

his system of thought. This revision seriously undermined Husserl's critique of the natural attitude and its consequences. Richard Rorty calls this revisionism the "miserics" of the phenomenological movement. After quoting from Ryle's review that phenomenology was heading for bankruptcy and disaster ending either in "self-ruinous Subjectivism or in windy Mysticism." Rorty adds, "Ryle's prescient point was that the coming of 'existential phenomenology' meant the end of phenomenology as a 'rigorous science.'"⁴³ Thus, phenomenologists of religion who think that we can recover our losses by turning to the existentialist phenomenologists had better think long and hard.

The rest is history, which for the most part is a metaphorical use of Husserl's phenomenology -- a lesson on why revisions are seldom interesting.

IV. A Phenomenological Critique of Phenomenology of Religion.

I believe that it is worthwhile reflecting for a moment on the relevance of this analysis for the study of religion. To do this we must, of course, take Husserl's point of departure as an important problem. We must share, in other words, his concern to establish knowledge on a rational basis. We must also share his concern, if not his analysis, for the genesis of skepticism and dogmatism. If we do, it becomes clear that the study of religion is also threatened by them.

One of the main aims in the study of religion is objectivity. The search for a proper grounding for objectivity has often led to explanations of the meaning of religion as primarily sociological, psychological, or both. For Husserl, the basic issue involved here is not whether we find the right theory and its premises in either the human or natural sciences. Husserl explicitly defended the importance of both. His problem was to find a valid basis for the claims they make. For Husserl, it made no difference, relative to skepticism (which is finally irrationalism), whether we attempt to found our method on the "objective" or the "subjective"; the consequences are the same. If, for example, we take our departure from the natural sciences, seeking validity in the physical world, we gain an "objective" world. We gain it, however, until we return to the subject for whom the world is an object. Or, we may turn to the "positive sciences" (psychological in the widest

sense) and lose any sense of objective validity whatsoever, since subjectivism swallows the world in its own solipsism. As Husserl describes the situation in a different context, "purely factual sciences produce purely factual men."⁴⁴ We should add that "purely subjective sciences produce no men at all." Of course, Husserl would deny that there ever is such a thing as a consistent "pure science" in either of these cases.

Durkheim's sociology of religion is a classic example of the attempt to ground cognition as well as religion in social reality. His attempt to sociologize Kant's transcendental subject, however, only accentuates the problem. The question is not whether religion is social or has a social function. The crucial question for Husserl is what are the critical grounds for accepting the "collective conscience" as the a priori of all religious and social life? It is this question that phenomenologists of religion fail to ask in their haste to brand sociology of religion "reductionistic."

In the same form, Husserlian phenomenology would ask Freud, what is the critical basis for accepting the unconscious? Husserl's own theory of motivation led him to conclude that "what I do not 'know,' what in my experience, my presentation, thinking, or doing does not stand counter to it as presented, perceived, remembered, or thought, etc., does not 'determine' me psychically [geistig]. And what is not inherent in my experiences [erlebnissen], whether it is unthought or contained as implicit intention, does not motivate me, not even in an unconscious manner."⁴⁵ Such assertions do not strike us as unusual. We have become familiar with talk about "pre-theoretical," or "pre-reflective," knowledge, of "competence" in a language which is "innate." This is especially the case in those cognitive sciences interested in social and psychological topics. For the most part, there is little interest in these developments by phenomenologists of religion. This is most unfortunate.

There is another approach in the search for objectivity in the study of religion. It can be called the metaphysical-theological basis for solving some of our problems. The use of the terms metaphysical and theological is intentional. They not only take us back to what has been described in the first chapter, but their use fits in nicely with Husserl's own description of them. It is clear that they are closely related, if not