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Gadamer's Hermeneutics and the Art of Conversation

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Andrzej Wierciński

DERMOT MORAN

" Gadamer and Husserl on Horizon, Intersubjectivity and the Life-World"

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plea that "the future survival of humankind" may depend on our willingness to engage dialogically with others on both the personal level and the level of larger human communities and cultures.

3. Gadamer and Husserl on Horizon, Intersubjectivity, and the Life-World

Dermot Moran

The Marburg Beginning and the Promise of Phenomenology

Hans-Georg Gadamer's manner of engaging with sedimented *historical meaning* and with the binding yet elusive character of *tradition* began during his early studies in Marburg, inspired primarily by Martin Heidegger, as well as by his encounter with the Marburg classicists, Paul Natorp and Paul Friedländer. In these formative years, as Gadamer himself has acknowledged, he also had a fruitful engagement with Edmund Husserl and the phenomenological movement. Indeed, he acknowledges the special importance *phenomenology* had for students at that time as the promise of a movement that would remain loyal to concrete lived experience and thereby challenge the prevailing Neo-Kantianism that prioritized somewhat arid and non-historical epistemological problems.[1] Gadamer writes of having a certain expectation from Husserl's phenomenology during the early twenties: "We also lived in the expectation of a new philosophical orientation, which was particularly tied to the dark, magical word 'phenomenology.'"[2]

Heidegger too has talked about that 'magic word' phenomenology; and in the twenties that term signified primarily the work of Husserl, Scheler, and their followers. What phenomenology promised to do was to go behind the accepted world of science and inquire into the foundations of the life-world. As Gadamer would later recall:

> But the phenomenological school [in the 1920's] had an even stronger impact by no longer sharing the Marburg School's orientation to the facts of the sciences as self-evident. It went behind scientific experience and the categorial analysis of its methods, and brought the natural experience of life—that is, what the later Husserl named with the now famous expression, the "life-world"—into the foreground of its phenomenological investigation.[3]

Understandably, given his career-long focus on hermeneutics and classical philosophy, Gadamer's engagement with Edmund Husserl has not been highlighted by commentators and certainly has not been given the same attention as Gadamer's lifelong relationship with Heidegger (until the latter's death in 1976).[4] Indeed, Gadamer's

[1] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Die Phänomenologische Bewegung," GW3: 105-146; English, "The Phenomenological Movement," in idem, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. and ed. David Linge (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1976), 130-181.

[2] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Reflections on My Philosophical Journey," in Lewis Edwin Hahn, ed., *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, Library of Living Philosophers (Chicago: Open Court, 1997), 7.

[3] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Martin Heidegger and Marburg Theology (1964)," in Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 198-212, esp. 200.

[4] See Walter's Lammi, "Gadamer's Debt to Husserl," in Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, ed., *Analecta Husserliana* LXXI (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 167–179. See also

embrace of *hermeneutics* of the Heideggerian kind (itself stemming from Dilthey) as the primary path to historical understanding has been interpreted as a rejection of eidetic phenomenology of the descriptive kind practiced by Husserl (who was widely seen as an opponent of Dilthey). Moreover, Gadamer was particularly influenced in his reading of the importance of hermeneutics by an important comparative study of the time by Dilthey's student and son-in-law, Georg Misch (1878-1965), entitled *Life-Philosophy and Phenomenology: A Dispute Concerning the Diltheyan Tendency in Heidegger and Husserl* which appeared in 1930.[5] Misch portrayed hermeneutics as more faithfully portraying life than Husserl's eidetic phenomenology and regards Heidegger as having thought through to the end Dilthey's problematic.

As a consequence, there is a standard view, articulated, for instance, in Jean Grondin's otherwise excellent biography of Gadamer, that Gadamer repudiated Husserl as an outdated professor from a previous generation—"a typical Wilhelminian scholar with stiff collar and gold watch chain in the style of the time, which reminded Gadamer of the world of his father."[6] Grondin contrasts Husserl's and Heidegger's approach to phenomenology as follows:

> Only the term "phenomenology" was common to Husserl and Heidegger.... Whereas Husserl represented a phenomenology of consciousness, strongly reminiscent of idealism and modeled on pure, ideal, virtually Euclidean science, Heidegger proclaimed a phenomenology of historical Dasein that swept Husserl's phenomenology of consciousness clean away.[7]

On this all too common view Husserl was an ahistorical, Cartesian, rationalist idealist, who did not appreciate the historicity, finitude and facticity of human lived existence.

Indeed, it is certainly true—as Gadamer himself has repeatedly acknowledged—that Husserl's austere approach could never have satisfied the post-First-World-War generation of students that were 'looking for a worldview' and some

David Vessey, "Who was Gadamer's Husserl," *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* VII (2007): 1-23. In fact, Gadamer's *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3, devotes three articles to Husserl: "The Phenomenological Movement"(written in 1963), "The Science of the Life-World" (1972), both translated in Linge, ed, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, op. cit., and "*Zur Aktualität der Husserlschen Phänomenologie*" ["On the Current Relevance of Husserl's Phenomenology"] (1974), GW3: 160-171.

[5] See Georg Misch, *Lebensphilosophie und Phänomenologie: Eine Auseinandersetzung der Diltheyschen Richtung mit Heidegger und Husserl* (Bonn: Cohen, 1930; 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1964).

[6] See Jean Grondin, *Hans-Georg Gadamer: A Biography*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer (New Haven, Conn. & London: Yale University Press, 2003), 98.

[7] Ibid., 97. In a number of publications I have tried to overcome this contrast by emphasizing the continuity between Husserl's and Heidegger's conceptions of phenomenology, see, for instance, Dermot Moran, "Heidegger's Critique of Husserl's and Brentano's Accounts of Intentionality," *Inquiry*, vol. 43, no. 1 (March 2000): 39-65; and idem, "Husserl and Heidegger on the Transcendental 'Homelessness' of Philosophy," in Pol Vandevelde and Sebastian Luft, ed., *Phenomenology, Archaeology, Ethics: Current Investigations of Husserl's Corpus* (London & New York: Continuum Press, 2010), 169-187.

kind of answers to the meaning of existence given the mindless destruction of the war. It is also true that Gadamer understood Husserlian phenomenology as a kind of intellectual pursuit of the essence or *eidos*, which, accordingly, could never grasp the 'uniqueness, finitude and historicity' of human Dasein, as he puts it in his 1963 essay on the phenomenological movement.[8] Gadamer was disappointed that Husserl's phenomenology, after so promising a start, effectively collapsed back into a kind of Neo-Kantian idealism.[9] It is certainly true that Husserl made his peace with the Neo-Kantians and especially Rickert and Cassirer during his Freiburg years. Nonetheless, Gadamer saw Husserl as an inspiring teacher attempting to communicate the importance of phenomenology with exactitude, honesty and even a missionary zeal.[10] According to Gadamer's anecdote, Husserl's efforts to transcendentally ground phenomenology left him no time even to go to the theater, to listen to music or to enjoy poetry, as he confessed to Roman Ingarden![11] But Husserl did want to do philosophy genuinely and *concretely* and Gadamer was greatly drawn to this, admiring Husserl's attention to detail and 'craftsmanship,' although he admits that, in 1923 when he sat in Husserl's lectures, as a recently graduated doctor of philosophy, he was really not up to the task of grappling with the depth and intricacies of Husserl's phenomenology.[12]

In fact, Husserl left a deeper mark on Gadamer than has been generally acknowledged, and, in this essay, I want to show that Husserl's influence on Gadamer is much greater than is commonly realized. Moreover, Husserl's influence on Gadamer grew, especially *after* Gadamer had read the Husserl's *Crisis of the European Sciences*[13] at some time during the nineteen fifties. It is noteworthy, therefore, that in *Truth and Method* (1960),[14] Gadamer has a long discussion of Husserl's *Crisis* which had been published in the Husserliana series edited by Walter Biemel just six years earlier in 1954. In fact, only the first two of the projected five parts of the *Crisis* appeared in print in the newly founded *Philosophia* journal edited by the exiled

[8] See Gadamer, "The Phenomenological Movement," 135.

[9] See Gadamer, "Reflections on My Philosophical Journey," 7.

[10] See Gadamer, "The Phenomenological Movement," 132.

[11] See Gadamer, "Zur Aktualität der Husserlschen Phänomenologie," GW3: 165.

[12] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "On Phenomenology: A Conversation with Alfred Grieder," in *Gadamer in Conversation*, ed. and trans. Richard Palmer (New Haven, Conn. & London: Yale University Press, 2001), 106.

[13] *Edmund Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970). The German edition is Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. Walter Biemel, Husserliana (hereafter 'Hua') volume VI (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1954). Hereafter '*Crisis*' followed by the section number, page number of the English translation and then the Husserliana volume and page number.

[14] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1960, 2nd edition, 1965; GW1, 1990). The English translation is by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Sheed & Ward, 1989). Hereafter 'TM' followed by the pagination of the English translation.

German Neo-Kantian philosopher Arthur Liebert (1878-1946)[15] and published in Belgrade early in 1937 (but dated 1936).[16] The full edition did not appear until 1954. But it made a profound impression on Gadamer who particularly focuses on its novel discussion of the 'life-world' (*Lebenswelt*).

Gadamer sees the *Crisis* as Husserl's belated attempt to address the themes of finitude and historicity, which had been discussed so vividly and inspirationally by Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927).[17] Indeed, Heidegger's very popularity is for Husserl, on Gadamer's reading, an indication of the decline of the spirit of philosophy as a rigorous science. Gadamer correctly interprets the late Husserl's lament that the 'dream was over' as a regretting of the abandonment of the ideal of philosophy as a rigorous science. He also interprets Husserl correctly as never abandoning the doctrine of the transcendental ego even in his later work, when, according to Landgrebe and others Husserl was turning away from Cartesianism.

In *Truth and Method* Gadamer quite deliberately acknowledges the importance of Husserl's relation to hermeneutics and pays particular attention to the later Husserl's concepts of *horizon*, *intersubjectivity* and *life-world* (the latter concept Gadamer acknowledges has 'found an astounding resonance in the contemporary mind'[18]). In the rest of this essay I hope to show that Gadamer came to appreciate that Edmund Husserl had a much fuller and more subtle appreciation of finitude, facticity and historicity, than the common view suggests.

Gadamer's Familiarity with Husserl

Of course, Gadamer was already familiar with Husserl from his Marburg studies in the early twenties. The Marburg professor of classics Paul Natorp was a friend

[15] Arthur Liebert, a Prussian Jew, was a Neo-Kantian philosopher, who had become head of the Kant-Gesellschaft in 1910. He had lectured in Berlin from 1919 until 1933 when he was dismissed under the Nazi laws. He then went to Prague where he founded the *Philosophia* society and organized the publication of its journal (which appeared until 1939), at which time he emigrated to England, settling in Birmingham. He returned to Berlin in 1946 but died soon after. He wrote several Kantian studies e.g., *Wie ist kritische Philosophie überhaupt möglich?* (Leipzig 1919) and three books whose titles have relevance to Husserl's theme: *Die geistige Krisis der Gegenwart* (Berlin 1923), *Die Krise des Idealismus* (Zürich 1936), and *Von der Pflicht der Philosophie in unserer Zeit* (Zürich 1938).

[16] The first two-parts (i.e., §§ 1-27) of the *Crisis* were published in Volume One of the yearbook *Philosophia* (Belgrade, 1936), 77-176. Although dated 1936, in fact, the journal was held up by a printer's strike and the editor Liebert's travels and did not actually appear until January 2007. Husserl himself received his copy on 7th January 1937. The Editor of *Philosophia*, Arthur Liebert, because he was Jewish, was in exile from the Nazis in Belgrade. Because of his Jewish origin Husserl was officially forbidden to publish in Germany after 1933 (although his existing books were allowed to remain in print).

[17] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (1927; 17th edition, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1993), trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). Hereafter 'SZ' followed by the section number and pagination of the English translation, and then the page number of the German.

[18] See Gadamer, "The Phenomenological Movement," 151.

and correspondent of Husserl's and had favorably reviewed the latter's *Ideas* I (1913) in the journal *Logos* in 1917. Gadamer also learned about Husserl from the seminars of the influential art historian Richard Hamann (1879-1961),[19] a former student of both Georg Simmel and Wilhelm Dilthey, as well as from a tutorial with one of Natorp's students who discussed *Ideas* I.[20] Furthermore, in 1920, Max Scheler, at that time considered the second leading light, after Husserl, in phenomenology, had visited Marburg and had discussed Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige* (*Idea of the Holy*) with the young Gadamer as he recalled in his *Philosophical Apprenticeships*.[21] Gadamer even took one of Husserl's courses in the summer semester of 1923 in Freiburg, where he had gone primarily to listen to Heidegger. This course, supposedly entitled 'Transcendental Logic' convinced Gadamer that Husserl had taken an idealist turn (this was prior to the publication of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* in 1929[22] and of the *Cartesian Meditations*[23] in the French translation, both of which confirmed Husserl's embrace of idealism). Gadamer, of course, was correct to see Husserl as an idealist. Husserl's *Ideas* I (1913)[24] had already been reviewed positively by Paul Natorp who saw Husserl as moving toward a reconciliation with Kant through his presentation of phenomenology as a form of transcendental philosophy. Furthermore, *Ideas* I had caused some consternation among Husserl's realist followers (e.g., Johannes Daubert) who thought he had strayed from the realism of the *Logical Investigations*. Indeed, in his 1925 lectures, *History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger criticizes Husserl's account of consciousness as 'immanent' and 'absolute' as an uninterrogated continuation of the presuppositions of Cartesian metaphysics. For many philosophers of the day, *Ideas* I remained the definitive introduction to Husserl's phenomenology and Husserl did not publish another book for over a decade. In 1931 *Ideas* I was translated into English by Boyce Gibson and Husserl wrote an Author's Preface to the translation. This 'Author's Preface' (written in 1930) reinforces the claim made in *Cartesian Meditations* that phenomenology is *eo ipso* transcendental idealism. This return to idealism seemed to miss the importance of engaging with the concretely historical.

[19] See Gadamer, "On Phenomenology: A Conversation with Alfons Grieder," 103.

[20] Ibid., 104.

[21] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Apprenticeships*, trans. Robert R. Sullivan (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985),15.

[22] Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1969).

[23] *Edmund Husserl, Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, ed. Stephan Strasser, Husserliana I (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1950), trans. Dorion Cairns, *Cartesian Meditations* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1993). Hereafter 'CM' followed by pagination of English and then Husserliana edition.

[24] Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischer Philosophie*. Erstes Buch: *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* 1. Halbband *Text der 1-3. Auflage*, ed. K. Schuhmann, Hua III/1 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), trans. Fred Kersten, *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy First Book* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1983). Hereafter '*Ideas* I' followed by English pagination Husserliana volume and German pagination of the first Niemeyer Edition of 1913.

But Gadamer's engagement with Husserl did not end in 1923. Indeed, I would suggest that his most fruitful *Auseinandersetzung* with Husserl came in the nineteen fifties through to the nineteen seventies when Gadamer was able to read the newly edited texts of Husserl including the *Crisis*, *Ideas* II, which appeared in 1952,[25] and the *Intersubjectivity* volumes (which appeared only in 1973).[26] These texts alerted Gadamer to a very different Husserl, one engaged with history, community, personhood and the meaning of tradition.

On his own admission Gadamer was enamored of Heidegger (whom he first encountered as Husserl's assistant in Freiburg in 1923) and he was particularly by Heidegger's ability to disclose the history of the motivation behind philosophical questions,[27] but he was also aware of certain conceptions in Husserl that were crucial to his project for developing hermeneutics. Primarily, he was interested in Husserl's conception of *intentionality* (surprisingly downplayed in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, 1927) as a way of overcoming the epistemological separation between subject and object that had bedeviled Neo-Kantianism. Gadamer writes:

> When epistemological inquiry sought to answer the question of how the subject, filled with his own representations, knows the external world and can be certain of its reality, the phenomenological critique showed how pointless such a question is.[28]

Intentionality, for Gadamer, meant the correlation between 'the object of experience' and its 'modes of givenness.' (TM, 244) Phenomenology focused on these modes of givenness and thereby uncovered not just the objects presented in experience but also the horizons against which they are so presented. (see TM, 235) Gadamer continues to insist on the importance of intentionality which suggests a closer proximity to Husserl rather than to Heidegger who replaced the notion with the more opaque conception of the transcendence of Dasein.

Gadamer was also deeply taken with Husserl's analyses of time consciousness and writes in *Truth and Method* (summarizing the essential insight he found in phenomenology): "Every experience has implicit horizons of before and after, and finally fuses with the continuum of the experiences present in the before and after to form a unified flow of experience." (TM, 245)

[25] Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, ed. Marly Biemel, Husserliana IV (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1952), trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer as *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989). Hereafter '*Ideas* II' followed by English pagination, Husserliana (hereafter 'Hua') volume and German pagination.

[26] See Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität: Texte aus dem Nachlass*, Husserliana vols. XIII, XIV and XV, ed. Iso Kern (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973).

[27] See Gadamer, "Reflections on My Philosophical Journey." 8.

[28] Gadamer, "The Phenomenological Movement," 131.

Crucially, Gadamer was deeply influenced by Husserl's conception of "horizon" (*Horizont*) and, indeed, makes that concept more central to his own hermeneutics than it might have been in Husserl (although the late Husserl moved more and more in the direction of articulating what he himself calls 'horizon-intentionality'). Gadamer made the 'overlapping' of horizons central to mutual understanding, and develops a careful hermeneutic of how such overlapping should be understood.

In the *Crisis* in particular, as Gadamer recognizes, Husserl offers his most sustained effort to develop a phenomenological approach to the issues of temporality, historicity, finitude and cultural and generational development (the phenomenon Husserl calls 'generativity,' *Generativität*, *Crisis*, 188; Hua VI, 191, i.e., the manner in which meanings become sedimented in being passed from one generation to another). Moreover, in the latter parts of the *Crisis*, especially in the supplementary texts, one finds remarks about the nature of the philosophical tradition that could have been written by a Heidegger or a Gadamer but in fact emanated from Husserl's own private musings on the 'poeticization' (*Dichtung*) of philosophical history. On the one hand, for Husserl—as for Heidegger—history (understood in terms of the chains of events and the unfolding of circumstances over time) is the sphere of the unique, the individual, the once-off temporally marked event. It is truly the domain of *facticity*, contingency and what Heidegger will call 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*) Indeed, in this context, Husserl regularly invokes the idea of the 'relativity of everything historical' (*die Relativität alles Historischen*, *Crisis*, 373; VI, 382). Husserl too frequently remarks on the 'irrational fact' of history, something emphasized by Ludwig Landgrebe (Indeed, Landgrebe's article on Husserl's departure from Cartesianism was particularly influential on Gadamer also).[29] On the other hand, as Husserl also recognizes, history also is the domain of the intersubjective, the social, the communal life lived according to norms and values. Human activities cohere together into tradition and the shaping of culture. Husserl is interested in discovering the underlying essential a priori structures that govern the constitution of historical, communal life In this regard he refers to the 'essential structures of absolute historicity' (*Crisis* 259; VI, 262) and even invokes the idea of 'absolute historicity,' concepts Gadamer cites in his assessment of Husserl's later work.

Husserl and Heidegger on Historicity

Although, Husserl is often presented as having no interest in history, in fact, he has been engaging with the meaning of the human sciences from around 1911. His concern with making sense of both history as a science and the manner of human historical living goes back much earlier and at least can be dated to his reading o

[29] Hans-Georg See Ludwig Landgrebe, "Husserl's Departure from Cartesianism," in idem. *The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl: Six Essays*, ed. with an Introduction by Donn Welton (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 66-121.

Wilhelm Dilthey (the issue of historicism is discussed critically in Husserl's 'Philosophy as a Rigorous Science' essay of 1910/1911). Already in writing *Ideas* I (especially in *Ideas* III) Husserl had been struggling to articulate the relations between nature and culture and this is already evident in the draft manuscript of *Ideas* II. It is most probable that the analysis of history in the *Crisis* and *Origin of Geometry* is simply a continuation of this meditation (relating primarily to Dilthey and Rickert) carried out in Husserl's *Nature and Spirit* lectures given repeatedly between 1917 and 1927. The recent publication of these *Nature and Spirit* lectures, as well as Husserliana volume XXXIX on the life-world,[30] show that in fact Husserl had a great deal to say about the problematic of history in general. Husserl acknowledges that Dilthey's concept of the 'interconnectedness of life' (*Lebenszusammenhang*) is a powerful conception, which, however, needs more adequate theoretical grounding and clarification. This too is Gadamer's focus—he too begins from the Diltheyan intuition of the immediate, seamless flow and unity of life and acknowledges that he was reading Dilthey in 1923 at the very time that Heidegger too was reading him.

Gadamer notes that, already by 1918, Husserl (as expressed in a letter written to Natorp) sought to overcome the static approaches of his earlier phenomenology and had tried to make the issue of transcendental genesis the core of his phenomenology. For Heidegger, as for Gadamer, all efforts to solve the problem of history (including those that compared its methodology to that of the natural sciences) already took for granted the intrinsic meaning of human historical happening, making history, what Heidegger calls '*Geschehen*' (historicizing): "The specific movement in which Dasein *is stretched along and stretches itself along*, we call its '*historizing.*'" (SZ, § 72, 427; 375)

In his 'Foreword to the Continuation of the *Crisis*' (Supplement 13 in Biemel, unfortunately not included in David Carr's English translation) Husserl himself asserts that the historical mode of exposition of the *Crisis* is 'not chosen by chance' but rather is central to his task (*Crisis*, Hua VI, 441) since he wants to exhibit the whole history of philosophy as possessing a 'unitary teleological structure' (*eine einheitliche teleologische Struktur*, *Crisis* Hua VI, 442). Philosophy, Husserl acknowledges, cannot escape its history; philosophers are 'heirs to the past' in respect of the very goal set for philosophy (*Crisis*, § 7, 17; Hua VI, 16), indeed philosophers have a duty to carry through a historical self-reflection in order to articulate the needs of the time.

> In *our* philosophizing then—how can we avoid it?—we are *functionaries of mankind* (*Funktionäre der Menschheit*). The quite personal responsibility of our own true being as philosophers, our inner personal vocation, bears within itself at the same time, the responsibility for the true being of mankind; the latter is, necessarily, being toward a *telos* and can only come to realization, *if at all*, through philosophy—through *us, if* we are philosophers in all seriousness. (*Crisis*, § 7, 17; VI, 15)

[30] Edmund Husserl, *Die Lebenswelt: Auslegungen der Vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution*, ed. Rochus Sowa, Husserliana XXXIX (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008).

Indeed, Husserl has a very subtle appreciation, as we shall see, of the peculiar manner in which philosophy approaches its own history. He speaks of a kind of 'poeticizing' of the history of philosophy. By that he means that philosophers identify their historical predecessors not by some factual documenting of the external history of philosophy, but through a kind of inner alignment, rather in the manner in which poets choose those whom they have decided have influenced them. Poetry and philosophy makes its own tradition as it were.

Historicity (*Historizität*, *Geschichtlichkeit*—he uses both terms) for Husserl, does not have quite the same technical sense it has in Heidegger's work. For Husserl, it means primarily the way in which human groupings constitute and live out, across the interchanges and transmissions of the generations (Husserl's 'generativity'), a common history. Each group has a 'unity of becoming'; every social grouping has its own 'historicity.' As Husserl writes in the *Crisis*:

> Each kind of cultural formation has its historicity, has its character of having become and its relation to the future and, indeed, in reference to its historical, living, productive and utilizing humanity. (*Crisis*, VI 504, my translation)[31]

Moreover different historicities can be grouped into various stages of development; there are different 'levels' (*Stufen*) of historicity, for Husserl, although these should not be understood simply as temporal stages, rather they indicate different levels of sophistication in the overall organization and outlook of a society. He writes (in a supplementary text entitled "Levels of Historicity: First Historicity," again not translated in Carr):

> Historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) in the most general sense has always already been in progress (*in Gang*) and in this progress, it is rightly a universal, which belongs to human existence. It is a unified becoming (*ein einheitliches Werden*) according to persons, in persons, and, as an environment, according to the plurality of forms of the environment, which can be seen as the unity of an organism. (*Crisis*,VI, 502, my translation)

Husserl also speaks in this text of 'original generative historicity.' (*Crisis*, Hua VI, 501) Elsewhere he speaks of 'transcendental historicity,' (Hua XXIX, 80) and speaks of the historicity of the natural world and of the cultural, intersubjective

[31] The German text of *Crisis* VI, 504 reads: "Jede Art von Kulturgebilden hat ihre Geschichtlichkeit, hat ihren Charakter der Gewordenheit und ihre Beziehung auf Zukunft, und zwar in Bezug auf ihre geschichtlich lebende, erzeugende und benutzende Menschheit."

domain. For Husserl, nature itself (as a cultural product) has a *history* in the very same way that the cultural world, which is more usually considered to be historical, does. Indeed Husserl prefers to speak of the 'culture-things-surrounding world' (*Die Kultur-Sachen-Umwelt,* VI, 501), emphasizing that the human world encounters both cultural and natural objects in an interwoven unity.

That Husserl is interested in the existential meaning of human culture is evident at the beginning of the *Crisis,* § 2 where he speaks of human beings 'in their spiritual existence' and of the 'shapes of the spiritual world.' (*Crisis*, 7; VI, 4) In another text associated with the investigations that became the *Crisis*, albeit written prior to 1930, Husserl raises the question on the methodology of the natural sciences and asks whether there can be such a methodology also for the human sciences and for history: "Is there a method for encompassing the realm of the "spirit," of history, in all its essential possibilities, so that one can arrive at "exact" truths through exact concepts for this realm?" (*Crisis*, Carr, 322n.; VI, 301n.)

In his writings on culture, Husserl explicitly employs the German term '*Geist*,' which can broadly be translated as 'culture.' Spirit signifies the collective efforts and achievements of human conscious endeavor, and can be extended to mean all conscious life including that of animals.[32] Thus, for instance, in the *Vienna Lecture* Husserl speaks of the 'spirituality' (*Geistigkeit*) of animals as well as humans, meaning thereby something like the cultural world and behavior of animals thought as a complex unified whole (see *Crisis*, 271; Hua VI, 316). Thus, in a 1934 fragment entitled 'human life in historicity' associated with the *Crisis*, Husserl had written:

> The original animism. Man lives his spiritual life not in a spiritless world, in a world [understood] as matter, but rather as a spirit among spirits, among human and super-human, and this world-totality (*Weltall*) is, for him, the all of existing living, in the way of spirit, of the I-being, of the I-living among others as I subjects, life in the form of a universal I-community (*Ich-Gemeinschaft*). (Hua XXIX, 3, my translation)

According to Husserl, this personal attitude is supported by the sense of a common social world: "We could not be persons for others if there were not over against us a common surrounding world. The one is constituted together with the other." (*Ideas* II, 387; IV, 377)

For Husserl, being a person is a relational concept. He singles out the way humans use personal pronouns: "saying 'I' and 'We.'" To be an 'I' is always to be an 'I' over against a 'you,' a 'he,' a 'she.' In the background of Husserl's

[32] The German *Geist* can be translated as 'mind,' 'spirit,' or 'culture,' as well as meaning 'ghost' or 'specter,' Husserl uses it to mean the specific culture of human beings but he can also means the general mood or spirit or a culture or discipline, e.g., 'the spirit of philosophy,' 'the spiritual battles' of Western culture. (*Crisis* § 3)

discussion must be the German Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen (1842-1918) who—prior to Martin Buber—spoke of the importance of the 'I-thou relation' (*Ich-Du Beziehung*)[33] Husserl also speaks of the 'I-you synthesis' (*Ich-Du Synthesis, Crisis*, 172; VI, 175) and the even more complicated 'we-synthesis.' An 'I' recognizes others as also being 'I's in their own right. He speaks of people interacting in a personal, communal world, both acting on it and being affected by it, e.g.:

> What the person does and suffers, what happens within him, how he stands in relation to his surrounding world, what angers him, what depresses him, what makes him cheerful or upset—these are questions relating to persons and so are questions of a similar sort relating to communities of every level: marriages, friendships, clubs, civic communities, communities of peoples etc.—first in historical factualness and then in generality. (Abhandlung II, *Crisis*, 322; Hua VI, 301)

It is at this point that Husserl raises the question of the methodology of the human social or sciences that assume the existence and the action of *persons* who have individual first-person lives and second-person and third-person encounters with others. Husserl is now developing themes that are central to Gadamer.

Cultural and Historical Understanding (*Verstehen*)

One of Gadamer's central conceptions—drawn from Dilthey and Heidegger—is the notion of *Verstehen*, understanding, usually contrasted with scientific explanation (*Erklärung*). Gadamer comments that Heidegger understood phenomenological clarification as always working against a background of that which resists illumination.

> From this critique of the concept of consciousness, which Heidegger would later radicalize, we can take to be of special significance that Heidegger already before *Being and Time* introduced the expression 'hermeneutic of facticity,' setting it against his own questioning of the idealism of consciousness. Facticity is obviously that which cannot be clarified, that which resists any attempt to attain transparency of understanding. Thus it becomes clear that in every understanding there remains something unexplained, and that one therefore must ask about what motivates every understanding.[34]

[33] See Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism*, trans. Simon Kaplan (New York: Frederick Unger, 1972).

[34] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Subjectivität und Intersubjektivität, Subjekt und Person in GW10: 87–99; English, "Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity, Subject and Person." *Continental Philosophy Review* 33 (2000): 275–287, see esp. 281.

Another of the key insights that Gadamer takes from Heidegger is that of the *finitude* of human understanding. As Gadamer proclaims: '*To be historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete.*' (TM, 302) The voyage of self-understanding is always under way. Not only can understanding never grasp the whole, but human beings are essentially limited by being confined to particular times, places and points in history. In this regard Gadamer sees all understanding as taking place within certain horizons. But he strongly rejects historicism (the claim that historical consciousness cannot rise above its own relativity). Gadamer opposes the view that horizons are mutually exclusive or that world views are hermetically sealed and non-porous. In fact, Gadamer wants to emphasize that the very idea of a horizon includes not just the idea of circumscription but also the idea of *openness*. Horizons are not just limits but are essentially open to other horizons; they are moving boundaries. Horizons also can overlap and indeed *are* essentially overlapping and interpenetrating. Every meaningful subject or object belongs within many horizons at once. There is an ongoing never finished process of the interpenetration of horizons, which Gadamer calls 'fusion of horizons' (*Horizontsverschmelzung*, TM, 306) and which he carefully emphasizes is not a single horizon but rather a coalescence of horizons (plural). There is a dynamic interaction between the horizon of the interpreter and that of the text from the past: "Historical consciousness is aware of its own otherness and hence foregrounds the horizon of the past from its own." (TM, 306)

Every attempt to understand the other must begin from the recognition that we are separated by different horizons of understanding, and that mutual understanding comes through overlapping consensus, merging of horizons, rather than through the abandonment by one of the interlocutors of his or her initial horizon. This mutual fusion of horizons has to respect the difference and the distance between the temporal horizons. Consciousness of distance is essential to understanding.

Husserl and Gadamer on the Meaning of Horizon

To articulate his sense of common understanding across temporal and cultural distance, Gadamer invokes Husserl's notion of 'horizon' (*Horizont*). In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer acknowledges the centrality of the concept of horizon for Husserl and also its vitality as a concept on which he himself will draw. He sees Husserl as using horizon to 'capture the way all limited intentionality of meaning merges into the fundamental continuity of the whole.' (TM, 245) In other words, Husserl overcomes a certain earlier atomism in his treatment of the intentionality of *Erlebnisse* by showing that all experiences belong within larger and never fully actualized wholes. Time-consciousness itself is perhaps a paradigm case of horizon-consciousness.

Gadamer goes on to explain horizon as 'not a rigid boundary, but something that moves with one and invites one to advance further.' (TM, 245) Later in *Truth and Method* he writes:

> Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of "situation" by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular standpoint. Applying this to the thinking mind, we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons and so forth. (TM, 302)

Horizons offer limits but also beckon to move closer to the limit and indeed the horizon then moves further back. In this sense, the horizon is something that constantly changes and this is an essential feature. Furthermore, horizons are also different from one another, and although they can 'fuse,' they never become identified into a single horizon.

Gadamer recognizes that Husserl connects the notion of horizon with the notion of *world* (*die Welt*). In *Truth and Method* he quotes Husserl as saying that he had made a mistake in neglecting to thematize explicitly the concept of world when he was discussing the notion of the natural world in *Ideas* I. (TM, 245n. 148) Everything belongs to a world which provides a horizon, i.e., the context for all meaningful encounters, for it. Gadamer goes on to link the notion of horizon with Husserl's rich concept of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*). The life-world, for Gadamer is 'the whole in which we live as historical creatures' (TM, 247), and is what is pregiven in all our experience but never becomes an object for us in the natural attitude. For Gadamer, this concept of the life-world is the exact opposite of objectivism and is an 'essentially historical concept.' (TM, 247) It has to be contrasted with the infinite idea of a true world (the scientific conception of the world). Gadamer sees Husserl as recognizing the unity of the flow of life as prior to discrete experiences. Gadamer, however, criticizes Husserl (similar to the criticism of *Lebensphilosophie* in Heidegger's *Being and Time*) for importing the speculative and unclarified concept of *life* and attempting to fit it into an essentially epistemological framework. Furthermore, according to Gadamer, Husserl had no idea of the prior philosophical tradition (including Simmel and others) which had previously made life into a theme. Gadamer here shows his dependence on the comparative analysis of Misch.

In general terms, the term 'horizon' is used by Husserl metaphorically but exploiting the common sense meaning of the limit of one's visual sight. He extends the meaning to every context of experience that acts as a limit or boundary (the Greek *horos* means 'boundary'). The first discussion of horizon in print is in Husserl's *Ideas* I (1913) where, in the Introduction he speaks of traditional prejudices which set a horizon on our thoughts. (*Ideas* I, xix; Hua III/1, 3) In Section One he talks

about the world as the 'collective horizon of possible investigations.' *Ideas* I, Section 82 speaks of a three-fold horizon. In *Ideas* I, Section 27 Husserl writes:

> But not even with the domain of this intuitionally clear or obscure, distinct or indistinct, *co-present*—which makes up a constant halo around the field of actual perception—is the world exhausted which is "on hand" for me in the manner peculiar to consciousness at every waking moment. On the contrary, in the fixed order of its being, it reaches into the unlimited. What is now perceived and what is more or less clearly co-present and determinate (or at least somewhat determinate), are penetrated and surrounded by an *obscurely intended to horizon of indeterminate actuality.* I can send rays of the illuminative regard of attention into this horizon with varying results. Determining presentiations, obscure at first and then becoming alive, haul something out for me; a chain of such quasi-memories is linked together; the sphere of determinateness becomes wider and wider, perhaps so wide that connection is made with the field of actual perception as my *central* surroundings. (*Ideas* I, § 27, 52; Hua III/1, 49)

For Husserl material, spatial objects are not perceived in isolation but are apprehended through a 'profile' or 'adumbration' (*Abschattung*) against a 'background' (*Hintergrund*) of other objects and in the midst of a 'surrounding world' (*Umwelt*) of other living bodies which are also other persons, animals, and so on (*Ideas* II § 51). Thus, Husserl says: 'Every perception has... its background of perception.' (*Ideas* I, § 113, p. 267; Hua III/1, 231)

According to Husserl, not just every perception but every 'lived experience' (*Erlebnis*) of whatever kind bears with a set of unique essential possibilities that go to make up what he calls the 'horizon' of the experience. These horizons are not just empty possibilities, but rather are 'intentionally predelineated in respect of content' (CM, §19, 44; Hua I, 82), that is, they are 'predelineated potentialities.' (CM, I, 82) There is a 'horizon of references' built in to the experience itself:

> everything that genuinely appears is an appearing thing only by virtue of being intertwined and permeated with an intentional empty horizon, that is, by virtue of being surrounded by a halo of emptiness with respect to appearance. It is an emptiness that is not a nothingness, but an emptiness to be filled out; it is a determinable indeterminacy. (APS, 42; Hua XI, 5-6)

To stay with the example of perception, perceived things are given within a 'perceptual field' whereby the entity is experienced with internal and external horizons. (*Crisis*, § 47) A perceived thing has a context of immediately present things, but also a context of possible things. A word or sentence has meaning against the background context of all the other meanings in the languages. A horizon is a system of references—something like a language. The character of a

horizon is of a limit that can never be reached and which seems to recede as on approaches it. A horizon is therefore non-objectifiable and non-determinate.[35]

Husserl distinguishes between inner and outer horizons in his *Cartesian Meditations* and elsewhere. A chair has an inner horizon—it can be sat on, kneele against, stood on, lifted and moved, stacked with other chairs, used to prop open door, hurled through a window, broken up for firewood, and so on. Interacting wi a chair involves apprehending it according to one of more of these later possibilities. The side of the object that appears in a series of adumbration alway promises more, there are pointers to other sides, an inside. But the horizons do n stop there. There are not just the other sides of the object, but also the possibili that the perception itself could have been conducted in a different way (from different angle, distance, etc.). Thus, for example, I know if I approach the woode chair more closely, certain features of the grain will stand out more clearly. The leads to a certain indeterminacy within the experience of the object and yet also certain determinateness and a certain set of further determinables. The object is 'pole of identity' (*ein Identitätspol*, CM, § 19) for a set of experiences, 'a consta X, a constant substrate.' (Hua XI, 5) *Inner horizons* consist of the set of anticip tions and prefigurations that I have already in mind as I approach the object. (H XI, 7) Husserl sees the process of perceiving an object as a dynamic procedu involving progressive fillings and emptyings. Certain prefigurations get filled intuitively while new expectations are opened up. Every perception invokes whole series or system of perceptions. There is no final perception that can exhau the thing completely. Indeed, to be a physical thing is precisely to be essential inexhaustible, and this is even more true of the kind of entities discovered cultural life.

Horizons can be temporal, spatial, linguistic, cultural, historical, and so o The ultimate 'horizon of all horizons' is the *world* (*Ideas* I, § 27) which has t sense of being infinite and unbounded in every direction. Husserl speaks in his lat writings of a 'world-horizon.' (*Welthorizont*, e.g., *Crisis*, § 36) He writes (on t theme of givenness which Gadamer will substantially expand and develop):

> The natural life, whether it is prescientificalliy or scientifically, theoretical or practically interested, is life within a universal unthematic horizon. Th horizon is, in the natural attitude, precisely the world always pregiven as th which exists. Simply living on in this manner, one does not need the wo "pregiven"; there is no need to point out that the world is constantly actuali

[35] On Husserl's concept of horizon, see Tze-Wan Kwan, "Husserl's Concept of Horizo An Attempt at Reappraisal," *Analecta Husserliana* 31 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishe 1990), 361–99; and Roberto J. Walton, "World-experience, World-Representation, and t World as an Idea," *Husserl Studies*, vol. 14 (1997): 1-20. On Gadamer's concept of horizon, s Charles Taylor, "Understanding the Other: A Gadamerian View of Conceptual Schemes," in Je Malpas Ulrich Arnswald, and Jens Kertscher, ed., *Gadamer's Century: Essays in Honor of Hans Georg Gadamer* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 279-297.

> for us. All natural questions, all theoretical and practical goals taken as themes—as existing, as perhaps existing, as probable, as questionable, as valuable, as project, as action and result of action—have to do with something or other within the world-horizon (*Welthorizont*). (*Crisis*, § 38, 145; Hua VI, 148)

For Husserl, the constitutional problem of how the same perceptual object is experienced as the same by multiple co-subjects is precisely the problematic of how a 'world' comes into being. (See, for instance, *Ideas* II, § 18, 84; Hua IV, 80). When we apprehend an object, its very objectivity is constituted by its being apprehendable by others. Husserl finds this initially very puzzling because in perceiving an object, normally the sense that others do or can perceive it also is not fore-grounded in our perceptual experience. Nevertheless, it precisely belongs to the perception of an object that the object is inserted in a world-horizon of such possible perceptions by others (or oneself at another time). This leads naturally to the recognition that perceptual experience is embedded not just in the temporal flow of an individual consciousness, but in the intersecting and coinciding intentionalities of others. Every lived experience has a past that fades into an indeterminate horizon of the past and similarly it has a horizon relating to the future.

Husserl speaks of humans living within the horizons of their historicity. (*Crisis*, § 2) He is clearly aware that human artefacts in particular have a temporal situatedness that may constrain how they are to be understood at a particular time. In *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, for instance, Husserl acknowledges that in his *Logical Investigations* (1900/1901) he still lacked the concept of 'horizon intentionality' needed to grasp life in history. Furthermore, horizons cannot be understood in the terms associated with thinghood. Horizons are not *things* and resist objectification or reification. It is this very non-objective, shared and elusive notion of horizon that Gadamer finds so attractive and so appropriate for his own needs in articulating the hermeneutic situation.

Husserl and Gadamer on Intersubjectivity and the Life-world

Gadamer notes the way that Alfred Schutz and other students of Husserl sought to de-transcendentalize Husserl's conception of the life-world. Surprisingly, Gadamer wants to retain the transcendental register. Gadamer believes Husserl saw that the transcendental turn as initiated by Descartes missed two vital insights—concerning intersubjectivity and the constitution of what is not explicitly intended. He writes

> But this ultimate ego [the transcendental ego] was basically something empty, with which one really did not know what to do. Husserl saw, in particular, that at least two unnoticed presuppositions were contained in this radical beginning. First of all, the transcendental ego contained the "all of us" of human community, and the transcendental view of phenomenology in no way poses the question explicitly as to how the being of the there and the we, beyond the ego's own world, is really constituted. (This is the problem of intersubjectivity). Second, he saw that the general suspension of the thesis regarding reality did not suffice, since suspension of the positing only touched the explicit object of the act of intentional meaning, but not what is co-intended and the anonymous implications given along with every such act of meaning....Thus Husserl arrived at the elaboration of his doctrine of the horizons that in the end are all integrated into the one universal world-horizon that embraces our entire intentional life.[36]

Gadamer is here pointing to matters with which his own hermeneutics will fruitfully engage. Basically, Gadamer acknowledges the importance of Husserl's rediscovery of intentionality and also his identification of the problems of intersubjectivity and the regions of co-intended but not consciously intended meanings. This is the very ground of Gadamer's own investigations. In an essay entitled "Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity, Subject and Person," Gadamer writes:

> There are, however, also good reasons to want to recognize the Husserlian program of transcendental phenomenology for its consistency and radicality. Yet one must be critical of the use that Husserl himself made of the approach to the problem of intersubjectivity for the phenomenology of the life-world.[37]

Gadamer is deeply interested in Husserl's concept of intersubjectivity but criticizes Husserl's conception of the experience of the other as it is laid out in the *Cartesian Meditations* and in the three Husserliana volumes on intersubjectivity which Gadamer read during the nineteen seventies. He writes:

> With Husserl we can understand how he arrives as a concept like "intersubjectivity" because he is determined to remain in the Cartesian sphere of subjectivity. That leads to Husserl's tireless phenomenological investigation which now fill three thick volumes. It also leads to the utterly absurd consequence that we first intend the "other" as an object of perception constituted by aspects, etc., and then in a higher-level act, confer on this "other" the character of a "subject" through transcendental empathy. We can admire the consistency with which Husserl holds fast to the primacy of his approach. However, we notice that the narrowness and one-sidedness of the ontology of presence cannot be avoided by such an approach.[38]

[36] See Gadamer, "The Phenomenological Movement," 154-55.
[37] See Gadamer, "Subjectivität und Intersubjektivität, Subjekt, und Person," 275.
[38] See "Text Matters: Interview with Hans-Georg Gadamer," in Richard Kearney, *States of Mind: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1995), 262–289, see especially, 277.

Gadamer quotes approvingly of Husserl's invocation of the notion of the *nos cogitamus* to compensate for the methodological solipsism of the *ego cogito*. Gadamer is never convinced that Husserl has been able to truly grasp the manner in which the other presents himself or herself in our experience.

There is no doubting then, for Gadamer, that Husserl did acknowledge the importance of intersubjectivity, co-subjectivity and life in community. Gadamer does acknowledge the continuity between Husserl's discussions of intentional horizon and Heidegger's account of being in the world. In the *Crisis*, for instance, Husserl constantly stresses the 'communalization' (*Vergemeinschaftung*) of our experience, paralleling Heidegger's discussion of 'being-with-others' (*Mitsein*) in *Being and Time*. He speaks of the essential human characteristic of 'living-with-one-another' (*Miteinanderleben*, *Crisis*, 163; Hua VI, 166; see also § 28, 108; Hua VI, 110) and speaks of humans cooperating and living in a world as 'co-subjects' (*Mitsubjekte*, Hua VI, 167), who belong together in a 'co-humanity.' (*Mitmenschheit*, Hua VI, 168) He speaks more generally a collective shared intentionality or 'we subjectivity' (*Wir-subjektivität*, *Crisis*, § 28, 109; Hua VI, 111), a topic that has again become a matter of interest in philosophy of mind.[39] For Husserl, the priority of the personal, cultural world is emphasized over and above the natural world (and especially the naturalistic world as determined by the exact physical sciences) in *Ideas* II and thereafter. In the *Crisis*, Husserl goes further and writes about subjects not just having a shared sense of a common world, but also of grasping this world as formed by *tradition* (even if that tradition consists entirely of erroneous beliefs, as Husserl comments at *Crisis*, 326; VI, 305). People live in a world formed of sedimented practices and habits—a 'traditional world.' In his *Intersubjectivity* volumes Husserl declares in a note written around 1921/1922: "Life in pre-judgment, life in tradition. In the widest sense, it belongs to every ego-life (*Ichleben*) to be life in tradition." (Hua XIV, 230, my translation)

All human life is built on earlier traditions and knowledge practices accumulated over the generaltions such that all meaning is built on prior meaning. Thus Husserl writes in *Crisis* Supplement XXIV (accompanying Section 73):

> Each human being as a person stands in his or her generative interconnectivities (*Zusammenhänge*), which, understood in a personal spiritual manner, stand in the unity of a historicity; this is not just a sequence of past factualities, but it is implicated in each present, in its factuality, as a hidden spiritual acquisition, as the past, which has formed that specific person, and as such is intentionally implicated in him as his formation or upbringing (*Bildung*). (*Crisis* VI, 488, my translation)

[39] See Hans-Bernhard Schmid, *Plural Action: Essays in Philosophy and Social Science*, *Contributions to Phenomenology*, vol. 58 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

It is clear therefore that the concept of tradition (*Überlieferung*, *Tradition*) and the manner in which personal worlds are shaped by tradition already gets significant treatment in the late Husserl and here Gadamer completely agrees with Husserl's approach. Gadamer writes:

> For we live in what has been handed down to us, and this is not just a specific region of our experience of the world, specifically what we call the "cultural tradition" which only consists of texts and monuments and which are able to pass on to us a linguistically constituted and historically documented sense. No it is *the world itself* which is communicatively experienced and continuously entrusted (*traditur*) to us as an infinitely open task.[40]

Gadamer is especially impressed by Husserl's conception of the 'life-world' a concept that he returns to again and again, and which he constantly singles out for praise. He sees Husserl as introducing the word as an answer to a question. The life-world is for Gadamer, a 'counter-concept' to the idea of the 'world of science.'[41] In another essay, Gadamer writes:

> In Husserl's later work the magic word *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld) appears—one of those rare and wonderful artificial words (it does not appear before Husserl) that have found their way into the general linguistic consciousness thus attesting to the fact that they bring an unrecognized or forgotten truth to language. So the word "*Lebenswelt*" has reminded us of all the presuppositions that underlie all scientific knowledge.[42]

Gadamer sees the introduction of this concept as a decisive correction of the Neo-Kantian and Positivist fascination with the scientific world as the true account of the natural world. It is also Husserl's own effort at 'self-criticism.'[43]

'Life-world' is, for Husserl, a term with many significations, depending on the context. The term is used to encompass—or indeed sometimes replace—other terms he uses, including the 'natural world' (*die natürliche Welt*), 'the intuitively given surrounding world' (*die anschauliche Umwelt*, *Crisis*, § 9a; § 59), the 'straightforwardly intuited world' (*Crisis*, § 33), the 'taken-for-granted, pregiven world of experience, the world of natural life' (*Crisis*, 204; VI, 208), the 'environment

[40] See Gadamer, "Reflections on My Philosophical Journey," 29.

[41] Gadamer, "The Phenomenological Movement," 152.

[42] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Ideal of Practical Philosophy," in idem, *Praise of Theory: Speeches and Essays*, trans. Chris Dawson (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), 50–61, esp., 55. Gadamer is inaccurate in claiming the word does not appear before Husserl: the term '*Lebenswelt*' features in Grimm's *Deutsche Wörterbuch* of 1885 (see Editor's Introduction Edmund Husserl, *Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution. Texte aus dem Nachlaß (1917-1937)*, Hua XXXIX xlvi).

[43] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Science of the Life-World," in Linge, ed. *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 187.

(*Umgebung*), the 'world of experience' (*Erfahrungswelt, Erlebniswelt*), the world of culture (*Kulturwelt*, Hua IX, 113), 'world-life' (*Weltleben*), the 'human world,' and so on.[44] The life-world is, first and foremost, the 'world of everyday experience,' (*Alltagswelt*) the 'intuited' world (*die anschauliche Welt*), the 'pregiven' surrounding world. (*Crisis*, 47; VI, 47) It is, furthermore, the world as 'a realm of subjective phenomena' (*Crisis*, § 29) that previously has not been explored by any science. As Husserl writes: "Consciously we always live in the life-world; normally there is no reason to make it explicitly thematic for ourselves universally as world." (*Crisis*, Appendix VII, 379; VI, 459)

The life-world is always the intentional correlate or *counterpart* of human experiencing, acting and valuing, of life in the natural and personal attitudes. Husserl speaks, therefore, of the 'intertwining' (*Verflechtung*) or interpenetration between nature (as the object of the sciences and natural experience) and spirit (as culture) in the life-world (see *Phen. Psych.* § 16). In this sense, the life-world encompasses both the world of what has traditionally been designated as 'nature' (as it presents itself to us *in our everyday dealings* with it, including rocks, mountains, sky, plants, animals, planets, stars, and so on) as well as what is usually known as the world of 'culture,' including ourselves, other persons, animals in their social behavior, institutions, artefacts, symbolic systems such as languages, religions—in other words, our overall natural and cultural environing world. The life-world has to be understood as including the overlapping sets of objects which surround us in life as perceptual objects, instruments and tools, food, clothing, shelter, art objects, religious objects, and so on.

In his earliest discussion of the concept in *Crisis*, § 9, Husserl contrasts the prescientific (*vorwissenschaftlich*) life-world with the world of science. He goes on to characterize the life-world as 'intuitive' (*anschaulich*), 'real' (*real*), 'concrete' (*konkret*), and 'merely subjective relative (*bloss subjektiv relativ*), in contrast to the world of science which is 'objective,' 'ideal' and 'abstract.'[45] Indeed, the most prominent characteristic that Husserl attributes to the life-world—and indeed the earliest characterization of it that he offers (inspired by Richard Avenarius's notion of the 'pre-found', *das Vorgefundene*)—is that the life-world is always 'pregiven' (*vorgegeben*), always 'on hand' (*vorhanden*).[46] Husserl speaks repeatedly of the phenomenon of the 'pregivenness' (*Vorgegebenheit*) of the world, prior to all theorizing. In this sense, the life-world is unsurmountable. It cannot be shaken off or transcended. No matter what experience we have, it is based on a sense that things are already there before us. The life-world is so intimately present that we cannot even

[44] See Ernst Wolfgang Orth, *Edmund Husserls Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendentale Phänomenologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999), 132-36.

[45] See Walter Biemel, "Gedanken zur Genesis der Lebenswelt," in Gerhard Preyer, Georg Peter, and Alexander Ulfig, ed, *Protosoziologie im Kontext »Lebenswelt« und »System« in Philosophie und Soziologie* (Frankfurt, a.M.: Humanities Online, 2000), 41-54. Compare *Phen. Psych.* § 25, p. 109; Hua IX 142-43.

[46] See Husserl, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 107; Hua XIII, 196.

speak of it as a 'presupposition' (*Voraussetzung*) in some theoretical sense, rather all presuppositions and convictions already start from this 'pregivenness.' The world lies concretely at the heart of every natural conscious experience.[47] Furthermore, it cannot be understood as a totality of things, it is actually a horizon that stretches from indefinite past to indefinite future and includes all possibilities of experience and meaningfulness.

The *world of experience* is immediately given and intuited as something already there and taken-for-granted, obvious. As Husserl insists, 'to live is always to live-in-certainty-of-the-world' (*Inweltgewissheitleben*, *Crisis*, § 37); natural living is 'living in belief' (*Glaubensleben*). There is naive 'acceptance character' to living in the natural attitude in the world. It is so immediate that it is not even thematized. This concept of living in naive belief is of course very close to Gadamer's idea that all understanding takes place on the basis of unquestioned presupposition and prejudgment. Gadamer's conception of communities living within the horizon of traditions that provide the very pregiven context for all understanding is already richly documented in Husserl.

Interestingly, Gadamer thinks Husserl's late explorations of the life-world pointed him in the way of concrete historical explorations for which he was ill-equipped.[48] Gadamer is here moving in the direction of Merleau-Ponty's criticisms of Husserl. Merleau-Ponty, commenting on Husserl's famous letter to Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, thought that Husserl came to acknowledge the limitations of a purely a priori practice of eidetic variation and recognized the need for empirical explorations of the different factual life-worlds. Gadamer thinks similarly that Husserl in the end traded finitude for metaphysics and that there is a need to constantly place finitude at the center of the philosophical inquiry. For Gadamer, to recognize finitude is also the recognize the hold that *language* (as encapsulating this finitude) has on our thought. Husserlian phenomenology failed to address properly the phenomenon of language.

Conclusion

Much more work needs to be done on Gadamer's appropriation of Husserl to do justice to the influence that the founder of phenomenology continued to wield over the hermeneutic practitioner. It is clear that not only in *Truth and Method*, but also in his later essays, Gadamer owes a deep debt to Husserl's explorations of the nature of historical, communal life lived over generations—life lived in tradition. Indeed, one could say that Gadamer very early on appreciated this side of Husserl

[47] Edmund Husserl, "Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy," trans. Ted E. Klein and William E. Pohl, *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 5 (Fall 1974): 22n; collected in *Erste Philosophie*, Hua VII, 246n1.

[48] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Phenomenological Tradition," in Linge, ed., *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 193.

which had been relatively unnoticed until the publication of the Husserliana volumes that showed the breadth of Husserl's investigations on intersubjectivity, empathy, personal and interpersonal life.[49] In this regard, Gadamer stands with Merleau-Ponty as an extraordinary creative reader and interpreter of Husserl's *oeuvre*.

[49] This side of Husserl is now the focus of considerable attention from scholars, see inter alia, Donn Welton, *The Other Husserl* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2001); Anthony Steinbock, *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1995); Dan Zahavi, *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity*, trans. Elizabeth A. Behnke (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2001) and Dan Zahavi and Natalie Depraz, ed., *Alterity and Facticity: New Perspectives on Husserl* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998).

4. Deriving Gadamer's Account of Intersubjectivity from his Account of Dialogue

David Vessey

Throughout the twentieth century few philosophical topics have been so central as intersubjectivity. Understanding how we are aware of, and relate to, others not only has obvious implications for ethics and political theory, but also for epistemology—as we seek to know whether individuals have privileged access to their mental states, how objectivity is established, and the role that confirmation across subjects plays in legitimating judgment—and metaphysics—as we try to understand the nature of the subject and the subject's relation to the world. Virtually every major twentieth century philosopher has contributed to the topic, certainly every major phenomenologist, and some, such as Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, have made it the central feature of their philosophical reflections. Hans-Georg Gadamer on the other hand has no explicit, articulated theory of intersubjectivity. This should be surprising. Gadamer certainly associates himself with the phenomenological tradition and the issues that arise within it; he has scattered comments criticizing I-Thou accounts of intersubjectivity and Heidegger's theory of *Mit-sein*; and he is well known for placing dialogue, an essentially intersubjective process, at the center of his philosophical hermeneutics. Still, he has no explicit theory and, in the one essay where he discusses intersubjective issues "Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity; Subject and Person"[1] he suggests an account of intersubjectivity make no sense once we, following Heidegger, abandon an account of subjectivity. So perhaps the lack of a theory of intersubjectivity is less of an omission than itself a statement about intersubjectivity.[2] Nonetheless, if we are going to bring Gadamer into dialogue with other thinkers in twentieth century philosophy, and especially with the phenomenological tradition, it make sense to ask whether his philosophical hermeneutics presupposes or entails an account of intersubjectivity. For certainly his extensive comments on dialogue and understanding would have implications for a theory of intersubjectivity, were he to articulate one. That is the project of this paper: to spell out to what extent Gadamer's theory of dialogue can be used to explicate an account of intersubjectivity. We will look both at what is unique about Gadamer's account of dialogue, and at the few comments he does make about theories of intersubjectivity to help articulate what we will call a Gadamerian theory of intersubjectivity. As it turns out, the key claim that implies an account of intersubjectivity is his claim that language is only perfected in dialogue. First, though, we must get clear about what an account of intersubjectivity includes, and what we should look for when investigating Gadamer's hermeneutics. As a wide variety of philosophical issues have been collected under the name "intersubjectivity," it is worth our time to take a minute to distinguish them.

[1] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity: Subject and Person," *Continental Philosophy Review* 33, no. 3 (July 2000).

[2] See my "Gadamer's Account of Friendship as an Alternative to an Account of Intersubjectivity" in *Philosophy Today* 49, no. 5 (2005): 61-67, for how Gadamer uses Aristotle's theory of friendship as a substitute for an account of intersubjectivity.