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## Introduction

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This collection of essays addresses the moments of crisis that punctuate the course of continental thought in this century, from the founding crisis of reason, to which Edmund Husserl responded with a call for a rigorous science of phenomenology, to the current crisis of postmodernism, with its rejection of Husserl's metanarrative of history and rationality. The steps are many and discrete from Husserl's program of reformulating philosophy as a science of phenomenology to the postmodernist undercutting of philosophy's claim to a salvific role and of its attendant notions—the unified subject, objective reality, and a historical telos; these steps include Martin Heidegger's epochal history of Being, Michel Foucault's analysis of the power of cultural and disciplinary practices, and the dispersal of meanings in the philosophies of Jacques Derrida and others.

The first part of this collection, "Husserl's Narrative of the Crisis of Reason and the Life-World," comprises three essays. Rudolf Bernet's essay, which clarifies the many ways in which the world appears to the subject, takes as its focus the familiar envioning-world. Bernet compares Husserl's notion of envioning-world with Heidegger's examination of the limits of world in order to emphasize the contingency of the hospitality and rationality of the envioning-world and to criticize Husserl's notion of the constitution of the world for its inadequacy in accounting for the ways in which the subject has a responsibility for making the world more rational. The theme of responsibility for rationality continues in R. Philip Buckley's essay, where he argues that Husserl was concerned with the crisis in Western rationality long before the publication of *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, and that the motivation of this concern was an ethical one. This ethical concern also serves Buckley as a clue to understanding the quite different responses of Husserl and Heidegger to the perception of crisis. In his essay, J. Claude Evans argues for abandoning Husserl's doctrine of absolute consciousness (which, he believes, was not a discovery but, in fact, was a construction necessitated by

Husserl's account of sensations) for the sake of an account of intentionality that is more adequate to lived experience and for an understanding of time consciousness that avoids some of the problems associated with the traditional account. He also suggests ways in which this line of thought can illuminate the sources of opposing tendencies in Husserl's account of the constituting function of consciousness.

The critique of phenomenology as a science founded on the notion of absolute consciousness raises another question, addressed in Part Two, "The Possibility of Philosophy as Social Critique." Charles Harvey's essay, which opens this section, considers the question, What is it about human being that makes social criticism possible? Harvey observes that a successful answer to this question must avoid two extreme understandings of the self, the sociological and the world-purified conceptions—represented by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jurgen Habermas, respectively—and he finds Husserl's account of the self to be more satisfactory than either of the other two. In the next essay, Kenneth Baynes first explores the different ways in which the notion of the life-world functions in the social theory of Jurgen Habermas and in Husserl's *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, and how this notion contributes to Habermas's solutions to the crisis of reason and to the methodological crisis of the social sciences. He then argues that the concept of the life-world remains indispensable to social theory, even when removed from the context of the project of transcendental phenomenology. In her essay, Linda Alcoff cautions feminist theorists against too hasty an appropriation of Foucault's thought into feminist social critique. She cites Foucault's analysis of subjectivity and the further implications of his views for political practice as obstacles to any theory and practice of feminist resistance. The last essay in this section, by Thomas Thorp, focuses on Habermas's critique of Heidegger and Derrida in his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* and argues that the manner in which Habermas constructs his polemic contradicts his theory of practical rationality, dependent as it is on a distinction between politically responsible argumentation and self-interested rhetoric. Further, Thorp argues that Habermas's theory of communicative action departs from the notion of political theory inherited from Critical Theory to an extent that undermines Habermas's claim that his theory is politically relevant.

The three essays in Part Three, "Subjection to Language, Power, and History," focus on the death of the epistemologically and morally autonomous subject in continental thought. Michael Clifford examines the place of Heidegger's *Being and Time* in Foucault's critique of the analytic of finitude and shows how, particularly in the notion of being-towards-death, Heidegger's work attempts to overcome the subject-object dichotomy and at the same time prepares the way for the critique of that

effort. Foucault's analytics of power is the focus of the essay by Ladelle McWhorter, who rejects the interpretation that the analytics of power is a theory offering a model of power. According to McWhorter's reading, the analytics is a discursive strategy that undermines the notions of causality, identity, and foundation that underlie much of traditional analysis of power. In the third essay, Jane Rodeheffer examines the transformations at work in the notion of the call of conscience in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. She finds that these transformations make possible the movement away from the model of the conscience of a guilty subject toward the understanding of the call of language in Heidegger's later works—the call to Dasein to own its possible not-being.

Part Four, "Retrieval of Crises," comprises four essays that focus on Heidegger's response to the crisis of Western philosophy. According to Heidegger, the present crisis of Western thought can be understood only if we first retrieve the crises in Greek thought. In the first of these essays Walter Brogan turns to *Being and Time* and finds in Heidegger's discussion of Dasein's possibility of being-a-whole a parallel with Aristotle's notions of *phronēsis* and *praxis*, particularly with regard to the way in which both writers find the possibility of genuine practical life, in Brogan's words, in "a drawing back into oneself of one's ownmost potentiality." Dennis Schmidt points to the importance of the Greek conception of the relation between *physis* and *technē* in Heidegger's attempts to rethink production. Schmidt shows that Heidegger's thought moves away from an economy of representation and reproduction, but criticizes Heidegger for failing to take adequate account of *technē* as repetition, a failure with political consequences. Thomas Davis also focuses on the role of *phronēsis* in Heidegger's thought, specifically as it functions in the notion of *Gelassenheit* and the attunement of thought with its origins at the end of metaphysics. In his examination of Creon's experience in *Antigone*, Davis finds a clue to the way in which the confrontation with Greek thought might be possible. Jane Love turns to the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* and Plato's use of the metaphor of appetite to describe the soul's desire for intellectual contemplation. She finds that the metaphor serves both to maintain the distinction between the desires of the soul and of the body and to point toward a hidden unity of soul and body in their potential for violability and death.

Part Five, whose four essays focus on the crises of postmodernism, is aptly titled "Shattering Identities." Dorothea Olkowski follows the thought of Gilles Deleuze in his discussions of the literature of the Marquis de Sade and of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, in which he finds a challenge to Plato's distinction between and valuation of *ikons* and their copies, on the one hand, and simulacra, on the other. According to Olkowski, in Deleuze's reading of these works the source of perversion is found to reside

not in the simulacrum but rather in the nature of demonstrative and dialectical reason itself. The image of the unified self is the target of Iris Marion Young's essay, in which she uses Julia Kristeva's category of the abject to uncover the roots of unconscious prejudice toward certain groups in anxieties regarding self-identity. Political responses to such prejudice is made more difficult, she says, when prejudice is explicitly condemned on the level of discursive consciousness but unconscious prejudice remains, and when the prevailing paradigm of the mature person is one of "self-control" and unified subjectivity. Richard Boothby takes up the theme of unification and fragmentation in his examination of Lacan's treatment of Freud's theory of castration. Lacan, he says, extends the significance of castration in the Oedipal drama to the more general experience of desire and loss, and views castration anxiety as a developmental task that is intrinsically bound up with the acquisition of language. Boothby offers two examples to illustrate Lacan's interpretation: Helen Keller's account of her first encounter with language, and a child's drawings of body parts. In the final essay, Gayle Ormiston turns to Jean-Francois Lyotard's work, *The Postmodern Condition*, to explore the ways in which the postmodern is marked by the opposition and apposition of the Socratic-Platonic desire for justice and for the unknown with what Lyotard calls paganism, that is, the absence of criteria for knowing and acting. This state of linkage and disruption—of *différend*—is itself the postmodern condition of language, a condition that fractures any notion of universal knowledge, objective criteria, or foundation.

Collected together, these essays do not signify or complete a narrative history of crises in twentieth-century continental philosophy, but they do articulate multiple points or moments of crisis without cure or end.