No. 16

Difficulties in the grounding recourse from the world as a pregiven one to subjectivity

(Spring 1931)[[1]](#footnote-1)

<§ 1. The circularity of the anthropological approach>

We have gone a necessary way from the positive sciences, which may have seemed to us at first, at least according to their type, as fully valid representatives of true science, or rather, we went back <from> their idea of a science of the real world’s true being towards the world prior to this scientific truth, that is, from the scientific world towards the life world of man, in which, if science is historically already there, it belongs to the life world exclusively as a historical formation of culture in parenthesizing its validity. All its truths then are parenthesized and have only as cultural formations a sense in the life world (also that of the scientist himself) as cultural formations prior to all questions about legitimacy; because the positive sciences as such shall be questioned on the grounds for acceptance, their ability. All positive science rests on this “pre-scientific”, “atheoretical” world, world relieved from all scientific acceptances as always “naively” valid, always naively experienced, always pregiven in its whole temporal universality. It, as pretending world knowledge, by grounding the same, necessarily presupposes the acceptance of being of the life world. And now we ask for the sources, origins of this acceptance of being.[[2]](#footnote-2)

[255] Accordingly it seems that we arrive at anthropology as the first philosophical and basic science: as a science of the concrete man with all that belonging to the concretion of his world life. It belongs to this life that he always knows himself as a subject having the world, being in the world, having command of the world, and still again belonging to it as something worldly, as an object, and of course knows himself as living in community with other men in a human way, and in this community simply related to the world in a communal way, among that to himself and his community.

But how shall this anthropology accomplish that, which is demanded here, how is it possible at all, if not on the original ground of the already being world of the man, daring to create anthropology, whether singly or in scientific community? How could he do otherwise than, in finding himself in the world as subject of world life, describe this world he already has, and himself as having it? Certainly, in creating his world life as sociality and culture the world keeps on shaping itself as what it always is, as a humanized world, as a world, which has its face from humanity. But it has it already, whenever he investigates sense, it is always already concrete as this humanized world, which obviously does not exclude that it, the way it is for him respectively, has open possibilities of world areas he has not yet introduced into actual humanization.

Nay, is it not a countersensical daring in the end to ask for man’s concrete surrounding world, with the intention, decisive for us, of examining the acceptance of the world’s being as always already being first of all on its acceptance?

1. On the one hand: This is the difficulty, in what way one has to approach eidetic insights, in general, nay, unconditionally accepted ones in general, as they necessarily seem to be, if the fundamental basis, or rather, the justification possible any time and for everyone shall be provided for, which universal science would demand.

Universal science is subject to the idea of an unconditional, an apodictic validity, which, whenever actualized [256], still is not bound to any place, to any time.[[3]](#footnote-3) But it would simply be actualized in its historical time, and the connection of its validity radically to be taken into responsibility must be a habitual possession for every scientist in his time, that is, [it must] be interpretable any time in the attitude of responsibility. Thereby the knowledge of the unconditional, the apodictic validity of the ideal goal of this science must exist for him as well, that is, the knowledge that this same goal is possible at any time <for> everybody in asking back from his surrounding world, [that it] is to be actualized in apodicticity: Therefore everybody must be able to construct the essential form of a possible surrounding world from his fundamental surrounding world as a way of the world’s givenness and his having-it-fundamentally-accepted, as an essential form of all actual <surrounding worlds>, the completely unknown ones included, encompassing all possible ones as such.

But does the eidetic universality, to be gained from my surrounding world as my fact of acceptance, have to coincide with the essential forms to be gained from other historical surrounding worlds? Is not every eidetic universality historically bound as well? Of course the question relates to all eidetic universalities we have established as apodictically valid without any philosophical direction of interest, for example that of arithmetic, and already of the most primitive axioms.

1. But we do have another difficulty as well, concerning us more closely, and which has already been indicated above. Every inquiry back from the respective surrounding world, or rather, its eidetic style however to be gained on the reasons of its acceptance of being, or rather, an acceptance of being of a surrounding world as such, and of a surrounding world with which content and which subjective way of givenness ever already presupposes man or men, for whom it is a surrounding world; the inquiry back on the reasons for acceptance of a certain accepted content is an inquiry back on psychological, single human or communal human mental processes of acceptance and habitualities of acceptance. But thereby men have become the original ground, which though, because men simply are living men, <means> men in [257] the world and worldly living, acting, creating, caring ones, etc.

Thus this seems to result in the whole inquiry being a circular one. The final ground for the grounding of being is therefore the anthropological one, that is, man in his concretion, as man of his surrounding world. To describe the way he is conscious of himself and of it in his life world, or rather, delimited in essential attitude that, which is the necessary eidetic style here, this also means delimiting that, which necessarily is world for him – the world that he asks questions as practical ones – e.g. questions like that: “What do I intend now, what is supposed to be done, what would I prefer, etc.?” – thus theoretical questions as well. They are questions of a distinguished practice, the cognizing one, stand in the unitary human life context, being a unitary context of practice or intends to be it, have their special functions therein, which then need to be explored like the practical ones as such and in working universality.

All that is fair enough. But are we not allowed to ask any more: How is such anthropology grounded eventually? How is the final grounding for man’s being himself as a man of his surrounding world, as a man, experiencing his fellow men in a united way, thinking etc. in such and such a way, by building up anthropology? Or do we wish to say, according to the newest turns of philosophical trend: this was no science at all, science was a special way of behavior, of especially interested men in the concrete context of their life, which was considered in abstract incompleteness, if its was only considered as a theoretical one, where quite a specific motivation temporarily effected a theoretic attitude from this concretely full life, and from this attitude the becoming of some theoretic habituality?

<§ 2.> The philosopher as such in theoretic attitude

Let us not get confused. It may be, and of course it is the case that theoretic interest and theoretic performance was only one line in human life and even not in each. [258] But are we supposed to be in another attitude, we, those meditating ones here, since we ask questions on truth? Is not a description of the concrete human existence, and even more so a delimitation of its essence a theoretical matter, and do we not have to differ the one-sidedness of life having its impact in theoretic interest in the concrete context of the theorizing subject and the concrete all-roundness of the theoretical theme? The philosopher, the anthropologizing one, believes to be able to be a philosopher, [he] anyway has truths in view, that is, essential truths, anyway generally human truths. Their context is a theoretical context, having sprung from theoretical interest – may this be a temporary one, may it be practically, ethically, religiously motivated, in the hope to bring men to better ways through such cognition, to keep them from intellectualist or rationalist aberrations, etc. But if science and rationalism were identified, then every kind of anthropology, however its character may be, and however it may make human “existence” a theme, is rationalism.

Anyway, that is the most necessary for true rationalism, that of genuine scientificiality, that the radical question on the grounds for acceptance of the acceptance of being is asked, in which I and we, if we are pregiven to us as men in the world, and thereby also as men world is always pregiven to, simply may say that, nay, already may have pregiven such a thing in an unspoken way.

Certainly, we have to ask thus, if such questioning has an understandable sense and a necessary right. Of course this is the decisive point. Expressed otherwise: The radical question now is, whether the natural ground of judgment (that, which concrete life presupposes in all its activities, and thereby the theoretical life the sciences of this original ground spring from, the positive ones) is an original ground indeed, the origin of acceptance cannot be questioned any more, or whether it, as will be shown to us, has an indeed deeply hidden, but to be uncovered origin of acceptance, an exceedingly complicated, systematically [259] to be explored foundation of acceptance, which is there as constantly living, but constantly covered foundation of acceptance, there as the absolute life and the absolutely concrete being of that subjectivity we are ourselves, but in which we build and have the worldly apperception, by which we ourselves emerge as men, objectivated for ourselves in the world, and [by which] our life <has> the objective sense-formation of the living-into-the-world – into the world being our own formation of sense and acceptance.

Appendix XV:

<Scientific description presupposes a theoretical attitude to that, which is identical with all practical interests>[[4]](#footnote-4)

(May 1931)

<…> And in his opinion no genuine ontology is possible, without proceeding in exactly that way.

Here we need to heed though, that still this, as any proceeding, scientific in the widest sense, is a proceeding in consequently theoretical interest, that is, it delivers its results by a theoretical attitude laying over the naturalness of practical life of a pre-theoretic step, [the attitude] of a “non-participant” onlooker, purely directed towards that, which is there, who, without being entangled in this practice, watches it, considers it, pursues its kinds and forms, its motivation, its steps of the significance’s formation. Accordingly, it is impossible to see, why not another way shall be possible, and possibly a more natural way – for us as children of a time, having sciences, or rather, having a special attitude as their heritage, in which an objective world is already practically “released” for us, as such a one, not constantly determining in practical life, in scientific abstraction, but which is well known to us as the same, being there for the natural man as well, and “going through” his life.

Certainly there is some tension, a tendency towards some false philosophy from an absolutization of a positivist world. Not that scientific world as such was a wrong formation [260], but that a merely relative scientific world, like the naturalist absolutization of the world of natural science, is taken for the full and whole one. Is it not exactly “classical” phenomenology’s way that, through revealing pure consciousness life, at first according to its most general shapes and then proceedingly towards the constitutive problems, simply has also revealed the way towards some world consideration, constitutively considering any kind of scientific world in its concrete relation to the constituting subjectivity? Is not practical subjectivity constituting as well, has the purpose of my phenomenology ever been that to reveal constitutively merely the nature of the natural scientists? If we begin by the way I do it, to bring out a natural concept of the world in a transcendentally aesthetic way, then this designates, as I still believe despite Heidegger, a necessary and first system of tasks as such, that I have chosen the course of the abstractive theoretical consideration only in another way, but in a certain way more primitive than Heidegger’s was.

What is the first for an awakened theoretical interest, or what may be first? Is therefore not the structure of the practical surrounding world, and of the I or We as of the practical one something quite late, although the practical world is the most concrete without any doubt, in correlation to the practically interested subjectivity practically living consciousness? Is not every theoretical attitude abstract, insofar as we, as we immediately have to do, presuppose it as an attitude going towards universality, totality?

Special motives belong to that, in order to enable theoretical attitude, and in contrast to Heidegger it seems to me that an original motive, for science as for art, was implied in the necessity of the play, and especially in the motivation of some playful “theoretic curiosity”, which wishes to view the things, to get to know them, things, which are none of its business, [curiosity] not springing from the necessity of life, not from profession, from the complex of ends of self-preservation. And no “deficient” practice shall present itself here.

Spreading of a theoretical interest, presupposing the becoming of a consequently theoretical interest, then we have interest in the world, or any worldly manifoldness constantly going through the world into infinity. May they otherwise practically come into question – now only its being comes into question, and the question on being naturally goes first, under the title “world”, towards the relatively constituted “universal present” and then soon further towards the “past” and the becoming of present from it, [261] equally towards the being of the “future” as becoming from present.

The universal practical structure of the life world in its generality is not the first for the theoretical man. His practical interests change, and with them the significances, and the significances also change indeed in relation to the persons: It is only different insofar as the respective Ego knows itself to be united with a community of family, status, people, preserving itself in a relative constant way, and derives a certain far-reaching significance, an intersubjective identity from the relation of community.

The theoretical interest goes towards that, which is, and that is everywhere the identical in the change of subjects and their practical interests, <it goes> towards the same things, the same relations, the same changes, etc, being in themselves, i.e. being there for “everyone”, and towards the significances themselves only insofar as they are taken in their correlation, and now everyone again, if he takes a theoretical attitude, may find that this thing is accepted by subject A as such stuff, by subject B as quite other stuff, that every thing may be entangled in many kinds of connections of stuff for the same and different subjects.

What ever is being cognized, something being is cognized, and something being is some thing, something identical, ever again identifiable and for everyone identifiable eventually in the subjective connection of openly possible communication, in its connection of being, which certainly needs to remain out of sight as a familiar one in most cases. All that “stuff” as well and its characters of the stuff are something being of this first sense. In order to understand their being, the whole concrete connection of being needs to be made – as the same holds true for all other being, hidden in the life world and still “lying” everywhere in it, as the spatial being, spatial in the sense of the theoretically objective consideration (but not idealizing in a mathematical way).[[5]](#footnote-5)

[262]

Appendix XVI:

<The epoché is some arresting of the positional world life by volition and as that an active mode of world life>

(Age of revolution, in the bad time, about May 1933)

I can abstain from every (positional) act in the single case at first. I abstain from getting closer knowledge of any worldly thing, knowledge presenting itself to me as the substratum for cognition, and thus generally from making the world given in experience the theoretic theme, and from otherwise occupying myself with it. I can also do this integrally, in embracing, embracing the unconditionally general as such; this means a standstill of the whole natural awake life. The constantly pregiven world is still there, ready to become the field of my experiencing-myself-into-it (of the experiencing cognizance, turning-to-it-in-a-grasping-way and singly-looking-at-and-acquiring-that-which-I-have-grasped) thinking into, acting into, experiencing sorrow and lust from it, etc., in brief, [field] of the world life. But I abstain from exactly this. It may not remain at that.

But how can a new way of awake activity of single ones, entangling in manifold ways be still possible, an activity, which is not world life? All activity I call that of the natural attitude, is human world life, and this implies for the thus living one, having such an attitude, that he is living in the constancy of the world’s existence-for-him, that it is always there for him in advance, prior to every act he performs. It is there for him, he is conscious to it as that, and as pre-actively conscious; it hides consciously as presupposition for acts (unthematic, prethematic), the consciousness pregiving it hides all motives, from which these and those acts grow, the acts of man as child of the world.

To subject the universe of these acts – all in one – to the epoché does not result in any possibility for a positional further living, a proceeding activity, ever newly performing, for so long, as the consciousness, pregiving world, all former acts of the world life have made stream into their acquisitions and their possible performances predelineated from then on, is still accepted, still conscious as the ground of the awake life. I am in a natural attitude, even if I become quite rigid from senseless fear, and discontinue all doing, not even wish to see and hear, not even take on in an experiencing way [263] (directed towards knowledge, revelation), what is going on there. The world is still there for me, I am rigid, in the state of rigid waiting, neither ready to re-enter worldly activity, to ask the pregiven world questions, nor to occupy myself with something worldly. The universal epoché may only in passing be an arresting by volition of the positional world life on the further accepted world ground, similar to this state of rigidness (analogous to an epoché, but not an abstaining by volition like this). But it is itself a mode of world life, even if a peculiar one! As universal theoretic habit, parenthesizing of all pregiven knowledge, all pretended science, all philosophy in the old universal sense it was motivated in the going through, namely in the purpose to newly ground a universal and actual strict science of the world.

1. 1) Anthropologism. 2) Intersubjectively valid eidetic insights with regard to the rational form of the world. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. But we do not spare thereby the question on the sources of the validity of science. The question on the accomplishment of validity of world experience of course does not answer the question on intuition’s accomplishment of validity subsequent to the „idealizing“ science, and ever anew functioning in it – world view on the basis of theory, transcending possible experience. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Absolutely rational science alone thus is guiding there. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This is against Heidegger [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. (Not continued.) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)