

Crisis, Politics and the Common World: Arendt and Husserl

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The aim of this paper is to consider Hannah Arendt's post-World War II response to modern "world-alienation" and "world-destruction" in light of Edmund Husserl's thematization of 'Europe'. Husserl's turn to the idea of Europe is viewed as a means to counter the political and historical reality of his time: the rise of fascism and German Nazism (cf. Gasché 2009). In *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy*, he understands this political reality as the most conspicuous symptom of a crisis in modern philosophy, science, and European cultural life. More specifically, it represents a collapse of the belief in reason as *episteme* (vs. *doxa*), and in the struggle for truth in all realms of human existence. Husserl's contribution to meet the challenges of the crisis is an interpretation of the goal of European philosophy, through a reflection of the *telos* of Greek philosophy and its meaning for an understanding of the world as shared. While Arendt has indeed contributed to the 20th century renewal of thinking by learning from Greek experience, I argue that her original response to the modern crisis is her reflections on the political events themselves, and that these reflections lead her to a different phenomenological conception of the world as shared. The paper focuses on the implications of Arendt's analysis of pre-totalitarian European colonialism and imperialism for her concept of the world, and thus connects her ontological and historical work.