

Husserl and Putnam on the Human Sciences versus the Natural Sciences

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In recent work Hilary Putnam advocates a metaphysical position that he calls internal realism or, more piquantly, "realism with a small 'r'."¹ Realism with a small 'r', he says, is "a view that takes our familiar common sense scheme, as well as our scientific and artistic and other schemes, at face value, without helping itself to the notion of the thing 'in itself'."² The view he opposes to realism with a small 'r', Realism with a capital 'R', Putnam often identifies with scientific realism: the view that privileges the "scientific scheme" by claiming that it alone can or will someday capture the way things really are. In this context Putnam refers approvingly to Edmund Husserl's critique of scientific realism in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Putnam does not go so far as to label Husserl himself an advocate of realism with a small 'r', but it is clear that he considers Husserl, along with Wittgenstein and William James, to belong in this general camp.³

In this paper I want to explore the extent to which this characterization of Husserl is correct. I am not, however, going to focus on Husserl's defense of what Putnam calls "common sense realism" in the *Crisis*. A great deal of work has been done on the *Crisis*, some of which touches on just those issues addressed by Putnam.⁴ Instead, I want to turn to another work of Husserl's that has recently been published in English translation for the first time, the second volume of his *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. This text sets these issues in a new and inter-

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esting context. Rather than addressing the conflict between modern science and common sense, it compares and contrasts the rival visions of the world presented by the human and the natural sciences.

I. ONTOLOGICAL PLURALISM IN *IDEAS II*

I will label the position that Husserl upholds in *Ideas II* ontological pluralism. Husserl's ontological pluralism is quite similar to what Putnam describes as realism with a small 'r'. It regards scientific and humanistic interpretations of the world to be of equal justification and value. Yet, as Putnam also emphasizes about his version of realism, this tolerance has its limits.⁵ Ontological pluralism is not equivalent to relativism. Ontological relativism would be the position that what reality is, is relative to what conceptual scheme or belief system one happens to hold. An ontological pluralist holds that there is more than one ontological scheme that merits acceptance, not that any ontological scheme that happens to be accepted is correct. Husserl painstakingly describes how scientific and humanistic ontologies are built on and can be traced back to more basic, indeed fundamental features of our experience of the world. Ontological schemes that are not motivated in a rigorously consistent fashion by our fundamental experience of the world in this way do not merit acceptance.⁶

Putnam regards the basic mistake of Realism with a capital 'R' to be "the notion of an 'intrinsic' property, a property something has 'in itself,' apart from any contribution made by language or the mind."⁷ Husserl's phenomenology of course makes no use of this notion. Indeed, appeal to such 'intrinsic' properties is ruled out at the start by the transcendental reduction, which is the cornerstone of Husserl's philosophical method. The transcendental reduction requires one to abstain from judging or even considering whether the objects of human consciousness actually exist apart from our experience of them; these objects are to be described just as they are experienced. For this reason Husserl's philosophy is opposed to any version of traditional metaphysics. But it still deals with ontological questions, because, as Husserl constantly emphasizes, consciousness is by its nature consciousness of something. In Husserlian terms, then, ontology concerns itself with the general structure of the objects of consciousness.

When the existence of these objects is bracketed, as Husserl puts it, the way that consciousness confers meaning on them and organizes our experience is given center stage. The subtitle of this second volume of *Ideas*, *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, indicates that it offers an analysis of various specific ways this process takes place. The three ways of making sense of the world that it focuses on are the

natural sciences, the animal sciences and the human sciences. But the second section on the animal sciences is really an extension of the first section, because here Husserl analyses the way that psychic reality or human and animal consciousness is regarded from a natural scientific viewpoint. So I will pass over this second category and concentrate on Husserl's treatment of the natural sciences and the human sciences.

It is interesting to hold up Husserl's analysis of the way the world is understood by the natural scientist in *Ideas II* for comparison to his critique of the modern scientific world view in the *Crisis*. In the *Crisis* Husserl's critique of Objectivism, or the type of scientific realism that Putnam rejects, is so emphatic that one easily loses sight of Husserl's avowed admiration for the accomplishments of actual scientists themselves.⁸ Husserl's approach in *Ideas II* reminds us that Husserl did not question the legitimacy of the practice of natural science. Indeed, this section of *Ideas II* analyses how the scientific conception of nature develops naturally out of more basic and essential aspects of perception. He even makes the surprising claim: "... what natural science claims about a thing, namely that it is *constructed out of molecules and atoms*, is already pre-delineated as a possibility in the intuited thing, ..."⁹

To Husserl, then, the physical world that is studied by the natural scientist is real, but real with a small 'r', not with a capital 'R', to use Putnam's locution. For in *Ideas II* other perspectives than that of the natural scientist are accorded legitimacy as well. The situation that Husserl decries in the *Crisis* arises when the stance of the natural scientist is taken to be the only legitimate one and material nature or the nature described by physics is taken to be the primary reality.

In the third section of *Ideas II* Husserl turns away from natural science to analyze the world that is studied by the human sciences. The parallel between this sort of science or type of human knowledge and its subject matter is much clearer in German. The *Geisteswissenschaften*, which include what English speaking people call the humanities as well as certain of the social sciences—Husserl explicitly mentions history, sociology, and cultural anthropology—are sciences of *Geist*, or the human spirit.¹⁰ The world that the *Geisteswissenschaftler* studies, then, is the *geistige* or human spiritual world.

The human sciences do not try to explain the workings of the physical world, but rather the human world. These sciences appeal to human values as causal factors in their accounts. These values are why wars are fought, religions spring up, pictures are painted and preserved; they are what literature conveys to us. These sciences thus presuppose the reality of such values.

The natural sciences attempt to abstract from human values.¹¹ Therefore, according to Husserl, the human sciences

draw their themes from a more basic mode of experience of the world. Husserl stresses that the world that surrounds us in our everyday life is a practical world structured in terms of human purposes and values. This is the way all people, even natural scientists, experience the world most of the time. What Husserl here calls the surrounding world (*Umwelt*) of everyday life in which the human sciences anchor their investigations thus has an undeniable resemblance to the life world that Husserl uncovers as “the forgotten meaning-fundament of natural science” in the *Crisis*.¹²

At this level the philosophical distinction familiar since the Scientific Revolution between primary and secondary qualities—the subjective and objective properties of an object—does not come into play. The beauty of certain tones played on a violin is “given originally,” as Husserl puts it. The usefulness of the objects we encounter is directly apprehended. These are not just properties that are added on to the objectively existing physical thing that is described by natural science.¹³ Husserl explicitly says that the objects encountered in the surrounding world of everyday life are not “the things of exact natural science, with the determinations claimed there to be the only Objectively true ones.”¹⁴ These things are beautiful things, useful things—beautiful or useful through and through. The beauty of the violin and the usefulness of the hammer are real, as real as their molecular structure is. That these qualities of beauty and usefulness exist in relation to and thus presuppose a human community does not make them subjective. The objective properties discovered by natural science also can be traced back to and thus presuppose a realm of human practice. All of these properties are real, but real with a small ‘r’ not a capital ‘R’, to use Putnam’s locution again.

II. THE PRIORITY OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES FOR HUSSERL

This is the ontological pluralist position that Husserl presents in *Ideas II*, and the parallels to Putnam’s internal realism seem clear. Yet the picture I have presented so far of Husserl’s stance in this work is complicated by the fact that Husserl appears to compromise it significantly at the end. In the final chapter of *Ideas II* Husserl asserts “The Ontological Priority of the Spiritual World over the Naturalistic.” Can such a claim possibly be reconciled with either Husserl’s ontological pluralism or Putnam’s internal realism?

It turns out that a great deal hinges on just how these claims for the ontological priority of the spiritual world are interpreted. These closing pages of *Ideas II* are somewhat dense and disjointed, which can be laid to the fact that the book

never progressed beyond the manuscript stage in Husserl's lifetime.¹⁵ There are three separate strands of argument woven together in the text. They are: (1) the ontological priority of the spiritual world entails merely the failure of any attempt to explain consciousness solely in physiological terms; (2) the human sciences have a certain methodological priority over the natural sciences because of their greater scope; (3) the standpoint of the human sciences has a philosophical priority.

As to the first interpretation, at times in this final chapter Husserl seems only to be arguing against any form of physicalism. In particular, he argues against psycho-physical parallelism, the position that each mental event corresponds to a particular brain process on which it depends.¹⁶ Now, if this is all that the ontological priority of the spiritual world consists in, then it certainly poses no threat to ontological pluralism. A refutation of psycho-physical parallelism such as Husserl claims to be offering simply would show that a physiological account of conscious processes, although relevant in certain contexts, can only go so far and no further. Husserl himself draws this conclusion at one point.¹⁷ This would then be an argument against the type of scientific realism rejected by Putnam and by Husserl in the *Crisis* and an argument for ontological pluralism.

The second way that Husserl's claim for the ontological priority of the spiritual world can be interpreted should be familiar to readers of Husserl's *Crisis*. The argument presented there goes: natural science is itself a cultural product and thus presupposes a community of human subjects unified by various values and purposes. Furthermore, the scientist never actually transcends the everyday world of perception, but in fact relies on it in making his/her measurements, e.g., in reading dials, making graphs, etc.¹⁸ It is true that Husserl does not devote much space in this final chapter of *Ideas II* to making this argument.¹⁹ But it is a powerful argument nonetheless.

However, this argument is not so very damaging to the prospects for ontological pluralism. The upshot of it seems to be only that the human sciences have a certain methodological priority over the natural sciences, because the world studied by them is the world of a more basic or primary level of human experience. Not everyone is a natural scientist, or even accepts the natural scientific world view, but everyone lives in the practically structured world of everyday life. The standpoint of the human sciences is thus more inclusive. It is true that certain human sciences, the history of science, say, or the history of ideas, can tell us more about natural science than natural science can tell us about literature, for instance. But only natural science has the potential to give us real insight into physical nature. The practice of natural science can be analyzed by the human sciences, but they cannot investigate

the domain of natural science, physical nature itself. Husserl himself says something to this effect at one point.²⁰

By contrast, under the third interpretation that can be given to Husserl's claim for the ontological priority of the spiritual world, the human sciences have not only a methodological priority but also a philosophical priority over the natural sciences. Two different versions of this interpretation can be given: one rather extreme and one more moderate. The extreme version, which I shall discuss first, is clearly at odds with ontological pluralism. But this interpretation of the claim is not consistent with Husserl's basic phenomenological principles and should be rejected.

In some places in this chapter Husserl seems to imply rather strongly that the spiritual world is, in Putnam's terms, more *Real* than the physical world studied by natural science. He suggests that the spiritual world is ontologically prior to the natural world because not only is spirit not dependent on nature, but nature is dependent on spirit in some fashion. In one place Husserl even appears to be making the extreme claim that nature is dependent on spirit for its very existence: "All natural existence depends on the existence of absolute spirits."²¹ The human spirit, unlike nature, is, as Husserl says, "absolute." Husserl thinks that this dimension of spirit is revealed in a thought experiment he envisions: "... if we could eliminate all spirits from the world, then that is the end of nature. But if we eliminate nature, ... there always still remains something: the spirit as individual spirit."²²

If this interpretation is accepted, then the ontological priority that Husserl is claiming for the spiritual world should be taken in a very strong sense. Indeed, if this interpretation is right, then Husserl's thought seems to be veering in the direction of Hegelian idealism (although, admittedly, Husserl's use of the term *Geist* differs significantly from Hegel's). This type of idealist of course is just as much an opponent of ontological pluralism as the scientific realist.

But Husserl is not a Hegelian idealist, although one commentator at least detects such tendencies in his thought.²³ He is a transcendental phenomenologist. For a transcendental phenomenologist, the transcendental reduction serves as a final brake on any sort of metaphysical speculation. What the transcendental reduction reveals is how the world we encounter, whether the physical world of the natural scientist or the everyday world or the world of the human sciences, is always the world for us. The world must always be considered in its relation to a possible human subject, but that does not mean that it depends on the human subject or the human spirit for its existence.

This insight leads to a more moderate and tempered version of Husserl's claim for the ontological priority of the spiri-

tual world. In proclaiming limits to the extent to which the human spirit can be naturalized or comprehended in a natural scientific explanation Husserl declares: "Subjects cannot be dissolved into nature, for in that case what gives nature its sense would be missing."²⁴ This statement can be taken to mean that the natural world is not dependent on the human spirit for its existence, but rather that it is dependent on the human spirit for its meaning, even—or rather precisely—its natural scientific meaning. It is human beings who do science; they are the source of scientific theories and they provide the criteria for their confirmation. Putnam makes a similar point when he states, "we did not make the stars. But we did make the concept *star*, and we can, and sometimes do, describe a region of astronomical space using different concepts entirely (e.g., concepts like "thermonuclear reaction")."²⁵

This understanding of the ontological priority of the human spiritual world has less alarming consequences than the interpretation of it I sketched just previously. And it is certainly consistent with Husserl's general philosophical stance: Husserl's statement that spirit is what gives nature its sense is in a way a restatement of the central insight on which his transcendental phenomenology is based.

Furthermore, it is in this sense that the philosophical priority of the human sciences vis-à-vis the natural sciences can be understood under this interpretation of Husserl's claim for the ontological priority of the spiritual world. When Husserl says that spirit is what gives nature its sense he is bringing out the root connection between *Geist* or the human spirit and what he elsewhere calls transcendental subjectivity—the ultimate source of all sense and meaning. Of course, it would be wrong to simply equate the human spirit with transcendental subjectivity. Transcendental subjectivity, the ability of the subject to give any meaning at all to the world, is more fundamental, for it underlies the operations of the human spirit. The human spirit is itself a construction of the sciences that study it. Yet transcendental subjectivity and the human spirit are, in a sense that is revealed fully only by the transcendental reduction that stands at the basis of Husserl's phenomenology, essentially identical.²⁶ This is the way that the human spirit is to be distinguished from nature as studied by the natural sciences. The human spirit both gives meaning to the human world and is given meaning by the disciplines that study it, whereas nature is not human; it is not meaning-bestowing; it is solely the object of our research.

Finally, if the human spirit is really only transcendental subjectivity under another description, then the distinction between the human sciences and transcendental phenomenology is a relative and not an absolute one. Husserl does hint here and there in the manuscripts at a fundamental connection be-

tween transcendental phenomenology and the human sciences.²⁷ What is at stake here is what Husserl described as the problem of the 'way in' to transcendental phenomenology. Throughout his career, Husserl looked to a range of different intellectual activities—Cartesian doubt, intentional or 'pure' psychology, the history of science (the way in through the life-world described in the *Crisis*)—to provide a suitable beginning point from which to make the transition to the type of transcendental reflection his phenomenology involves.²⁸ Although he changed his mind about the relative merits of these different pathways, one thing is clear: natural science was never considered for this role.²⁹ Yet while natural science cannot, the human sciences can serve as a 'way in' to transcendental phenomenology. For the human sciences study the ways in which humans have given meaning to their world over the centuries.

In any case, it is the essential identity of the human spirit and transcendental subjectivity that gives the human sciences a philosophical priority over the natural sciences within Husserl's system. Given the restricted sense the word 'ontological' must carry in a phenomenological context, this is perhaps all that Husserl's claim for the ontological priority of the spiritual world entails. Thus the ontological priority of the human spirit, even under this third interpretation of Husserl's claim, is still consistent with ontological pluralism, at least the Husserlian brand of ontological pluralism based on his phenomenological principles.

III. HUSSERL VERSUS PUTNAM

Nonetheless, Husserl's proclamation of the ontological priority of the human spiritual world at the end of *Ideas II* is one place where the ultimate differences between Husserl's and Putnam's thought become evident. As I discussed, it does not necessarily follow from Husserl's claims about ontological priority that this world is more *Real*, in Putnam's terms, than the world of nature delineated by modern science. Thus Husserl's position is not directly at odds with the central tenets of Putnam's internal realism. Yet, even though Husserl and Putnam do not part ways entirely at this point, a basic tension between their approaches to this issue emerges.

It turned out that the priority of the human spiritual world for Husserl could entail three different and not necessarily connected consequences: (1) the rejection of physicalism; (2) the methodological priority of the human sciences over the natural sciences due to their greater scope; (3) the philosophical priority of the human sciences over the natural sciences.

All three of these consequences conform to basic phenomenological principles. First, a physicalist position on the nature of consciousness is ruled out by the implementation of the

transcendental reduction. Secondly, Husserl argues directly in the *Crisis* that the life-world, which is the world the human sciences study, is more fundamental than the world constructed by the natural scientist. Thirdly, the essential identity of the human spirit with transcendental subjectivity and the potential for the human sciences to serve as a 'way in' to transcendental phenomenology assures the human sciences a philosophical priority within Husserl's system, as I have argued.

The next question is whether Putnam would accept any of these three conclusions. As to the first one, Putnam does reject physicalism.³⁰ Indeed, as an internal realist he would have to reject physicalism, for physicalism, as a philosophical position at least, purports to have the one correct story on the nature of human consciousness.

Would Putnam accept that the human sciences have a greater scope than the natural sciences and thus can claim a certain methodological priority? All indications are that he would not. In an essay entitled "Literature, Science and Reflection" Putnam implies the reverse—that natural scientific knowledge has a methodological priority over humanistic knowledge because it is testable. Of course Putnam is just discussing literature here (though he accords it a central place within the humanities); he lumps the social sciences together with the natural sciences in regard to their testability.³¹ To Putnam the type of insight that great literature imparts is not a more basic kind of knowledge, but a lesser rival to scientific knowledge: "No matter how profound the psychological insights of a novelist may seem to be, they cannot be called *knowledge* if they have not been tested."³² (Husserl would disagree with Putnam's contention that humanistic knowledge is not testable, due to Husserl's distinctive phenomenological approach to deciding knowledge claims.³³ But Putnam does not share Husserl's phenomenological conception of truth.)

As to the last consequence of Husserl's claim for the ontological priority of the human spirit, the philosophical priority of the human sciences, here I think that Putnam definitely would bow out. Any attempt to secure this sort of ascendancy for the human sciences would have to fall under the rubric of what he calls the full-blown obscurantist position that humanistic knowledge is higher or more important than scientific knowledge. At this point Putnam sounds a very ontological pluralist note: "why should placing a high value on art be incompatible with placing a high value on science, and a high value on yet other good things beside."³⁴

Yet, it is not the case that Husserl does not place a high value on natural science, as I have stressed in this paper. Husserl subscribes to the philosophical priority of the human sciences for entirely different reasons than do the 'obscuran-

tist' humanists that Putnam takes to task in his essay. In explaining the philosophical priority of the human sciences within Husserl's system I have appealed to certain deep philosophical connections between the human sciences and transcendental phenomenology, a connection that only becomes apparent at the transcendental level revealed by the transcendental reduction.

No one can expect Putnam to accept the philosophical priority of the human sciences on these grounds. This is the point at which the central difference between Husserl and Putnam arises. Not only is Putnam not a transcendental phenomenologist, there is no transcendental level at all within Putnam's internal realism. That is why it is called *internal realism*. Putnam can have no recourse to a detached point of view from which to sort out the deeper philosophical relevance of the various disciplines.³⁵

For Putnam, no doubt, ascending to the transcendental level smacks too much of assuming a God's Eye point of view, a point of view he rejects as humanly impossible. Much of Husserl's philosophical enterprise, of course, including the problematic of the 'way in' to transcendental phenomenology, is devoted to showing that achieving a transcendental point of view *is possible*, justified and philosophically correct. For reasons inherent in the nature of transcendental phenomenology—its fundamental focus on subjectivity—Husserl is motivated in the end to ally himself with the humanist tradition.³⁶ Putnam's internal realism is not a species of transcendental philosophy. This is the central difference between Putnam's and Husserl's thought. Lacking a transcendental level, Putnam's internal realism differs intrinsically from the ontological pluralism espoused by Husserl in *Ideas II*.³⁷

NOTES

¹ See Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), *Realism and Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), *The Many Faces of Realism* (LaSalle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1987), *Realism with a Human Face* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

² Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism*, 17.

³ See Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism*, 12, 15, 17 and *Realism with a Human Face*, 52, 89.

⁴ See Gail Soffer, "Phenomenology and Scientific Realism: Husserl's Critique of Galileo," *Review of Metaphysics* 44(1) (1990):67–94.

⁵ See Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism*, 17–18.

⁶ See Alan McMichael, "Creative Ontology and Absolute Truth," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 12 (1988): 55; for a discussion of what it means for a truth claim to merit acceptance.

⁷ Putnam, *Realism with a Human Face*, 8.

⁸ See Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern

University Press, 1970), 53. Henceforth referred to as *Crisis*.

⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Andre Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), 54. Henceforth referred to as *Ideas II*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 246.

¹¹ See *Crisis*, 60.

¹² *Ibid.*, 48.

¹³ At first glance this statement seems to conflict with the account given in the *Introduction to Experience and Judgment*, a text that was put together later than *Ideas II*. There it reads: "Nature is the invariable foundation for all the changing relativity of evaluative judgments which bear on it ..." Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, trans. James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 54. But the nature referred to in these passages, like the realm of "mere nature" (*blosse Natur*) posited in the fifth of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, is *not* nature as it is studied or rather constructed by the natural scientist. Rather it is the realm of pregiven objects experienced at a level prior to all idealization and mathematization. See *Experience and Judgment*, 41–46.

¹⁴ *Ideas II*, 199.

¹⁵ *Ideas II*, although reviewed many times by Husserl, was put together from different manuscripts by his assistants and never given final approval for publication. See *Ideas II*, xi–xiii.

¹⁶ See Paul Ricoeur, *Husserl* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967):77, for a definition of this position, which is never clearly stated by Husserl.

¹⁷ "The spirit can be grasped as dependent on nature and can itself be naturalized, but only to a certain degree. A univocal determination of spirit through merely natural dependencies is unthinkable, i.e., as reduction to something like physical nature, ..." *Ideas II*, 311.

¹⁸ See *Crisis*, 126.

¹⁹ In fact Husserl devotes only one sentence to making this argument, in addition to a footnote, where notably the term lifeworld is directly used. Aside from these two places, the argument from the *Crisis* surfaces briefly in one remarkably prescient paragraph at the very beginning of the third section. See *Ideas II*, 302, 193.

²⁰ In a text published as a supplement to *Ideas II*, Husserl says: "Thereby, however, the natural sciences, as sciences, are enclosed within the human sphere. It is not nature itself that is encompassed by the Objectivities of the human sciences, but rather that holds for the science of nature, the science of psychology, etc;" *Ideas II*, 401–402.

²¹ *Ideas II*, 316.

²² *Ideas II*, 311. See also Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1982), 109–112 where Husserl engages in a similar thought experiment.

²³ See Ludwig Landgrebe, *The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl*, ed. Donn Welton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 155–156, 171–172.

²⁴ *Ideas II*, 311.

²⁵ Hilary Putnam, "Replies and Comments," *Erkenntnis* 34 (3) (1991):407.

²⁶ The ability of subjectivity to undergo this sort of peculiar duplica-

tion, which is revealed by the transcendental reduction, is made possible by what J. N. Mohanty describes as “a profound and essential ambiguity in the nature of consciousness itself.” J. N. Mohanty, *The Possibility of Transcendental Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), 143.

²⁷ See Edmund Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie*, ed. Walter Biemel, *Husserliana* vol. 9 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), 376–379 and *Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendente Phänomenologie*, ed. Walter Biemel, *Husserliana* vol. 6 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 345–347.

²⁸ See Iso Kern, “The Three Ways to the Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction in the Philosophy of Edmund Husserl” in *Husserl: Expositions and Appraisals*, ed. Frederick A. Elliston and Peter McCormick (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977).

²⁹ See *Crisis*, 155.

³⁰ See Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, 78–89.

³¹ It is true that Putnam spends the preceding lecture arguing that “the social sciences cannot realistically hope to resemble the physical.” But the results of the social sciences are empirically testable for him, like those of the natural sciences. He also at least flirts with the idea of human nature becoming “totally scientifically transparent to humans” (in a millennium or two), at which point not only social science but ethics will become completely scientific. That Putnam can even entertain this possibility casts some doubt on his ultimate commitment to internal realism. Hilary Putnam, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 77, 85.

³² Putnam, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences*, 89.

³³ Husserl holds that all knowledge claims are testable in that they contain meaning intentions that either can or cannot be fulfilled in intuition. This type of testability is the basis of Husserl’s *Evidenz* theory of truth first developed in the Prolegomena to his *Logical Investigations* and modified in subsequent works. See Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations* vol. 1 (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1970), 60–61. Furthermore, for Husserl all higher-order knowledge claims, including natural scientific and humanistic knowledge claims, are founded by *Evidenz* of a lower order, which derives ultimately from the intuition of the sensible world. For instance, the meaning intention of an insight expressed in a work of drama is either fulfilled or not fulfilled by one’s interpretation of the events of the play. And one’s interpretation of the play is usually based on a perception of actors performing it in some physical setting.

³⁴ Putnam, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences*, 89.

³⁵ Various commentators on Putnam’s thought have urged some version of a two-standpoint theory on him in order for him to escape inconsistencies. See William Throop and Katheryn Doran, “Putnam’s Realism and Relativity: An Uneasy Balance,” *Erkenntnis* 34(3) (1991):357–369. Putnam has rejected this move. The most he will endorse is “reflective distance.” Hilary Putnam, “Replies and Comments,” *Erkenntnis* 34(3) (1991):3–18.

³⁶ See Part I of the *Crisis* where Husserl links the spirit of his own philosophy to Modern European thought and especially glorifies the Renaissance. *Crisis*, 3–18.

³⁷ I want to thank David Stern, Joseph Filonowicz, and an anonymous referee for this journal for their helpful suggestions about this paper and to acknowledge the support of the Research Time Awards Committee of Long Island University.