

HUSSERL AND RORTY: A COMMON GROUND

MASTER OF ARTS (1988)
(Philosophy)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Husserl and Rorty: A Common Ground

AUTHOR: Elizabeth Ann Fry, B.A. (University of Saskatchewan)

SUPERVISOR: Professor G.B. Madison

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 74

HUSSERL AND RORTY: A COMMON GROUND

By

ELIZABETH ANN FRY, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the school of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

April 1988

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Acknowledgements

Professor Gary Madison had faith in what I wanted to say, but encouraged me to say it more convincingly.

Professor Evan Simpson also had faith in what I wanted to say and his attention to detail was most valuable.

Professor Barry Allen's comments were helpful and insightful.

Thanks also to Wayne Turner whose high standards never let me get away with anything.

I would like to thank my mom and dad who have been supportive in all my endeavors, especially this one.

And Ahmad - thanks for putting up with me.

For Mom and Dad, whose voices speak words
that put flowers into desert landscapes

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: <i>Why Rorty Should Take Husserl More Seriously</i>	4
Chapter 2: <i>Defining the Life-World and its A Priori</i>	14
Chapter 3: <i>Husserl's Historical Reduction</i>	28
Chapter 4: <i>The Foundational Nature of Intersubjectivity</i>	45
Conclusion	59
Notes	64
Bibliography	73

Introduction

In "Husserl's Departure from Cartesianism", Ludwig Landgrebe discusses the significance of the lectures on *First Philosophy*, pointing out that

The effort required to penetrate this work's almost inextricable train of thought, which, continually interrupted by excursions and the reinterpretations of themes already executed, laboriously draws itself forward with constantly new beginnings, will therefore be richly rewarded.¹

Perhaps this emphasis on new beginnings and reinterpretations might be seen as a strong reflection of Edmund Husserl's contention that philosophy consists of an infinite task and thus a number of reformulations of the goals of philosophy are necessary and appropriate.

Husserl saw the need for a new beginning in philosophy in much the same mode as Descartes had approximately three centuries before him. This need is strongly expressed in practically everything Husserl wrote. There is a sense of an agonizing birth of ideas apparent whenever one undertakes to read even the shortest of Husserl's essays or manuscripts and more than one of Husserl's works is subtitled "An introduction to Phenomenology".²

Husserl's attempt at a new beginning in philosophy, which was in many ways similar to Descartes', results in a paradoxical inclination in

his writings. Husserl was very much interested in working within the tradition of modern philosophy to the extent that his new beginning would be as presuppositionless as Descartes' attempt. Thus, on the one hand, Husserl was sticking to the confines of the epistemology and metaphysics of the modern tradition which entailed, for Husserl, the notion of a foundation. His new beginning or solution was to find a radically new foundation of transcendental subjectivity or phenomenology. As we shall see, this new foundation of phenomenology was placed in the realm of the life-world. Thus, Husserl intended to remain within the modern tradition by doing phenomenology. On the other hand, although Husserl attempted to remain more or less within the Cartesian framework, he broke with this tradition unwittingly. Husserl's break with the tradition, rather than an intentional, conscious decision, was a result of trying to adhere to traditional metaphysical thought:

This occurs as the consequence of Husserl's return to "absolute experience" and not by way of turning to something new. It is therefore no overstatement to maintain that in this return to absolute experience, as is followed out for the first time in the *First Philosophy*, lies the motive whose consequences lead to the destruction of the framework which sustained the metaphysical thought of the tradition (in particular, its Cartesian form). Husserl himself was of course never entirely aware of the full extent of this break with the tradition. Beginning with the *First Philosophy*, it is played out behind his back in his incessant endeavor to establish phenomenology.³

One of the indications of Husserl's departure from Cartesianism was the way in which he sought to establish a foundation. Whereas Descartes' apodictic evidence was grounded in the "I am", Husserl, in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*,

stresses the importance of the life-world as a pre-given structure. This thesis will develop the argument that the life-world is necessary for the possibility of intersubjectivity. A consequence of this position is that intersubjectivity is "foundational" - i.e., we are only able to communicate with others if certain pre-given, pre-established structures are being shared and understood by ourselves and others.

In order to develop this argument, I will initially consider Husserl in the eyes of Richard Rorty and suggest that Rorty should consider more seriously the implications of what Husserl discusses in the *Crisis*. Thus, chapter one sets up a challenge for Rorty. This challenge is then developed by considering three interrelated issues. The first is to define the life-world and what Husserl means by its a priori. The second issue concerns Husserl's historical reduction as it relates specifically to the a priori of the life-world. Thirdly, and lastly, a possible non-metaphysical foundation for intersubjectivity will be considered by contrasting Rorty's definition of hermeneutics with the implications of what Husserl says in the *Crisis* and the fifth Cartesian Meditation.

Chapter One

Why Rorty Should Take Husserl More Seriously

Husserl's departure from metaphysics had a dramatic influence on the goals of continental and analytical philosophy because it raised many inescapable questions about the nature of philosophy, questions which Richard Rorty, for example, examines with great enthusiasm. Since Husserl, there have been many to witness the destruction of metaphysics. Rorty's recent demolition of metaphysics and epistemology involving an historical exegesis in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and *Consequences of Pragmatism* has been the focus of much controversy.

Although Rorty does not recognize in Husserl a break with the idealist tradition, he comments that Husserl and others found themselves in a crisis situation with "a note of desperation in their voices".¹ But Rorty does not interpret this desperation in Husserl's voice as something which leads to a break with the metaphysical tradition, or, for that matter, as something which was even the suggestion of a break. However, Gary Madison proposes the following idea that

in spite of Husserl's unquestioned allegiance to the tradition, there are elements in his thought which tend to propel him beyond it and which, if fully developed, would require a different philosophical context and the abandonment of the ideal of scientific philosophy ... Although any reading of this latter sort must be undertaken with the greatest caution, so as not to read "existentialism" back into Husserl, it is not without philosophical or

hermeneutical merits.²

It is this point exactly which will be developed in greater detail and a point to which Rorty seems oblivious. As a consequence, his assessment of Husserl consists of a misinterpretation.

Rorty views Husserl as just another foundationalist seeking yet another new foundation to replace the old one. What Rorty does not take into consideration is that the new foundation Husserl is putting forth is not metaphysical in the traditional sense. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty has a tendency to construct his history of philosophy such that certain philosophers, such as Husserl, are forced into a simplistic mold. So far as Rorty is concerned, Husserl re-discovers essences³ and tries to make philosophy rigorous once again. But Husserl's life-world is a new a priori consisting of phenomena and he insists that we must distinguish this from the objective-logical a priori consisting of noumena put forward, for example, by Kant.

This thesis argues that Rorty's interpretation of Husserl relies heavily on Husserl's earlier writings but unfortunately does not consider seriously enough the implications of Husserl's later writings, notably the *Crisis*. Had Rorty attended to the later writings rather than only the early ones, he might have recognized an ally in Husserl. Instead, Rorty misses, omits or denies the connection he has with Husserl. As I shall attempt to make clear, Rorty's case for an explicit hermeneutical approach to reality which would replace the traditional philosophic problematic of philosophy as the mirror of nature, is not completely unrelated to Husserl's approach. But Rorty would most likely disagree because he would say that Husserl is doing exactly what we

should avoid - asking questions which entail some sort of theory of knowledge. Rorty's reaction to Husserl's question, "How can the critique of cognition get underway?"⁴, would be that philosophy should no longer consist merely of a theory of knowledge. If we were to examine just the earlier works of Husserl, as Rorty seems to have done, then we might well come up with a similar dissatisfaction. For example, Rorty would disagree with Husserl's emphatic declaration that philosophy must not model itself after the methodology of the natural sciences and that "In contradistinction to all natural cognition, philosophy lies ... within a new dimension."⁵ Philosophy, according to Rorty, should not model itself after the natural sciences because philosophy should not see itself or define itself epistemologically. But this is different from Husserl's position because the implications of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* are that philosophy can no longer define itself in any way whatsoever, since, for Rorty, philosophy really no longer exists as a formal, foundational discipline. What remains for us now, according to Rorty, are just various forms of edification - truth being one form - but no particular problems which we have to solve because we are philosophers. So Rorty would agree that philosophy should not adopt the methodology of the natural sciences for the reason that philosophy should not be seen as having a methodology at all. Husserl, although he insists that philosophy should not adopt the methodology of the natural sciences, insists that this is because philosophy must define its own methodology. In an earlier work, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, Husserl wanted philosophy to properly recognize itself as a critique of cognition, as a rigorous science. But to Rorty this sounds too much

like epistemology and therefore he would reject Husserl's ideas concerning the goals of philosophy. But by examining the *Crisis*, we will see that although Rorty and Husserl may be two thinkers from different traditions, their projects are not unrelated.

Although it would not be appropriate to attribute to Husserl some sort of early stage of existentialism or hermeneutics (witness Husserl's criticism of Heidegger's anthropologism or Husserl's criticism of the existentialists⁶), one cannot deny the importance Husserl attributes to the life-world in the *Crisis*, and intersubjectivity in the fifth Cartesian Meditation, both of which are central concerns in defining hermeneutics. This point will be developed further, partly within the context of Jeff Mitscherling's article, "Resuming the Dialogue".⁷

Thus, to study how one might connect Rorty to Husserl has a specific purpose. Rorty's project owes some tribute to Husserl and the nature of this tribute is perhaps parallel to the one Nietzsche owes to Kant.⁸ Rorty's project is in the limelight today for any thinker concerned with the issues of historicism and relativism and these are issues which Husserl was also grappling with in the last years of his life. Rorty would say that Husserl lost his battle with historicism, but I would argue that since the a priori of Husserl's life-world is not a metaphysical foundation and consists of actual phenomena, it is possible to speak of foundations coexisting with history without contradicting oneself.

From the points raised above it should be apparent that Husserl and Rorty respond to a crisis situation in philosophy. Husserl, in the tradition of the Greeks, was continuing to make philosophy rigorous,

despite the fact that his disciples were not necessarily following this same goal. But the statement, "Philosophy as science, as serious, rigorous, indeed apodictically rigorous, science - the dream is over"⁹, though it can be viewed as an expression of Husserl's disappointment with regards to the existentialism (and therefore, for Husserl, irrationalism) of Heidegger, should not be interpreted "as a confession on Husserl's part of a loss of faith in what had been his life-long goal: the ideal of an absolutely fundamental science."¹⁰ Husserl himself had not lost faith in this goal, even though others had. For Husserl, the crisis of philosophy was the possibility of giving way to existentialism, a tendency he refused to succumb to.

For Rorty, philosophy's crisis consists of the tension between: (1) the belief that philosophy has a particular subject matter - metaphysical and epistemological claims - which are somehow more fundamental than the claims of any other discipline; and (2) the belief that philosophy can be edifying but can never provide us with more than a hermeneutical assessment of the way things are. Rorty's belief is the latter. His solution is to eliminate basically everything which philosophy assumed (wrongly) to be its subject matter. In *Consequences of Pragmatism*, Rorty continually expresses the need to get away from the conviction that philosophy is something more than "just the name of one of the pigeonholes into which humanistic culture is divided for administrative and bibliographical purposes."¹¹ For everyone involved, this would mean "abdicating the role of sage, of final authority on the meaningfulness or the rationality of assertions or actions."¹² In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature and Consequences of Pragmatism*,

Rorty periodically cites Husserl and others as continuing to perpetuate philosophy as a foundational discipline.¹³ Contrasted with this are Rorty's post-modernist claims which imply an end to philosophy qua foundational or qua anything in particular.

But I contend that there is a middle ground between Rorty and Husserl. A careful reading of the *Crisis* indicates that Husserl had changed his mind about a number of things. Most importantly, Husserl sees the role of the pre-scientific life-world as being central to his phenomenology. Husserl resituates the status of the "scientifically true" world¹⁴ by illustrating that scientific entities presuppose the life-world instead of assuming a position of immediate experience. In other words, the life-world, and not the scientific world, has the status of a world of immediate experience. As a consequence of this, Husserl recognizes that

Prescientifically, in everyday sense-experience, the world is given in a subjectively relative way. Each of us has his own appearances; and for each of us they count as ... that which actually is. In dealing with one another, we have long since become aware of this discrepancy between our various ontic validities.¹⁵

We might say that this passage, at least implicitly, suggests a concept of truth and as David Carr points out in "Husserl's Problematic Concept of the Life-World", Husserl has developed a new concept of truth in the *Crisis*. When Husserl says that "the world is given in a subjectively relative way", we are reminded of what Gadamer says in *Truth and Method*:

even perception conceived as an adequate response to a stimulus would never be a mere mirroring of what is there. For it would always remain an understanding of something as something. All understanding as ... is an articulation of what is there, in that it looks

away from ... looks at ... sees together as ...
 vision, as an articulating reading of what is there,
 removes ... a lot of what is there from sight ...
 Equally, it is led by its expectations to read in
 what is not there at all.¹⁶

The concept of truth which Husserl develops in the *Crisis* is one with which Rorty would not disagree given his pragmatic contentions. Thus, there appears to be some common ground shared by Husserl and Rorty. Husserl refers to "situational" or "practical" truth¹⁷

which is properly characterized as "merely relative" - i.e., relative to the subject or the community, relative to the project under consideration - only by contrast to the notion of "objective" truth, truth-in-itself about the world-in-itself.¹⁸

A critical assessment of Carr's interpretation of Husserl leads us to the important conclusion that the difference between Husserl's subjectivism or relativism and Rorty's is that while Rorty's concept of truth acknowledges a "discrepancy between our various ontic validities", it does not involve the contrast between subjective truth and truth-in-itself because there is no metaphysical truth-in-itself for Rorty. Truth is something agreed upon and not independent of any theory or description of the way things really are. There are many truths, each with its own history of development. Husserl, however, contends that despite the discrepancies in our everyday sense-experience and despite the fact that the life-world in a cultural sense "can change historically, its phenomenology must deal with the eidetic structures of such change, the essential conditions of any and all cultural transformations."¹⁹ As Husserl himself says in the *Crisis*, "we do not think that ... there are many worlds. Necessarily, we believe in the world, whose things only appear to us differently but are the same."²⁰

Husserl's claims about eidetic structures would not sit well with Rorty. But by focusing on what we have cited as constituting a middle ground between these two thinkers, I shall develop the point in greater detail that Rorty should examine seriously the contentions of Husserl's later works, particularly, the *Crisis*. What appears to be the case is that Rorty has overlooked Husserl's concept of the pre-given or the a priori of the life-world which acts as a common ground. Rorty's definition of hermeneutics consists partly of a denial of the existence of a common ground among persons - i.e., there is no common ground which acts as a solid reference for the claims we make. Rorty's argument that knowledge is not a mirror of nature depends on the position that we do not proceed from a shared, common ground in order to arrive at knowledge claims. But I would argue, with Husserl in the background, that if we are to arrive at knowledge or a tentative agreement about the way things hang together, then we can only do so by proceeding from a common ground which consists of both perceptual and cultural structures. Otherwise, the whole process of inquiry can never get underway. Husserl's concept of the life-world provides us with that common ground needed to get the conversation going.

Jeff Mitscherling suggests that Rorty must have or appears to have overlooked two major phenomenological observations: intersubjectivity and the life-world. He argues that the shared cultural values which are constituted intersubjectively are also "the ground of the value-laden world we live in, our *Lebenswelt*."²¹ Rorty does not consider the importance of Husserl's greater emphasis of the life-world in the *Crisis*. Because of this, his assessment of Husserl is

influenced primarily by the ideas of Husserl's earlier works which include a strong belief in philosophy as a discipline which possesses foundations ("to the extent that philosophy goes back to ultimate origins ... "22). Rorty does not assess Husserl's phenomenological investigations of intersubjectivity and the life-world in the fifth Cartesian Meditation and the Crisis respectively. As a result, Rorty has focused on the presuppositionless philosophy of the earlier Husserl without assimilating the later developments. His interpretation of Husserl is within the confines of Husserl's dogmatic, foundationalist claims, rather than attempting to assess Husserl within the larger sphere which would include intersubjectivity - a necessary ingredient for Rorty's hermeneutics. Rorty's explicit remarks about foundations (i.e., how there aren't any), and the denial of the existence of a common ground among persons, must be considered seriously. When we examine Rorty's version of hermeneutics, it is apparent that he is naive about the implications of Husserl's thinking in the Crisis. If Husserl's emphasis on intersubjectivity and the life-world unintentionally paved the way for hermeneutics, then Rorty should not ignore Husserl's concept of the life-world which suggests the existence of a common ground.

Rorty's leap away from epistemology consists mainly of a claim "that knowledge is not to be seen as the ground of conversation, but that conversation is, so to speak, the foundation of knowledge ..."23 Thus, for Rorty, we share, in one sense, something common - the conversation - but the conversation is not grounded in a universal knowledge. However, as Mitscherling points out, there really can be no

dialogue between subjects unless there has been a certain amount of agreement established beforehand. Hence, the foundational nature of intersubjectivity. Whether or not all human inquiry has a ground in order to proceed will be one of the main concerns of this study. Perhaps the a priori of the life-world is what is responsible for the foundational nature of intersubjectivity. We are only able to communicate with others if certain pre-given, pre-established structures are being shared by the interlocutors. This idea will be explored in greater detail in chapter four.

Chapter Two

Defining the Life-world and its A Priori

Husserl argues that science has forgotten the reason for its possible existence - that it is, after all, an interpretation of the pre-given world of immediate experience. For Husserl, this is the crisis situation science is in. In order to re-define the reasons for the existence of science, Husserl concerns himself with the system of principles that give the logical structures of science their a priori. This gives rise to a rigorous investigation of the grounding of science. Husserl sees the crisis of science being understood and resolved by grasping the meaning of the life-world and how it is the a priori of the theoretical world - i.e., how it provides the a priori conditions for science.

With the realization that the life-world consists of premises which make possible scientific substructures, the objective sciences gain a knowledge which is grounded. The natural sciences are not based on the immediate experience of objective nature. Instead, the intuitive life-world provides the grounding for the conception of objective ideals. Objective theory, in its logical sense, is essentially related to and grounded in the life-world.

The argument put forward here depends initially on an acceptable definition of the a priori of the life-world as contrasted with the

objective-logical a priori. When we speak of the a priori of the life-world, we do not mean the metaphysical notion of the objective-logical a priori associated most strongly with Kant. When Husserl speaks of the a priori of the life-world, he means something which is necessary for the possibility of a theoretical world. This is because the life-world is the world of immediate experience, the "realm of original self-evidences."¹ By the world of immediate experience, Husserl means the perceptual world of intuitive data, the world which science interprets and theorizes about.

Husserl emphasizes the need to examine the life-world independently of science in order to demonstrate how and why science is grounded in the life-world. If we study the life-world as a science in its own right and come to an understanding of our consciousness of the life-world, then we will be in a position to "adequately understand the particular forms of consciousness that give us the theoretically interpreted world."² According to Husserl, the life-world has specific "scientific" tasks of its own which have an independent status from the theoretical world. Before the epoche of science, the life-world existed. Although science eventually grew out of the life-world, it has not always existed as it does now. Thus the life-world's role, so-to-speak, encompasses more than the grounding of science and because of this, its status supersedes its preliminary status as a necessity for the existence of science:

The life-world was always there for mankind before science, just as it continues its manner of being in the epoch of science. Thus one can put forward by itself the problem of the manner of being of the life-world; one can place oneself completely upon the

ground of this straightforwardly intuited world, putting out of play all objective-scientific opinions and cognitions, in order to consider generally what kind of "scientific" tasks, i.e, tasks to be resolved with universal validity, arise in respect to this world's own manner of being.³

Whether or not we can put "out of play all objective-scientific opinions and cognitions" is problematic and this will be dealt with later in this chapter and extensively in chapter three.

For now, we shall be concerned with what exactly Husserl includes within the realm of the life-world. It was noted that by the world of immediate experience, Husserl means the perceptual world. Whether or not the cultural world is included within Husserl's concept of the life-world is a query which David Carr has dealt with in his article, "Husserl's Problematic Concept of the Life-World". Carr's interpretation of Husserl involves a certain hierarchy which incorporates all the complex interrelationships between the perceptual, cultural and theoretical worlds.

If my interpretation of Carr is correct, his hierarchy is as follows. Although both the perceptual and cultural worlds are part of the pre-theoretical world, the life-world, they do not have the same status. The perceptual world, for Husserl, has a more fundamental status - it is the basis for both the cultural and theoretical worlds. The relation between the perceptual and theoretical worlds is indirect, contrasted with the direct relation between the cultural and theoretical worlds. This suggests that the cultural world has an intermediate status which bridges the perceptual and theoretical worlds. As such, the perceptual world gives rise to the cultural world and the cultural

world gives rise to the theoretical world of science. One of the reasons the perceptual world's relation to the theoretical world is not direct is because the perceptual world is pre-linguistic. Since language is necessary for the formulation of scientific theories, the linguistic, cultural world is a necessary step between the perceptual and the theoretical worlds.

The life-world qua perceptual world has perceptual structures which do not change. Science tries to capture these a priori structures by putting forth various theories. Contrasted with this is the life-world qua cultural world. Since the cultural world changes historically, it is necessary to determine its a priori structure through a phenomenological analysis which, according to Carr, involves two stages:

Its first subject of concern must be the ontological status of the community as such and the conditions of the possibility of such phenomena as institutions, political organizations, literature ... Second, since the life-world in this cultural sense can change historically, its phenomenology must deal with the eidetic structures of such change, the essential conditions of any and all cultural transformations.⁴

Carr appears to be implying that the phenomenology of the cultural world has its own a priori which is distinct from the a priori of the perceptual world. But I would argue that a more accurate reading of Husserl would indicate that the a priori structure of the perceptual world accounts for the possibility of a cultural world which has an invariant structure of its own. This argument will be explored in chapters three and four along with an examination of the dependency of the cultural world upon the perceptual world. What concerns us for now

is that there are two distinct strata which make up the life-world, both of which are necessary for the existence of science.

The problem remains as to how the life-world becomes a subject of investigation which encompasses scientific statements which have their own objectivity and which, therefore, can be verified by everyone. The scientific investigation of the life-world is possible by carrying out the epoche of objective science - the first step of the transcendental epoche. This is

an epoche of all participation in the cognitions of the objective sciences, an epoche of any critical position-taking which is interested in their truth or falsity, even any position on their guiding idea of an objective knowledge of the world.⁵

By investigating "the distinction in principle between the objective-logical a priori and the a priori of the life-world"⁶, we will see that Husserl's epoche reveals the a priori of the life-world in a way which is not "argumentatively constructed through mythical thinking."⁷ Instead of trying to arrive at an a priori through logical argumentation (as is the case with an objective-logical a priori), the epoche, according to Husserl, lets us recognize that the world "takes its ontic meaning entirely from our intentional life through a priori types of accomplishments that can be exhibited"⁸, as opposed to assuming certain metaphysical presuppositions to count as a ground or foundation.

Husserl stresses the necessity of performing the transcendental epoche which results in a total transformation of attitude. He contends that in the natural attitude it is impossible to make sense of the subjective Heraclitean flux, but by performing the epoche, this becomes possible. Access to the universal a priori which belongs to the

life-world comes about by performing the epoche of objective science. Performing the epoche means being able to separate the objective-logical and the life-world a priori. Without this epoche, we will continue to substitute the objective a priori for the a priori of the life-world and the objective-logical sciences will continue to lack scientific grounding. Being able to separate the objective-logical and the life-world a priori will "set in motion a radical reflection upon the great task of a pure theory of essence of the life-world."⁹

According to Husserl, the epoche makes possible an attitude which transcends normal everyday existence and thematizes the way in which things in the life-world exhibit themselves. In the *Crisis*, Husserl is critical of "Kant's unexpressed 'presupposition': the surrounding world of life, taken for granted as valid."¹⁰ The subjective phenomena of the life-world which, for Kant, remained anonymous, must be disclosed so that objective science can be properly grounded. Otherwise, according to Husserl, we will (with Kant) come up with nothing but mythical constructions. The life-world is what we know best, but it is also what is taken for granted. Because it is something we take for granted, we are not normally conscious of its manner of being. The disclosure of the subjective phenomena of the life-world demands scientific treatment which Husserl claims has never been undertaken:

There has never been a scientific inquiry into the way in which the life-world constantly functions as subsoil, into how its manifold prelogical validities act as grounds for the logical ones, for theoretical truths.¹¹

Since the life-world is not understood "scientifically in its own manner of being"¹², it should, according to Husserl, be considered a universal

problem for philosophy. It is, for Husserl, a theoretical necessity to thematize the life-world in order to sort out certain paradoxical enigmas - enigmas which Husserl states as follows:

merely subjective relativity is supposedly overcome by objective-logical theory, yet the latter belongs, as the theoretical praxis of human beings, to the merely subjective and relative and at the same time must have its premises ... in the subjective and relative.¹³

Objective science, then, is able to emerge from the meaning-construct or general structure of the life-world.

Through the epoche, the world is transformed into a universe of phenomena which consists of intentional relations between subjects and objects. The intentional relation between subject and object produces the world's ontic meaning "through a priori types of accomplishments".¹⁴ When Husserl speaks of a priori truths, he means the fixed a priori types of accomplishments. The epoche provides a new direction of interest whereby it becomes possible to inquire into the ways in which the life-world objects appear as well as the intentional structures belonging to them. The intentional relation between the subject and object replaces the subject/object correlation of the natural attitude.

The life-world, then, as the realm of pure experience, has an invariant structure which consists of a set of essential types.¹⁵ As such, it is the foundation for all knowledge. However, this does not mean that the life-world has a ground which is taken for granted. Instead, it begins without an underlying ground. However, "it achieves the possibility of creating a ground for itself through its own powers, namely in mastering through original self-reflection, the naive world as

transformed into a phenomenon or rather a universe of phenomena."¹⁶ Each thing or phenomenon has fixed a priori types of accomplishments. These include both the intentions of the subject (i.e., the cogito), as well as the manners of givenness of the object.

Husserl argues that although the actual content of the life-world may vary and is being continually corrected, the world still exists in a unified way. This is possible, Husserl explains, because of the general structure of the life-world:

the life-world does have, in all its relative features, a general structure. This general structure, to which everything that exists relatively is bound, is not itself relative. We can attend to it in its generality and ... fix it once and for all in a way equally accessible to all.¹⁷

With the epoche of the objective sciences, we are in a position to thematize the life-world which involves attending to its general structure. We are also in a position to establish scientific facts about the life-world which includes an analysis of thematically investigated types. These thematically investigated types involve a fixed typology - an essential correlation between the world and its subjective manners of givenness.¹⁸ Generally, the life-world is the spatiotemporal world of things, as is the world of the objective sciences. However, the life-world does not consist of theoretical idealizations. It does, however, consist of structures which are normally taken for granted. But Husserl stresses that to thematize the life-world means more than formulating a doctrine of essence of the spatiotemporal ontology; it means more than putting forward a life-world ontology.

Our consciousness of the world is not the same as our consciousness of objects within the world-horizon. Husserl's task is to determine how the existence of two correlative types of consciousness is possible. This goal can be accomplished "by the idea of a consistently reflective attitude toward the 'how' of the subjective manner of givenness of the life-world and life-world objects."¹⁹ By investigating the subjective manner of givenness of life-world objects we will also, according to Husserl, determine the universal framework of the life-world, which, as a universal framework, will apply to all individual life-worlds. Husserl focuses on "never thematically investigated types"²⁰ in order to carry out his task:

Ordinarily we notice nothing of the whole subjective character of the manners of exhibiting "of" the things, but in reflection we recognize ... that essential correlations obtain here which are the component parts of a farther-reaching, universal a priori.²¹

In the *Crisis*, throughout sections #39 - #53 of Part III A, Husserl introduces his concept of thematically investigated types which, he claims, have never been the focus of philosophical interest. Husserl uses perception as a model to illustrate these a priori types of accomplishments, but he insists that once we have recognized a fixed typology, we will realize that this typology extends beyond what is perceived and also applies to "any and every entity within the spatiotemporal world and to its subjective manners of givenness."²² Through an intentional analysis, it can be determined how things in the life-world exhibit themselves. According to Husserl, an intentional analysis will reveal that the exhibitings are necessarily systematic.²³

He refers to this as the "universal a priori of correlation between experienced object and manners of givenness ..."24 Through an intentional analysis of perception, the subjective accomplishments are revealed. These consist of an "intersubjective harmony of validity ..."25 In other words, everything which is perceived entails a communalization. All of us experience the perceptual world in the same way - through the same subjective manners of givenness. Thus, we are conscious of the same world. Each individual:

knows that he and his fellows, in their actual contact, are related to the same experienced things in such a way that each individual has different aspects, different states, perspectives, etc., of them but that in each case these are taken from the same total system of multiplicities of which each individual is constantly conscious (in the actual experience of the same thing) as the horizon of possible experience of this thing.26

Husserl does not deny the fact that often there appear to be intersubjective discrepancies, but these can be resolved, he says, through discussion and criticism.27 In chapter IV, the idea of "intersubjective harmony of validity" will be developed from a cultural, linguistic perspective, instead of the present perceptual perspective.

Husserl discusses a priori types within the context of perception. As we have indicated, Husserl defines the life-world as both perceptual and cultural worlds. Our concern in chapters III and IV will be the cultural world and whether we can agree with Husserl's transcendental conditions for the possibility of the historically relative, cultural world. How the a priori types of accomplishments, as they relate to perceived objects, connect up to the cultural world; whether there are conceivable a priori types of accomplishments which

are specific to the cultural world; and whether the perceptual world, with its a priori types of accomplishments, provides the cultural world with a fixed typology, will all be topics of discussion for the next two chapters.

In chapter III, a discussion of the life-world which undergoes changes will be considered. Some of these changes are partly due to the accomplishments of science flowing into the life-world. Thus, the cultural world includes not only scientists, but also scientific theories. Husserl makes us aware of the paradoxes involved when examining the relationship between the life-world and the realm of objective science. Although these two are interconnected in the way already elucidated - i.e., objective science is possible only through the existence of the immediately experienced life-world - science is also part of the life-world. It is not only that scientists are part of the life-world; it is also the case that science and scientific theories exist as cultural facts in the life-world: "The concrete life-world ... is the grounding soil of the 'scientifically true' world and at the same time encompasses it in its own universal concreteness."²⁸ From these preceding remarks, it might appear that Husserl is merging the scientific world with the life-world. According to Carr, Husserl is adding scientific theories to the life-world, but not the world which scientific theories describe.²⁹ Perhaps this could be more clearly illustrated by saying that while the life-world may include certain scientific theories about, for example, atoms, it does not follow that atoms begin to exist in the life-world in the way tables and chairs do. They are still considered to be theoretical entities. When Husserl says

that scientific theories exist as cultural facts in the life-world, he means that they exist amidst all other spiritual accomplishments:

they are human formations, essentially related to human actualities and potentialities and thus belong to this concrete unity of the life-world whose concreteness thus extends further than that of "things".³⁰

Carr sees Husserl as having accomplished a reversal of the scientist's role. This reversal is fully justified if we agree that science is one interpretation of the world amongst other interpretations. The scientist's role, then, has been altered. The scientist can no longer see himself as being able to overcome the relativity of the subjective life-world. His/her picture of things is no more and no less objective than the picture I might have. Therefore, the scientist's picture or theory is part of the life-world just as other theories are. The scientific hypothesis is only "one among the many practical hypotheses and projects which make up the life of human beings in this life-world ..."³¹

The life-world is transformed through science as well as by historical conditions. But as Landgrebe argues, in support of Husserl, the core of the life-world does not change.³² Landgrebe supports this claim by referring to Husserl's statement: "the scientists are themselves men in the life-world, men among men ..."³³ The connection in his argument is clarified when he remarks that the reason the immediately experienced world remains invariant is because it is a world which counts for everybody. But one might still object by saying that the world before us as a *cultural world* is constantly being transformed and is therefore not invariant. Since Husserl includes the cultural

world within the domain of the life-world, we must determine how the core of the life-world as cultural world remains invariant. Either the cultural world remains invariant because it is tied to the a priori types of accomplishments of the perceptual world, or the cultural world has its own independent eidetic structures. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters. Our concern will be whether and how the life-world as a cultural world has an invariant structure which can persist through history - how the life-world is not "a mere cultural entity that (precludes) the idea of rigorous science and strict rationality."³⁴ Husserl's life-world has a general, invariant, a priori structure and is therefore not relative. But it is not invariant in a platonic sense - it is not metaphysical.³⁵ We will explore why this is the case in the next two chapters. But as an hypothesis for now, we might say that the life-world's invariant structure is not metaphysical because its core consists of a "universal a priori of correlation between experienced object and manners of givenness ...". If we make the presupposition that the cultural world is dependent upon the perceptual world for its constitution, then the cultural world is dependent upon an invariant yet non-metaphysical structure since the universal a priori of correlation is arrived at through an intentional analysis of perception and not argumentatively constructed. If this is the case, then it may be possible to defend Husserl against a Rortyan argument that Husserl's life-world is yet another foundation which attempts to dissolve cultural relativity. Rorty would question whether the core of Husserl's life-world is "a permanent neutral matrix for all inquiry and all history ..."³⁶ Rorty and others might be tempted to argue that the

reality of history - the fact that the life-world is an historical world (i.e., has the horizon of history) - undermines Husserl's project. Perhaps this is the primary question regarding the a priori of the life-world as a cultural world. Husserl wants to have as a basic goal, a universal, absolute science of the life-world, while at the same time acknowledge that the cultural world is encompassed by his a priori. Husserl's science of the life-world seems to claim trans-historical validity and as a result, universal commensurability. The community of the life-world is seen by Husserl as "the forgotten meaning-fundament of natural science"³⁷ which is common to us all. Through eidetic variation, Husserl wants a science of the life-world which entails essential categories of every life-world regardless of time and place. Husserl's historical reduction will be the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter Three

Husserl's Historical Reduction

Chapter II discussed, to a certain extent, the problems which are involved in Husserl's concept of the life-world. There is a tendency to define the a priori of the life-world in terms of the perceptual world, leaving the status of the cultural world unresolved. If the cultural world is not included in the life-world, then, as we have stated, an a priori of the life-world qua perceptual world is not problematic. This involves our intentional relation to things in the world which consists of a "universal a priori of correlation between experienced object and manners of givenness ..." However, if the cultural world is included in the realm of the life-world, the picture immediately becomes more complicated. Husserl's historical reduction seems plausible if it is just the perceived world which he is considering. But if this reduction is applied to the cultural world as well, then there will be the obvious objection which cultural relativists will make: the idea of a historical reduction doesn't make sense since the idea of an a priori applicable to the cultural world doesn't make sense.

Husserl expounds on the a priori of the life-world as it relates to the perceptual world. If the cultural world is dependent on the perceptual world for its constitution, then we can infer that the a priori of the perceptual world infiltrates the cultural world as well.

But we have to justify this claim. If the cultural world stems from the perceptual world, and the perceptual world consists of a priori types of accomplishments - i.e., the intentional relation between subject and object - then we might conclude that the cultural world is somehow controlled by this same a priori. As we noted in chapter II, the essential correlations of the perceptual world are, according to Husserl, "the component parts of a farther-reaching, universal a priori." This could be interpreted to mean that the invariant structure of the perceptual world extends beyond itself and in so doing, determines the structure of the cultural world as well.

Husserl's invariant, essential structure of the life-world seems to be mainly this: that the world is essentially a world of things regardless of whose world we are referring to. The cultural world, though it may be a historical world, can be traced to an underlying essential structure in the sense that the cultural world arises from the perceptual world which is itself a world of things. For example, measurement, as part of the cultural world, will change in its mode of appearance from culture to culture. But measurement is part of every culture because things are necessarily within the perceptual world upon which every cultural world is based. Thus, if I am interpreting Husserl correctly, the concept of distance would be a necessary component of the structure of all cultural worlds. Every culture has a technique for measuring which can always be presupposed and is necessary for the development of culture. To connect this up to the world of objective science, the measuring technique of every culture is pre-given to the scientist who can then proceed from what is pre-given in the life-world

to idealizations of the theoretical world.¹

Though there are many variations of the life-world, there is, according to Husserl, an essence underlying each and every possible life-world - i.e., "an essentially general set of elements going through all the variants"² which can be made self-evident again and again. As was indicated, the life-world is necessarily a world of things. Thus, the first element or characteristic going through all the variants is that all entities are experienced fundamentally as things. For Husserl, this includes human beings. This point will be developed in chapter IV by analyzing Husserl's fifth Cartesian Meditation where he indicates that "the basic community ... is the simple spatial encounter of two persons involving ... mutual and intersubjective perception."³ Initially, we are conscious of others in the same way we are conscious of things. The second element is that all bodies have "spatio-temporal shapes and 'material' qualities ..."⁴ Thirdly, as a cultural world, the life-world includes a technical praxis of producing certain shapes for practical needs. The last element is that every culture has a technique for measuring, and this has already been illustrated.

The purpose of this discussion is to come to better terms with the status of the life-world qua cultural world. If the cultural world is part of the life-world, then it must be accounted for in Husserl's a priori of the life-world. Primordially, the life-world, for Husserl, is the perceptual world with an invariant structure. The fundamental elements of this structure were indicated above. The question now is whether there can be an equally plausible invariant structure of the cultural world and this raises "the total problem of the universal

historicity of the correlative manners of being of humanity and the cultural world and the a priori structure contained in this historicity."⁵ If, for the moment, we see Husserl as including the cultural world or at least a cultural dimension within the life-world, then we could either argue the way we have thus far - i.e., the a priori of the perceptual world determines the a priori of the cultural world - or we could argue, as Carr does, that the eidetic structures of the cultural world are not reducible to those of the perceptual world. Holding this position would mean having to account for changes in the cultural world independently of the a priori of the perceptual world. Carr's interpretation of Husserl seems to be just this and it implies that the phenomenology of the cultural world is not reducible to the phenomenology of the perceptual world. Carr's argument is apparent in the following statement:

since the life-world in this cultural sense can change historically, its phenomenology must deal with the eidetic structures of such change, the essential conditions of any and all cultural transformations.⁶

By saying "its phenomenology", Carr is referring to the life-world *qua* cultural world and therefore is implying that the cultural world's transformations must be dealt with by its phenomenology - i.e., not by the phenomenology of the perceptual world. I briefly argued in chapter II that Carr has misinterpreted Husserl on this point. I would think that a more precise reading of Husserl indicates what I have already suggested above - i.e., that the essential correlations of the perceptual world are responsible for the cultural world as well. Carr appears more sympathetic towards this approach in *Phenomenology and the*

Problem of History, but less so in his article, "Husserl's Problematic Concept of the Life-World" This will become more evident in chapter IV with a discussion of the fifth Cartesian Meditation.

But even if all cultural transformations are reducible to the invariant structure of the perceptual world, Husserl would not disagree that the world is a historical world. He insists, however, that there is an *essential structure* of the world even though it lies within a historical horizon.⁷ If my interpretation of Husserl is correct, the a priori of the life-world qua cultural world is actually an a priori of history. Husserl distinguishes factual history from the a priori of history itself which encompasses all the conclusions of factual history by thematizing "the general ground of meaning upon which all such conclusions rest ..."⁸ Determining the a priori of history involves a historical reduction: the elimination of the historical prejudices of consciousness. According to Husserl, a historical reduction would involve the possibility of tracing the primal evidences which underlie the historical meaning-structures of the present.⁹

Obvious objections arise as to the possibility of this endeavor. Some would argue that Husserl is simply "wanting to bring, in a way reminiscent of Plato, the flow of history to a standstill with his idea of its continual flow."¹⁰ But Husserl is very aware of the objections which are raised against the possibility of a historical reduction. In "The Origin of Geometry", he formulates what would be the major objection - one which Rorty would make:

what naivete, to seek to display, and to claim to have displayed, a historical a priori, an absolute, supertemporal validity, after we have obtained such

abundant testimony for the relativity of everything historical, of all historically developed world-apperceptions ... Every people ... has its world in which, for that people, everything fits well together, whether in mythical-magical or in European-rational terms, and in which everything can be explained perfectly. Every people has its "logic" and, accordingly, if this logic is explicated in propositions, "its" a priori.¹¹

Husserl admits that this is a very weighty objection and he does not expect that his attempt at a historical reduction will be well received at first. But he believes that historicism is mistaken in principle¹² because it does not recognize what he refers to as "the internal-historical problem, the epistemological problem ..."¹³ Husserl contends that all facticities are grounded in an essential structure and that a teleological reason, contained in this essential structure, persists through all history.¹⁴ As we shall see, Landgrebe's interpretation of Husserl's a priori of history emphasizes its teleological nature. But first, let us explore the reasoning which Husserl offers to support these claims.

Husserl begins by asserting that any methodology which establishes historical facts presupposes "a validity-ground never observed, never made thematic, of a strictly unassailable [type of evidence], without which historical inquiry would be a meaningless enterprise."¹⁵ Thus, in order for facts (the facts set out by historicism for example) to have meaning, the historical a priori must be presupposed. Husserl seems to be defining the historical a priori as "the universal horizon of questioning ... as a horizon of implicit certainty, which, in spite of all vague background-indeterminacy, is the presupposition of all determinability, or of all intention to seek and

to establish determined facts."¹⁶ This horizon of implicit certainty makes possible knowledge that is, at the present, unknown. The teleological reason contained in this horizon of implicit certainty results in "a historically coherent and unified civilization ..."¹⁷ Husserl contends that all questioning of a historical nature presupposes a horizon whose essential structure can be made explicit. Up to this point, Husserl's theory seems very speculative.

In order to make more explicit the a priori of the historical world, Husserl focuses his attention on the conditions which are necessary for the possibility of a science which is not time-bound, using geometry as an example:

Only if the apodictically general content, invariant throughout all conceivable variation, of the spatiotemporal sphere of shapes is taken into account in the idealization can an ideal construction arise which can be understood for all future time and by all coming generations ... and thus be capable of being handed down and reproduced with the identical intersubjective meaning ... Were the thinking activity of a scientist to introduce something "time-bound" in his thinking ... his construction would like-wise have a merely time-bound ontic meaning; this meaning would be understandable only by those men who shared the same merely factual presuppositions of understanding.¹⁸

How we arrive at this "apodictically general content, invariant throughout all conceivable variation " is a question Husserl has perhaps already answered by pointing us in the direction of things. The a priori of history and consequently the a priori of the cultural world seems to be one which deals with the ahistorical things of the perceptual world - i.e., the life-world remains the same in that the things in it and their mode of appearing to us remain the same. Carr

suggests that Husserl's unchanging structure of the life-world may consist of nothing more and nothing less than horizon, space, time, object and event, seen as necessary correlates of a phenomenological theory of consciousness which would "assure us that in spite of all relativity there is a bedrock of unchanging world-structure which remains invariant and upon which the play of historical change runs its course ..."¹⁹

If, through historical reflection, we are able to recognize and then bracket certain prejudices which are part of a particular tradition, then we can say that the life-world has a general structure which underlies all historical relativities. As was indicated, for Husserl, this general structure seems to consist of the eidetic structures of the perceptual world. In other words, a historical reduction is possible if the world in which we actually live can be separated from different ways of thinking about the world. We can see the similarity between Husserl's phenomenological reduction which supposedly overcomes the prejudices of the natural attitude, and the historical reduction which, if possible, overcomes the prejudices of a certain tradition. Both have the ideal function of returning us to a position of pure seeing, but both seem highly improbable. As Carr points out, if "the cultural world actually flows into and affects the nature of the world as it is directly given", then "historical prejudice actually shapes our way of experiencing the world."²⁰ The consequence of this is that the structures of the immediately experienced world do not make up an a priori but are actually just the structures of the historical and cultural worlds.²¹ In other words, a historical

reduction is not possible if there is no world-structure which exists apart from intellectual frameworks of a particular historical tradition. Husserl's assumption is that there are inherited prejudices which can be eliminated from our consciousness. Once this has somehow occurred, there will still remain "the transhistorical structure of world-consciousness ..."²² Thus, for Husserl, the two reductions and the task of philosophy are one and the same thing: freedom from prejudice. What Husserl does not appear to question is whether defining philosophy in this way also involves a prejudice which is part of the tradition of modern thought - a tradition which includes himself.²³ If it is impossible to eliminate prejudices in the way Husserl wants to, then he cannot transcend a position of having just another *Weltanschauung*. If a transcendental theory of consciousness is itself historical, then it would appear that there can never be a pure seeing of the world. If our consciousness of the world is historical, then there can be no such thing as a transcendental consciousness. Carr wonders whether Husserl is simply caught in his own net, since, on the one hand, he recognizes the relativity of both the life-world and the scientific world; but on the other hand, he contends that the world has a universal structure which is pre-given to consciousness.

The notion of historicity may preclude the very idea of a complete historical reduction, but we might be able to develop the idea of *partial historicism* whereby, on the one hand, we accept the relativity of world-structure, but, on the other hand, the structure of consciousness is invariant. Perhaps *partial historicism* is what Husserl is proposing - at least implicitly. He would agree that the life-world

qua cultural world varies historically. What does not vary for Husserl are the intentional structures of consciousness. But this would lead us to an important discovery. As Carr suggests:

if there is a structure of consciousness that is invariable in this manner, does it not follow that there is also a structure of the world that is likewise invariable? This seems to follow if the theory of historicity is still a theory of the intentional structures of consciousness.²⁴

If we adhere to a phenomenological theory of consciousness - i.e., consciousness is always consciousness of something (of the world) - then the world-as-experienced involves a specific structural characterization.²⁵ But whether this structural characterization signifies an invariant structure is another question. One could argue that a phenomenological theory of consciousness and the world is just that - a theory. To speak of the world in Husserl's phenomenological manner is part of one tradition in philosophy. It gives the relationship between consciousness and the world a certain structure, but not one which is invariant. If this is the case, then we are back to the suggestion that consciousness is essentially historical.

If we take a partial historicist position, then the theory that consciousness is essentially historical becomes an ahistorical validity.²⁶ However, as Carr points out, there is a major problem which weakens the partial historicist position: historical prejudice prevents the possibility of a transhistorical theory of the world, but does not prevent a theory of consciousness which is ahistorical. If history effects our reflection upon the world, then doesn't it also effect "our reflection upon consciousness itself?"²⁷ Our reflection upon

consciousness (or Husserl's reflection upon consciousness) may be completely affected by the tradition in which we are (or he is) located. We may happen to conclude that the correct theory of consciousness is one which assumes the historicity of consciousness, but there is nothing which prevents someone in the future from proposing that our theory of the historicity of consciousness is incorrect.

Husserl's attempt to say something ahistorical about the life-world's structure seems to stem from two theories. The first is that we can say something ahistorical about the life-world's structure because of the intentional structures of consciousness which are invariant. In other words, we can say something ahistorical about the life-world's structure because we can say something ahistorical about consciousness. The second theory is that there is an invariant structure of the world-as-experienced consisting of horizon, space, time, object and event. Even though perception may be affected by historical prejudice - for example, different theoretical structures from the scientific world are continually flowing into the life-world in which we live and our experience of the world may be affected by these theoretical structures - there may still be room here which exists between a description of the world via theories about the world and our actual experience of the world. What we believe about the world may determine our experience of the world.²⁸ What we believe about the world will change as different theories about the world are absorbed by the life-world. But theories may not affect our perception of the world completely. Perhaps Husserl's point is that there is something invariant which remains regardless of the changing scientific theories, for example. By

admitting to differences which exist between different cultures and different time periods, we are also implicitly admitting or assuming an ahistorical structure of world-givenness. For example, "how can we understand the documents that we decipher and interpret as further evidence, unless we take them first to refer to a world whose structure is that of our own?" and "how could we ever show that our own structure of world-givenness is merely a function of our over-all world-view?"²⁹

Contrasted with this, of course, is Rorty's viewpoint that admitting to differences between cultures or *Weltanschauungen* does not imply an ahistorical structure of world-givenness. Rorty is critical of Husserl's insistence on an invariant, pre-given structure of the life-world, since for him, there is no position which can be demonstrated philosophically which proves there is a universal ground beyond what is given culturally. If there is a universal ground or pre-established structure, there is still no method of investigating this structure. But Rorty doubts that there is anything like a universal ground which goes beyond or underlies what we have put there ourselves:

This hard saying brings out what ties Dewey and Foucault, James and Nietzsche, together - the sense that there is nothing deep down inside us except what we have put there ourselves, no criterion that we have not created in the course of creating a practice, no standard of rationality that is not an appeal to such a criterion, no rigorous argumentation that is not obedience to our own conventions.³⁰

Rorty implicitly charges Husserl with the Myth of the Given³¹ - i.e., he sees Husserl in a metaphysical light, desperately holding onto an essential world-structure which is pre-given to consciousness and which is therefore unaffected by historical or cultural conditions.

However, Husserl's essential world-structure does not appear to lie within a realm of forms or essences. It is not a lifeless backdrop to the world of life, but rather, an essential structure of the life-world consisting of our intentional relation to things in the perceptual world. Thus, we can say there is indeed a distinct difference here which Rorty misses in his interpretation of Husserl. One of the consequences of such a misinterpretation which will be investigated in chapter IV is the denial of a possible foundational theory of intersubjectivity which is based on or stems from the *spatial* encounter of persons involved in the intersubjective perception of Nature: "Everyone, as a matter of a priori necessity, lives in the same Nature."³² Even though all cultural worlds differ, they are all dependent upon the same nature. If each cultural world, which includes language, is dependent upon the same life-world of objects, then all cultures and all languages (and all language games) have a common denominator, a common ground. There is an "unconditional accessibility to anyone which belongs essentially to the constitutional sense of Nature."³³

Landgrebe captures very precisely the type of objection raised by Rorty with regards to the world as historical world. It was noted what Husserl says in the *Cartesian Meditations* - that "as a matter of a priori necessity, (everyone) lives in the same Nature." Landgrebe realizes that there will be those who will object to this statement by insisting that we live in different and changing images of nature which depend on the particular culture in which we live. Rorty would make this objection by saying that certain images of nature may be better or

more true than others, but only in the sense that "they provide us with better prospects of meeting the demands of our existence in the life-world; but they are not true in the sense of being final."³⁴ Thus, for Rorty, to say that the world is a historical world necessarily means that there is nothing invariant about the world and there is certainly no world behind the world. All hypotheses have a pragmatic status and therefore, not only is it the case that there is no objective criteria to evaluate them, it also would make no sense if there were. To say that "Everyone, as a matter of a priori necessity, lives in the same Nature", presupposes that there is a concept, or, that there are concepts which somehow capture the very being of nature. But this is impossible because, for Rorty, all concepts are subject to history.

Landgrebe, however, in support of Husserl, stresses the a priori structure contained in historicity in spite of the changes of the historical world and in spite of the changing hypotheses about the world. As was indicated, since the life-world is a historical world, the a priori of the life-world is equivalent to the a priori of history. By reflecting on the conditions of the possibility of history or relativity, the a priori of the life-world can be determined. Landgrebe realizes that there are difficulties with what he sees to be Husserl's approach and that perhaps our initial reaction might be as follows:

Are not ... the "Heraclitean flux", this correlation of historical world-horizon and subjectivity constituting it, and the concept of the essence of this flow, which is nevertheless an "idealization", irreconcilable opposites?³⁵

Unfortunately, Landgrebe's attempt to clarify what is meant by Husserl's a priori of history is, to say the least, rather fragmented.

He emphasizes that the a priori of history "is the concept of an invariant style of life-world existence.³⁶ But if the a priori of history is a concept, how does it escape being relative? How can Landgrebe go on to say that the propositions of this a priori are essential, if the propositions are part of this concept? Landgrebe reasons further: if every a priori is derived from an idealization, then it follows that the concepts of the invariant structures of the life-world (as historical world) also derive from an idealization. From this it follows that the a priori of the life-world, though it is invariant, "is not exhausted by our conceptualization of it."³⁷ Landgrebe then makes a statement which appears to be no better than a complete contradiction: the a priori is a Heraclitean flux. It is difficult to imagine how the propositions of this a priori can be essential while at the same time be part of a Heraclitean flux.

Yet, by considering Husserl's concept of intentionality, perhaps we can make some sense of Landgrebe's analysis of Husserl's a priori. Instead of thinking of the a priori of the life-world as something fixed, Landgrebe suggests we consider seriously the accomplishments of the reduction (epoché). The reduction has altered the interpretation of the a priori by eliminating its metaphysical characterization. Thus, the a priori is no longer seen as something permanent. A consequence of this is the elimination of the idea of something being able to subsist "in itself" or "for itself". All this ties in with Husserl's concept of intentionality because, according to Landgrebe,

All that is fixed is the direction of the goal prefigured in the primal intention. Yet this goal itself points to an open future. Phenomenological

reason is not circumscribed by a fixed a priori apprehended [in reduction] but it is an *open reason*. It does not, therefore, comprehend itself and its ground 'theoretically' (through idealization and logical apprehension).³⁸

When Landgrebe says that "All that is fixed is the direction of the goal prefigured in the primal intention", it should be evident that Landgrebe is giving a teleological interpretation of the a priori as opposed to a metaphysical interpretation. By doing this, Landgrebe thinks he has shown how the opposition between the a priori and what is historical can be overcome. They can, in fact, be brought together by giving the a priori a teleological dimension and by considering Husserl's concept of intentionality as it applies to the life-world:

The universal structure of subjectivity constituting the life-world, its "intentionality ... would be intentionality in the sense of "always-being-out-beyond-itself" ... and of not being able to grasp itself in an objectifying reflection. This, it seems to me, gives us the possibility of solving the riddle of how there can be an a priori of history, a solution which results from Husserl's statements but which he himself did not envision because of his theory of reflection.³⁹

But one wonders how useful Landgrebe's remarks are concerning Husserl's a priori of the life-world. They seem to fall short of what has already been said about the central features of the a priori which includes the intentional relation we have to things in the world. What has been discussed in this chapter would appear to supersede Landgrebe's analysis in the sense that my interpretation hinges on the actual phenomena of the perceptual world instead of just the theoretical possibility of defining the life-world's a priori structure. How useful Landgrebe's interpretation of Husserl is will be considered more

generally in my concluding remarks, following chapter IV.

Chapter Four

A Foundation for Intersubjectivity

In this final chapter I wish to discuss some of the possible implications of what has been analyzed in chapters one to three. Since Husserl contends that there is an a priori of the life-world, it follows that regardless of certain relativities, there remains for Husserl, a world which is common to us all. We will be concerned with clarifying what Husserl is referring to when he speaks of "the world as the universal horizon, common to all men, of actually existing things."¹ Husserl's common world appears to be the commonness of Nature itself, to which we all have an unconditional accessibility.²

What might be the consequences of Husserl's position? We can argue that, contrary to Rorty, there is the possibility of a common ground due to the commonness of Nature. If the surrounding world of Nature is common to all, then regardless of the different cultural formations of Nature, there still remains a common world which transcends all possible cultural formations of this world. If this is correct, one could argue that intersubjectivity involving dialogue is grounded in the intuitive intersubjectivity of the perceptual world - i.e., perceptual awareness of what is other. This will be discussed by analyzing Husserl's fifth Cartesian Meditation.

We shall also discuss the possibility of what could be called a

compromise or middle ground between a position such as Husserl's, and Rorty's insistence that there is no common ground for the interlocutors. If my interpretation is correct, this position is expressed by Mitscherling in "Resuming the Dialogue". Mitscherling argues for the 'foundational' nature of intersubjectivity - i.e., dialogue "can never get underway without a considerable degree of prior agreement among the subjects."³ We can see the life-world - culturally and perceptually - as a foundation for intersubjectivity in the sense that it is always meant and thus always a backdrop to the conversation.

In chapters II and III, we discussed the possible dependency of the cultural world upon the perceptual world. Within this same context arises the question of whether or not verbal intersubjectivity is grounded in perceptual intersubjectivity. In the fifth Cartesian Meditation, "the basic community for Husserl ... is the simple spatial encounter of two persons involving ... mutual and intersubjective perception."⁴ Thus, Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity is primordially a theory of non-verbal communication. The question which confronts us here is whether or not there is an important relationship which exists between Husserl's non-verbal communication and verbal communication (i.e., dialogue). Perhaps we can extrapolate what Husserl says of the perceptual world to the cultural, linguistic world. For example, just as there is "intersubjective harmony of validity" between persons in the perceptual world, so also is there an "intersubjective harmony of validity" between persons in the linguistic world. This position would assume that the cultural world is dependent upon the perceived world for its constitution. This is Carr's point when he says

that "the cultural world has its meaning-fundament in the world of perception".⁵ This would give the cultural world a foundation, but not one which is metaphysical. We could then argue that Rorty is wrong when he says there is no common ground which exists between participants in the conversation. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty emphasizes that the conversation of mankind "presupposes no disciplinary matrix which unites the speakers" and "the hope of agreement ... is not a hope for the discovery of antecedently existing common ground ..."⁶ But if the cultural, linguistic world is grounded in the perceptual world of Nature, then it would follow that there is some sort of common ground between interlocutors - that language does have a foundation. As Carr says, "A community or society of persons in the normal sense of these terms is simply a more enduring and complex version of the perceptual encounter".⁷ Husserl's common ground of the life-world qua perceptual world could be seen as a backdrop for all possible conversations. Husserl would contend that we are conscious of all things in the same mode - i.e., by intentional acts - whether they are part of nature or part of our cultural world. Initially or primordially, we are conscious of others in the same way we are conscious of things. Thus, the consciousness of the other is initially an intended, perceptual consciousness - i.e., intersubjectivity takes place in a non-verbal manner. Dialogue or verbal intersubjectivity, occurs in a mediated way - i.e., is dependent upon the non-verbal mode of intersubjectivity.

Rorty would disagree that "All (cultural) worlds become "constituted" with a common objective world immanent in it."⁸ Yet, is

it not the case that

Everyone, as a matter of a priori necessity, lives in the same Nature, a Nature moreover that, with the necessary communalization of his life and the lives of others, he has fashioned into a cultural world in his individual and communalized living and doing.⁹

Culture, then, as contrasted with nature, has a conditioned accessibility; a restricted kind of objectivity.¹⁰ This results in subjective truths about the world - truths which are secured for specific purposes¹¹ and depend on each particular culture. Let us compare this previous statement with Rorty's conception of truth because there is a similarity here between Husserl and Rorty. Husserl is admitting to the existence of truth which manifests itself pragmatically, as does Rorty. The difference is that Rorty's conception of truth is not grounded in a common physical world. Nevertheless, both Husserl and Rorty have pragmatic conceptions of truth which govern the cultural world. Our next concern will be Husserl's "commonness of Nature" as the foundation for all intersubjectivity: "The first form of objectivity: intersubjective Nature".¹²

The idea of grounding knowledge or theories of knowledge in nature is one which Rorty rejects quite explicitly. So Husserl's emphasis on the commonness of nature ("how I can identify a Nature constituted in me with one constituted in me as a Nature constituted by someone else."¹³) would, quite predictably, be snubbed by Rorty, since the idea of an objective world, as a world which is identical for everyone, is mistaken. A world which is identical for everyone would have to be one which is constituted in exactly the same way by each member of the community:

The objective world as an idea - the ideal correlate of an intersubjective (intersubjectively communalized) experience ... is essentially related to intersubjectivity ... whose component particular subjects are equipped with mutually corresponding and harmonious constitutive systems. Consequently the constitution of the world essentially involves a "harmony" of the monads: precisely this harmony among particular constitutions in the particular monads ...¹⁴

But this notion seems to remind us of the Kantian picture where concepts are necessary tools which we use to structure or constitute the world. What is given becomes structured in the same way resulting in a common world.¹⁵ One might argue that Husserl's "intentional components" appear to produce nothing different than what is added to the mind by Kant. Yet Husserl insists that he is not succumbing to "a 'metaphysical' hypothesizing of monadic harmony ..."¹⁶

Do we all constitute Nature in the same way? How does Husserl know that we are all equipped with "mutually corresponding and harmonious constitutive systems"? Rorty would argue that there is no way of knowing this and therefore we could never base other conclusions on this assumption.

However, according to Husserl, the community, "as necessarily bearing within itself the same objective world"¹⁷, is the same community for each monad. Though we each have a different perspective of the community, we are all part of one common community in the sense that nature is the common denominator. This, however, does not eliminate the possibility of different social communities. But the primordial community is one which necessarily has nature as its foundation.

There are different social communities (higher intersubjective

communities)¹⁸ which have corresponding different cultures. Unlike our unconditional access to the objective world of nature, our access to different cultural worlds, for "essential constitutional reasons"¹⁹ is necessarily conditional. This is because each cultural world consists of fashioning the objective world of nature into a restricted kind of objectivity - a cultural world of "individual and communalized living and doing".²⁰ Thus, all beings, as we have indicated, live in the same world, but only in "a loose cultural community".²¹ Our particular surrounding world of culture is constituted as a concrete life-world.²² It is constituted as a concrete life-world, but is actually, according to Husserl, a restricted kind of objectivity.

It would seem, then, that the life-world qua cultural world has less accessibility than the life-world qua perceptual world. The perceptual world takes on a more transcendental sense of the world in its full concreteness as a life-world for us all²³, and thus, as a world which is always meant, always intended. The life-world, in its full concreteness, then, is the foundation for all intersubjectivity.

Curiously enough, though, Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity does not focus on a theory about language. This is not to say that his theory of intersubjectivity is not a theory of communication. But the type of communication Husserl is emphasizing occurs prior to language. As Carr points out:

each becomes for himself an object, and their surroundings become, for each, the surroundings of both. Insofar as such an encounter takes place there is communication: I am confronted with the reality of a perspective on the surroundings which is not my own, and which, simply by being what it is for me, gives my own view itself the status of a mere

perspective.24

But how does linguistic communication - dialogue - differ from this? Carr's paraphrase of Husserl - "I am confronted with the reality of a perspective on the surroundings which is not my own" - could be extrapolated such that it would also make sense within the context of linguistic communication. This lends itself to a hermeneutical approach to reality instead of one which is metaphysical. Thus, Husserl's claim that "Phenomenology's purely intuitive, concrete, and also apodictic mode of demonstration, excludes all "metaphysical" adventure"²⁵, is substantiated by two claims: 1. Nature, and not a world of forms behind the world, is the objective world; 2. Nature is intersubjective: there are different perspectives of the objective world which are initially communicated through the perceptual encounter of one another. If Nature, as correlate of the "loose cultural community"²⁶ (which is a linguistic community) is seen as being intersubjective, then we have further supported the claim that verbal intersubjectivity is dependent upon the intersubjectivity of the perceptual world - i.e., of nature. If this is the case, truth derived from verbal intersubjectivity is a *mediated* truth because it is dependent upon the concrete, intuitive world of nature. This is why, for Husserl, language entails a certain amount of *seduction*: it leads us away from the

originally intuitive life which creates its originally self-evident structures through activities on the basis of sense-experience ... Greater and greater segments of this life lapse into a kind of talking and reading that is dominated purely by association; and often enough, in respect to the validities arrived at in this way, it is disappointed by subsequent experience.²⁷

The perceptual awareness which we have of what is other than ourselves as well as the awareness which goes hand in hand with this that we are all aware of the same objective world of nature, exists, for Husserl, prior to language. Because both our primordial or intuited experience of what is other as well as nature occur as non-linguistic and perceptual experiences, they exist as *unmediated* experiences of truth. If this is the case, where does this leave the status of language according to Husserl?

Following Rorty, Jean Grondin contends that "the life-world is carried by the community of language, that is, by dialogue."²⁸ Because there are no foundations, language is the only way to arrive at truth. According to Grondin, a hermeneutical transformation of phenomenology resulted in the replacement of Husserl's concepts of intuition and constitution with *interpretation*. The hermeneutical conception of truth relies on interpretation and meaningfulness, as opposed to a correspondence to reality determined by specified criteria. If we return for the moment to what Husserl refers to as the seduction of language as contrasted with the "originally intuitive life", then we are in a better position to understand Grondin's claim (and I would think an implicit criticism of Husserl, given the context of the article) that "Those who already have a definitive foundation do not really need communication. They have already found the answer."²⁹ Does this adequately describe Husserl's position? Could we say of Husserl that he thinks he has found truth in the pre-given, intuitive life-world and therefore does not require language as a means of arriving at truth? This would appear to be Grondin's criticism of Husserl and possibly

Rorty's as well.

But this is all a little hasty. Husserl does "take into consideration the function of empathy and fellow mankind as a community of empathy and of language."³⁰ He discusses both "reciprocal linguistic understanding" and "written documenting linguistic expression".³¹ He also recognizes that truths such as scientific theories can only be communicated or disclosed through language.

First of all, by "reciprocal linguistic understanding", Husserl means that when a subject is involved in the discovery of, for example, a scientific theory, it can only be understood by others through a linguistic encounter which is reciprocal. This means that there is

the self-evident consciousness of the identity of the mental structure in the productions of both the receiver of the communication and the communicator ... The productions can reproduce their likenesses from person to person, and in the chain of the understanding of these repetitions, what is self-evident turns up as the same in the consciousness of the other. In the unity of the community of communication among several persons the repeatedly produced structure becomes an object of consciousness, not as a likeness, but as the one structure common to all.³²

Earlier in the same essay ("Origin of Geometry"), Husserl remarks in a footnote that all constructions, be they scientific or otherwise, must necessarily be expressed linguistically because of their objective being. "They have their objectivity, their existence-for-everyone, only as signification, as the meaning of speech."³³ Through language, there is always a direct accessibility to the ideal objects of scientific constructions.

The role played by "written, documenting linguistic expression"

is to make possible the continued existence of ideal objects when "reciprocal linguistic understanding" is not taking place. Thus, the potential for the communication of ideal objects is always there. The ideal objects become *sedimented* in the written language and the self-evidence of these structures can be reactivated again and again - i.e., communication takes place.³⁴

If the life-world is necessary for the possibility of science, and science is only possible because of the perceptual world and language, then, as Carr suggests, "The life-world in the minimal sense ... would be the horizon of perception plus the horizon of language."³⁵ Therefore, the perceptual and intersubjective encounter of the other which Husserl analyzes in the fifth Cartesian Meditation must be expanded into the "horizon of civilization"³⁶ which includes language. Language is necessary in order to communicate scientific theories and all other ideal objects. Referring to geometrical ideality, Husserl says that "by means of language ... it receives ... its linguistic living body".³⁷ However, it must be kept in mind that the intuitive experience of self-evidence is always prior to the linguistic expression of this experience. Thus, language, as part of the cultural world, is always dependent upon the perceptual world. "Language ... is related correlatively to the world, the universe of objects which is linguistically expressible in its being and its being-such."³⁸

Having considered some of Husserl's arguments in the fifth Cartesian Meditation, we can now proceed to a discussion of how these arguments have influenced and contributed to the ongoing dialogue concerning hermeneutics. If we compare Grondin's with Mitscherling's

reaction to Rorty's conception of hermeneutics - specifically the notion of dialogue, we find that while Grondin strongly supports Rorty's post-foundationalist position, Mitscherling hesitates to endorse a position which rejects completely the notion of foundations. Mitscherling criticizes "Rorty's claim that hermeneutic philosophical conversation proceeds in the absence of a common ground".³⁹ He sees Rorty as having ignored or overlooked Husserl's conceptions of intersubjectivity and the life-world in the fifth Cartesian Meditation and the Crisis. In these later works there is

a new emphasis ... in the role played in constitution by the community of subjects, a community consisting primarily of shared (we might almost say 'culturally inherited') values ... Such shared cultural values are intersubjectively constituted while at the same time being themselves the ground of the activity of intersubjective constitution and thus also the ground of the value-laden world we live in, our *Lebenswelt*.⁴⁰

Carr's analysis of Husserl also emphasizes the idea that membership in a community necessarily involves inheriting a specific background from the community. Thus all micropractices and all language games only have meaning with respect to the shared beliefs and values of a community. These beliefs and values are not grounded in intuition but in communication - "the world as it is for me - as it is represented in my beliefs, attitudes, "habits", etc. - owes its origin not to acts of direct intuition, but what can be only called acts of communication."⁴¹ Being a member of a community means that we inherit a language, certain beliefs and values. This appears to be Husserl's point when, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, he speaks of the "substratum of sedimented prominences which, as a horizon, accompany every living present".⁴²

These "sedimented prominences" are the results of communication and not intuition. But as Carr suggests, "a large part of the "substratum of sedimented prominences" ... plays the role of and has precisely the same significance as that which is intuited, i.e., it makes up part of the "habitualities", "abiding possessions", "beliefs" to which I in fact return and which form the background of my present conscious life."⁴³

Mitscherling and Carr both stress the *communalization* which is involved in any community. And this is reminiscent of Husserl in the *Crisis* when he describes, for example, how scientists are united in a community of theory and have the same truths "or, in the communalization of accomplishing acts, are united ... in a critical transaction aimed at critical agreement."⁴⁴ The idea of being united with others in the same community through shared values, beliefs and language is the basis for Mitscherling's claim that intersubjectivity has a foundational nature. The foundation, of course, is not metaphysical, but has its touchstone in language in which shared values are constituted.⁴⁵ However, Rorty does not associate Husserl with a non-metaphysical foundation because, as was pointed out, he interprets Husserl's essential world-structure as something which underlies the world in the realm of essences. Rorty's interpretation of Husserl does not take into account Husserl's important concept of intentionality which focuses on our intentional relation to things in the perceptual world. This intentional relation is characteristic of the perceptual encounter which we have of what is other than ourselves and includes other human beings. For Husserl, the perceptual encounter of what is other is necessarily presupposed in order for a community to exist as a linguistic entity. As a result, the

cultural world has a *conditioned* accessibility as contrasted with the unconditional accessibility of the perceptual world. Thus, the perceptual world acts as a foundation for the cultural world and as a result, Husserl's foundation is not metaphysical. Mitscherling insists (with Husserl in mind) that it is necessary for there to be an underlying agreement among interlocutors in order for any dialogue to occur. For Husserl, this agreement stems from the contention that nature is the correlate of the "loose cultural community". It also stems from Husserl's statement: the "substratum of sedimented prominences ... as a horizon, accompany every living present ...". Mitscherling's point is that

Inquiry - be it in the field of natural science, ethics, epistemology, ontology, politics, or whatever - can only proceed given a starting point and final court of appeal, i.e., a 'foundation'.⁴⁶

Carr's and Mitscherling's interpretation of Husserl stresses the cultural world of the community and the communalization involved in this community through language. As a result, the direct experience of the perceptual world takes second place to the cultural world. But if Husserl is correct in arguing that the cultural world is dependent upon the perceptual world for its constitution, then ultimately all communication is dependent upon the intuitive, perceptual encounter of things and other persons.⁴⁷ Husserl's 'foundation' is the pre-scientific life-world *qua* perceptual world. However,

each man understands first of all ... his concrete surrounding world or his culture; and he does so precisely as a man who belongs to the community fashioning it historically.⁴⁸

Given the above statement by Husserl, it would appear that there would be little disagreement between Rorty and Husserl on this issue since Rorty's emphasis is also on the existence of the community as a historical entity. By omitting the word, "first", the positions of Husserl and Rorty would seem quite comparable. This omission would suit Rorty because it would indicate that there is no reduction of the cultural world to the perceptual world involved. But because Husserl insists that the surrounding world or cultural world is constituted with an invariant perceptual world as correlate, the comparison breaks down. What I see to be the final results of this discussion will now be considered in the following concluding remarks.

Conclusion

In this thesis, an attempt was made to evaluate Richard Rorty's interpretation of Edmund Husserl. Although Rorty does not devote a great deal of time and space to the writings of Husserl, it is clear from what he does say, that he has overlooked certain points in Husserl's later writings. By examining the *Crisis* and the fifth Cartesian Meditation, it is evident that the a priori which Husserl is putting forth is not an a priori in the traditional philosophical sense, but rather an a priori consisting of actual phenomena which, for Husserl, are the foundation for intersubjectivity. Husserl's foundation consists of perceptual structures which are necessary for the possibility of the cultural world. As such, these structures are also the basis for a common ground with regards to the verbal communication between interlocutors. The importance of performing the epoche was illustrated as a means of recognizing that the world "takes its ontic meaning entirely from our intentional life through a priori types of accomplishments that can be exhibited ..." These "a priori types of accomplishments" consist of essential correlations "which are the component parts of a farther-reaching, universal a priori." As "component parts of a farther-reaching, universal a priori", the perceptual structures are the foundation for both the cultural world as well as the scientific world. Thus, the cultural world depends upon the

perceptual world for its constitution and, as a result, it does not have its own independent eidetic structures. This argument was contrasted with Carr's position that the cultural world's phenomenology has its own a priori which must account for all cultural transformations.

Chapter III considered the central thesis that Husserl's historical reduction consists of the reduction of the cultural world to the perceptual world's a priori. The "essentially general set of elements going through all the variants" was outlined and it was emphasized that because Husserl argues that all entities are experienced fundamentally as things, it follows that human beings are experienced fundamentally as things. This was indicated to be a key point since Husserl argues in the fifth Cartesian Meditation that the fundamental encounter between two persons is strictly perceptual. Verbal intersubjectivity takes place on a mediated level - i.e., it is dependent upon the perceptual encounter and the eidetic structures involved in this encounter.

Objections were considered as to the possibility of eliminating from consciousness historical prejudices and whether a complete reduction is actually possible. This was compared to the phenomenological reduction which supposedly overcomes the prejudices of the natural attitude. Admittedly, Husserl's exploration of a historical a priori is sometimes vague, but he seems to be stressing, in a round about way, "the apodictically general content, invariant throughout all conceivable variation ..." Thus, when Husserl says that all questioning of a historical nature presupposes a horizon whose essential structure can be made explicit, he is pointing us again to things in the

perceptual world as well as to other unchanging structures such as space and time. This latter idea is pointed out by Carr as well as the suggestion that Husserl's position may be implicitly *partial historicism* given Husserl's emphasis on the intentional structures of consciousness which are invariant. If the intentional structure of consciousness are invariant, then there may also be a structure of the world which is also invariant.

Chapter III concludes by pointing out that Husserl's essential world structure does not lie within a realm of forms or essences and this is contrasted with Rorty's interpretation or misinterpretation of Husserl. Landgrebe's arguments, which consider Husserl's concept of intentionality, are cited as a means of combatting some of Rorty's concerns. However, they do not seem to correspond very well with what I have shown to be my interpretation of Husserl's *a priori*. This is partly because Landgrebe's comments serve to indicate the *a priori* as the possibility of a defining structure, but do not actually define that structure in the way I have defined it.

Chapter IV dealt with what Husserl means by a world which is common to all. This common world which surrounds us all is nature itself. By an analysis of the fifth Cartesian Meditation it was shown that the intuitive intersubjectivity of the perceptual world is seen by Husserl as the foundation for the cultural world. In our "individual and communalized living and doing", we "fashion" nature into a cultural world. Husserl also refers to the "intersubjective harmony of validity" between persons in the perceptual world. If the cultural world stems from the perceptual world in the way Husserl argues it does, then an

important consequence of this could be that there is also a comparable "intersubjective harmony of validity" in the cultural, linguistic world which can be traced back to our encounter of the perceptual world.

Chapter IV also considered the positions of Grondin and Mitscherling in the light of Rorty's conception of hermeneutics. Grondin's support of Rorty's antifoundationalism was contrasted with Mitscherling's claim that there is a common ground for intersubjectivity consisting of shared cultural values. This appears to be similar to Husserl's remarks concerning *communalization* which Carr expands upon.

The purpose of this investigation was partly to point fingers at Rorty, but this was not done with the intention of showing that what Husserl is saying is necessarily correct. Although I believe Rorty has misinterpreted Husserl, this does not mean that Husserl's arguments regarding the a priori of the life-world are without problems and some of these have been considered. What I hope to have accomplished is a more precise interpretation of Husserl's later works. This should put us in a better position to evaluate his position correctly. As it stands, Rorty has not given Husserl a fair evaluation.

Since Rorty has abandoned philosophy completely, he sees himself to be justified in attacking the ideas of those who are intent on keeping philosophy a discipline with specific tasks. As a result, Husserl is a target for Rorty (along with many others) as someone who has tried to make sense of things philosophically. In a discussion such as this, the question of how much opposition remains between Husserl and Rorty is a difficult one to answer, given that philosophy has come to an end for Rorty, but is an infinite task for Husserl. However, I will

attempt some sort of evaluation.

Whether or not Rorty would be convinced by the arguments I have presented here that Husserl's foundation is not metaphysical is uncertain. I would think that even if Rorty were to consider the arguments in this thesis and admit that his interpretation of Husserl falls short of the outcome of such a detailed account of the *Crisis* and the fifth Cartesian Meditation, he would still be critical of Husserl's emphasis on the commonness of nature as providing a ground for the cultural world and, as such, a ground for different communities. In *Consequences of Pragmatism*, Rorty insists that

Our identification with our ... community is heightened when we see this community as ours rather than nature's, shaped rather than found. One among many which men have made ... our glory is in our participation in fallible and transitory projects, not in our obedience to permanent constraints.¹

Thus, it would appear that to argue as Husserl has, that all cultural worlds are constituted correlatively to nature, would not sit well with Rorty. Nevertheless, Rorty might have to admit that Husserl's foundation is not metaphysical and therefore, to endorse a philosophy such as Husserl's does not necessarily mean consenting to something Rorty says we have to give up if we are to gain his "renewed sense of community"² - i.e., metaphysical comfort.

Notes

Introduction

1. Ludwig Landgrebe. *The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1981, p. 69.
2. Note that Husserl's *Ideas* is subtitled *General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* and *Cartesian Meditations* is subtitled *An Introduction to Phenomenology*.
3. Landgrebe, p.98.

Chapter I

1. Richard Rorty. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, p.4.
2. Gary Madison. "Phenomenology and Existentialism: Husserl and the End of Idealism", *Husserl - Expositions and Appraisals*. Eds. Frederick A. Elliston & Peter McCormick. Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977, p. 263.
3. Richard Rorty. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. p. 167.
4. Edmund Husserl. *The Idea of Phenomenology*. Trans. William P. Alston & George Nakhnikian. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, p. 22.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 21
6. Cf. Gary Madison. "Phenomenology and Existentialism: Husserl and the End of Idealism", *Husserl - Expositions and Appraisals*, p. 260.
7. I will be referring to the paper Jeff Mitscherling gave at the conference at McMaster University in the fall of 1986. This manuscript is to be distinguished from the article of the same title

which appears in Evan Simpson's book, *Antifoundationalism and Practical Reasoning: Conversations between Hermeneutics and Analysis*.

8. My thanks to Wayne Turner for suggesting this idea to me.
9. Edmund Husserl. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Trans. David Carr. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 389.
10. Gary Madison. "Phenomenology and Existentialism: Husserl and the End of Idealism", *Husserl - Expositions and Appraisals*, p. 247.
11. Richard Rorty. *Consequences of Pragmatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1982, p. 226.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
13. Cf. *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 160.
14. Cf., for instance, the *Crisis*, p. 131: "The concrete life-world, then is the grounding soil ... of the 'scientifically true' world and at the same time encompasses it in its own universal concreteness."
15. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
16. Hans-Georg Gadamer. *Truth and Method*. Trans. Eds. Garrett Barden & John Cumming from the second edition. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1988, pp 81 - 82.
17. Cf. the *Crisis*, p. 132: "... there are two sorts of truth: on the one side, everyday practical situational truths, relative, to be sure, but ... exactly what praxis, in its particular projects, seeks and needs ..."
18. David Carr. "Husserl's Problematic Concept of the Life-World", *Husserl: Expositions and Appraisals*, p. 211.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
20. *The Crisis*, p. 23.
21. Jeff Mitscherling. "Resuming the Dialogue", p. 13.
22. Edmund Husserl. "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science", *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*. Trans. Quentin Lauer. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965, p. 147.

23. "Resuming the Dialogue", p. 7.

Chapter II

1. *The Crisis*, p. 127.
2. David Carr. *Phenomenology and the Problem of History - A Study of Husserl's Transcendental Philosophy*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974, p. 136.
3. *The Crisis*, p. 123.
4. David Carr. "Husserl's Problematic Concept of the Life-world", *Husserl - Expositions and Appraisals*, p. 209.
5. *The Crisis*, p. 135.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
15. Cf. the *Crisis*, p. 226: The life-world "as existing prescientifically for us (originally) purely through experience, furnishes us in advance, through its invariant set of essential types, with all possible scientific topics."
16. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

19. Ibid., p. 143.
20. Ibid., p. 145.
21. Ibid., p. 159.
22. Ibid., p. 166.
23. Ibid., p. 161.
24. Ibid., p. 166, n.
25. Ibid., p. 163.
26. Ibid., p. 164; cf. also pp 165 - 166.
27. Ibid.; cf. also p. 163.
28. Ibid., p. 131.
29. David Carr. "Husserl's Problematic Concept of the Life-World", *Husserl - Expositions and Appraisals*, p. 207.
30. *The Crisis*, p. 130.
31. Ibid., p. 131; cf. also Landgrebe, p. 187: "The objective sciences and their propositions are not tested as to truth but rather their origin and existence are comprehended only as cultural facts among others appearing in history."
32. Cf. Ludwig Landgrebe. *The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl*, p. 181.
33. Landgrebe cites the German edition of the *Crisis*: *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*. Ed. Walter Biemel. *Husserliana*, vol. 6. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954, p. 446.
34. Jean Grondin. "Hermeneutical Truth and its Historical Presuppositions. A Possible Bridge between Analysis and Hermeneutics", *Antifoundationalism and Practical Reasoning: Conversations between Hermeneutics and Analysis*. Ed. Evan Simpson. Edmonton, Alberta: Academic Printing & Publishing, 1987, p. 49.
35. Cf. the *Crisis*, pp 137 - 143.
36. Richard Rorty. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 179.

37. *The Crisis*, p. 48.

Chapter III

1. Cf. *the Crisis*, pp 376 -377.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 375.
3. David Carr. *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, p. 105.
4. *The Crisis*, p. 373.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 369.
6. David Carr. "Husserl's Problematic Concept of the Life-world", *Husserl - Expositions and Appraisals*, p. 209.
7. Cf. *the Crisis*, p. 369.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 371.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
10. Ludwig Landgrebe. *The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl*, p. 195.
11. *The Crisis*, p. 373.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 378.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 373.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 374.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 377.
19. David Carr. *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, p. 255.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

21. Ibid., p. 241.
22. Ibid., p. 242.
23. Ibid., p. 245.
24. Ibid., p. 254.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., p. 253.
27. Ibid., p. 251.
28. Ibid., p. 256.
29. Ibid., p. 257.
30. Richard Rorty. *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. xlii; thanks also to Wayne Turner for his helpful remarks.
31. Correspondence with Wayne Turner helped me with this point.
32. Edmund Husserl. *Cartesian Meditations*. Trans. by Dorion Cairns. The Hague/Boston/London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1960, p. 133.
33. Ibid., p. 132.
34. Landgrebe, p. 191.
35. Ibid., p. 195.
36. Ibid., p. 197
37. Ibid., p. 199.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., p. 200.

Chapter IV

1. *The Crisis*, p. 163.
2. Cf. *The Cartesian Meditations*, p. 132.

3. Jeff Mitscherling. "Resuming the Dialogue", p. 10.
4. David Carr. *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, p. 105.
5. David Carr. "Husserl's Problematic Concept of the Life-World", *Husserl - Expositions and Appraisals*, p. 209.
6. Richard Rorty. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 318.
7. David Carr. *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, p. 106.
8. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 133.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
11. Cf. *the Crisis*, p. 139.
12. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 120.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
14. *Ibid.*, pp 107 - 108; Cf. also Carr, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, p. 98: "The fact about the experience of another that makes comprehensible the full-fledged notion of objectivity is that, as monad, he is thus constituted as having 'his own' world just as I do. But these two 'own' worlds are constued in intersubjective experience as *appearances* or modes of givenness of one and the same world which is intended by both of us and indeed by all, and from which such appearances can at times differ."
15. Cf. Carr, p. 87: "By taking the particular objects of transcendental reflection as merely exemplary, Husserl seeks to describe the structure of any consciousness at all."
16. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 108.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*

23. Ibid., p. 136.
24. Carr, p. 105; cf. also *CM*, pp 121, 124 & 130.
25. *CM*, p. 139; Cf. also p. 168.
26. Cf. Paul Ricoeur. *Husserl: An Analysis of his Phenomenology*. Trans. Edward G. Ballard. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967, p. 137: The "loose cultural community" or universal community "represents the possibility of every normally constituted man to reach the same objective nature."
27. *The Crisis*, p. 362.
28. Jean Grondin. "Hermeneutical Truth and its Historical Presuppositions. A Possible Bridge between Analysis and Hermeneutics", *Antifoundationalism and Practical Reasoning: Conversations between Hermeneutics and Analysis*, pp 54 - 55.
29. Ibid., p. 55.
30. *The Crisis*, p. 360.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p. 357.
34. Ibid., pp 361 & 367.
35. Carr, p. 202.
36. *The Crisis*, p. 358.
37. Ibid., p. 357.
38. Ibid., p. 359.
39. Mitscherling, p.13.
40. Ibid.
41. Carr, p. 105
42. Edmund Husserl. *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. Trans. Dorion Cairns. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, p. 319.
43. Carr, p. 107.

44. *The Crisis*, p. 110.
45. Cf. Mitscherling, p. 13.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
47. Cf. *The Crisis*, p. 359.
48. *CM*, p. 133; cf. also Mitscherling, p. 18 & Carr, pp 101, 102 & 248.

Conclusion

1. Richard Rorty. *Consequences of Pragmatism*, p. 166.
2. *Ibid.*

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