueled by a total moral commitment to the vocation of philosophy.

Approaching Husserl in this manner tends to make one much more tolerant of the seeming dead-ends and self-contradictions which plague his thought. One senses the constant struggle and sympathetically follows each chosen path as far as one can. Limitations seem more to be limitations in the language than confusion in the vision, even though Husserl himself would insist on the necessity of working everything out in a consistent and repeatable fashion.

All this will be confirmed as I now leave the reference to Kant behind and attempt to show, to those willing to understand, one of the paths I have actually taken; *as* a path actually taken, it offers itself as one that can at any time be taken again. Indeed, it is a path which at every step allows just this self-evidence to be renewed and tested as apodictic, i.e. the self-evidence of a path capable of being taken repeatedly at will and capable of

being followed further at will in repeatedly verifiable experiences and cognitions. (Crisis 121)

Often in his attempts to convey the goal of transcendental reduction Husserl seems simply to be wrestling with the conundrums of self-consciousness. I was reminded at one point of Kierkegaard's attempt to define the self :

The self is a relation which relates itself to its own self, or it is that in the relation which accounts for it that the relation relates itself to its own self; the self is not the relation but consists in the fact that the relation relates itself to its own self. (Kierkegaard 146)

Attempts to pin down the nature of the self might seem pointless were it not for the moral context which requires it. In Kierkegaard's case sin and salvation were at stake. With Husserl the task seems no less urgent.

In phenomenology all rational problems have their place, and thus also those that traditionally are in some special sense or other philosophically significant. For the absolute sources of transcendental experience, or eidetic intuiting, only receive their genuine formulation and feasible means for their solution in phenomenology. In its universal relatedness back to itself, phenomenology recognizes its particular function within a potential transcendental life <or life-process> of humankind.

Phenomenology recognizes the absolute norms which are to be picked out intuitively from it <that life or life-process>, and also its primordial teleological-tendential structure in a directedness towards disclosure of these norms and their conscious practical operation. It recognizes itself as

a function of the all-embracing self-reflection by (transcendental) humanity in the service of an all-inclusive praxis of reason that strives towards the universal ideal of absolute perfection which lies in the infinite, a striving which becomes free through disclosure. Or, in other words, it is a striving in the direction of the idea (lying in the infinite) of a humanness which in action and continually wishes to live and be in truth and genuineness. In its self-reflective function it finds the relative realization of the correlated practical idea of a genuine human life <Menschheitsleben> in the second sense (whose structural forms of being and whose practical norms it is to investigate), namely as one <that is> consciously and purposively directed towards this absolute idea. In short, the metaphysically teleological, the ethical, and the problems of philosophy of history, no less than, obviously, the problems of judging reason, lie within its boundary, no differently from all significant problems whatever, and all <of them> in their inmost synthetic unity and order as transcendental spirituality <Geistigkeit>. (Phenomenology ¶15)

Phenomenology is the means by which values and goals can be discovered which will enable mankind to realize its potential for “genuine human life.” Husserl sees phenomenology as the fulfillment of the promise of the Enlightenment.

This is not just a matter of a special form of culture – “science” or “philosophy” – as one among others belonging to European mankind. For the primal establishment of the new philosophy is, according to what was said earlier, the primal establishment of modern European humanity itself

– humanity which seeks to renew itself radically, as against the foregoing medieval and ancient age, precisely and only through its new philosophy  
Thus the crisis of philosophy implies the crisis of all modern sciences as members of the philosophical universe: at first a latent, then a more and more prominent crisis of European humanity itself in respect to the total meaningfulness of its cultural life, its total “*Existenz*.” (Crisis 12)

What is most intriguing in this is what Husserl means by “reason” or “rationalism.”

We are now certain that the rationalism of the eighteenth century, the manner in which it sought to secure the necessary roots of European humanity, was *naïve*. But in giving up this naïve and (if carefully thought through) even absurd rationalism, is it necessary to sacrifice the *genuine* sense of rationalism? (Crisis 16)

Obviously genuine rationalism is not the rationalism of the scientific method though Husserl in no way disparages what science has achieved.

It is naturally a ludicrous, though unfortunately common misunderstanding, to seek to attack transcendental phenomenology as “Cartesianism,” as if its *ego cogito* were a premise or set of premises from which the rest of knowledge (whereby one naïvely speaks only of objective knowledge) was to be deduced, absolutely “secured.” The point is not to secure objectivity but to understand it. One must finally achieve the insight that no objective science, no matter how exact, explains or ever can explain anything in a serious sense. To deduce is not to explain. To



predict, or to recognize the objective forms of composition of physical or chemical bodies and to predict accordingly – all this explains nothing but is in need of explanation. The only true way to explain is to make transcendently understandable. Everything objective demands to be understood. Natural-scientific knowing about nature thus gives us no truly explanatory, no ultimate knowledge of nature because it does not investigate nature at all in the absolute framework through which its actual and genuine being reveals its ontic meaning; thus natural science never reaches this being thematically. This does not detract in the least from the greatness of its creative geniuses or their accomplishments, just as the being of the objective world in the natural attitude, and this attitude itself, have lost nothing through the fact that they are, so to speak, “understood back into” the absolute sphere of being in which they ultimately and truly are. (Crisis 189)

Husserl accepts the classical definition of man as a “rational animal,” but he sees rationality as a possibility or a potential to be realized rather than a fixed, given characteristic. It is in some sense a demand on human nature, a call to self-realization. It is also a drive towards an infinite goal of clarity and self-awareness. He is provincial enough to believe that European civilization is unique in its discovery of reason, but he is also awake enough to see that European civilization has become derailed.

To bring latent reason to the understanding of its own possibilities and thus to bring to insight the possibility of metaphysics as a true possibility – this is the only way to put metaphysics or universal philosophy on the

strenuous road to realization. It is the only way to decide whether the *telos* which was inborn in European humanity at the birth of Greek philosophy – that of humanity which seeks to exist, and is only possible, through philosophical reason, moving endlessly from latent to manifest reason and forever seeking its own norms through this, its truth and genuine human nature – whether this *telos*, then, is merely a factual, historical delusion, the accidental acquisition of merely one among many other civilizations and histories, or whether Greek humanity was not rather the first breakthrough to what is essential to humanity as such, its *entelechy*. To be human at all is essentially to be a human being in a socially and generatively united civilization; and if man is a rational being (*animal rationale*), it is only insofar as his whole civilization is a rational civilization, that is, one with a latent orientation toward reason or one openly oriented toward the entelechy which has come to itself, become manifest to itself, and which now of necessity consciously directs human becoming. (Crisis 15)

If deduction and successful prediction based on deduction do not constitute explanation, what would be the form of an adequate explanation? What does it mean to equate “reason” with the “entelechy” which is essential to humanity? If reason is “latent” and a “rational civilization” is the one which somehow manages to allow humanity’s entelechy to “come to itself,” how does one account for the fact that civilization can be “irrational” and humanity can fail to realize its own essence?

“Ontology” is apparently the form of the systematic explanation which grounds positive sciences and unifies all of knowledge into one coherent whole.

Remarkable consequences arise when one weighs the significance of transcendental phenomenology. In its systematic development, it brings to realization the Leibnizian idea of a universal ontology as the systematic unity of all conceivable a priori sciences, but on a new foundation which overcomes "dogmatism" through the use of the transcendental phenomenological method. Phenomenology as the science of all conceivable transcendental phenomena and especially the synthetic total structures in which alone they are concretely possible those of the transcendental single subjects bound to communities of subjects is eo ipso the a priori science of all conceivable beings <Seienden>. But <it is the science>, then, not merely of the totality of objectively existing beings taken in an attitude of natural positivity, but rather of the being as such in full concretion, which produces its sense of being and its validity through the correlative intentional constitution. It also deals with the being of transcendental subjectivity itself, whose nature it is to be demonstrably constituted transcendently in and for itself. Accordingly, a phenomenology properly carried through is the truly universal ontology, as over against the only illusorily all-embracing ontology in positivity and precisely for this reason it overcomes the dogmatic one-sidedness and hence unintelligibility of the latter, while at the same time it comprises

within itself the truly legitimate content <of an ontology in positivity> as grounded originally in intentional constitution. (Phenomenology ¶11)

Reason seems to involve a process by which thought brings to consciousness its own “structure.” Self-consciousness implies access to “a priori” knowledge of all possible objects of consciousness or at least to all the possible ways in which an object can be available to consciousness. Somehow in intuition consciousness is immediately available to itself without the process of objectification by which it accesses the world, and yet it is able to articulate its own structure through the systematic use of concepts. I confess I do not understand Husserl’s critique of Kant and the neo-Kantians well enough to follow all the distinctions in his explanation of the transcendental reduction, but one thing seems abundantly clear to me. The concepts Husserl needs for his systematic thinking are derived from a language he has learned. Without language one has no “concepts.” Without concepts one is “inarticulate” at the very least and has only overwhelming immediate experience which “makes no sense.” Perhaps the abandonment of conceptual thought can result in being flooded by the white light of mystical awareness in which one loses one’s separate identity. In any event the attempt to articulate immediate experience or “intuition” relies on language which is an inherited cultural artifact, a repository of ideas of precisely the sort that phenomenology seeks to free itself from. This is why Husserl began to see the need for a different type of examination of historical moments in philosophy. He understood the extent to which modern European man was trapped beneath naïve formulations from the Enlightenment and had to excavate himself in some way.

What Husserl seems to have discovered is what Gadamer calls the “linguisticity of understanding.” He has seen the interconnection of the self and its “life world,” and he has seen the function of language or “ideas” in the constitution of the “world.” His terminology seems inevitably to invite what some like to call “hypostasization,” but he has clearly penetrated beneath Descartes’ bifurcation of reality into *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. What he describes as his “faith” in reason is his experience of the driving force in his own thought (and life). It is the ability of thought to transcend itself and ever renew itself in its wrestling match with the angel of intuition. He tended to adopt the positivist metaphor and view reason as a progressive force in history, but he could also have viewed it as a cyclical, never-ending process in which one generation’s revelation becomes the sediment of dogma from beneath which the next generation must resurrect itself.