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Paper Final

The Phenomenological Reduction

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The purpose Edmund Husserl provides within his research and discussion in the first volume of *Ideas*, is to construct a theory of science that all eidetic disciplines may draw from by forming the foundational groundwork of pure transcendental consciousness through the methodology of the Phenomenological Reduction. To begin, phenomenological philosophy, studies the mental processes of consciousness and how we perceive and cognize objects in our immediate awareness. Edmund Husserl, who is known as the father of phenomenology, truly began to turn the tides when he decided to question Naturalism and the Natural Attitude. This naturalistic mindset is a way of life in which day by day and moment by moment we allow the world to pass before us, accepting it as factually existent and real. It is in this continuous stream of spatiotemporal reality that we go on doing things comfortably and without doubt or concern that Husserl dubs a naïvety. Growing up with a background in mathematics as well as a strong focus on logic, Husserl believes this naturalizing attitude has been the proprietor for inadequacy and falsified theorems throughout the expanding eidetic sciences. From this standpoint, he proposes the means to cultivate a new way of thinking by adopting, what he deems, the phenomenological attitude. By utilizing this specified type of cognition, a person is able to intuit their surrounding world and everything in it with a heightened sense of awareness that is devoid

of bias opinions and preconceived notions. In this way, one is able to perceive the world for what it is and in turn get “back to the things themselves”.¹

To open one up to the world of phenomena, Edmund Husserl introduces a new set of terminology in the first part of the reduction, named the phenomenological epoché, where he begins with identifying one of the most important key concepts being that of intentionality. First and foremost, intentionality is simply the way in which a person directs their attention onto something to forthwith be conscious of that which they are perceiving. It is implausible to be without intentionality for a person will always have their attention directed onto something whether it be a physical object or a mental process of cognizance. “To have something real given originally and ‘attentively to perceive’ and ‘experience’ it in an intuiting simpliciter are one and the same...[for] the world is the sum-total of objects of possible experience and experiential cognition of objects that on the basis of actual experiences are cognizable in correct theoretical thinking”.² Building his methodology from the place of intentionality, Husserl focuses on mental processes and the correlates of such like of eidetic seizing upon essences. Notably, an essence is the fundamental properties of a physical object or act of intuition and cognition that make it what it is by necessity, without which it loses its identity.³ Imagine, for instance, an object you would by no means be able to conceive if a specific trait or characteristic of which was taken away. It is such a trait then that becomes a part of its essence.

¹Smith, Joel. "Phenomenology ." Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy IEP. Accessed March 9, 2018. <https://www.iep.utm.edu/phenom/>.

² Edmund Husserl, *Ideas I*, page 6

³"Essence." Wikipedia. February 28, 2018. Accessed March 10, 2018. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essence>.

To be able to experience essences in their most immanent state, the application of intentionality directed upon essences produces eidetic seeing within intuition. “Experiencing, or *intuition of something individual* can become transmuted into *eidetic seeing (ideation)* — a possibility which is itself to be understood not as empirical, but as eidetic”.⁴ To enumerate, when looking at a physical object one is able to view one side or multiple sides yet not all sides and therefore the infinite realm of experiences is left open. By those means, it is through the continuous stream of adumbrations that one may determine the essence of an object by separating the inadequacy of that which is given to us in our immediate presentative intuition. Correspondingly, an intuitive seizing upon pure essences (Eidos) may also be acquired through another method of eidetic seeing within free phantasy. By making connections based on imaginative states, seizing upon essences is available within both the realm of factual existence as well as the multiplicity of mental processes. By imagining we still experience, feel and produce the same mental acts of cognition and therefore by using the methodology of ideation we are able to connect even further into pure essences.

Continuing into the analysis and investigation of consciousness, a hierarchy of genus and species is developed by categorizing essences from the ability to recognize judgements within intuition. A judgment is a decision we make about something, like an idea or statement, in which we determine whether it is good or bad, probable or improbable, true or false based on our own personal implications or taste. Judgments are to be distinguished from non-judgments or from that which is just given to us in intuition. Once we are able to differentiate the two we are able to categorize essences within the analytic region by which we may diversify such amongst the

⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas I*, page 8

hierarchy of genus and species. It is by the means of this analytic breakdown that Edmund Husserl is able to arrive at the principle of all principles. “*Every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily (so to speak, in its ‘personal’ actuality) offered to us in ‘intuition’ is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there*”.⁵ All in all, we are able to make valuable connections within the mind as we begin to adhere to an a priori state in our approach to the phenomenological attitude.

In the second part of the reduction, known as the eidetic reduction, positing of the natural world by exclusion and parenthesizing is introduced as to address the matter of constituting essences within the realm of consciousness as apart from objective reality. We start by defining the Ego, arriving at such from Descartes, “I think, therefore I am”. It is Husserl’s belief, that in the event that the entire physical sphere of actuality was annihilated, a consciousness would still exist. Nevertheless, noting consciousness as being a different entity, we recognize that the ego is formidably in all streams of our mental processes. We are unable to separate ourselves from such and therefore the method of bracketing allows us to focus on consciousness in its individuality by setting aside bias opinions. This capability leads to what we associate as the horizon of possibility. “Any hypothetical formulation in practical life or in empirical science relates to this changing but always co-positing horizon whereby the positing of the world receives its essential sense”.⁶ The intentional horizon, in effect, allows for one to make more valuable connections

⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas I*, page 44

⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas I*, page 107

into the actual or potential future experiences within the respective time by being able to intuit such with a higher sense of clarity.

All in all, the phenomenological reduction is meant to provide a sense of clarity that will inherently help to broaden our knowledge and promote discovery within the difficult characteristics of the human mind. To say the least, I believe the work Husserl has done is extremely important for the future generations as well as the human race in general. As can be seen, over time we have fallen into a mode of consumerism and production, not accounting for the repercussions abusing our resources. The naturalistic attitude of today has seemingly become to live unquestionably by the rules and regulations of our system and government which in turn is leading us towards a state of apocalyptic purgatory or depression. Therefore, it is with the efforts of phenomenology that we may reform not only the eidetic disciplines but that of politics and any system whatever. Alleviating our minds from preconceived discriminatory form and conformity to the specific circumstances of which we were each brought up, may very well allow the human race to address very serious global issues with more clarity. Finding out more than just what it means to mean, but how that meaning can be directed towards that which is meaningful to life as a whole.

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