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I. Husserl's story.

Husserl's last work\(^1\) is the only one he himself called, in sub-title, an "Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy."\(^2\) Already in 1913, he distinguished between "pure phenomenology" and "phenomenological philosophy."\(^3\) The book he published then was called only "A General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology."\(^4\) It presents "pure phenomenology" merely as a possible new approach to "the given." In order to give this phenomenological approach a philosophical meaning, it remained to be shown that this approach was necessary. Husserl intended to do this in the "Third Book" of a greater work which is announced in the "Introduction" to the "First Book" published in 1913. This "Third Book," he never wrote. In 1923/24, he tried to fill up this gap by elaborating his lectures on "First Philosophy."\(^5\) By way of a "Critical History of Ideas," the first part of the lectures, he sets out to demonstrate that the classical ideal of European philosophy, due to Plato and Aristotle, cannot be finally realized without putting to work the two main methods of pure phenomenology: the eidetic and the specifically phenomenological reduction. Traditional philosophy, Husserl wants to point out, could never realize this classical ideal, partly because of its omission of the eidetic reduction and mainly because of its omission of an ἐποχή by means of the specifically phenomenological reduction. Phenomenological philosophy or the philosophical meaning of pure phenomenology is thus founded on a sketch of the history of Western philosophy.

Husserl did more or less the same in the only work published (partly) by himself that he called explicitly "An Introduction to Phenomenological
Philosophy. Again, what he does, in order to point out the philosophical meaning or the necessity of pure phenomenology, is telling a story, this time including elements of a history of European science and some considerations on Western civilization or "European mankind" generally.

What is his story as he told it last? European civilization, we are told, is mainly founded on the classical Greek ideal of purely theoretical knowledge. Modern Western civilization is founded on a renewal of this ancient ideal. But in this renewal, something went wrong. The classical ideal of pure theory degenerated into modern scientific "objectivism." Accordingly, the growing success of modern objective science led also to a growing estrangement of this science from our "subjective-relative" life-world. Modern objective science cannot tell us how to behave and what to do in our actual everyday life-world. This in itself is the main cause of the present distress of European mankind. Yet, scientific objectivity has become the only kind of rationality we can rely on. So European man in his distress is looking out more and more for irrational ways to understand himself and his world, which can make things only worse.

This story would not be complete and would not be of much help unless it tells us also what exactly went wrong with the original ideal of purely theoretical knowledge and why exactly it should have degenerated into modern objectivism and its estrangement from our life-world. Husserl's answer to this is somewhat intricate and surprising. Modern science, he says, was doomed to overlook the realities of our subjective-relative life-world because this kind of science was rooted itself in this life-world and never left this ground. The ideal of purely theoretical knowledge cannot be realized as long as we do not succeed to elevate ourselves above the soil of our subjective-relative life-world. This is the true purport of the éποχη, to be implemented by the specifically phenomenological reduction. And that is why pure (or transcendental) phenomenology is necessary in order to overcome the crisis of the European sciences and of European mankind generally. And that again is the philosophical meaning of phenomenology as Husserl conceived it in his last work.

II. Husserl's program and contemporary philosophy

Husserl's last program for phenomenological research results out of this story. By means of an éποχη, we should conquer a point of view from where we can look on our subjective-relative life-world, including what has grown out of its soil, especially the objectivism of modern science