

© Éditions Alter, groupe de recherche en phénoménologie

Siège social de la revue

Université de Bourgogne
Faculté des Lettres et philosophie
BP 27877 – 21078 Dijon cedex

Correspondance

Natalie Depraz : 183, rue Legendre, 75017 Paris
natalie.depraz@univ-rouen.fr
Vincent Houillon : 72 rue d'Herblay, 95150 Taverny
vhouillon@voila.fr

Toutes les informations sur la revue et le séminaire sont
consultables sur notre site : <http://www.revue-alter.com>

Abonnements

Pierre Rodrigo : 35, rue Verrerie, 21000 Dijon
pierre.rodrigo@tele2.fr

ISBN : 978-2-9522374-9-2
EAN : 9782952237499

Diffusion

Librairie philosophique J. Vrin
6, place de la Sorbonne
75005 Paris

La revue n'est pas responsable des manuscrits qui lui sont envoyés.
Les articles publiés n'engagent que leur auteur.

LA VIE

Publié avec le concours du Centre national du livre



N° 21/2013 – Éditions ALTER

Alter
est publié par l'association *Alter*
(groupe de recherche en phénoménologie)
et en collaboration avec les Archives-Husserl de Paris

Comité de direction

Jocelyn Benoist, Étienne Bimbenet, Philippe Cabestan, Natalie Depraz,
Julien Farges, Jean-Claude Gens, Vincent Houillon, Grégori Jean,
Laurent Perreau, Camille Riquier, François-David Sebbah, Claudia Serban.

Correspondants étrangers

Simon Critchley (Angleterre)
Dieter Lohmar (Allemagne)
Shin Nagai (Japon)
Javier San Martin (Espagne)
Anthony J. Steinbock (États-Unis)
Dan Zahavi (Danemark)

Comité d'honneur

Renaud Barbaras (Université de Paris-I)
Rudolf Bernet (Archives-Husserl de Leuven)
John B. Brough (Georgetown University de Chicago)
Ronald Bruzina (Kentucky University)
Jean-François Courtine (Archives-Husserl de Paris)
Françoise Dastur (Université de Nice)
Klaus Held (Bergische Universität Gesamthochschule Wuppertal)
Jean-Luc Marion (Université de Paris-IV Sorbonne)
Pierre Rodrigo (Université de Bourgogne)
Mario Ruggenini (Università di Venezia)
Bernhard Waldenfels (Ruhr Universität Bochum)

Numéro coordonné par Philippe Cabestan et Jean-Claude Gens

Assistant d'édition : Hadrien Gens

Sommaire

1. La vie

L'expérience de la vie religieuse à l'épreuve de la philosophie : Heidegger lecteur d'Augustin <i>Sophie-Jan Arrien</i>	9
La vie, document : un poème <i>Philippe Beck</i>	29
La vie animale, une autre existence ? <i>Florence Burgat</i>	33
Vie et risque. Le végétal au risque du mouvement <i>Natalie Depraz</i>	51
La vie du « monde de la vie » : relativité et mobilité <i>Julien Farges</i>	73
Le sourire énigmatique de la vie <i>Jean-Claude Gens</i>	89
Y a-t-il un vitalisme proprement phénoménologique ? Réflexions autour de Michel Henry <i>Grégori Jean</i>	101
<i>Die verborgene Einheit intentionaler Innerlichkeit. Husserl on History, Life and Tradition</i> <i>Dermot Moran</i>	117
Vie et différences anthropologiques <i>Julien Pieron</i>	135
Vécus, vie intentionnelle et monde de la vie : le rapport de la phénoménologie husserlienne à la <i>Lebensphilosophie</i> <i>Laurent Perreau</i>	151

**"DIE VERBORGENE EINHEIT INTENTIONALER
INNERLICHKEIT": HUSSERL ON HISTORY,
LIFE AND TRADITION**

Dermot Moran

Abstract

Understanding the meaning of history is central both to Husserl's *Crisis* project and to his mature conception of transcendental phenomenology as a description of full concrete living in plurality. In this paper I examine the mature Husserl's conception of *history* (variously: *Historie*, *Geschichte*) including his account of the development of Western (i.e. "European" – as in the very title of the *Crisis* itself) culture, which focuses specifically on the emergence of theoretical reflection, essential to scientific rationality, and the breakthrough to the very idea of philosophy itself with its conception of "purposive life" (*Zweckleben*, VI 502), a life lived according to reason (*Vernunftleben*, *Crisis*, p. 117; VI 119). I discuss the motivations for Husserl's turn to history, the evolution of his conception of history, his conception of the a priori of history, its teleology, and his understanding of the "poeticization of history" in the *Crisis* articles and associated writings.

In the widest sense, it belongs to every ego-life (Ichleben) to be life in tradition. (Husserl, Husserliana XIV 230)

There is a certain superficial truth to the popular characterization of Edmund Husserl as lacking interest in history. A well-known anecdote records Heidegger and Husserl conversing, with Husserl laying out his plans for a system of transcendental phenomenology,

when Heidegger interrupted him with the question: "And what about history?" Husserl allegedly answered: "I had completely forgotten about that"¹. This possibly apocryphal story lends credence to the common misconception that Husserl – in contrast to his successor Martin Heidegger – was unconcerned with history. Yet, for the mature Husserl, human life is purposive life, lived in plurality, life in tradition.

In this paper I shall examine the mature Husserl's conception of history (*Historie, Geschichte*)² and his conception of "purposive life" (*Zweckleben*, VI 502), a life lived according to reason (*Vernunftleben*, *Crisis*, p. 117; VI 119)³. The question of history, for Husserl, includes deep questions of how certain things or events become invested with significance through some kind of inauguration or "primal foundation" (*Urstiftung*), how meanings become crystallized into "habituallities" (*Habitualitäten*), "sedimented" into traditions, and transmitted across generations in a process Husserl calls "generativity" (*Generativität*).

The Meaning of History

History is central both to Husserl's *Crisis* project and to his mature transcendental phenomenology. Thus, he describes the *Crisis* as a "teleological historical reflection" (*Crisis*, p. 3; VI xiv n. 3) that involves an intellectual "reconstruction" and "backwards questioning" (*Rückfragen*) of the history of western culture (specifically the development

of modern philosophy and modern natural science). Furthermore, in his "Foreword for the Continuation of the *Crisis*" (Supplement XIII, Hua VI 435-445), Husserl speaks of a "teleological-historical way" to transcendental phenomenology and asserts that the *historical* mode of exposition of the *Crisis* is "not chosen by chance" but rather is central to his task (Hua VI 441) since he wants to exhibit the whole history of philosophy as possessing a "unitary teleological structure" (*eine einheitliche teleologische Struktur*, VI 442).

In a related text from 1934, entitled "The History of Philosophy in Connection with the Historical Science and with Culture", he defines history as:

History (Die Historie) is the science of the genesis of humanity, understood in a personal sense, and its surrounding life-world (Lebensumwelt), as it has come to be in this genesis, in each present in actual praxis, in the further shaping of the standing cultural world. (Hua XXIX 53, my translation)

The emphasis here is on history understood in terms of the shaping of personal and interpersonal existence. Husserl is not interested in "factual history" (*Tatsachenhistorie*); he wants to explore "inner history" (*innere Historie*, VI 386) with its "inner historicity" (XXIX 417): how a sense of history comes to be established, how humans situate themselves in cultural contexts and traditions and identifying the necessary a priori features that makes such living in history possible. What emerges, finally then, is a "treatment of history" (*Geschichtsbetrachtung*, *Crisis*, p. 58; VI 59) which is at the same time a "critique" (*ibid.*).

Husserl explores the meaning of history primarily through the history of *philosophy*. Without invoking Hegel but clearly following broadly the German Idealist tradition, Husserl sees the history of philosophy as having exemplary significance. The history of philosophy (and by implication the history of "European", i.e. Western, culture in general) exhibits an intelligible structure and trajectory that is exemplary for cultural history generally.

Husserl wants to understand not just history itself as an intentionally constituted "meaning complex" (*Sinneszusammenhang*), but also what is *essential* or invariant to history as a form of human intentional instituting. In this sense, history is a part of the a priori structures that make meaning possible. History as mere blind facts will be incomprehensible unless the "a priori of history" is understood:

¹ See Heinrich Wiegand-Petz, *Auf einen Stern zugehen*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly as *Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger 1929-1976* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 80.

² Unlike Heidegger (see *Being and Time* § 6 and § 76), Husserl does not make a sharp distinction between "history" (*Geschichte* – which Heidegger relates to the verb "*geschehen*", to happen) understood as historical factual occurrences or happenings and history as the more formal imposition of an historical narrative (*Historie*), as in "natural history" (*Naturhistorie*, *Crisis* VI 304). Thus, at *Crisis*, p. 331; VI 310, Husserl uses the word "*Historie*" instead of "*Geschichte*" for the course of human history (cf. p. 333; VI 312). Husserl appears to use the words interchangeably at *Crisis* VI 492. Thus Husserl speaks of "world history" as *Weltgeschichte* at *Crisis*, p. 66; VI 67, whereas he uses the term *Welthistorie* at *Crisis*, p. 334; VI 313. Similarly, he speaks of "factual history" (*Tatsachenhistorie*) in "The Origin of Geometry" (*Crisis*, p. 371; VI 380 and p. 378; VI 386).

³ Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. Walter Biemel, Husserliana [hereafter "Hua"] VI (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1954; reprinted 1976), selectively trans. David Carr as *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970). Hereafter "*Crisis*" followed by English pagination and Hua volume and page number.

All [merely] factual history (*Tatsachenhistorie*) remains incomprehensible because, always merely drawing its conclusions naively and straightforwardly from facts, it never makes thematic the general ground of meaning (*den allgemeinen Sinnboden*) upon which all such conclusions rest, has never investigated the immense structural *a priori* (*strukturelle Apriori*) which is proper to it. ("The Origin of Geometry", *Crisis*, p. 371; VI 380)

Husserl wants to chart "essential", "apriori" or "eidetic history", including identifying its hidden goal (*telos*) and "motivation" (*Crisis* § 5, p. 11; VI 9). This involves overcoming what he calls the "naïve instinctive" approach to history (XXIX 228), and instead seeing history (and paradigmatically the history of *philosophy*) as essential to temporal human existence among persons and as a form of meaning-making or meaning instituting and also as the manner in which tradition is passed along. Husserl also refers paradoxically to the "essential structures of absolute historicity" (*Crisis*, p. 259; VI 262) and even invokes the idea of "absolute historicity". He also talks of the "history of essence" or "essential history" (*Wesenshistorie*, *Crisis*, 350/Hua VI.362) and of a universal "a priori of history" (*Crisis*, p. 349; Hua VI.362, and *Crisis* p. 351; Hua VI.363).

How is the historical world constituted? Human activities cohere together into traditions and shape specific cultures with their own particular ways of developing and unfolding that Husserl usually calls "historicity" (*Geschichtlichkeiten* – in the plural). In sum, he wants to describe the *a priori* constitution of human culture. In "The Origin of Geometry" Husserl offers another definition of history:

We can now say that history (*Geschichte*) is from the start nothing other than the vital movement (*die lebendige Bewegung*) of the being-with-one-another (*Miteinander*) and the interweaving (*Ineinander*) of original formations (*Sinnbildung*) and sedimentations of meaning (*Sinnsedimentierung*). (*Crisis*, p. 371; VI 380, trans. Modified)

Husserl's Turn to History

Prior to the *Crisis*, Husserl had largely ignored – at least in his published works (aside from the *Kaizo* articles (Hua XXVII 3-43), published in Japan in 1923-24 and therefore largely inaccessible to readers in Europe at that time – the whole problematic of human collective living in community and society, i.e. how a unified sense or meaning can arise out of the multiple intentional actions of humans in the past. His major publications present the new science of

phenomenology primarily from the standpoint of individual consciousness with its lived experiences (*Erlebnisse*) and rarely address the issue of historical, social and communal life (although *Formal and Transcendental Logic* § 100 does outline briefly the history of transcendental philosophy). The *Crisis* therefore was welcomed by Husserl's students (e.g. Landgrebe and Patočka) because it offered Husserl's most sustained effort to develop a phenomenological approach to the issues of temporality, finitude, historicity, habituality, and cultural and generational development (the phenomenon Husserl calls "generativity", *Generativität*, *Crisis*, p. 188; VI 191, i.e. the manner in which meanings become sedimented in being passed from one generation to another)⁴.

Husserl had already been addressing the issue of the nature of the human sciences and their relation to the natural sciences in his Freiburg lectures on "Nature and Spirit", from 1917 to 1927⁵, where his focus is often on Rickert, and also in his *Phenomenological Psychology* lectures (1925), where he revisits Dilthey. In the *Crisis*, then, he clearly intended to comprehend not just the methodology of the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*), but also the status of the *human* or *cultural* sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Indeed, according to Husserl's overall plans for the *Crisis*, he intended to add sections on the human sciences at the latter end of the book. It is important, then, to interpret the analysis of history in the *Crisis* and "Origin of Geometry" as in part a continuation of a meditation carried out in his *Nature and Spirit* lectures, and relating primarily to Dilthey and Rickert. Husserl acknowledges that Dilthey's conception of the "connectedness of life" (*Lebenszusammenhang*, a term also used by Husserl, see *Crisis*, p. 149; VI 152) is a powerful conception, which, however, needs more adequate theoretical grounding and clarification.

A second motivation driving Husserl's concern with history was his overall attempt to comprehend the essence of *philosophy*. His reflections were primarily developed in his *First Philosophy* (*Erste Philosophie*) lectures of 1923-1924, which he explicitly calls a "critical history of ideas" (Hua VII 3), and in a short sketch of "a history of

⁴ The term "generativity" has a medical meaning of "concern with the next generation", e.g. in rearing children, but is broadened by Husserl to mean the overall process by which cultural meaning is creatively filtered and transmitted from one generation to another. The concept was later developed by the psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (1902-1994) to cover all kinds of ways in which traditions may be passed on or inhibited, e.g. a child deciding to stand up to familial abuse. Husserl discusses "generativity" in greater detail in texts associated with the *Crisis* (see especially the 1934 supplement, "Different Forms of Historicity", Hua XXIX 37-46)

⁵ See Husserl, *Natur und Geist. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1919*, hrsg. Michael Weiler, Hua XXXII (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001).

transcendental philosophy" in his 1929 *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (see especially § 100) where he also speaks of the need for a "critical consideration of history" (FTL p. 261; XVII 268) and engages in a "historico-critical digression" on modern philosophy (FTL, p. 266; XVII 273).

For Husserl, philosophy has an *essential*, integral relation to its history, unlike other sciences. As Husserl writes, in *Crisis* Supplement XXIV, philosophers live in the present in their actual lives, but in their professional vocation they are in communicative interaction with philosophers of previous generations:

For philosophers of the present day the philosophical past is genuinely motivating. The peculiar modality of the horizon of the philosopher – generations and their works, their thoughts. Every philosopher has his historical horizon, encompassing all the philosophers, that has formed their thoughts in philosophical co-existence, and have worked on new philosophers as entering into this co-existence. (Crisis VI 488, my translation)

This poetical reconstruction consists of treating the past of philosophy not as a dead set of facts but as a set of living problems in dialogue with the present (see VI 488). Husserl speaks about the need for a treatment of history, as a critical appropriation of the past, in order to fully participate in the meaning of *philosophy*, to understand what it is and what it does (*Crisis*, p. 391; VI 510). Philosophy has its own "philosophical generativity" (Hua VI 488), which can even lose its power to propagate over time and degenerate such that living ideas become merely texts and documents. But even here the sedimented documents and material remain to be reawaken in subsequent generations. In this sense, in a unique way, living and dead are joined together, and the sense of the field or horizon of a problem or theme is greatly expanded.

Another important factor motivating Husserl's turn to history was the publication of two books: Heidegger's *Being and Time* in 1927 and Georg Misch's *Lebensphilosophie und Phänomenologie* in 1930. Misch's *Life-Philosophy and Phenomenology* contrasted Husserl's work unfavorably with the new hermeneutics of Heidegger and Dilthey, motivating Husserl to defend his own approach to the essential a priori of history, including his own conception of historicity and live in tradition⁶. With the publication of Husserl's research manuscripts on

⁶ Misch, *Lebensphilosophie und Phänomenologie. Eine Auseinandersetzung der diltheyschen Richtung mit Heidegger und Husserl*. (Bonn: Cohen, 1930; 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1964).

intersubjectivity (Husserliana XIII to XV) and especially his *Nature and Spirit* lectures (regularly delivered in Freiburg until 1927, now Hua XXXII), as well as Husserliana volume XXXIX on the life-world⁷, we can recognize that he had been concerned with the problematic of communal living in history and the issue of "historicity" (for which he employs two terms more or less indiscriminately: *Geschichtlichkeit*, *Historizität*) for a much longer period and quite independently of Heidegger⁸. Indeed, it is more likely that Husserl's conception of spontaneous, absorbed "living-in" (*Dahinleben*) influenced Heidegger's conceptions of human collective living in the historical "we-world" rather than the other way around.

In fact, Husserl's explicit turn to history in the *Crisis* is largely a matter of his own internal development. He was influenced here not so much by Heidegger nor by the political turmoil of the nineteen thirties but rather by his own concerns to develop phenomenology outwards from an egology, through his studies of empathy, to an intersubjective philosophy of collective spirit, *Gemeingeist*. Phenomenology could not be considered complete, then, until it had addressed the nature of communal and historical living.

The Phenomenology of Communal Spirit (*Gemeingeist*)

Husserl's phenomenology explicitly begins, in the spirit of Descartes' *Meditations*, from the individual ego's own self-reflection on his or her "lived experiences" (*Erlebnisse*) as intentional performances. But Husserl – and this is already clearly stated in *Ideas* II – also recognized that the ego itself has a history and constitutes its experiences in terms of an extended, flowing *life*, a concept usually more associated with Wilhelm Dilthey. Moreover this life involves the experience of the world as the non-objectifiable horizon of all experience. As he writes in the *Cartesian Meditations*:

The ego constitutes himself for himself in, so to speak, the unity of a "history". (CM § 37, p. 75-76; Hua I 109-110)

Husserl goes on to say that the entire cultural world as well as the world of *nature* (primarily construed as the world of physical, spatial

⁷ Husserl, *Die Lebenswelt: Auslegungen der Vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution*, ed. Rochus Sowa, Husserliana XXXIX (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008).

⁸ Although *Geschichtlichkeit* appears occasionally in Dilthey, Dilthey does not employ the term *Historizität*.

things – which he calls “thing-world”, *Dingwelt*) must be constituted through the apprehending ego’s own constituting acts and experiences.

Philosophy, for Husserl, cannot escape its history; philosophers are “heirs to the past” in respect of the very goal set for philosophy (*Crisis* § 7, p. 17; VI 16), indeed philosophers have a duty to carry through a historical self-reflection in order to articulate the needs of the time. Philosophers are, as he famously puts it, *functionaries of mankind* (*Funktionäre der Menschheit*, *Crisis* § 7, p. 17; VI 15). Elsewhere Husserl sees “functionaries” not merely as passive bearers or conveyors of tradition but as actively and creatively *constituting* (filtering, validating, suppressing, affirming, maintaining, renewing) our sense of belonging to institutions through our participation and endorsement of them, with “our tasks, our duties, our responsibilities” (Hua XXIX 229; cf. *Crisis* supplement XXIV 489). Philosophers – as do natural scientists – share the goal of truth (XXIX 229) and carry the burden of interpreting the historicity of their people. In particular, he speaks of historical continuity in philosophy as involving a kind of “poeticizing” (*Dichtung* – a term that more usually means poetry or fiction, literature) of the history of philosophy. By that he means that philosophers identify their historical predecessors not by some factual documenting of the external facts of the history of philosophy, but through a kind of inner alignment or harmony, an “interweaving” (*Ineinander*) of intention, rather in the manner in which poets choose those whom they have decided have influenced them. Poetry and philosophy makes their own traditions through taking up the poems or thoughts of earlier generations and revivifying them (see *Crisis*, p. 392-95; VI 511-13). Philosophers of the past are joined with those of the present into a single “community of philosophers” (*Philosophengemeinschaft*, VI 444), a “community of thinkers” (*Denkergemeinschaft*, VI 444). The continuity of philosophical problems and discussions from generation to generation leads to a very particular “generativity” in the history of philosophy itself (*Crisis*, VI 444).

History as such cannot be understood until one recognizes generativity. Generativity functions in lots of complex and hidden ways, e.g. children’s games pass from one generation of children to another, while the adults often have forgotten them. Meanings can be preserved, encoded with further meanings, or distorted, obliterated or repressed. What is transmitted can remain dormant and then suddenly be reawakened.

Communalization and Historicity

Husserl often speaks of the process of “communalization” (*Vergemeinschaftung* *Crisis*, p. 262; VI 265, cf. VI 322, 357) whereby humans become socialized into various groupings. He also speaks of our being “with-one-another” (*Miteinander*) paralleling Heidegger’s discussion of “being-with-others” (*Mitsein*) in *Being and Time* § 26. Thus, in *Crisis* § 47, he speaks of the human character of “living-with-one-another” (*Miteinanderleben*, *Crisis*, p. 163; VI 166; see also § 28, p. 108; VI 110) and cooperating as “co-subjects” (*Mitsubjekte*, VI 167) who belong together in a “co-humanity” (*Mitmenschheit*, VI 168). He speaks more generally a collective shared intentionality or “we subjectivity” (*Wir-subjektivität*, *Crisis* § 28, p. 109; VI 111).

In the *Crisis*, Husserl investigates the interpersonal, intersubjective, communal world, the world of what he calls “socialities” (*Sozialitäten*), families, peoples, nations (he sometimes speaks of the Greeks as a “nation”, *Crisis* VI 322), and even “super-nations” (*Übernationen*, VI 314, 320, 322, 326), by which he means larger groupings of nations or peoples, united by a common purpose, e.g. the idea of “Europe” (see XXIX 229), “India” or “China”. Humans are members of families, clubs, groups, linguistic communities, religious or political institutions, states, and so on. These belongings are subject to norms. Thus he speaks of Germans as “good Europeans” participating in the culture of Europe (see Hua XXIX 229).

Human communities have their own historical orientation and trajectories, their own outlooks, horizons, paths and destinies in history, which Husserl loosely terms “historicity” (*Historizitäten*, *Geschichtlichkeiten*). These historicities interweave with one another in complex ways. Some cultural groupings even lack history and are thereby closed in on themselves. *Historicity*, for Husserl, does not have quite the same technical sense it has in Heidegger. For Husserl, it means the way in which human groupings constitute and live out, across the interchanges and transmissions of the generations, a common history. A historicity is a “unity of becoming” (*Einheit des Werdens*). For Husserl, every social grouping has its own “historicity” or structural way of evolving its history:

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

Moreover different historicities can be grouped into various stages of development; there are different "levels" (*Stufen*) of historicity, 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 *Crisis* supplementary text entitled "Levels of Historicity: First Historicity", 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)

Note here that Husserl characterizes historicity as a universal and necessary property belonging to human existence.

In emphasizing the importance of history, Husserl frequently contrasts groups who live historically and have a "living historicity" (XXVII 187) with those who lack history or are "historyless" (*geschichtslos*, see his letter to Lévy-Bruhl)⁹. In a supplementary text XXVI to the *Crisis* (VI 502-503) Husserl refers to the different "levels of historicity" and in an associated text from the Autumn of 1934 on the "naiveté of science" (Hua XXIX No. 3) he reflects on the levels of historicity and the manner in which human beings live in history with a sense of past, present and future. Different histories relate to their past in fundamentally different ways. At the lowest level of this historicity is the stagnant world of the primitive which "lacks history" (XXIX 39) and is immersed in a mythical cosmology: "The first surrounding world is the in-between-realm between earth and heaven" (XXIX 38). Different national groupings have their distinct myths of their place on earth, and locate themselves relative to what is above and below. Each myth furthermore conceives its people in relation to what is for them earth as a whole. Hence there is already a kind of intrinsic and shared *universality* (XXIX 44) in mythic story-telling.

The mythical outlook, moreover, exhibits a natural "animism" (XXIX 4; 38) whereby nature itself is experienced as a living person. Physical things in nature are thought to participate in life. The dead continue to inhabit the world (Husserl is echoing Lévy-Bruhl). Thus,

⁹ See "Edmund Husserl's Letter to Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, 11 March 1935", trans. Dermot Moran with Lukas Steinacher, *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, Vol. VIII (2008), p. 349-354, esp. p. 352.

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)

There are lower and higher groupings, less complex and more complex social forms, from small family groupings to multinational civilizations. Humans live in families, groups, communities, nations, and even certain supra-national unities (*Übernationen*, e.g. Europe, China). Strictly speaking, furthermore, Husserl writes, there are no "first" humans (XXIX 37), rather families give rise to families, generations to generations. Nations live in a "homeland" (*Heimat*, XXIX 9) or "home-world" (*Heimwelt*)¹⁰, or "near-world" (*Nahwelt*, VI 303), that is familiar to them; each group has its own specific sense of what is familiar and what is unfamiliar or foreign. Each nation has its opposing nation (XXIX 38-39, 41), and so on. But all of these engagements at a cultural level take place among *persons*:

A particularly privileged position in the surrounding world is occupied by its persons. (Crisis, p. 328; VI 307)

Persons and the Personalistic Attitude

The concept of the person is the key concept for Husserl's thoughts on the process of communalization, and on the meaning of history. From *Ideas II* on, Husserl frequently speaks about the specifically personal approach, the "personalistic attitude" (*die personalistische Einstellung*, *Ideas II* § 49), according to which subjects recognize each other as subjects interested in reasoning and valuing. Persons relate to one another in complex intentional ways, according to their motivations, sedimented traditions, values, beliefs and desires, and so on.

¹⁰ Husserl frequently uses the term "homeworld" (*"Heimwelt"*, e.g. Hua VI 303 and Hua XXXIX 335) to express the manner the world always appears within a familiar context (the world as "*die normale Lebenswelt*" Hua XV 210). The world is constituted according to normality and abnormality (Hua XXXIX, Nr. 58) and unfolds necessarily within relations of proximity and remoteness. See Bernhard Waldenfels, "Homeworld and Alienworld", in *Phenomenology: Critical Concepts in Philosophy*, ed. Dermot Moran & Lester Embree, Vol. IV, *Expanding Horizons of Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 280-291.

For Husserl, being a person is a relational concept.

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, p. 387; IV 377)

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". An "I" recognizes others as also being "I"s in their own right (as being literally alter ego's). In the background of Husserl's 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*)¹¹. Husserl, for instance, speaks of the "I-you synthesis" (*Ich-Du Synthesis*, *Crisis*, p. 172; VI 175) and the even more complicated "we-synthesis" (*Wir-Synthesis*, *ibid.*), according to which we feel a common bond of fellowship with others. Husserl writes:

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. (Crisis, p. 322; VI 301)

Husserl's characterization of persons stresses not just the traditionally ascribed characteristics of freedom and rationality but also their intentionality and, most of all, their capacity to weave meanings that are socially recognized. The recognition of and from others is crucial to personhood. Even the Cartesian *cogito* needs to be reframed as a communal operation, as a "we think", *nos cogitamus*¹². Persons grow and develop. They have a shared sense of a common world formed by *tradition* (even if that tradition consists entirely of erroneous beliefs, as Husserl remarks, *Crisis*, p. 326; VI 305). A people lives in a world of tradition, a "traditional world". In his *Intersubjectivity* volumes Husserl declares in a note written around 1921-1922:

Life in prejudgment, life in tradition. In the widest sense, it belongs to every ego-life (Ichleben) to be life in tradition. (Hua XIV 230, my translation)

¹¹ See Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism*, trans. Simon Kaplan (New York: Frederick Unger, 1972).

¹² See David Carr, "Cogitamus Ergo Sumus: The Intentionality of the First-Person Plural", in his *Interpreting Husserl* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1987), p. 281-296.

Similarly, Husserl writes in *Crisis* Supplement XXIV (accompanying Section 73):

Each human being as a person stands in his or her generative interconnectivities (generativen Zusammenhängen), which, understood in a personal spiritual manner, stand in the unity of a historicity; this is not just a sequence of past factualities (Tatsächlichkeiten), 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)

We have definite perceptual experiences of a common, shared world where our experiences are harmoniously confirmed by others. We have a sense of a shared past with others of our community or family. There is a particular manner in which a group relates to its past, preserves a memory of past achievements, grievances, and so on. The world as understood from the personal attitude, or the attitude of engaged practical living, is a world of personal and social interests and involvements.

A community consciousness also engenders the sense of belonging to the *one, shared world* (and Husserl here recognizes the important contribution of a shared *language*). Of course, Husserl recognizes that in the course of our collective experience, there are also situations where our perceptual viewpoints are challenged or even negated by others; there can be "disharmonies" or "discrepancies" (*Uneinstimmigkeiten*).

To summarize, human life in the natural attitude is never primarily the singular life of the individual *cogito*, but rather a life lived in community, by persons who engage in personal relations with one another, who are members of families and communities across generations.

Teleology and Goal-Directed Life

As temporal beings, humans live lives that are meaningful because of communal engagement with others. Our lives are directed towards "goals" (*Zwecke*) – either ones we explicitly set ourselves (as our "life-vocation", *Lebensberuf*) or ones we simply drift into and accept unquestioningly (see *Crisis*, p. 379; VI 459). These goals are determined by our horizon of interests and the life-world overall encompasses and enables these purposive structures that belong to our active lives.

(*Crisis*, p. 382; VI 462). All communities come together and are unified around particular sets of values and purposes. To be human is to live under the "ought" and also to live purposively. As Husserl writes in Section 73 (that Biemel added as a "concluding section" to *Crisis* Part III)

... that being human is teleological being and an ought to be (*das Menschsein ein Teleologischsein und Sein-sollen ist*) and that this teleology holds sway in each and every activity and project of an ego ... (*Crisis* VI, p. 341; 275-276)

This teleology moreover has to become visible through a kind of "self-understanding" that is achieved only in and through philosophy itself.

Husserl considers history – and more particularly the history of philosophy – to be guided by purposiveness or what he calls "teleology" (*Teleologie*, from the Greek *telos* meaning "goal", "aim", "purpose" or "end"):

Our task is to make comprehensible the teleology in the historical becoming (*in dem geschichtlichen Werden*) of philosophy, especially modern philosophy, and at the same time to achieve clarity about ourselves, who are the bearers (*Träger*) of this teleology, who take part in carrying it out through our personal attentions. (*Crisis* § 15, p. 70; VI 71)

At the outset of the *Crisis* he states that he will not accept that "the shapes of the spiritual world" merely form and dissolve "like fleeting waves" (*Crisis* § 2, p. 7; VI 4). Husserl maintains that "the whole historical process has a remarkable form, one which becomes visible only through an interpretation of its hidden, innermost motivation" (*Crisis* § 5, p. 11; VI 9). History has a *telos* or goal. There must be "meaning" or reason in history" (*Crisis* § 3, p. 9; VI 7).

In the *Crisis* Husserl claims that what he calls "European humanity", i.e. Western scientific culture founded on the ancient Greek revolution) has made a revolutionary transformation from an enclosed particular life to adopting a goal of universal rationality as its guiding ideal. There is, Husserl insists, a *telos* which is "inborn in European humanity at the birth of Greek philosophy" (§ 6, p. 15; VI 13); it is the idea of people seeking to live by philosophical reason, and hence break with myth and tradition. Husserl raises the question whether this *telos* is illusory or merely an accidental accomplishment, one among many in the history of civilizations or whether it is, as he himself clearly believes: "the first breakthrough (*Durchbruch*) to what is essential to humanity as such, its *entelechy*" (*Crisis* § 6, p. 15; VI 13).

According to Husserl, moreover – and this has proved controversial – only Europe has a *teleology* in the strict sense, that is, a driving force aiming at a universal goal, in this case the driving force is towards the theoretical life (see *Crisis*, p. 278; VI 323) – as Husserl had already articulated in his Prague Treatise of 1934 (Hua XXVII 207). This European absolute idea is one of *theoria*, the adoption of the purely theoretical attitude, breaking with its own cultural particularity and absorption in itself. This breakthrough involves the discovery of ideality and "the idealizing accomplishment" (*die idealisierende Leistung*, *Crisis*, p. 346; VI 359), the commitment to evidence and justification, the recognition of the universality of reason, and the commitment to the idea of infinite inquiry and "infinite tasks" (albeit a concept not clearly specified by Husserl). As Husserl puts it, a new *telos* was opened up for all of humanity by the ancient Greeks:

... 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. (*Crisis* § 6, p. 15; VI 13)

Europe in the spiritual sense is for Husserl essentially an "international" and unified project (XXVII 207)¹³.

According to Husserl, what sets the European ideal of humanity apart is precisely its claim to *universality* and indeed a specific directedness towards *infinite* inquiry and infinite realization of the task of gaining knowledge (see *Crisis* § 15 and XXIX 390). Furthermore, the teleology of western humanity is expressed by and precisely incarnated in the practice of philosophy itself, as it emerged with the Greek enlightenment and has continued ever since.

Husserl maintains that the Indian and Chinese civilizations do exhibit a *universal* interest in the sense they have produced all-embracing, mythopoeic cosmologies, but they have done so from the standpoint of purely *practical* interests and fail to develop a fully transcendent conception of universal reason and purely theoretical knowledge. Husserl is empathic:

But only in the Greeks do we have a universal ("cosmological") life-interest in the essentially new form of a purely "theoretical" attitude, and this as a communal form in which this interest works itself out for internal reasons, being the corresponding, essentially new [community] of philosophers, of scientists (mathematicians, astronomers, etc.). (*Crisis*, p. 280; VI 326)

¹³ Husserl always emphasizes that it is its commitment to *philosophy* as a theoretical knowledge of the world (see XXVII 208) that makes Europe as a spiritual form open to infinite tasks.

Husserl maintains that the Greeks broke through to a new form of life – the form of life of *theoria*, dominated by what Husserl calls “the theoretical attitude” (see *Crisis* § 9(c), p. 36; VI 35). This theoretical attitude operates at a remove from the concerns of practical life as experienced in the natural attitude, and hence allowed the Greeks to exercise skepticism about their own most basic motivations and beliefs. The theoretical attitude is precisely the attitude of detached contemplation, of the “disinterested” or “non-participating” spectator about which Husserl talks a great deal in his mature works. According to the “Vienna Lecture” (and indeed the Prague lectures of 1935) the theoretical attitude is characterized by *wonder* or amazement at the world. The theoretical attitude necessarily involves a shift of attention or focus away from practical engagements. It involves applying an *epochè* to all practical interests and focusing purely on the demand for truth, and in this way, Husserl believes it prepares human subjects for the life of “self-responsibility” (*Crisis*, p. 283; VI 329). The theoretical attitude opens up a world of infinite tasks and unites humans together on the quest for rational “self-responsibility” (*Selbstverantwortung*, *Crisis*, p. 197; VI 200 and p. 283; VI 329). For Husserl, in the “Vienna Lecture”, philosophical life has ushered into history a new kind of praxis “that of the universal critique of all life and of all life-goals” (*Crisis*, p. 283; VI 329). Henceforth human life has to be lived as an absolutely self-critical constant re-evaluation of all its aims and achievements.

*The teleology of Western philosophy is the life of reason.
Philosophy, science in all its forms, is rational – that is a tautology.
(Crisis, p. 339; VI § 73, 274).*

Husserl invokes the image of the “dawn” (*Bild des Morgenrots*) characterizing the Greek spirit. From its origin in Greece, philosophy has had a driving aim or *telos*, its “sense of a goal” or “end” (*Zwecksinn*, *Crisis*, p. 394; VI 512, cf. XXIX 379). Philosophy, moreover, has an underlying unity of sense, apart from its obvious competing systems. There is a “concealed unity of intentional interiority” (*verborgene Einheit intentionaler Innerlichkeit*) in philosophy as Husserl makes clear in his long discussion of “Teleology in the History of Philosophy” (Hua XXIX 362-420), written in 1936-37.

Genesis, Universal History and World History

Husserl assumes the essential and intrinsic rationality of history. Indeed he believes we abandon reason itself if we abjure the notion of “reason in history”. He believes history must be understood as a kind of “total unity” (*Gesamteinheit*, *Crisis*, p. 71; VI 72), which is a “unity of motivation”. In the “Origin of Geometry” text, Husserl speaks of “universal history” (*Crisis*, p. 353; VI 365) in relation to his inquiries into “the deepest problems of meaning” (*ibid.*)¹⁴. In this text, Husserl takes the history of geometry to have “exemplary significance” for the history of science and indeed for the history of European culture in general. He is interested in terms of the manner in which texts are interpreted and concepts are passed along by tradition. Moreover, these traditions take on different meanings as we contextualize them relative to our current concerns. For Husserl, as a philosopher one is philosophizing in one’s own time, with one’s own inherited stock of concepts, and common opinions, with the scientific outlook of one’s own day (Hua VI 492). Each philosopher’s present is finite but stands in the context of an infinite horizon (Hua VI 494). How an infinite science is possible based on finite experiences is one of the key problems, Husserl acknowledges (Hua VI 499).

In this discussion of tradition, Husserl speaks both of “universal history” and the idea of a “universal a priori of history”. As Husserl writes in a *Crisis* supplementary text probably from 1936:

The a priori is related to the being of mankind and the surrounding world that is valid for it in experience, thinking and acting. But the a priori is something ideal and general, which on the one hand refers to men themselves as objects and on the other hand is a structure within men who form it. (Crisis, p. 349; VI 362)

This captures very well the double-sidedness of the a priori for Husserl. The a priori specifies formal conditions that make meaningful experience possible but on the other hand those very a priori forms have their source in transcendental subjectivity. Heidegger himself praised Husserl for giving a new sense to the a priori (understood as the eidetic) but in his late work he also re-connects it with subjectivity in its temporal flow. Husserl is historizing the a priori. The meaningfulness of the historical world owes to the actions

¹⁴ The concept of “universal history” is already to be found in Immanuel Kant, see his *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (1784), trans. Lewis White Beck, in I. Kant, *Kant On History* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1963).

of human subjects who are necessarily incarnated in the world and have their own way of projecting meaning into the future and taking up the remembered past.

At the end of the *Crisis*, Husserl too speaks of the “history of the world” or “world history” (*Weltgeschichte, Welthistorie*)¹⁵ as an infinite idea which guides reflections on history generally (Appendix XXV *Crisis* VI 501). Husserl believes that world-history offers a “horizon of infinities” (*Crisis* p. 390; VI 509) which takes humans beyond their individual world views that limit them. All history, for Husserl, begins, from the constitution of the present as a shared present with others – a “common present” (*Mitgegenwart*, Hua XXIX 54). The constitution of world history requires projecting backward a sense of a common past, and even more challenging, generating, an ideal of an infinite future. History, as the movement of peoples in time, makes sense, because it is appropriated and understood by the present generation who are the living agents in reconstituting their own historical past as *theirs*.

Indeed, as Husserl acknowledges in a late manuscript from the summer of 1937, he sees the exploration of what he had in *Ideas* I called the “natural concept of the world” and later the “life-world” as precisely the exploration of the “historical world” (Hua XXIX 426). The life-world is the historical world. Life is life in history, life in tradition.

¹⁵ Husserl uses the term “world history” (*Weltgeschichte, Welthistorie*) several times in the *Crisis*, e.g. p. 66; VI 67 and p. 274; VI 319.

VIE ET DIFFÉRENCES ANTHROPOLOGIQUES

Julien Pieron

J'ai peur que l'on ne comprenne pas bien ce que j'entends par issue. J'emploie le mot dans son sens courant et dans toute son amplitude. J'évite intentionnellement de parler de liberté. Ce n'est pas ce grand sentiment de la liberté dans tous les sens auquel je songe. Comme singe je le connaissais peut-être, et j'ai vu des hommes qui en éprouvent le désir. Mais, en ce qui me concerne, je n'ai jamais réclamé ni ne réclame la liberté.
(Kafka)

Les pages qui suivent tentent de dresser le bilan de recherches déjà anciennes autour de la phénoménologie de la vie et du problème de la différence anthropologique. Ces recherches trouvent leur point de départ dans une lecture minutieuse de Heidegger, et débouchent sur une série de doutes et de difficultés, qui conduisent à aller voir et chercher *ailleurs* qu'en phénoménologie – notamment du côté de la philosophie politique et de l'épistémologie. Après avoir rappelé brièvement la source de ces doutes et difficultés, nous tenterons d'y répondre de la seule façon qui nous apparaisse aujourd'hui possible : interroger et déplacer radicalement les conditions du problème, reformuler intégralement les questions – d'où le nombre et le caractère hétéroclite (ou hétérodoxe) des auteurs invoqués ici.

Le cadre de nos recherches autour de la différence anthropologique, c'est une étude de l'interprétation de la *Monadologie* leibnizienne présentée par Heidegger dans son cours du semestre d'été 1928. Cette étude permettait d'atteindre un double résultat : confirmer une interprétation de *Sein und Zeit* qui visait à reconstruire la troisième section « Temps et être », ou du moins à cerner le mouvement qui s'y accomplit ; offrir un schème conceptuel susceptible d'éclairer la genèse de la conceptualité du cours de 1929-30 et de mettre en évidence une sorte de carrefour métaphysique entre une