

Should I Always First See Before I Believe?: Husserlian Phenomenology and its Relevance to his Critique and Proposed Reconstruction of Natural Science

Alden Reuben B. Luna, Ph.L., LI. B.
San Beda College

Introduction

Edmund Husserl is considered by many as the one who had solidified the place of phenomenology in the history of Western philosophy. While many¹ before him had already utilized such term in their own philosophic undertakings, it was him who was regarded as its originary thinker for the reason that he was the one to treat phenomenology not as a mere method, but as a philosophy in its own accord.² He believed phenomenology is the most reliable vehicle in man's quest for firm foundation of knowledge, precisely because it seeks to go back to the things themselves.

Having crossed over from the niche of mathematics into the realms of philosophy, he strived in making philosophy scientific. This is not surprising, considering the fact that his background in mathematics imbued in his framework a keen sense for precision through firm and established foundations and formulae. Yet despite this inclination, it should also be made clear that he wasn't like the positivists (people who formed this movement would ask no

¹Before Husserl came to use the term phenomenology, quite a number of thinkers already utilized the word in order to usher in their different concepts and methods. In the 18th century, it was used by the German Pietist Christoph Friedrich Oetinger to refer to the study of the "divine system of relations" between the things on the surface of the visible world. Later that century, Johann Heinrich Lambert also used the term for the theory of appearances fundamental to all empirical knowledge. From there, Kant derived his own notion of phenomenon – that which appears to us. Then there was Hegel in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. Brentano was also noteworthy for ushering in the notion of intentionality. Regardless of who used the term, it somehow always pertains to reality as present to us, as it comes into view among us.

²Phenomenology, as a new way of doing philosophy, was first formally announced by Edmund Husserl in the Introduction to the Second Volume of the First Edition of his *Logische Untersuchungen* (Logical Investigations, 1900-1901), when, in discussing the need for a wide-ranging theory of knowledge, he speaks of "phenomenology of the experiences of thinking and knowing". Furthermore, he speaks of it in the 1913 Second Edition of the same work as that which "must bring to pure expression, must describe in terms of their essential concepts and their governing formulae of essence, the essences which directly make themselves known in intuition, and the connections which have their roots purely in such essences. See the Introduction of Dermot Moran's *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

questions at all with regard to reality, convinced as they were that to such questions there were no answers; they were simply satisfied with describing consciousness) who would go as far as trying to mathematize everything and place all reality within the cage of parameters they had set beforehand. Husserl was rather occupied in the discovery of a firm foundation (by a “firm” foundation (strong) is meant an unshakable one) for philosophy.³

And in his pursuit for the aforementioned, he did not only condemn the many existing philosophies of his time, but also the seemingly perpetual feuds among philosophers who ushered in different modes of philosophizing aided with “undefined fundamental concepts, the assertion of theorems without demonstration, the tendency to construct systems as closed theoretical entities without taking any care of their relation to reality and so on”.⁴ One such dilemma that he was trying to resolve was the so-called “Crisis of the European Sciences”⁵, or the unequivocal objectivity and radical empiricism of the natural sciences, psychologism⁶ and logicism,⁷ which while promising to unearth the objectivity of reality, only ended up trapped within the bounds of biased views of phenomenon and more rampant relativism⁸ – he sometimes puts it as the Crisis of the European Man.

³Arnór Harnibalsson, Ph.D., On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism, (The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 9.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵The Crisis of the European Sciences is Husserl’s last and most influential book, written in Nazi Germany where he was discriminated against as a Jew. It incisively identifies the urgent moral and existential crises of the age and defends the relevance of philosophy at a time of both scientific progress and political barbarism.

⁶The relationship between logic and psychology was fought over most intensely in the German-speaking lands between 1890 and 1914. Indeed, during this period pretty much all of German-speaking philosophy was engulfed in the so-called Psychologismus-Streit (the ‘psychologism dispute’). This dispute centered on the question whether logic (and epistemology) are parts of psychology. Gottlob Frege and Edmund Husserl are the best-known figures of this controversy. The fact that the psychologism dispute has become closely associated with German-speaking philosophy must not, however, blind us to the enormous influence of John Stuart Mill upon both sides of the controversy. Paradoxically, Mill’s Logic of 1843 was not only a key inspiration behind much German-speaking psychologistic philosophy, it also contained some crucially important anti-psychologistic ideas. (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/psychologism/> - Accessed on October 9, 2013)

⁷Logicism is a philosophical, foundational, and foundationalist doctrine that can be advanced with respect to any branch of mathematics. Traditionally, logicism has concerned itself especially with arithmetic and real analysis. It comes in a stronger and a weaker version.

⁸The strong version of logicism maintains that all mathematical truths in the chosen branch(es) form a species of logical truth. The weak version of logicism, by contrast, maintains only that all the theorems do. (By ‘theorems’ we mean results that are provable within the branch of mathematics in question.) The foundationalism is with respect to those parts of mathematics that the logicist reconstructs. Success in this regard is compatible, however, with a non-foundationalist (e.g., coherentist) view of the parts of mathematics that cannot be so reconstructed. (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logicism/> - Accessed on October 10, 2013)

Where's the Rub?

Before delving beneath the conundrums of the aforementioned crisis, it is of great importance to first take a glimpse at one of the key factors that propelled its ascent - the vicious clash between rationalism and empiricism. To many, this age-old vendetta has long been a historical cliché, which pulls the pages far back into the ancient world of Heraclitus and Parmenides, of Plato and Aristotle; but still constantly affecting some of today's hackneyed debates as regards science, religion and philosophy. But for purposes of casting a ray of light into the topic at hand, allow me to focus primarily on the transitory period from the Medieval Era en route the Renaissance.

After the epoch of scholasticism and its dominance throughout the Medieval ages, a paradigm shift started to wield the scepter – a movement towards the uprising of “science” (the natural sciences, in particular) as the new thoroughfare through which all other truths were weighed and gauged; a nook within which exactitude and objectivity were the forefronts. Faith was slowly replaced with hunger for certainty; mysteries were gradually overshadowed by new discoveries; and God was steadily dethroned by verifiable data and formulae. Such scientific ventures awakened a revitalized desire for the investigation of the physical world, as well as the celestial domain.

In the 13th century, Aristotle dominated the world of science...(which) remained in general within the framework of his theory of nature.⁹ But centuries later, doubts would be cast upon the status-quo. People sought for more. Hence came the so-called Scientific Revolution which intensified the eagerness and enthusiasm for breaking free from the bonds of the imposed beliefs during those times – from Nicholas Copernicus' *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Bodies* and Galileo Galilei's refutation of many of the established Aristotelian paradigms, towards Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum*, King Charles II's Royal Society of London, and unto the emergence of Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein into the picture. In a sense, much of the passé assumptions and dilemmas of the past were given new light and fresher perspectives by this

⁹Armand A. Maurer, *CSB, Medieval Philosophy*, (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1982), 255.

revolution. And this in turn rolled out the red carpet for the growth in confidence in science and its vows for exactitude and clarity – objectivism through the lens of the empirical world became the very parameter for truth. In Philosophy, this took the shape of empiricism.

According to empiricists, experience is the sole and primary gauge of certainty; the mind is but a passive spectator in the scheme presented by the outside world. The world outside is a determinate structure that imparts upon human mind imprints and images. Error becomes a possibility only when the mind begins to work upon its contents. Hence, it attempts to ground certain knowledge on an appeal to the transcendence of objects of sense experience. Furthermore, Empiricism claims that consciousness is shaped by the transcendent world. By the transcendent world, we mean the world outside man. John Locke, one of its chief proponents, opens his book *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* with an attack on the doctrine of innate ideas and hence to show the primacy of sensory experience.

Berkeley likewise, in his book *A Treatise Concerning Human Knowledge*, claims the same notion:

By sight I have the ideas of light and colors, with their several degrees and variations. By touch I perceive, for example, hard and soft, heat and cold, motion and resistance, and all these more or less either as to quantity or degree. Smelling furnishes me with odors, the palate with tastes, and hearing conveys sounds to the mind in all their variety of tone and composition. And as several of these are observed to accompany each other, they come to be marked by one name, and so to be reputed as one thing. Thus, for example, a certain color, taste, smell, figure, and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing signified by the name "apple"; other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things – which as they are pleasing or disagreeable excite the passions of love, hatred, joy, grief, and so forth.¹⁰

Being an epistemological movement which bases human knowledge primarily upon experience, it was but necessary for them to put sensation at the acme of everything else. "At the outset of the study of perception, we find in language the notion of sensation,

¹⁰George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, ed. Colin M. Turbayne, (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, Inc., 1957), 23.

which seems immediate and obvious.”¹¹ Empiricism claims that sensation is a purely qualitative element, with the subject coinciding with it. This pure sensation,¹² in turn, provides the fundamental building block of perception and eventually of experience; it sees perception as a summation of sensations.¹³ It takes the world as given and thoroughly established that this world must impinge causally on the perceiver.¹⁴

However, such movement was not without a rival; its counterpart, the rationalists/intellectualists, blew the horns of warfare. Intellectualism, broadly speaking is the attempt to reduce the objective world into the subjective realm; it seeks to found knowledge in the immanent structures of subjectivity. The basic epistemological problem it seeks to decipher is the proverbial problem of representationalism.¹⁵ In order to escape this labyrinth, intellectualism offers this solution:

*...bracket all reference to the transcendent reality and restrict epistemic claims to what is given to the subject only insofar as it is given. Transcendent things have no place in this epistemology; they cannot be objects of certainty.*¹⁶

The ground for certainty shifts towards the depersonalized pure knowing subject and his immanent framework. It reduces reality into the realm present in the mind, in the knowing subject. Uncertainty lies beyond what the human mind can comprehend.

¹¹Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, (London: Routledge & Kegan Ltd, 1962), 3.

¹²These pure sensations are believed to be the most basic form of experience we encounter, which makes possible the emergence of meaning and sense. They are not yet those that are embedded in images of things; they are simply pure sensations. The experience of which “will always an experience of an undifferentiated, instantaneous, dotlike impact”, for the experience of which happens when one coincides with the sensed, in which the “latter ceases to have any place in the objective world” (Ibid.)

¹³Perception is thus the receipt or recording of some kind of simple sensory unites or atoms (like ideas of light and color; simple sensations, retinal stimuli) that are in some way less than the things we typically see. These simple sensory units are both qualitatively and quantitatively independent of one another; so much so that what I see is not literally the same thing that I touch.

¹⁴The constancy hypothesis maintains that there is a point-to-point correspondence and constant connection between the stimulus and any basic perception. For each point on the surface of a stimulus (what is seen), there is a point of stimulation on the retina. This leads to the reduction of the thing and percept to atomistic elements.

¹⁵Representationalism goes like this: if the subject has access to the transcendent world only by means of its immanent representation, then, in principle, there is no way to compare representation with reality to ascertain whether they truly correspond. See M.C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, 2nd ed., (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 26.

¹⁶Ibid.

Some of its leading figures were René Descartes, Johann Gottlieb Fichte on the idealist morality and Georg Wilhelm Hegel on his grand evolution of culture and human consciousness. While empiricism claims that all knowledge of the world comes from experience, the rationalist holds that all knowledge is a priori, already known by the subject prior to experience. The mind organizes or constitutes the things in experience, and we can never know the thing in itself outside of experience – intellectualism centers on a constituting consciousness.

Into the Other Kaleidoscopes...

The divergent roads that the material and the spiritual likewise manifested in the natural and humanistic sciences¹⁷ of the Modern Period – the former being concerned with the physical and empirical world, while the latter being occupied in explaining:

...human beings as persons, to their personal life and activity. To live (as a person) is to live in social framework, wherein I and we live together in community and have the community as a horizon. Here the word live is not to be taken in a physiological sense but rather as signifying purposeful living, manifesting spiritual creativity – in the broadest sense, creating culture within historical continuity¹⁸

While both sciences are considered essential for the nation's growth and progress during Husserl's time, the former seems to be a more efficient tool for such cause due to its firm grip on certainty and accuracy. The objectivity of naturalism surfaced overwhelmingly to such extent so as to cause the decline of humanistic sciences. For one, during these times, a deluge of naïve cries for reform roamed the streets of Europe, which painted a bad picture for the humanistic science – for most saw it as simply venturing into the reverie of the abstract and ideals without offering real and practical solutions to the unfolding problems of their era. As Husserl put it, "Why is it that so luxuriantly developed humanistic sciences here fail to perform the service that in their own sphere the natural sciences perform so competently?"¹⁹

¹⁷Gesteswissenschaften or in other terms, science of the spirit.

¹⁸Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, (New York, USA: Harper Torchbook, 1965), 150.

¹⁹Ibid., 150-151.

The natural sciences of the Modern Period, on the other hand, had gained tremendous fame and unwavering reputation, as it offered a realm of organized knowledge that is exact, clear and objective. Its greatness can be further understood in its “refusal to be content with an observational empiricism, since for them, all descriptions of nature are but methodical procedures for arriving at exact explanations, ultimately psycho-physical explanations”²⁰

With its intertwining relationship with mathematics, the universality, as other would put it, of knowledge as governing every single state of affair, became clearer. This mathematically exact natural science has been a true revolution in the technical mastery of nature.²¹ Such methodological situation of clarity cannot be said of as similar in the case of humanistic sciences. Since it is concerned with human persons, each possessing individual human life-soul and spirituality, and the community of individual *vis-à-vis* their relation with one another, such exactitude and similar extensive scientific practical application is quite impossible. “Only nature can be handled as a self-contained world. On the other side such a consistent abstraction from nature does not, for the practitioner of humanistic science who is interested purely in the spiritual, lead to a self-contained world, a world whose interrelationships are purely spiritual, that could be the theme of a pure and universal humanistic science, parallel to pure natural science.”²²

And so Husserl asks: How then did the intoxicating success of this discovery of physical infinity affect the scientific mastery of the realm of the spirit?²³ It is in this accord that the humanistic science, or the science of the spirit,²⁴ had become a mere extension of the infinity of nature realized through the physical world. Along this line, it is believed that everything, as was aforementioned,

²⁰Ibid., 151.

²¹Descartes was the forerunner of this project known as the Mastery of Nature, who insisted that by reducing everything into the language of mathematics, man not only arrives at absolute truth but also acquires the power to control nature; hence, to live a life free from any form of sufferings – an existence cradled in the pallet of comfort. From a teleological metaphysics, thinkers turned towards the realm of mathematics, wherein precision is the quarterback and practicality is the playmaker. What is beyond man’s intellectual province is non-sense. By reducing the perspective of nature, into the language of mathematics and the ambit of machines, everything became mere predictable and less complicated – easier to be manipulated and conquered.

²²Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 152.

²³Ibid., 183.

²⁴The spirit for Husserl is to be differentiated from the soul or from the substantial form. It is more like the spirit of the times – an encompassing trend or system; something that transcends

in the world can be understood objectively through the natural/physical sphere – and for that matter, even the domain of the spirit is submerged beneath this panorama. “The extraordinary successes of natural knowledge are now to be extended to knowledge of the spirit.”²⁵ The once highly-esteemed realm beyond the material world was reduced into but an insignificant piece in the vast jigsaw puzzle of the corporeal world. Hence, the naturalists assert that “there can be no pure, self-contained search for an explanation of the spiritual, no purely inner-oriented psychology or theory of spirit beginning with the ego in psychical self-experience and extending to the other psyche”²⁶

Husserl saw this revitalized zeal as misleading and problematic. While the mathematical natural science is indeed an accomplishment in its own accord, its encompassing swathe over the spiritual world and further reducing the same into a seemingly mere accident or extension of the infinities of the physical world’s actualities and possibilities, cut deep into the skin of the European Society during these times – paving way for what was popularly known as the CRISIS OF THE EUROPEAN SCIENCE. For him, this new-found faith in the natural science made the search for the firm foundation of knowledge almost impossible. With this fight for supremacy over knowledge *vis-à-vis* objectivity, man’s own quest for truth rather took a shallow turn as it went from skepticism to relativism, until finally radical formalism and physicalism. Rather than showing things as they really are, in their objectivity, they have only enshrouded them with their axioms and hypotheses resulting men to move further from reality. The epistemological questions of “What can I know?” and “How do I know?” landed deeper upon the domain of dilemma.

Crossing the Rubicon...

Phenomenology is commonly understood, following Husserlian perspective, as a “radical, anti-traditional style of philosophizing, which emphasizes the attempt to get to the truth of

the materiality of things and kindles a deep intersubjectivity through a profound experience of the phenomenon. It is that which is achieved in the pure phenomenological ego of consciousness as one goes back to the phenomenon itself, bracketing all biases and prejudices.

²⁵Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 184.

²⁶*Ibid.*

matters, to describe phenomenon in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer".²⁷ It is describing phenomenon as it appears to the consciousness, as it is intended by one's consciousness – it is, in short, an analysis of consciousness. Husserl said that:

*"Experience is not an opening through which a world, existing prior to experience, shines into a room of consciousness; it is not a mere taking of something alien to consciousness into consciousness... Experience is the performance in which for me, the experiencer, experienced being 'is there' and is there as what it is, with the whole content and the mode of being that experiences itself, by the performance going on in its intentionality, attributes to it...that nothing exists for me otherwise than by virtue of the actual and potential act of my own consciousness."*²⁸

The main objective of Husserl's philosophy was to establish the foundation for a radical and universal knowledge in confrontation with the growing skepticism that manifested scientific positivism and its philosophical derivations. Husserl tried to radicalize the foundation of human knowledge to make it immune to skepticism.²⁹ An emphasis on the consciousness is very dominant in this notion; our ability to know always implies a consciousness of something. When one intends, it automatically comes from one's consciousness. However, intentionality implies an activity of consistent bracketing³⁰ (epoche) and must thus deal with phenomenon as it is. "Back to the things themselves mean to go to the immediate data given to me."³¹ It is not interested in facts, singular facts, but in essences, the ideas and universals.

In other words, the dominant paradigm of phenomenology is a faithful description of the world, which avers that the world has always been there before any analysis can be made of it. As he

²⁷Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 4.

²⁸Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969) § 94, 232-234.

²⁹Victor Velarde-Mayol, *On Husserl*, (Belmont, CA, USA: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, 2000), 11-12.

³⁰Husserl's reduction involves two coordinated abstractions...that serve to zero in on the noema, or pure intentional content as such. The first is the transcendental reduction or epochè, which brackets the transcendent, perspectively given world back to the immanent, epistemically transparent contents of consciousness. The second is the eidetic reduction, which moves from factual psychological reality toward atemporal conceptual and semantic content, from facts to essences.

³¹Ibid.

envisages phenomenology, its task is purely descriptive for the real is, according to him, a “closely woven fabric”³² – described and not constructed or formed. We do not have in our hands or discretion the making of the world. Such thoroughfare immediately separates, or more clearly makes it distinct, at least in terms of priority, with the natural sciences; for the latter primarily seeks to give a thorough explanation of the world.

However, the emergence of the aforementioned crisis between 1934 and 1937 gave him the impetus to modify and widen the depth of his phenomenology. Naturalism, as explained earlier, was the primary recipient of Husserl’s critiques.

*Naturalism is the doctrine that recognizes as real only the physical. As a science of the factual it either refuses any reality to the ideal or else “naturalizes” it by making it a physical reality. It is precisely by naturalizing consciousness and ideas, however, that it defeats itself. The objectivity which presupposes, without which it could itself lay no claim to being scientific, is essentially ideal and therefore a contradiction of naturalism’s own principles. Thus in its theoretical procedure it is idealistic, even though it refuses all idealism and makes of ideas physical realities.*³³

Such internal contradictions steered his zeal to reconstruct the fallen sciences of his time. One of its biggest and most precarious implications is the mathematization or naturalization of the spirit and of the consciousness. Such radical reduction likewise diminishes human being’s dignity into being a sheer object of speculation, observation and the spatio-temporal reality. Man’s subjectivity as both rational and free individual person is eradicated as well. Taking for granted not only consciousness, but the life-world itself. “Blinded by naturalism, the practitioners of humanistic science have completely neglected even to pose the problem of a universal and pure science of the spirit and to seek a theory of the essence of spirit as spirit.”³⁴ A further overtone of this is the psychophysical psychology or the naturalization of psychology.

Because modern psychology is essentially bound to the physical, it shares the naïveté of all sciences; it is caught up in the contingency of empirical existence and cannot itself be absolute or necessary...

³²Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, x.

³³Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 9.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 155.

*(and) because it is afraid of introspection, it refuses any direct grasp of the data of consciousness, thus blocking any access to the essence of the very concepts with which it must work. Nor is it aware of the deficiencies in its own procedures but seeks to overcome the essential weaknesses of its methods by employing these same methods. In doing this it rejects the only method that would make it truly a psychology, the phenomenological method. It wants to get to things themselves without even knowing what things are...*³⁵

Although it attempts to be scientific and at the same time be consciousness-oriented, empirical psychology still fails to transcend past the bounds of naturalism since it limits its gauge of truth to the tangible and observable experiences. But the vastness of reality transcends past the limited hold that we have of the same – hence, our experiences cannot be the “everything”. Another modern psychology that sings along the same melodies is Behaviorism,³⁶ which asserts that psychological data must be open to public inspections. And since behavior is public and consciousness is private, this school of thought considers the former as the primary object of psychology; thus it placed much emphasis on the stimulus-response paradigm.

³⁵Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 10.

³⁶Wilfred Sellars (1912–89), the distinguished philosopher, noted that a person may qualify as a behaviorist, loosely or attitudinally speaking, if they insist on confirming “hypotheses about psychological events in terms of behavioral criteria”. A behaviorist, so understood, is a psychological theorist who demands behavioral evidence for any psychological hypothesis. For such a person, there is no knowable difference between two states of mind unless there is a demonstrable difference in the behavior associated with each state.

Arguably, there is nothing truly exciting about behaviorism loosely understood. It enthrones behavioral evidence, an arguably inescapable practice in psychological science. Not so behaviorism the doctrine. This entry is about the doctrine, not the attitude. Behaviorism, the doctrine, has caused considerable excitement among both advocates and critics.

Behaviorism, the doctrine, is committed in its fullest and most complete sense to the truth of the following three sets of claims.

1. Psychology is the science of behavior. Psychology is not the science of mind.
2. Behavior can be described and explained without making ultimate reference to mental events or to internal psychological processes. The sources of behavior are external (in the environment), not internal (in the mind, in the head).
3. In the course of theory development in psychology, if, somehow, mental terms or concepts are deployed in describing or explaining behavior, then either (a) these terms or concepts should be eliminated and replaced by behavioral terms or (b) they can and should be translated or paraphrased into behavioral concepts.

The three sets of claims are logically distinct. Moreover, taken independently, each helps to form a type of behaviorism. “Methodological” behaviorism is committed to the truth of (1). “Psychological” behaviorism is committed to the truth of (2). “Analytical” behaviorism (also known as “philosophical” or “logical” behaviorism) is committed to the truth of the sub-statement in (3) that mental terms or concepts can and should be translated into behavioral concepts.

The scientific inadequacy of naturalism and empirical psychologism was not the only motivation of Husserl's *Transcendental Phenomenology*; the relativism brought about by radical empiricism *vis-à-vis* historicism³⁷ had likewise prompted his contemplations. Husserl is in agreement with other philosophers that there is a "structure of becoming" throughout the course of history; a certain degree of ingenious indication to a one-sided rationality is an unavoidable beginning stage. However, to get stuck to this initial stage only rolls out the red carpet en route relativism. Husserl believes that this is what historicism does, due to its "attempt to interpret all reality and all truth as relative to historical development".³⁸ Although he agreed with Dilthey³⁹ that there is indeed in history a vast diversity of philosophical positions (or what Thomas Kuhn would later call paradigm shifts) in the ongoing life of the spirit, he would still deny that such factual diversity can deprive any particular position of objective validity.

All these boil down to Husserl's own search for the ideal of philosophy science – a scientific philosophy; an exploration that had long been the goal of many philosophical disciplines. "Philosophy's constant failure to develop into a rigorous science might lead one

Other nomenclature is sometimes used to classify behaviorisms. Georges Rey, for example, classifies behaviorisms as methodological, analytical, and radical, where "radical" is Rey's term for what I am classifying as psychological behaviorism. (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/behaviorism/> - Accessed on November 5, 2013)

³⁷**Historicism** is a mode of thinking in which the basic significance of specific social context—e.g., time, place, local conditions—is central; whereas the notion of fundamental generalizable immutable laws in the realm of sociology or social behavior tends to be rejected.

The term has developed different and divergent, though loosely related, meanings. Elements of historicism appear in the writings of Italian philosopher G. B. Vico and French essayist Michel de Montaigne, and became fully developed with the dialectic of G. W. F. Hegel, influential in 19th-century Europe. The writings of Karl Marx, influenced by Hegel, also contain historicism. The term is also associated with the empirical social sciences and the work of Franz Boas. (<http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/100k/docs/Historicism.html> - Accessed on October 9, 2013)

Simply put, historicism is the theory which claims that history in the narrower sense, the sense of culture-formation, is the sole interpretive standpoint from which history in its all-encompassing sense is to be understood. Maurice Mandelbaum has characterized the theory as a "genetic model of explanation which attempts to base all evaluation on the nature of the historical (culture-forming) process itself". – Roy Clouser, *A Critique of Historicism*, *Critica*, XXI (Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 2.

³⁸Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 13.

³⁹For Wilhelm Dilthey, historicism is the last step to the liberation of man. He said: The historical consciousness of the finiteness of every historical phenomenon, every human and social condition, and of the relativity of every kind of belief, is the last step in the liberation of man. By its means man attains to the sovereign power to appropriate the contents of every experience, to throw himself entirely into it, unprejudiced, as if there were not any system of philosophy or belief which could bind men. Life becomes free from conceptual knowledge; the mind becomes sovereign with regard to all the cobwebs of dogmatic thought. Here we are confronted with something that cannot be spirited away. And, in contrast to relativity, the continuity of the creative force asserts itself as the most essential historical fact. – Clouser, *A Critique of Historicism*, 3.

to conclude that it is philosophy's essence to be nonscientific and that it should abandon its misguided efforts to become scientific."⁴⁰ However, he is of the belief that there ought to be a universal science, thus the emergence of his idea of "philosophy as a rigorous science".⁴¹ Such kind of orientation refuses to accept any conclusion that has not been verified as absolutely valid for all men and for all times; thus he wants philosophy to be a science in direct contact with the absolute. And for Husserl, for philosophy to satisfy the exigencies of science (in its very essence), it must rid itself of all presuppositions – it must BEGIN ANEW. It is rediscovering phenomenon, by stepping aback and relook at the same, which has been shrouded by prejudices. The closeness or attachment to something or someone for a long period of time brings the possibility of it being taken for granted, of one being accustomed to it. Slowly, it sinks beneath pre-set standards molded out of one's experience with the thing or person. You must be this. This thing ought to accomplish these endeavors. He is such and such. So much so that one can no longer see anything new that gushes out from it or from the person; no surprises whatsoever will anymore amuse the person who has gone so familiarized with them. They have become merely parcels of one's habit, of one's system.

Similarly, the world we live in has suddenly become an alien terrain. Humanity has taken for granted the world in its vastness, reducing it into the language of numbers, causal chains/reactions, laws of physics, mechanical screws, etc. We lose sight of the world in its reality. Phenomenon has been cloaked by prejudices and presuppositions of a sundry of disciplines aiming at exactly the opposite of how their method turned out – a faithful description of experience and discovery of meaning. And for Husserl, a renewal in the very sphere of philosophy is essential in achieving such state: a going back to the things themselves. And too, it is by bracketing all prejudices, be it of the sciences or common sense and even those drawn from religious and cultural traditions, can an honest description of the phenomenon as it appears to consciousness be possible – this will eventually lead, according to Husserl, to the discovery of the essences of things. "The ideal, normatively defined,

⁴⁰Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 8.

⁴¹Philosophy as a Rigorous Science reveals how strong Hume's influence on Husserl was. For the former, whatever could be thought of as not being, could not-be, since its non-being involved no contradiction. Husserl, therefore, will accept as an object of philosophical thought only what cannot not-be and this is essence.

timeless content of an intentional state is what Husserl calls its noema, in contrast to its, noesis, the token psychological episode occurring in time.”⁴²

*the (adequacy of a) phenomenological description of a perceptual experience should be independent of whether for the experience under investigation there is an object it represents or not. Either way, there will at least be a perceptual content (if not the same content on both sides, though). It is this content that Husserl calls the perceptual noema. Thanks to its noema, even a hallucination is an intentional act, an experience “as of” an object. Phenomenological description is concerned with those aspects of the noema that remain the same irrespective of whether the experience in question is veridical or not. Thus, our phenomenologist must not employ—he (or she) must “bracket”—his belief in the existence of the perceptual object.*⁴³

Thus “it is important to realize that it cannot be a science of nature at all; it cannot be “objective” the way a science of nature must be. The world it is to study is not the objective world of nature but the “enviroming world” (*umwelt*) of the spiritual subject”.⁴⁴

Hence, he proposes a reconstruction in the European sciences; a science that is of the spirit, an objectivity of the spiritual subject. What is ought to be fashioned is not a science of nature, if true universality and objectivity is to be pulled out of the hat; it is rather a science of the spirit. This renewal of science, for Husserl, is the antidote in the worsening crisis of the European science, or of the narrowing thoroughfares of the natural sciences. Such revitalization, though, is remote from reach if the worth of the spirit is not to be realized. In one Vienna Lecture, Husserl said that “the spirit, and indeed only the spirit, exists in itself and for itself, is self-sufficient; and in its self-sufficiency, and only in this way, it can be treated truly rationally, truly and from the ground up scientifically”.⁴⁵ The mistaken rationalism that Husserl is seeking to reconstruct has indeed been the cause of this crisis, for having pulled humanity away from that which is the foundation of true rationalism – the spirit.

⁴²From an introductory article by Taylor Carman and Mark Hansen in the book Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty, 7.

⁴³<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/> - Accessed on October 20, 2013.

⁴⁴Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 16.

⁴⁵Seemingly close to the Cartesian mind-body dualism wherein emphasis on the mind as an independent entity capable of rational activities, although Husserl considered himself more as a monist.

Limiting man to spatio-temporal entities and disintegrating him of any self-realizations would only make him less of who he is, but also deteriorate his orientation for inter-subjectivity since within the naturalistic world-view, there is no room for the other as a subject. Everything is reduced to mere appendage of this big machine of nature since qualities in objects are fully developed and determinate. "In the world taken in itself everything is determined. There are many unclear sights...but it is so only for us. The object... is never ambiguous, but becomes so only through our inattention."⁴⁶ There is a primacy being given upon the absolute inviolability of atoms in things, which in turn enable man to cognize them. Instead of the mind working on the data from the outside world, man is reduced into a spectator – a passive piece of wax wherein a magnitude of sensations and stimuli leaves marks and smudges. Hume remarked that "the mind is a kind of theater, where several perceptions successively make their appearance".⁴⁷ It takes the world as given and thoroughly established that this world must impinge causally on the perceiver.⁴⁸ What is beyond what the natural world gives is nothing.

But as Husserl pointed out, such kind of perspective only pulls humanity further from the truth. In common parlance, there is more to everything than what meets the eye. By using phenomenology to relook at reality and nature, the spirit is set free; the search for truth is rekindled. "Spirit is not looked upon here as part of nature or parallel to it; rather nature belongs to the sphere of the spirit. Then, too, the ego is no longer an isolated thing along side other such things in a pre-given world."⁴⁹ For Husserl, it is by bracketing our prejudices and biases about how we see the world and going back to the things themselves that we can rediscover phenomenon and our place in it, and open up to the encompassing system of the spirit. This phenomenology is one that is transcendental – since in so bracketing, one attempts to go beyond the physical/empirical towards a deeper understanding and experience of the phenomenon

⁴⁶Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 6.

⁴⁷David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, ed. Selby-Bigge, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 253.

⁴⁸The constancy hypothesis maintains that there is a point-to-point correspondence and constant connection between the stimulus and any basic perception. For each point on the surface of a stimulus (what is seen), there is a point of stimulation on the retina. This leads to the reduction of the thing and percept to atomistic elements.

⁴⁹Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 190.

and into the very spirit of the life-world; experiencing phenomenon in its own intentionality. Alongside this is the interiorization of reflection that I am conscious of something. "It is my conviction that intentional phenomenology has for the first time made spirit as spirit the field of systematic, scientific experience, thus effecting a total transformation of the task of knowledge."⁵⁰ Until finally, through the depth of one's renewed experience of phenomenon, one achieves a more profound and meaningful realization and understanding of the spirit – where a blurring of the distance between the subject knower and the object known happens – i.e. the pure/phenomenological I. Borrowing a concept ushered in by Fr. Roque Ferriols, he said: "angpinakamalalimnapagbigkassameron ay katahimikan"⁵¹

Husserl went further by modifying his approach to phenomenology by the "enhancement from an ego-oriented phenomenology to an intersubjective⁵² oriented one, finally to a holistic view, in which the sole datum of departure of

⁵⁰Ibid., 190-191.

⁵¹To give justice to the quotation, the author shall opt to explain the same in Filipino. mahiwaga at mayaman ang MERON. Ang MERON ay yaong lahat ng umiiral. Ang meron ay iyong totoong nangyayari at mangyayari pa lamang. Ako ay Meron. Ikaw ay Meron. Ang lahat ng umiiral ay Meron. Kaya nga kapag tinanong kita ng "Anong Meron?", ang agad na umuusbong bago pa man masabi kung ano nga ba talaga ang meron, ay ang katotohanan na may umiiral. Bukod pa sa bagay na tinutukoy, binibigkas na rin sa katanungang yaon na umiiral ka at ako'y ganoon rin. Ginamit ni Padre Ferriols ang "abot-tanaw" upang maihambing sa pagmumulat sa meron. Ayon sa kanya, "nakatingala akong tatanaw sa itaas. Payuko akong tatanaw sa baba. Lilingon ako sa kaliwa at sa kanan. Babali nga ko sa harapan at salikuran. Paiikutin ko ang aking mata, at pati ang ulo. Ibig na ibig kong tanawin ang lahat ng matatanaw. Ngunit, sa bawat dako, parang may sumasagupa sa aking tingin, na parang nagsasabi: hanggang dito ka lamang makakakita, lumagpas dito hindi makaabot ang pag-unat ng iyong mata" (Roque J. Ferriols, S.J. Pambungad sa Metapisika. Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, 1991. 12).

Kapag sinabi ng mahiwaga ang isang bagay, tinutukoy natin ang pagka-"hindi maipaliwanag" ng isang bagay. Pagkamangha ang bumabalot sa sinumang makakikita sa isang mahiwagang bagay. Kaakibat nito ang pagnanais na masumpungan ang kasagutan sa naglalaro ng mga katanungang dulot ng mahiwagang bagay. Ang isang may ama ng bagay naman o katotohanan o tao man ay masasabing punong-puno, siksik, umaapaw. Hindi kayang maikahon sa iilang mga lalagyan o silid. Lampas pa sila dito. Samakatuwid, hindi madaliang pagmumulat at pagsasaliksika kung ano ang meron. Tunay ng ang palaging bubunggo sa isang hangganan ang ating mga pagtingin, hihinto sa isang abot-tanaw.

Sandali ng pagmumunihin ang isang "iceberg". Kung titingnan ito sa ibabaw ng karagatan, magmimistula na itong isang gabundok na tipak ng yelo. Subalit ang natatanaw ay hindi pa ang kabuuan nito; maliit na kapisaso pa lamang itong mas malaking iceberg na nahihimlay sa ilalim ng karagatan. Maihambing dito ang pagtanaw sa meron. Ang nakikita o nadadanas lamang natin sa meron, sa totoong nangyayari, ay maliit na bahagi lamang ng kalawakan at kayamanan nito. Kumakagat lamang tayo sa mayamang katotohanan, subalit hindi natin ito kayang lunukin. Samakatuwid, ang meron pala ay lumalampas sa anumang konsepto natin; umaapaw sa kung ano mang sistemang ipinapataw natin sa ating buhay. Ang ating nalalaman, o nakikita, o pinaniniwalaan ay hindi kabuuan ng meron. Kumakagat lamang tayo sa kayamanan ng meron, kumakapit sa mga talutot nito. Subalit hanggang doon lamang ang kaya nating gawin. Hindi kayang lunukin ng mumunti nating isipan ang meron. Ngunit tulad ng anumang paghahambing, limitado pa rin ang paggamit natin

phenomenology is the life-world”.⁵³ Thus, the science of the spirit, or the spirit itself, not only triggers an individual consciousness but stimulates a unitive force binding together a community of knower; an intersubjectivity among knowers and between the theoretical spectator and the spiritual subject.⁵⁴ Transcendental phenomenology is a rediscovery of the very essence of things that is in them but is nonetheless transcendent; something that is ought to be realized if a true, objective and scientific philosophy is to be established. We are primordially of the natural world and therefore fundamentally at home in it; but yet not imprisoned within it. It is also from this inherence that we enjoy a pre-reflective bond with others and the human world.

We have discovered, with the natural and social worlds, the truly transcendental, which is not the totality of constituting operations whereby a transparent world, free from obscurity and impenetrable solidity, is spread out before an impartial spectator, but that ambiguous life in which the forms of transcendence have their Ursprung, and which, through a fundamental contradiction, puts me in communication with the, and on this basis makes knowledge possible.⁵⁵

It is also from this natal bond that we participate in shaping our world through our daily activities, that we determine the course of our joint history.

sa “tip of the iceberg” bilang analohiya. Mas malawak pa rito ang mero!

⁵²Edmund Husserl saw a problem that his reduction might inflict upon the existence of the other, for according to him, “Transcendental reduction restricts me to the stream of my pure conscious processes and the unities constituted by their actualities and potentialities” (Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns, (The Hague: MartinusNijhoff, 1977). And he went on to ask, “But what about other egos, who surely are not a mere intending and intended in me, merely synthetic unities of possible verification in me, but ascending to their sense, precisely others? (Ibid)”

Husserl in trying to escape the dilemma of solipsism, posited the knowledge of the other in terms of analogical apperception and pairing. The other’s body is evidently present and his consciousness or subjectivity is appresented. “I am motivated by what is originally presented, his body, to apperceive the conscious aspect needed to round out the totality of the intentional object, that is, to constitute the other’s body as an animate organism located over there apart from my absolute here. (Dillon, Merleau-Ponty’s *Ontology*, 116.)” My here is his there and his here is my there. Husserl called this analogical apperception to show that in so doing, I attribute to the other’s body over there what I experience in my body here, which includes a sensation, consciousness, reflection and other attributes that are proper to me. “In this way the other comes to be known as a fellow member of that ‘community of monads’ who inhabit a shared world.” (James Schmidt, Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *Between Phenomenology and Structuralism*, Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishing, 1985, 67)

⁵³Velarde-Medel, *On Husserl*, 81.

⁵⁴This can somehow be reflected in the global destination of all intentional *Erlebnisse*, since we are actually looking and are experiencing a whole phenomenon embraced within the spirit of the times.

⁵⁵Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 364-65.

We ourselves shall be drawn into an inner transformation through which we shall come face to face with, to direct experience of, the long-felt but constantly concealed dimension of the “transcendental.” The ground of experience, opened up in its infinity, will then become the fertile soil of a methodical working philosophy, with the self-evidence, furthermore, that all conceivable philosophical and scientific problems of the past are to be posed and decided by starting from this ground.⁵⁶

As Husserl himself puts it: “Let us...do battle with this danger of dangers with the sort of courage that does not shrink even the endless battles. If we do, then from the annihilating conflagration of disbelief...from the ashes of the great weariness, the phoenix of a new inner life of the spirit will arise as the underpinning of a great and distant human future, for the spirit along is immortal.”⁵⁷

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⁵⁶<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/husserl.htm>
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