

Introduction

In which Edmund Husserl's concept of phenomenology is discussed re the global crisis in the rationalist project.

Phenomenology is the lost continent of contemporary world thought. With very rare exception, for example Odysseos (2002), it is seen by analysts of international affairs as a mind-place which only the most intellectually adventurous or foolhardy enter and where the analytical equivalents of pre-historic monsters roam.

What follows is an expedition into this seldom-traversed domain. While the take-off point I have chosen is readily found on most philosophic maps, being the work of the founder of contemporary phenomenology, Edmund Husserl (1980–2001), the expedition rapidly moves off these maps to follow the more radical of the recommendations that he made. Here we are in uncharted intellectual territory, and must proceed one step at a time.

The rationale

What does doing Husserl's phenomenology tell us that we don't already know? A question like this suggests that we should begin by establishing the relevance of Husserl's phenomenology to the study of

world affairs. It also suggests that we should demonstrate why we might want to do what Husserl recommended.

Speaking for myself, I took an interest in phenomenology because, after spending many years mapping the ways in which we talk about world affairs, I realised that there was a large empty space where this particular reading of the subject ought to be. I also thought that this space needed to be filled, at least in a provisional way, so that we might do justice to a major school of Continental thought and its key philosophic concerns.

When I began studying world affairs, the discipline was mostly confined to the politico-strategic dimension of the subject. What is more, the diplomatic and military affairs of state that I was taught to describe and explain in the process were mostly deemed to be those defined by competing national interests. There were some scholars interested in the international system as a system, and even some who saw it as a society of some kind, but that was the extent of the analytical competition.¹

I later came to realise that this politico-strategic dimension could and should be complemented by politico-economic and politico-social dimensions. Along the way I also came to see how all three could and should be complemented by marxist, mentalist ('constructivist'), and mixed ('meta-marxist') perspectives. I was there, as well, when the discipline began to hear in earnest from those pushed to its analytical margins. It was at this point that I began to appreciate something of the significance of the perspectives offered by women, environmentalists, indigenous peoples, post-colonials, and the poor. The accounts that these critics from the margins gave helped me to put the discipline in a larger politico-cultural context and, more particularly, in the context of the culture of the Euro-American Enlightenment. Contemporary world affairs, it seemed, were part of a very specific project, namely modernist rationalism, or the Enlightenment project.

The most committed practitioners of this culture try to take what they do even further, though there are some—equally committed but more reflexive—who subject their rationalism to various lines of critical enquiry. For example, they are wont to ask why we prioritise the faculty of reason, what the consequences might be of having preconceptions built in to the discourses we use, and how the

subconscious mind works. They want to know what happens when we turn rationalism back upon itself, to what extent our assumptions compromise our objectivity and our detachment, and whether it is the subconscious that determines what it is that we think. All such enquiries are laudable, but they lead in the main to analytical dead-ends. These present as scientific myopia, or death of the intellect, or a disabling silence, or a motivational swamp, and cease as such to add much to our ability to account for the world and its affairs.

Romanticism always seemed to me to represent the most promising mind-move in this regard. By exploring feeling rather than reasoning, it seemed possible to describe and explain world affairs in transformative ways unused by rationalists. Phenomenology also seemed promising, however, and as it was the most neglected of the critical perspectives, I decided to explore what the founder of this contemporary philosophical movement had to say. I also decided to apply the results of the exploration to the study of world affairs, though not before taking time out to explore the most radical of the alternatives to modernist rationalism, namely the sacralist alternative.

While my personal intellectual history may explain why I came to bother with phenomenology, it does not explain why anyone else should. To do that, it is necessary to establish the role that phenomenology plays in the larger analytical scheme of things and, more particularly, in compensating for the shortcomings of the rationalist project. It is also necessary to establish why any and every student of world affairs should come to terms with that role.

So: we study world affairs to understand how they work, and we do so in a culture that prioritises the use of reason as an end in itself. Whether we think that what we see there is to do with competing national interests, or with the attempt to set up rules that allow for more cooperative modes of behaviour, or with the machinations of those who own and manage the global means of production, all talk of 'seeing' requires us to 'look at' the world in some particular way.

To prioritise reason is to objectify the world, and to objectify the world is to individuate ourselves, that is to think of ourselves as separate from the society in which we grew up. Individuation makes it possible for us to look at the world as something at a mental distance, to talk across to other analysts, similarly detached, and to construct

in the process a meta-society of the mind in which to do scientific work. (Our autonomy and therefore our detachment are never complete. Only a saint or someone insane could be as abstracted as that. As a consequence, our objectifying talk is able only ever to aspire to the use of reason as an end in itself. Scientific objectivity is a grail we never grasp.)

Because as rationalists we learn to attend to the world as something external to ourselves, we cease to notice how much we intend at the same time. We fail to appreciate the extent to which we do not see things as they are but rather as we are. We fail to understand how often we act in ways that bring about who we are rather than what we are looking at. If we want to know how world affairs work, therefore, we need to know not only what we are attending to, but also what we do this attending with. We need to know how much of what we know is something we see 'out there' rather than something we only think we see 'out there' because it comes from 'in here'.

This said, the world into which we were born is ongoing; in that respect, it is irrefutably external to ourselves and amenable to detached attention. How we attend is not straightforward, however, since we do all our attending with the ideas and concepts we learned growing up, as well as with all the attitudes that predispose us to see the world in the way that we do. These ideas and attitudes are our intentions regarding that world. They prompt us to read onto it what rationalism would have us believe we read only out of it.

The intending that rationalists do provides 'attending to' with what is called an 'interventive corollary' (Anscombe 1966; Meiland 1970; Rose 2005, p. 10; Searle 1983; Wegner 2002). To find out what this means, Husserl asked us to eschew all of our objectifying and to think about what we do that objectifying with. He asked us to intuit our most basic presuppositions and to ascertain how they craft the world we think we subsequently see (Deacon 1997, pp. 105, 109, 452; Dennett, in Gregory 1987, p. 161; Donald 2001, p. 251). Husserl's best known recommendation in this regard bade us compensate for what scientific attention takes away, that is our sense of things-in-themselves. Husserl rejected outright what he considered to be the experientially reductionist and impoverished version of the world that we get from the 'aggregates of sense data' constructed by scientists (Spiegelberg 1975, p. 58).

Husserl (1970b, pp. 6–7) did not believe that the world could ‘truthfully have a meaning’ if we insist on seeing there only what can be ‘objectively established’ about it. He did not think it sufficient, for example, to tell analytical stories where ‘all the shapes of the spiritual world, [and] all the conditions of life ... upon which man relies, form and dissolve themselves like fleeting waves’. For instance, he thought that Einstein’s extraordinary insights provide only ‘formulae’; that they deal only with an ‘idealized and naively objectified physis’; and that though they may be very successful in describing and explaining a reality patently very different from the one perceived by common-sense, they do not teach us how ‘formulae in general, [and] ... mathematical objectification in general, receive meaning’. In short, he thought that they fail to reform the space/time in which our ‘vital life runs its course’ (Husserl 1970b, p. 295). To succeed in this regard, he said, we have to be able to provide a much richer account of human experience than the one Einstein gives (Husserl 1970a).

Less well known is the way in which Husserl went beyond this initial recommendation to ask what our primal mental practices might be and how they determine what we do our thinking with (cf. Freud 1954, p. 112). In order for us to appreciate these practices, he asked us to stop reasoning in the rationalistic way and to start reasoning more reflexively. He asked us, that is, to feel for what we think to be the fundamental structure of ‘conscious life’ (Husserl 1917) by pushing scepticism to its ‘utmost limits’ (Spiegelberg 1975, pp. 57, 67, 68, 70, 73, 74) and by trying to discern the ‘pre-given basis’ to all experience in the process. He did not see this basis as being abstract or eternal in the detached way that a rationalist would; he saw it as being concrete and historical. He also saw it as being ‘transcendental’, that is as a manifestation of the *Ur-Ich*, or the ‘primal I’, or the self that is the ‘absolute irrelative to which all relativity, including that of the enquiring “I”, is related’ (Gadamer 1975, p. 218).

What precisely does Husserl say here? To answer this question, I find it helps to imagine learning to do rationalist research as learning to detach the thinking part of the self from its social context and as looking back at the socially embedded part of that self as the feeling part of the self. This is what we do when, as budding Cartesians, we initially learn to dichotomise mind and body, and reason and emotion, and to prioritise the former over the latter. It also helps, I find,

when looking back at the socially embedded part (the so-called corporeal and feeling part), to imagine a thinking facet there *as well as* an emotive one.

Husserl asked us to compensate for the shortcomings of detachment by bracketing it off, embedding ourselves again in society, and striving to know by using the thinking rather than the emotive facet of the re-embedded self. (Accessing the emotive facet is what a romantic would do.) In rationalist parlance this is phenomenology, or, at least, phenomenology in the more radical of the two ways recommended by Husserl. Rationalists see such knowing as quite 'hard-to-describe'. They call it 'gut-feeling' (Greene 2004, pp. 77, 83, 193, 225; Levinas 1973). Husserlian phenomenologists see such knowing as the starting point for all subsequent research. They call it 'gut-thinking'.

What happens if we take Husserl's less well known mind-move and attempt to make it for ourselves? What happens if we investigate our own awareness in the more radical of the two ways that he recommended? I decided to find out. I subsequently spent a sustained period bracketing off my rationalism, socially re-embedding myself, and 'gut-thinking'. The result was a tangible set of intellectual intuitions. In due course I was able to ascertain seven primal mental practices. I later charged a group of graduate students with the same task; they arrived at roughly the same set. After sustained discussion we agreed to call these practices *deferring*, *clumping*, *conflicting*, *ordering*, *taking*, *caring*, and *hoping*.

There is no set procedure for doing such research, however. My own approach was to summarise Husserl's suggestions, keep this summary close at hand, consult it several times a day, and wait. It was, in other words, to ask my own mind to provide an intuitive account of its most primal analytical practices. To my surprise, it did. To my surprise, as well, the procedure worked for other analysts, and, what is more, they achieved similar results.

Each of the fundamental thought-forms identified above intends a different facet of world affairs. While the *clumping*, *conflicting*, and *ordering* facets are relatively familiar, the *taking*, *caring*, and *hoping* facets are less so. *Deferring* seems a precursor to the rest, and is the first to be considered below, though all these facets ask us to look at world affairs anew.

Because the reflexive use of gut-thinking allows us only to describe our primal intentions, it cannot explain them. To do that, we have to return to rationalism; this re-introduces rationalism's shortcomings, however. It invites a second attempt at doing phenomenology, though not one that accesses our primal mental practices, since we have done that already, but one that attempts an intuitive assay of the emergent properties of all the conclusions to which rationalists come (Husserl 1970a, pp. 475, 765–70).

In moving between rationalism and phenomenology like this, we find ourselves constructing one of the two key cycles of contemporary knowing that rationalist reflexivity creates. We find ourselves, in effect, standing back to look, standing close to feel, taking part intellectually, then standing back to look again. The other cycle is the romantic one, whereby we stand back to look, stand close to feel, take part emotionally, then stand back to look again. Taken together, these two cycles constitute a double epistemological helix. Taken further, they lead on to the contextual realms of the communal and the sacral, or back to rationalism (Pettman 2000).

What does phenomenology critique?

Most of this is relatively new ground. Let us pause, therefore, to reconsider what has been said so far.

While the concept of 'phenomenology' can be traced to the middle of the eighteenth century (Spiegelberg 1975, p. 3), it did not take its contemporary shape until rationalism was well established, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth (Husserl 1970a). However, this is not rationalism as a synonym for hyper-rationalist thinking, as in rational choice or game theorising (Niou & Ordeshook 1991; Simon 1957); nor is it rationalism as a synonym for liberal internationalism, as in the parlance of the so-called English School (Bull 1977, p. 24; Wight, in Butterfield & Wight 1967). It is rationalism as a synonym for the modernist project, or for modernity, or for the Euro-American Enlightenment (Brown 1988; Giddens 1990); it is rationalism as the prioritisation of the use of reason as an end in itself en masse (Simon 1983, pp. 70–1).

Rationalism is done either by thinking of general ideas and testing them (deduction), or by summarising particulars (induction). However, in practice each approach implicates the other, since

general ideas presuppose particulars, while any summary of particular findings presupposes general ideas. Hence the current synthesis of the two, which was first proposed by Immanuel Kant (1885) and is currently called the hypothetico-deductive method (Cottingham 1984; Lakatos & Musgrave 1970).

Rationalism is only had at a price. The more we accept Kant's 'formalisation', for example, the less we appreciate the significance of the sacral and the communal (Hunter 2001, pp. 2, 364–76). Thus, while Kant saw human intelligence giving us access to a priori concepts that manifest as the world of things and making large amounts of reliable knowledge possible, as well as diverse technologies that radically enhance our control over our immediate natural environment (Feyerabend 1978; Kuhn 1996; Popper 1969), most people in the world still live in spiritually charged communities and do not prioritise reason as an end in itself. This is not an issue if we seek to understand the material world, but is an issue if we seek to understand what most people think about the world and how they behave there, since prioritising reason stops us from directly experiencing the world for ourselves and knowing what other people's experiences of the world might mean to them. It grants us clarity and a comprehensive perspective, but only because we are prepared to draw a cloud of unknowing between ourselves and whatever it is that non-rationalist ways of knowing require us to do. This does not mean that we should stop using rationalism, though it does probably mean that we should stop expecting rationalism to tell us everything we need to know about the world. It also suggests seeking to know about the world in non-rationalist as well as rationalist ways.

To recapitulate this key point: rationalism is human reason used, intellectually and empirically, in as untrammelled a fashion as possible. It is one culture's attempt to describe, explain, and prescribe for the world by putting at mind's length any other way of knowing, including the sacral and communal ways of knowing that still inform most people's lives (Miller 1987, pp. 19–82).

Untrammelling the mind like this requires individuation.² The world cannot be put at a mental distance, nor can reason be given (relatively) free rein, without the making of a (relatively) detached, socially dis-embedded sense of the self. Every individual falls at birth into a social context, but in a rationalist context the individual is

taught rationalism, and this requires, first and foremost, individuation, or a sense of self separate from that social context. It requires learning mentally how to pull away from the world while sundering the self. Once this split is achieved it then becomes possible to look back at the world, and oneself in that world, in a (relatively) impartial way. It also becomes possible to talk across to others similarly individuated and objectifying, or at least to behave as if one could.³ With talk of this sort, relatively uninhibited by the social constraints that otherwise cloud our clarity and compromise our analytical vision, it becomes possible to construct a meta-society of scientific researchers. It becomes possible to separate the distal idea of reasoning from the proximal sense of feeling, to privilege detachment over involvement (Damasio 2003), and to use reasoning that is (relatively) untrammelled to describe and explain what we subsequently attend to or 'see'.⁴

Despite his or her individuation, the individual still remains connected to his or her social context, however. Having learned how to pull away to objectify, such a person carries over into their detached sense of self the ideas that characterise their socially embedded sense of self. As a consequence, the rationalist way of being and knowing is never as clear or as comprehensive as rationalists like to think. Indeed, it has limits that result in characteristic distortions; these have to be actively compensated for if we are not to misunderstand how the world works. The most notable manifestation of these limits and distortions is the way in which people are pushed (largely by being taught how to pull) away from their social milieu. To compensate for the shortcomings of this mind-move we have to re-engage socially in a manner that rationalism eschews.

Many rationalists are not particularly concerned with what they lose in becoming rationalists, preferring to explore one or more of the doctrines that describe and explain the world in rationalist terms (see note 1). They may even critique rationalism for not going far enough. The doubly detached perspective they then espouse is even more objectifying and individuating. It represents a second-order, hyper-rationalist realm so abstract as to make rationalism of the first-order variety seem merely systematic. Those who extend such an invitation include epistemologists like Karl Popper (1968), as well as most main-line practitioners of the research culture of the United States, where

New World thinkers carried over from the Old World a cultural project that they then took to extremes. In this realm the hypothetico-deductive method is *de rigueur*.

Where rationalists are concerned with the shortcomings of their approach, however, they usually try to compensate for them. What they recommend in this regard depends upon what they think we should be compensating for.

The least radical of these rationalists are those who choose to stay within rationalism's epistemological ambit. For example, some rationalists will seek to compensate for the alienating effects of rationalism by promoting the practice of nationalism. As a rationalist analytical language, nationalism is supposedly not based on preconceptions; however, in practice it articulates a pessimistic view of our essential human nature, at least as this view pertains to 'them' (see note 1). More importantly, it is used to evoke pre-rationalist sentiments of communal solidarity. Whether these sentiments have been recently constructed, as for example in the case of state-makers who seek to consolidate the civic identity of a population that has little or no history of being one (like Indonesia), are of longer standing, as in the case of a state like Japan, or combine the two approaches, nationalism is atavistic. It pits 'us' against 'them', while bidding 'us' learn (or re-learn) ways of living that are neo-tribalist, that is more communalist and less estranged.

Other rationalists will be more optimistic about our essential human nature and, as a consequence, will articulate more collectivist practices. Here the compensatory sentiment will be one that comes not from a communalistic evocation of the past, but from a socialistic anticipation of the future. As members of a global social movement, for example, or as members of some other attempt to stride forwards together into a world of shared endeavour, it is as like-minded associates of local or global collectives that we are seen as best countering our rationalist alienation.

Yet other rationalists believe that what we learn to be is more important than what our inherited traits predispose, and as a consequence will opt to compensate for rationalism's shortcomings in material, mental, or mixed ways. Materialists, for example, look to change the nature and influence of the material constraints that alienate us (as do marxists). Mentalists look to norm-entrepreneurs

to effect a change in our sense of identity, our sense of what we value, or our sense of what we should accept as key principles (as do constructivists). The mixed look to both (as do meta-marxists).

The most radical of those rationalists who seek to compensate for the shortcomings that rationalism presents will critique the whole project, however. They may even suggest radical alternatives to it, the nature of the alternative depending upon whatever aspect of rationalism they deem to be the most limiting and distorting. For example, some see rationalism's certainty as the key issue, and consequently turn rationalism back upon itself to ask on what grounds we prioritise reason in the first place. This is postmodernism. Rationalism sanctions no preconceptions. It precludes in principle no line of questioning. Postmodernists take the doctrine at its word and then proceed to ask (using reason) how rationalism might be justified. In the process they extend the modernist mind-move to one side, as it were, whether at the first-order level of abstraction, where science is merely systematic, or at the second-order level, where it is hypothetico-deductive. Such an extension does not provide a specific alternative to the rationalist mind-gaze. It does relativise all rationalist understanding, however, as well as highlight the tenuous nature of rationalist certainty. This helps to make rationalists more humble and less likely to assume universal, absolute, and eternal standing for what they conclude. It helps to make rationalists more aware of the contingent nature of what they know and to make the whole project rhizomic rather than rooted (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), thereby opening up thinking and speaking spaces for those marginalised by the rationalist project (like women, or those primarily concerned with the integrity of the planetary environment, or post-colonials, or so-called 'first peoples', or the poor) (George 1994).

In unsettling the certainties that rationalism tends to inculcate, postmodernists have much in common with poststructuralists. Both contest the possibility of formulating 'grand narratives' of the kinds that rationalists try to construct. Poststructuralists are more aware than postmodernists, though, that rationalism is a discourse, and that the self that rationalists rely on to give them their detachment is compromised by that self having to use a language to do so. From the poststructuralist perspective, all talk makes assumptions that predispose conclusions. There can be no talk behind talk, that is, even

though rationalists may claim to have found a neutral way to address each other in the language of number, for example, or that of algebraic symbol. Poststructuralists argue that a rationalist account of the world will always be a story of some kind, replete with preconceptions that serve one form or another of political power. Moreover, they see the language in which such stories are told as being neither stable nor universal. Even the language of mathematics they see as a moving cohort of allusions and references, one that only appears to be fixed because of the customary ways in which it is used.

Then there are those who seek to compensate for the influence upon reason of the workings of the subconscious mind: the psychoanalysts. Rationalists like these see rationalistic reasoning as conditioned by, and even caused by, the parts of the mind not readily accessed by how we consciously think. They also see the effects of rationalistic reasoning as more far reaching than conscious thinking alone. For example, objectifying individuation, or the 'splitting' of the self described above, is known to result in life-crippling neuroses like narcissism and nihilism. Chemotherapeutic agents can mitigate the behavioural manifestations of such neuroses by treating their material causes; however, the learned nature of such ill health makes possible a range of talking-cures, too. Thus we find whole professions dedicated to compensating for rationalism's alienating effects by encouraging greater self-understanding of the relevant psychological principles, and by supporting people through the process of gaining greater awareness of what causes these effects.

This leaves us with those who, having first learned to put themselves at a mental distance, seek to eliminate that distance again, either by emoting more in a subjectifying way, or by thinking more in a subjectifying way. Analysts like these are acutely aware of rationalism's alienating effects. They seek to compensate for these by beating a retreat from detachment, seeking to engage the senses more actively or to reason in a more socially re-embedded way. Both retreats invite an imaginative alternative to the way of knowing that rationalism provides.

Rationalists call those who want to emote more romantics. To rationalists, romantics revert to a more affective way of knowing, perhaps as exponents of one of the 'arts'. Because of this reversion, romantics are seen as ir-rationalists, even though rationalism creates

illusions that only emotivism can correct. (Emotivism also creates illusions that only rationalism can correct.) Rationalists call those who keep on thinking despite having eschewed objectifying individuation phenomenologists. As they see it, phenomenologists feel for knowing in a way that can still be called intellectual, even though the intellect is no longer used in an objectifying way. Both of these approaches, pursued far enough, provide mirrors to the rationalist mind. They also provide windows onto alternative ways of knowing and being. They may even provide doors through which to step into realms that a rationalist would call post-premodernist.

To enter such realms, the rationalist has to do more than critique rationalism, however. He or she has to make a corporeally involved, mentally reflexive attempt to practise living in ways that are at the same time experiential and rational, imaginative and thoughtful, intuitive and intellectual. To sustain such an attempt means being prepared to practise living communally and sacrally, since these seem to be the only contexts in which the paradoxes that post-premodernism presents can be successfully resolved.

What was Husserl's project?

Located like this in the larger scheme of things, phenomenology appears as a particular critique of orthodox rationalism. The case it makes is unlike that of any other critique though. As such, it is not reducible to any of these critiques, and nor are they reducible to it.

Husserl was the philosopher who did most in the twentieth century to further phenomenology. He constantly urged us to drill 'deeper and deeper' into the mind to find the 'ground of all grounds' (Kolakowski 1990, p. 133), or the 'essence of conscious experience ... [and] especially ... intentional experience'. He repeatedly asked us to eschew the rationalist assumption that reality exists outside of ourselves, and to plumb the depths of our awareness in the hope that we might discern our primal mental practices and the ways in which they relate to the world 'via intentionality'. He wanted us to bracket off any concern for what rationalists see as being real, and to discern instead how consciousness is purposive, how it is always 'directed towards' the world, and how it reaches out to craft that world (Smith & Smith 1995, p. 9).

For rationalists this requires a radical shift in mental perspective. Husserl (in Zauer & Ihde 1973, pp. 64, 137) saw this shift as

being one of near-sacral significance, as one that involves a transformation in the world's 'palpable and practical' presence (Critchley 2001, p. 115).

What is to stop us from reflecting upon what comes before such reflection, though? What is to stop phenomenology becoming post-modernism instead? Here, the phenomenological understanding of how the mind works is what matters most. In trying to be 'conscious of something', in the way of a phenomenologist, we use the mind to ascertain the most primal of its practices. In ascertaining these practices, we stop reflexivity from becoming merely regressive, however (Critchley 2001, p. 115; Lyotard 1991, p. 54); we establish a floor to our knowing that is tangible and true, and we avoid that corridor of reflections (as when mirrors are put opposite each other) that is illusory and false.

Also critical in this regard is the social re-embedding that phenomenology involves. The phenomenological self is the Cartesian self brought back into the world, as it were. It is the self brought back from its objectifying mind-point, and put into the social context from which rationalism removed it (Elias 1991, p. 61). Lyotard (1991, p. 51) calls this a 'doubling' of the ego, though it is more of a doubling back. It is a matter of returning to the social context from which the ego was detached, but not to the state of innocence that pre-rationalism represents, since that was lost in learning how to be a rationalist. It is a matter of constructing a new context, that is a socially re-embedded context, though one that still remains (relatively) autonomous (Hammond, Howarth & Keat 1991, pp. 46, 262). It means moving back into the world, and becoming part of that world, while feeling for the use of reason in a way that is no longer rationalistic.

Is this any more than Weber's idea of *Verstehen*? Is it any more, that is, than a bid to find the 'rules and reasons for action from within' (Hollis & Smith 1990, p. 90; Weber 1949, 1968, pp. 8–9)? Not really, since Weber was more interested in compensating for the shortcomings of scientific detachment than in discerning our primary mental practices. He was more of a first-order than a second-order Husserlian, in that he was not interested in finding out how we intend what we see and mean, even though this is what a better understanding of the 'rules and reasons for action from within' arguably requires.

Critics also ask how we can have a supposedly 'transcendental' consciousness that is socially re-embedded (Drew 1996, p. 96). How is it possible to suspend rationalism, they say, while remaining mentally autonomous (Husserl 1970b, p. 258; Sokolowski 2000, p. 63; Spiegelberg 1975, p. 12)? How is it possible to stop subscribing to the 'natural attitude' while remaining (relatively) impartial (Fink, in Elverton 1970, p. 99)?

Attempts like these to depict phenomenology as self-contradictory are similar to attempts to depict marxism in the same way. Marx repudiated science as a bourgeois ideology while at the same time trying to justify his concept of social change as scientific. He dealt with this seeming contradiction by positing revolutionary praxis, that is by doing science in a different, more participatory, more revolutionary manner. He thought any apparent paradox would be resolved in the process (Railton, in Boyd, Gasper & Trout 1991, p. 772). In a similar vein, Husserl saw criticism of phenomenology from the heights of contemporary science as being completely irrelevant when viewed from the depths of phenomenology; or, as he said in his Vienna Lecture: science might be the spirit that prompts us to investigate nature, but phenomenology is the science of that spirit itself (Husserl 1917, p. 8; 1970b, p. 297).

What, then, of the question of 'many authorities' (Stout 1981, p. 44)? If every phenomenologist is his or her own authority, what are we to do when phenomenologists disagree? What are we to do with the 'chaos of subjectivities' and with that one, 'all-comprehensive solipsism' that rationalists see as being the result of phenomenology (Spiegelberg 1975, pp. 76, 110–29)?

Husserl (1970b, pp. 103, 137) saw none of the above as problematic, since phenomenologists are socially re-embedded and they therefore know what others know. The phenomenological 'other', he said, is not separate from the 'self' as it is in rationalist parlance. It is contiguous with the self and, as such, is likely to come to the same or similar conclusions. As a consequence, the issue of 'many authorities' does not arise, and objectivity can be found in the 'heart of subjectivity' (Spiegelberg 1975, p. 76) by combining extreme objectivism and extreme subjectivism (Merleau-Ponty 2002, p. xix).⁵

The militant rationalist still balks. As Bell (1990, pp. 162, 197) says, for instance: 'I ... tried to follow Husserl's instructions for the

performance of the phenomenological reduction, and I have to report that nothing of any philosophical interest occurred'. He thinks as a consequence that:

Husserlian phenomenology is ... not only one of the most timidly conservative, but also one of the most [dismal and] dogmatic of all philosophic standpoints. Having absolved himself in principle from any obligation to provide arguments, proofs, or justifications for his conclusions – indeed, having absolved himself from any obligation to provide conclusions at all – the Husserlian phenomenologist is free of all the normal accoutrements of objective, rational, philosophical enquiry. In the last analysis, all that a rigorous scientist may do is describe his own intuitions; and the ... subjectivity inherent in this proposal is not in the least mitigated by the fact that those intuitions are supposed to strike him as self-evident.

Bell subsequently sees 'no philosophical problem' to which phenomenology could be the solution, and 'no philosophical use to which it could be put'.

The militant rationalist is also likely to highlight how Husserl's phenomenology has no way of preventing us from intuiting fancy rather than fact. It has no way of telling 'genuinely objective certainty' from 'mistakenly heartfelt conviction' (Stout 1981, p. 50). Militant rationalists even accuse phenomenologists of being callous. For example, many rationalists think of these as hard times, where those who own and manage the world's wealth routinely hide the material unfairness of what they do behind erudite talk about the importance of ideas, including ideas about phenomenology.

And yet, Husserl's phenomenology does manage to provide insight of a kind that rationalism does not (Kolakowski 1975, p. 36). It makes it possible, for example, to ascertain primal mental practices prior to, and more essential than, those that rationalists provide (Husserl 1960, pp. 152–3).⁶ These practices may not be *absolutely* essential, but phenomenologists see them as being *relatively* so and, as such, as providing novel takes on the world as well as novel ways of describing more familiar takes on it.

In every chapter that follows, we will see, what is more, that these insights provided a heightened awareness of the significance of authority in world affairs. This was unexpected, but gut-thinking, when applied to the explanations of each primal mental practice, led to the same core conclusion.

Many remain unconvinced of the merits of Husserl's 'reduction', and this includes many contemporary phenomenologists. The key sticking-point is the bracketing off of rationalism, since this involves attempting a different mind-set that can only really be understood if it has already been adopted. This is not something that those who valorise rationalism find easy to do; indeed, many see the whole phenomenological approach as being 'contemptuous' and 'vain'. They see it moving us entirely into our own self-adoring minds, in the process stopping us from seeing the extent to which the world is independent of what we intend it to be (Weissman 1987, pp. 6, 7, 16).

Husserl (1917, pp. 5, 7, 8) was well aware that his reduction contradicts rationalism and its scientific sensibilities. He said himself that it is self-referential as a research method and therefore 'not science'. Scientific knowing must obtain for everyone. It cannot obtain, in the manner of phenomenology, only for the self. He considered this problem more apparent than real, however. For him, phenomenology was a way to gain access to the mental context that underpins all modernist science. It allows us to toil in the soil in which our consciousness grows. It grants us grass-roots access to the 'necessary formations' that craft *both* our awareness *and* the world.

If phenomenology is to be anything more than a 'helpful analogy', though, Husserl (1917, p. 8) said that it had to be given concrete expression by doing 'penetrating work'. It had also to be done.

Critchley (in Critchley & Schroeder 1999, p. 12) calls this the 'touchstone of philosophy in the Continental tradition', and Husserl (1960, p. 154) would have agreed, since his final court of appeal was always utility. Despite all of his attempts to establish phenomenology's veracity in principle, he invariably ended up by urging us to analyse the world phenomenologically in practice. We must feel for ourselves, he said, those 'concept-systems' that determine our 'fundamental sense' of what we think we know. And we must apply what we learn to the world at large.

What does doing phenomenology entail?

Husserl gave few clues as to what doing phenomenology involves, and those that he did give are very general. They include eschewing empirical experimentation and intellectual and empirical research, recovering a sense of our connection to the lived world (a connection we never lost but only learned to ignore), reflecting upon the practices that constitute our primal mental awareness, articulating our insights without reverting to rationalism (or resorting to romanticism), and assessing how these practices result in our awareness of the world and our intentions for it. This means embedding ourselves in a social context again, so that we can be less detached, while bracketing off the pre-suppositions that constitute rationalism's account of the world. It means feeling for the primal mental practices that underpin this account and exploring how they intend world affairs.

The whole procedure has been likened to arriving in a new city at night, and having an image of that city take shape in the mind, but only after many upsets, many moments of being utterly lost, and many 'adventures' (Milgram 1970, pp. 1467–8; Spiegelberg 1994, pp. 706–7).

It was encouraging, therefore, while conducting this particular study, to find that the primal practices listed earlier were replicated by other analysts when they undertook the same 'gut-thinking'. These analysts were all rationalists, which may be why their differences were so readily reconcilable. The convergence was marked nonetheless. Does such convergence occur across cultures? No studies of this kind have yet been done, but a tentative and indirect answer is found by considering what primal mental practices a 'universal person' might manifest (Brown 1991). When a preliminary study of this kind was made, the results were also reconcilable with the ones listed above, though the participants in this study were all rationalists, too. This no doubt played a part in making such a reconciliation possible.

It is important to reiterate at this point that, while the mental practices we find by doing what Husserl recommended may provide novel descriptions of the world, they do not explain that world. To do that, it is necessary to revert to rationalism. This means re-introducing rationalism's shortcomings, however, which means using phenomenology a second time, to compensate for them. It means bracketing off the rationalist notion of truth-as-representation in favour of an attempt to ascertain truth-as-an-emergent-whole (Husserl 1970a,

pp. 765–70). It means using what has been called ‘code-breaking’ reasoning, to scan or assay entire explanatory sets (Douglas & Isherwood 1979, p. viii; Husserl 1970a, p. 475). The consequence of doing so has been noted already: a heightened awareness of the significance of authority.

Why bother?

Doing phenomenology in the way Husserl recommended in his more radical moments makes it possible to formulate a number of primal mental practices. Some of these practices are relatively familiar in terms of how the world is conventionally described. Others provide more novel ways of talking about it.

Why bother, though? This question is answered here in terms of rationalism’s failure to account for the world as well as rationalists like to think. Rationalists are able to generate large amounts of systematic knowledge, which political practitioners use to help formulate foreign policies, corporate strategies, and diverse civil initiatives. Such knowledge is not renowned for its reliability, however; indeed, the stricter the scientific criteria that rationalists apply to knowing world affairs, the less reliable the knowledge they glean about them. Repeated attempts to falsify hypotheses about the world, in other words, leave rationalists with little of significance to say about them. This does not stop them seeking such results, but it does give proponents of the discipline pause as to how successful they can expect to be.

The various ways in which rationalists talk about the world present part-truths at best, not the whole-truth. Rationalist analysts try to persuade all other analysts that the fragment of truth that their work represents is a reliable account of the world. The result is a kind of Punch & Judy show, however: analysts whack away at each other, while the assumptions they make about human nature and nurturing practices are kept well out of sight. These assumptions are rarely directly addressed because they are not supposed to be there. Rationalism is meant to be the pursuit of reason as an end in itself, after all. Nonetheless, its assumptions are readily discernable and, seen as such, can also be discerned determining the whole show.

Conclusions like these are not heartening for those who want a ‘hard’ science of how the world works. If the best we can find are

part-truths rather than the whole-truth, under the mantle of a sense of reliability that no longer seems especially lustrous, then the idea of a physics of world affairs begins to seem like a chimera. And yet, this is exactly what a close look at the epistemological credentials of those who would scientise the study of world affairs seems to portend. There are ways of compensating for this conclusion, but they mean accepting that this is the conclusion and entertaining other ways to know (like phenomenology).

Doing phenomenology is also justified because phenomenologists are able to do what rationalists cannot. Consider, for example, the US failure to appreciate the state of Soviet disarray at the end of the Cold War. While US analysts were able to gather and assess a great deal of information about their ideological enemy, they conspicuously failed to appreciate the severity of the circumstances that led to the Soviet Union's demise. Why? In part at least because of the hyper-rationalist way in which they were doing their knowing and their monumental failure to compensate for the shortcomings of this way of knowing. The United States looked with detachment at their Soviet adversaries. They surveyed them as they would a city from space. They were able to see, as a consequence, where the main Soviet weapons were housed and how well the Soviets were provisioned; they were not, however, able to see key aspects of Soviet morale, since these aspects are knowable only by de-detaching ourselves and by embedding ourselves in the society concerned. Just as it is not possible to discern from space if a city's mayor is planning to resign or if its council is corrupt, it proved impossible to understand the Soviet polity without becoming intimately involved in it and appraising the primal mental practices that constituted the intentions of the Soviet way of life.

The United States had its spies, but they were not phenomenologically trained spies, and as a consequence, they did not provide the kind of intelligence that US policy-makers required if they were to compensate for the shortcomings of the kind of intelligence they were receiving. Phenomenologically trained spies provide descriptions of life-in-itself. They explore the ways in which their primal mental practices craft what they think and the ways in which the primal mental practices of those they live among craft what *they* think. A phenomenologically practised administration takes such intelligence very

seriously indeed. The United States was not such an administration and ultimately paid the price.

To do phenomenology, as Husserl described it, means providing a detailed description of what is called elsewhere the 'concrete here-and-now of our common experience' (Underhill 1937, p. 15). More radically, it means providing an account of our primal mental practices and what they intend (Haugaard 2002, p. 136; Hurley, in Deleuze 1988, p. ii). Neither approach solves all of our knowledge problems. Insights can be illusions. Self-evidence can be false. Social context can be no more than a cover for repression or suppression. Primal mental practices can be anything but (Levin 1970). These problems can be dealt with, however, by looking at what phenomenologists say in the light that shines through the explanatory windows provided by rationalism. Rationalism helps us to ascertain what is illusory, false, and/or bad rule in disguise. It does so by introducing its own shortcomings, however, shortcomings that phenomenology was meant to confront and confound. Which brings us back to phenomenology again, and how it gives us access to what underpins the whole rationalist project.

The result is one of the great battles of 'language against itself' (Lyotard 1991, p. 68). It is also an account of the world available in no other way, and one that throws new light upon world affairs (Dasgupta, in Radhakrishnan & Muirhead 1966, pp. 269–70). Think, for example, of the plight of a poor country that has just been given its independence. What, in such a case, could possibly be done? Rationalist accounts of the world all provide answers to a question like this. Realists, for example, talk in terms of strategic capabilities. Liberalists talk about the comparative advantages that the global market provides. Meta-marxists talk about the global corporations who cruise 'off-shore' seeking to maximise their profits by buying the compliance of comprador elites. Husserlian phenomenologists, by contrast, begin by providing a rich description of what ensues. They then attempt to cast this description in terms of our primal mental practices.

In attempting to get at the way in which we intend world affairs, are these phenomenologists doing anything more than depth psychology? This is the last question we have to consider in concluding this Introduction. Psychologists objectify motivation. They describe and explain motivation in terms of goal-directed behaviours like

instinct, drive, want, desire, need, interest, or incentive (Weiten 1992, pp. 340, 342). Phenomenologists, by contrast, critique objectification (Husserl 1970a, p. 145; Mohanty, in Smith & Smith 1995, p. 54). They reach beyond it to a more fundamental level of analysis.

Consider needs. It is said that there is no point to listing human needs, since they involve the concept of 'serious harm', and, as there is no way of knowing what is invariably 'serious' in this regard, there is no way of knowing what we always need (Thomson 1987, p. 94). As a consequence, those who make lists of needs are usually very tentative about how certain they can be. They still make such lists, though. They list biological needs, for example, like the need for food, water, and rest, and they list social needs like the need for deference, order, affiliation/autonomy, aggression/dominance, acquisition/retention, nurturance, cognisance, and play (Murray 1962, pp. 76–83, 716; Weiten 1992, p. 343).⁷

Needs sound very much like the primal phenomenological practices listed above. This suggests that a phenomenology of world affairs is no more than talk about world affairs in terms of psychological needs. A similar case might be made for psychological desires, (Marks 1986; Oddie 2005), or for those drives that Maslow arranged in a hierarchy from the concrete and the physiological to the abstract and the self-actual (Maslow 1987, pp. 6, 15–22; Thomson 1987, p. 15). The putative need for deference, for example, or for order, sounds like the practices called here deferring and ordering. Likewise, the putative need for affiliation or autonomy sounds like the practice called here clumping; aggression/dominance sounds like conflicting; acquisition/retention sounds like taking; nurturance sounds like caring; and cognisance sounds like hoping.

Needs are not primal mental practices, however. The simple fact is that primal mental practices are more fundamental; they represent a philosophic attempt to conceptualise what neurologists call the brain's 'binding' structures. They represent the patterns of repeated physiological practice that bring together the various aspects of individual perception that occur in various parts of the brain (Rose 2005, pp. 154–7). They highlight our 'meta-cognitive' ability to think about thinking (Donald 2001, pp. 10–11), or to think about the mind's own 'neural maps' (Damasio 2003, p. 206), or to think about the 'cognitive operators' that are said to be the 'organizing principles' of the mind itself (Newberg, d'Aquili & Rause 2001, pp. 47–8).⁸ Needs may

represent primal mental practices in psychological terms, but they are the figure; they are not the ‘absolute ground of all positing of being’ (Mohanty, in Smith & Smith 1995, p. 61); they are not these primal practices (Husserl 1917, p. 5). They might help us to determine what we might expect such practices to be, but that is all.

Conclusion

Rationalists dichotomise reason and emotion by learning to detach the ability to reason from its social context and to look back at the socially embedded part of themselves as their ability to feel. In orthodox rationalist terms, rationalism = autonomy + objectivity. Individuated, objectifying selves talk across to each other in ways that are either analytical or empirical, abstracted or engaged. They then compare these ways with the thinking and feeling that they do. If they take rationalism far enough, they will become aware of rationalism’s shortcomings, too. They will become aware, for example, of the way in which objectifying stops us from knowing anything that requires subjectifying. They may even attempt to compensate for such shortcomings, by trying to re-embed themselves socially and, as phenomenologists, by using their ability to think about what it is they are crafting their awareness with.

Matrix 1: the rationalist account of phenomenology

		Ways of reasoning	
		Analytical	Empirical
Kinds of knowing	Thinking	analytical researchers (deductivists)	empirical researchers (inductivists)
	Feeling	analytical experiencers (phenomenologists)	empirical experiencers (romanticists)

In the top left-hand quadrant of the table above are those who do deductive research by using thought experiments, that is reflexive reasoning. Rationalists see such thinkers as being quintessentially rationalistic, since they never stop looking outside of themselves in objectifying ways, even when that ‘outsight’ is basically insight.

In the top right-hand quadrant are those who do inductivist research by collecting concrete data or doing experiments. Rationalists see thinkers like these as rationalistic as well, since they too never

stop objectifying; that is, they never stop subjecting their hypotheses to public and repeated attempts to refute them.

In the bottom right-hand quadrant are those who eschew rationalism to become involved, and to use their emotions to determine what they experience ('gut-feeling'). Rationalists think of analysts like these as ir-rationalists. These so-called ir-rationalists see themselves as romanticists, however; as having a better 'grasp' of what is going on, while providing the results of their research in an 'artistic' form.

Those in the bottom left-hand quadrant also eschew rationalism, but in such a way as to continue thinking. They, too, try to become more involved. At the same time they try to ascertain what they do their experiencing with ('gut-thinking'). Rationalists call analysts like these retroductivists, that is, those who look for the most basic of reasons for what they observe. Retroductivists see themselves as phenomenologists, however; as having a more basic understanding of what is going on and as providing the results of their research in the form of radical intuitions.

While rationalism does make it possible for us to know *about* the world, it stops us from experiencing that world in any but narrowly prescribed ways. In the natural sciences, that prohibition can seem relatively unimportant. In the human sciences, however, it means forgoing important information about what is going on. Husserl refused to forgo this information, although what he proposed instead is as nuanced as rationalism itself. This is readily demonstrated by removing the top two quadrants from the matrix outlined above, and constructing a second matrix out of the bottom two quadrants. In this matrix, rationalism = autonomy + subjectivity.

Matrix 2: the phenomenological account of phenomenology

		Ways of reasoning	
		Analytical	Empirical
Kinds of knowing	Thinking	abstracted phenomenologists (Husserlian philosophers)	engaged phenomenologists (radical anthropologists)
	Feeling	abstracted romanticists (conceptual artists)	engaged romanticists (experiential artists)

In the bottom left-hand quadrant of the table above are those rationalists who return to the feeling facet of the socially re-embedded self while remaining relatively detached. In Husserlian terms, these are the more abstracted romantics, for example those conceptual artists who explore their feelings in relatively analytical ways.

In the bottom right-hand quadrant are those rationalists who return to the same feeling facet of the socially re-embedded self, but do so in a much more direct fashion. In Husserlian terms these are the more engaged romantics, for example those experiential artists who explore their feelings in relatively visceral or corporeal ways.

In the top right-hand quadrant are those rationalists who return to the thinking facet of the socially re-embedded self in a relatively direct way. In Husserlian terms these are the more engaged phenomenologists, for example those anthropologists who surrender all objectivity to take part in their research work.

In the top left-hand quadrant are those rationalists who return to the same thinking facet of the socially re-embedded self, but do so while remaining relatively detached. In Husserlian terms these are the more abstracted phenomenologists. This category would include philosophers like Husserl himself, who recommended surrendering objectivity while remaining relatively analytical.

When teased apart in this way, the phenomenological account of world affairs becomes more clear. The result is not meant to pigeon-hole particular thinkers, since it would be entirely possible for any particular analyst to manifest two, three, or even all of the practices sketched above. Rather, it is meant to highlight the nuances of a particular philosophic perspective that has not so far been systematically applied to world affairs.

Notes

- 1 A schematic representation of the analytical languages that rationalists use to describe and explain world affairs is provided below. This representation maps the key assumptions that rationalists make about our essential human nature (bad, calculating, or good) and about the essential nature of our human nurturing practices (material, mental, or mixed). In the 'naturist' case we also find the familiar politico-strategic, politico-economic and politico-social dimensions to the discipline, namely those of diplomacy and military politics, market politics, and identity politics. In the 'nurturist' case we find cross-cutting accounts, each of which explains world affairs regardless of any of the familiar dimensions to the discipline,

for example class politics, hegemonic politics, and constructivist politics. Though the nature/nurture dichotomy is highly contentious as a way of organising thinking about human behaviour (see, for example, Rose 2005, p. 59), it is certainly alive and well in the study of world affairs. Each analytical language is the site of more or less extreme analytical dialects. Meanwhile, those people not deemed rationalist enough get pushed to the margins, for example women, ecologists, indigenous peoples, post-colonials, and the poor.

Human naturist

	Politico-strategic	Politico-economic	Politico-social
Bad	statism ('realism')	mercantilism	nationalism
Calculating	inter-statism	liberalism	individualism
Good	globalism	socialism	collectivism

Human nurturist

Material	marxism
Mixed	meta-marxism
Mental	constructivism

- 2 If a culture is likened to a latex sheet, and the self is seen as being born into this culture as a genetically unique part of the sheet, then rationalism is that self learning to pull itself away from the sheet (its rationalist culture) to become more individuated and en-selved. This self remains part of the cultural context into which it is born. Even in its most individuated and attenuated form, it is detached from but not separate from its cultural context. Culture stretches out, as it were, as the self takes up its mentally dis-embedded stance, to continue to be an integral part of what that self thinks it is, and of how it thinks.

Husserl did not want the attenuation to end there, however. He thought that we can and should pull ourselves back from this dis-embedded position to the place the self was originally in before it learned to pull away. This re-embedded place is the phenomenological one.

Think of a volcano. Think of the self as it learns to pull away from its culture as creating a volcanic cone, with itself at the apex. Think of this apex then turning back into the volcano's core. The involution process is the phenomenological mind-move, as Husserl saw it.

The latex metaphor depicts the way the original sheet (the cultural context) turns back in upon itself. It depicts the way (unless it should tear,

leaving the self mentally adrift) that the self is able to remain part of its cultural context regardless of the attenuation that rationalism requires. The self remains a particular cultural being, that is, despite becoming firstly a rationalistic 'I', and secondly what Husserl called a transcendental 'I'. Indeed, by returning to where it was, even though this is not the cultural context in which it found itself originally, the self is ostensibly able to regain a greater awareness of its origins while at the same time retaining its autonomy and its capacity to reason. (Given the possibility of returning to an emotivist position at the same time—one equally in but not of the culture—this volcano is topographically very strange. It has a single cone but two cores, one phenomenological and the other romantic.)

- 3 To poststructuralists this account obscures the way in which objectifying selves can never (because of the culturally acquired nature of language) talk across to each other 'as the crow flies'. It obscures, they say, how such selves have to go back down to their cultural context, across, and then up to engage with the objectifying attempts of others, if they want to communicate. It obscures, they say, how 'talking across' (as a metaphor for the relevant speech-act) stops us from seeing that the medium in which these actions take place is cultural, and therefore grammatical, discursive, and derived 'from below'. In response to this criticism I would say that poststructuralism obscures the extent to which the rationalist position is dis-embedded. It short-changes the enormous effort that goes on in rationalist cultures to construct rationalist discourse. It also short-changes the extent to which rationalists are able to sustain a degree of meta-social autonomy, and the extent to which they are able to reach across to each other in rationalistic ways despite the compromised character of the reaching process.
- 4 Why look at the world like this in the first place? Those imbued with a sense of the universe as divinely inspired discern a kind of cosmic destiny at work here, though they differ as to what this destiny decrees. Those who are not imbued with this sense of divine destiny see our looking at the world in this way as a biological predisposition, that is as the result of natural selection and/or of having a particular kind of brain., Mentalists say that we know this world first and foremost as a result of the European Enlightenment and the revolution in science that this made possible, then as the product of the industrial revolution that the scientific revolution made possible, then as the outcome of the imperial adventures that industrial production made possible, then in terms of the state-made, market-centred, socially fragmented world that these imperial adventures made possible. Materialists, and particularly marxist materialists, say we know this world as the latest in a series of attempts to exploit the value of the world's workers by self-serving elites, who depict the results (including the mental results) as being in the interests of everyone, while using modernist objectivity to further their bourgeois concerns. And so on.
- 5 Note also Merleau-Ponty 2002, p. x. Husserl (1970b, p. 95) tried to outline a 'systematically constructed, and in a new way still scientific philosophy in which the Cartesian turn [the objectifying turn] ... works itself out in the

form of a transcendental subjectivism'. He is often seen, as a consequence, as a neo-Kantian. His idea of transcendental subjectivism is socially re-embedded, however. This is not Kant's idea; indeed, Husserl (1970b, p. 103) said quite explicitly that Kant has 'no idea' that his [Kant's] position requires 'unquestioned presuppositions', and that his [Kant's] conclusions are therefore incomplete.

- 6 Contemporary neurologists come to similar conclusions. See, for example, Antonio Damasio (2003, pp. 199–200, 205):

The neural patterns and the corresponding mental images of the objects and events outside the brain are creations of the brain related to the reality that prompts their creation rather than passive mirror images reflecting that reality ... [Though these] patterns ... are constructed according to the brain's own rules ... it should [also] be noted that this does not deny the reality of the objects. The objects are real ... [because] there is a set of *correspondences*, which has been achieved in the long history of evolution, between the physical characteristics of objects independent of us and the menu of possible responses of the organism.

Being members of one species, we make 'similar neural patterns of the same thing', which is why we accept the 'conventional' notion that 'each of us has formed in our minds the reflected picture of some particular thing ... [when] in reality we did not'. If this should be the case for objects, how much more should it be so with regard to repeated patterns of human practice, that is, for the events and structures that constitute our world?

The significance of such neurological findings is further reinforced when we realise that the brain 'does not begin its day as a *tabula rasa*'. It is imbued at the beginning of life with '[innate] knowledge ... [pre-disposing] how the organism should be managed, namely how the life process should be run'. Damasio (2003, pp. 206, 215, 217, 325) calls these 'substrates' of the mind 'neural maps', a concept that could well provide us with a neurological equivalent of Husserl's primal mental practices. Damasio also points out that the mind has properties that emerge from these neural-maps, properties that result not only in ideas about objects and events, but also in the 'doubling up' process that allows us to have ideas about ideas, and ideas about the idea of having ideas. These emergent properties are candidates for a neurologically grounded account of Husserl's primal mental practices.

- 7 No phenomenological correlate was discerned here for the need for play, though later reflection suggested that there might well be one. There seems no reason why there should not be a primal mental practice called 'playing', that is, with a chapter on world tourism or sport, and a case study on the globalisation of soccer, for example.
- 8 Rose (2005, pp. 301, 304–5) is a critic of those who see biological causes as being more important than social and cultural ones. He eschews this

dichotomy, preferring to call us 'biosocial' beings instead. As such, he argues that we are 'radically undetermined' or, rather, that we live at the moving 'interface' of 'multiple determinisms'. He says that this undetermined quality is what makes it possible for us to continue constructing our world (cf. Betzig 1997; Chagnon & Irons 1979). Rose (2005, pp. 157, 167, 203–4) is also a critic of those who seek to locate thought and emotion in particular parts of the brain (Tooby & Cosmides, in Barkow, Cosmides & Tooby 1992; cf. Sherman & Reeve, in Betzig 1997). He sees all thoughts and emotions as processes, that is as patterns of interaction between a number of the brain's regions. Like Damasio, he uses the same metaphor—that of maps—to talk about how these interactions work. Like maps, the representations of the world that the mind/brain makes allow for 'plans of action upon' that world, though because of the dynamism and the multiplicity of our thoughts and emotions, Rose says that the attempt to locate these plans in particular places in the brain is a 'category mistake'. As a result he talks about consciousness in terms of emergent properties. We are conscious at every level of our brains *in general*, he says, and at no level of our brains *in particular*.

The same applies to our sense of agency. Intuiting Husserl's primal mental practices could be said to be one way of reading these properties 'from the inside', though as Donald (2001, pp. xiii–xiv) (and Husserl) says, given the significance of culture and of the languages and symbols that our life-worlds provide, the outside is also the inside. 'We have evolved', Donald says, 'an adaptation for living in culture ... From our earliest birth as a species, humanity has relied upon creating "distributed" systems of thought and memory ... Our minds are still very much sealed into their biological containers. But they can do remarkably little on their own'. As he sees it, this presents three key problems. The first is the failure so far to locate what binds our perceptions together given how, for anything we perceive, our perceptions register in several parts of the brain; this is the problem of 'perceptual unity'. The second is the failure so far to find out where our short-term ability to remember might be and, therefore, our ability to sustain our awareness over time. The third is the failure so far to locate our long-term memory and, with it, our 'metacognitive' ability to 'supervise' our 'own operations, [at least] to a degree'.

Society and culture are involved in all three of these processes. How? Rose talks about consciousness as multi-layered, that is, as taking place on different levels. These range from that of simple perceptual processing right up to shared theories and symbolic networks (Donald 2001, pp. 10–11, 325). The practices at the top end of this spectrum are the ones that allow us to talk about the symbolic and the non-symbolic. They also allow us to posit a world 'both entirely physical and [entirely] virtual'. They let us describe the constraints of 'concrete reference' (nature) and of inter-subjectivity (nurture), and they let us exploit the opportunities that the nurturing/nurturing nexus provides (Deacon 1997, p. 454).

Husserl's primal thought-forms are patterned cognitive performances. Whether hard-wired, programmed in later, or both, they anticipate the

scientific attempt to be specific about the basic cogitative practices of the brain/mind.

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