

**HUSSERLIAN PHENOMENOLOGY AS FOUNDATIONALISM: CRITICAL
REVIEW OF A-WORLD-IN-BRACKETS**

Raphael, C. Eruka, Ph.D

Department of Philosophy

Madonna University Nigeria Okija, Anambra State.

drerukar@gmail.com

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Abstract

The Phenomenology of the 19th and 20th centuries, which was developed by Edmund Husserl, has scientific characterization. It was offered as a scientific description of phenomena. The path to this science is the transcendental epochal method which seeks to bracket the world, and turn it into an object of inquiry through phenomenological reduction. The end is the simplification of the complex and the fundamental quest for the essence(s) of phenomena. The process involves bracketing the world – here the world is turned into an object as a process in this subjective relationship for its deeper apprehension. Essentially, Phenomenology is a philosophical strand that lays claim to foundationalism. Foundationalist thinkers seek to radically depart from past values in their attempt to escape from bias, prejudice and misjudgment. It is the position of the paper that the ‘foundationalist-tabula rasa’ nuance may not be entirely correct as there is always the influence of the past on the present as a dialectical reality of human history. The work, in another view, did emphasize the mediation factor in religious experience; religious experience in itself is a phenomenon of all times. Human existence, suffused in the reality of this phenomenon, may fare better with a criteriological method for assessing the validity of these widespread experiential accounts. These, put in their proper perspectives would contribute to order, the authenticity of human existence and proper development in spheres of human endeavour.

Keywords: Foundationalism, Husserl, Phenomena, Nomena, Philosophy

Introduction

Phenomenology has been part of Philosophical reflections before it became a specialized field of philosophical enquiry. The word ‘phenomenology’ derives from the Greek

‘phenomenon’ which means appearance. That which appears or manifests constitutes human experience. Human experiences are there in their different dimensions, depths and complexities. Almost everything is an experience. Man is simply suffused in experiences. He is immersed in the manifestations of objects and his experience of them. We daily wake to the wonder of the rising sun and the array of light it throws; the moon and the benignity of its own ‘illumination’; the constellations in their graphic arrangements and appearances; the expanse of the seas and the undulations of their waves; etc. Besides these, our daily activities are deeply experiential – walking; running; jumping; swimming; speaking; writing; teaching; instructing; listening; gazing or staring, etc. Phenomenologia (Latin) or Phenomenologie (German) portrays the array of experiences which inundates the universe of human existence. The Dictionary of Philosophy refers to ‘phenomenon’ as:

Any object or occurrence perceived by the senses. 1. (In Greek Philosophy) Sensible appearance, contrasted with the real object apprehended by the intellect. 2. (In Kant) The object is interpreted through categories, contrasted with ‘noumenon (Flew, 1984, p. 266)

A pertinent point to note here is the individuality of human experience. The experience of the object in manifestation is individual. This remains the case whether the manifestation is available momentarily to a multitude or a single individual. Experience is always a first-person account; therefore, the phenomenal object may manifest in whichever ways, but its correlation with the individual is always the case; as such, it remains fundamentally a subjective phenomenon. That which is there in appearance is fundamentally a subjective reality. The subjective experience can only be objectified through the description of the subject that encountered it in the internal universe of experience. This description is a distancing from total involvement and refers to the thing as it appears and is witnessed subjectively. Phenomenology therefore could be said to be the science of appearances – the study of ‘phenomena’ – that is, things as they appear. The phenomenal is the thing in its manifestations; that is, its presentations in appearance. One may only add that that which manifests is witnessed; observed or experienced. Any manifestation or appearance that is not experienced remains unknown and as such cannot be described. Having correlated appearance to the human capacity to experience it, it becomes pertinent to contextualize it in the history of thought.

Historical Contexts in Ancient Greek Thought

Philosophy developed out of the manifestations of the variations of things out there. The appearance of objects is at the centre of philosophical development. Philosophy has in its long history struggled and still does struggle to go beyond the thick ‘maya’ of appearances. The universe itself is grand phenomenalism. This in itself was enough to

cause for philosophizing – the wonder therein in this phenomenism. Hear Aristotle on this:

‘For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties about the great matters, e.g. about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and of the stars, and about the genesis of the universe’ (Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*: Bk. 1: Ch. 2: 982b-10).

The ancient Greek thinkers tried to unravel the definition of the material universe from that which appears to be way beyond it: for Thales, it is water – a scientific reduction from Oceanus (the god of water represented by a massive expanse of the ocean (Composta, 2008, p. 17; Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* Bk. I: 3.984a). Anaximander particularly identified the ‘*weltstoff*’ with the ‘indeterminate’, the boundless – reality – which contrasts with our common experience (Early Greek Philosophy, p. 19) while for Anaximenes, it is air (Omorgbe, 2007, p. 5). That which manifests is there as part and parcel of reality but it has been a raw material for further reflection.

Parmenides substantializes his philosophy by his departure from our common experience of the thing as it appears. To conquer the vast world of the *maya* or sensory phenomena, he had to be borne on wings by the Heliads, daughters of the sun, away from the night and the cities of men into the temple of light (sun) wherein truth was revealed to him (Composta, 2008, p. 52). The terms and phrases ‘*maya*, night, cities of men’ indicate clouded understanding, operations at the level of sense knowledge or the knowledge of the thing as it appears; while the ‘light’ and ‘sun’ would refer to a reality beyond that which appears. While Heraclitus makes meaning of objects in their manifestations as embodied in his ‘theory of flux’ (Guthrie, 1972, p. 88), his ‘*logos*’; the ultimate intelligibility is nothing of human experience in its objective appearance. He even anticipated Husserl in his account of reality beyond that which appears, for according to Heraclitus: ‘Wisdom is not a knowledge of many things; it is the clear knowledge of one thing only, and this Herakleitos describes, in true prophetic style, as his Word (*logos* – *transcription mine*), which is true ‘evermore’, though men cannot understand it even when it is told them (Burnet, 1968, p. 46). The reality however is not only objective – for *logos* may manifest subjectively as the principle of order, reason, organization, worth and measure (Guthrie, 1971, pp. 419 – 430). However, it was Plato who developed his philosophy decisively on appearance and reality.

For Plato, appearance has to be sharply distinguished from reality because the former is the shadow of the latter. The reality for Plato is the archetypes or ‘Ideas’ (Guthrie, 1972, p.

88) onto which the shadows can be defined. As shadows, appearances are at best deceiving; cannot be relied on and as such, we cannot anchor our knowledge on them. Plato's allegory of the cave exemplifies the falsity of knowledge anchored on mere appearances or manifestations of objects. However, the significant terms in the allegory can be interpretatively understood for the sake of clarification and as a springboard for Husserlian phenomenology. First, the cave refers to the world taken in its uncritical state of being and operations; the people chained in the cave are minds that are not open to critical reflective activity; the objects that pass as if through a screen are the things as they appear or manifest to the senses while the sun refers to the truth of things that are available through systematic reflective and critical attempts at further understanding the world and its activities or operations. Thus for Plato, the ascendancy to truth is gradual and facilitated by education (Copleston, 2006, p. 162).

There is a need to underscore that even though there are historical philosophical discourses on the 'phenomenon' prior to its development as a science, Edmund Husserl, the father of modern Phenomenology, did not develop this science directly from its Greek preceding ideas. As in many other philosophical developments, the indirect Greek influence does indeed subsist but Husserlian Phenomenology turns out to be a distinct field of study; a movement of the twentieth-century currents of thought.

Husserl's Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), was a student of Franz Brentano (1838 – 1917). Brentano was a German philosopher and psychologist (Lawhead, p. 528). Though a philosopher, Husserl was a mathematician as well. Husserl's influence on twentieth-century philosophy is immense; besides Phenomenology which he developed into a science with wide followership, he remains the patron of modern existentialism with his huge influence on Martin Heidegger; Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. 'What we find then without analyzing all the details, is that Husserl exerted a strong influence upon Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre, the leading exponents of phenomenology and existentialism' (Stumpf, 2003, p. 447). These authors, to a very large extent, shaped twentieth-century thought through the lenses of phenomenology and existentialism. For Husserl, phenomenology is the study of that which appears in experience. In other words, Husserl systematized human experiences into a field of philosophical inquiry.

Husserlian phenomenology is a wide field of enquiry. This work would restrict itself to what Husserl means by experiences which form the theme for further development; his methodology; bracketing and the quest for essences and further analysis of the implications of all these for today and tomorrow. The work would spare some reflections on the contextualization of Phenomenology within Philosophical Foundationalism.

Phenomenology as conceived by Husserl is the science of phenomena. Phenomena in this case may transcend the common category of human experiences. Husserlian modes of experience, in the strict sense, transcend sensory phenomena. It is not always readily available in the ordinary run of human experiential accounts. However, if progress can be made in this understanding, our experiential classifications should be expanded to reflect not only the very commonplace but also the deeper realities of human experiences. Part of human experientialism in the Husserlian sense includes perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, awareness of our embodiment (consciousness of ourselves as embodied beings) and our actions resulting there-from, our social activities including linguistic activity.

‘According to Phenomenology, the content of experience includes more than sensory impressions that come through the five senses. For example, Husserl claims we may also “experience” numbers, geometrical figures, ideal entities, universals, the meanings of propositions, values, moral duties, aesthetic qualities, and (perhaps) religious phenomena’ (Lawhead, 2001, p. 529).

These experiences can be modally defined as metaphysical, logical, conceptual, moral, religious and aesthetic. Experience is not only spatiotemporal in the Kantian sense but involves the human internal universe; the kind of ‘spatiotemporal reality’ that can be accommodated within the realm of human consciousness. It is not only the reality of these experiences that interests phenomenology but the fact that all human experiences are directional. Our thoughts are not there for nothing or thoughts of nothing so to say. Our thoughts and perceptions are thoughts or perceptions of ‘something’; that is, of objects of thought or perception. Thought processes, perceptions, our imaginations and even valuations are all projections onto ‘something’. This is part of the character of human experience. All experience is directed onto an entity separate from the awareness that we are passing through a process; it is always an experience of something. To experience something is largely to be conscious of it. The experience of an object is the consciousness of it. Therefore, experience is the availability of an appearance or the manifestation of an object of reality or the presence of a phenomenon in human consciousness. This consciousness is always consciousness of ‘something’. Although experience and the object can have separate accounts descriptively in reality, they are mutually related such that once the one obtains the other is meant to follow. The directedness of human consciousness is what in Husserlian phenomenology is referred to as ‘intentionality’ (Stumpf, 2003, p. 450). The doctrine of intentionality does not necessarily imply purpose, intention or motif of action.

‘Instead, ‘intentionality’ refers to that feature of consciousness characterized as tending toward, pointing to or directedness toward an object. Since these two poles of experiences are always correlated, the intentional act (the experiencing) is called the noetic correlate, and the object of that act (what is experienced) is the noematic correlate’ (Lawhead, 2001, p. 531).

Therefore, every experience tends towards an object. Phenomenology thus studies the structure of various forms of experience. The structure of these forms of experience correlates to intentionality. The correlation is through thoughts, perceptions, ideas, images and conceptualizations etc., all of which are object-bound. Thought is not done in a vacuum; and, the experienced cannot be nothing – there is always an object of thought and that of human experience.

The experience of the thing assumes another dimension in its capacity to turning-on, on or around the subject. That which experiences and tends towards the other, has the propensity to turn onto its activities. The reflections of the person can be directed to the self – self-reflection. Therefore, consciousness can also be conscious of itself. Part of human manifestation in experience is the experience of the self in operation – self-consciousness or the awareness of the self in operation.

Husserl’s Methodology

The world as it is, in its uncritical state, and before the application of the phenomenological method is said to be in its natural mode of being. When the action is to investigate the world phenomenologically, the first step is to bracket the world. Bracketing the world implies a paradigm shift that involves the concentration of attention, a conscious shift in focus that seeks to suspend our previous knowledge of the world; all the theories about its existence and operations; ideas already formed; beliefs and judgments. It is like starting the knowledge journey of the world afresh – more or less starting on a clean slate. This is the foundationalist perspective – that is – going back to the foundations. Here, phenomenology and Cartesianism tend to agree; but while Cartesianism embarks on systematic doubt of all that is, phenomenology accepts the epistemological reality of the world in its gross presentation as a pathway to its gradualized self-revelation in progressive refinement onto the ‘thing in itself’. Descartes is the forerunner and grand patron of phenomenology.

Kant also studied the thing as it manifests but in a different way from Husserl. Kant’s phenomenology made for the spatiotemporal characterization of reality. Space is the spectacle through which reality is filtered to us. If this is true, then things can only be known as filtered. This renders impossible the accession to the knowledge of the-thing-in-

itself. Knowledge remains that of the phenomenon (the thing as it appears) while the noumenon (the-thing-in-itself) remains beyond reach, for according to Kant, ‘all speculative knowledge of reason is limited to objects of experience; but it should be carefully borne in mind, that this leaves it perfectly open to us, to think the same objects as things by themselves, though we cannot know them. For otherwise we would arrive at the absurd conclusion, that there is phenomenal appearance without something that appears’ (Wood, 2001, p. 17) Kant also insists that internal experience is impossible without external experience, for in his words, ‘internal experience, in general, is possible through external experience in general. Whether this or that supposed experience be purely imaginary, must be settled according to its particular determinations, and through a comparison with the criteria of all real experience’ (Wood, 2001, p. 87). Kant’s denial of knowledge beyond external experience has far-reaching implications for the bounds of epistemological reach and the quest for essences in phenomenology. Beyond the thing as it appears, filtered to us by space and time, knowledge is impossible. Kant thereby restricts genuine knowledge to that of the empirical world; to go beyond which is to indulge in illusion (Omoregbe, 2007, p. 35). Husserl tends to present the Kantian theory as false – it at best being a theory of phenomenalism rather than phenomenology. Husserl intends to break through the thick layer or even maya of the noumenon to demonstrate that this realm is an epistemological possibility in contradistinction to Kant. This is because in Husserl’s Phenomenology, ‘the world is constituted by the transcendental ego that gives existence and meaning to the world’ (Omoregbe, 2007, p. 35).

Phenomenological Reduction or Epoche

Phenomenological investigation methodologically starts with a deliberate shift in focus whereby one’s relation with the world in its natural attitude assumes a systematic-reflective encounter. The natural world can no longer remain the same to the phenomenological mind. Through this relationship, the world may have to give more of itself by releasing its hidden values to the investigative mind. The world in its natural mode is there in its gross presentation; the new relationship would have to attempt its reduction and refining; letting off so to say, the thick layers of the maya that used to keep these values off view. Paul Edwards, in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, put it this way:

‘Transcendental phenomenological reduction is a methodological device, required before one can begin to do phenomenology. Roughly, it is the transition from an ordinary, straightforward attitude toward the world and the objects in it to a reflective attitude’ (Edwards, 1972, p. 98).

Once we bracket the world in this process of transcendental reduction, new realities begin to be discovered. First, we discover the transcendental ‘ego’. This is not an object of sense hence its transcendental nature. The transcendental ‘ego’ yields itself as pure consciousness. Before this pure consciousness, the bracketed world becomes a world object. To remain at this transcendental level with full focus on the bracketed world is to chart the path for the peeling off of the encrustations of the world-object such that the thing in itself may begin to manifest. It is a purely descriptive phenomenon and the task of the phenomenologist is to attempt the phenomenological description as given in pure consciousness. The focus on phenomena in this way paves way for an encompassing description aiming towards the real in it, the meaning inherent in it, a perception that can be described as accurate and a deeper grasp of intentionality. In pursuit of this understanding, it has been observed that:

‘Phenomenology is now characterized as the exploration and description of a realm of being previously unsuspected, which is the absolute foundation of the experienced world, a realm of being, moreover, which is not accessible to the empirical observation but only to phenomenological description and to something Husserl called “eidetic’ intuition’ (Edwards, 1972, p. 98).

The end is the grasp of the essence of things. Phenomenology is thus the science of essences. The tendency is in this way, to get to the knowledge of the thing in itself. Just like the Cartesian cogito ergo, the transcendental ego is indubitable; thus, serving as the foundation of sorts and distinguishing phenomenology from the empirical sciences.

Critical Examination

Husserlian phenomenology vis-à-vis Ancient Greek Philosophy: A critical synthesis of Husserlian Phenomenology would have to align the phenomenal with the wonder that confronted the Greek cosmologists. From the twin reality of the awesome and possibly the awe-inspiring, the Greek thinkers took upon themselves the onus of further inquiry into the cosmological stuff. The manifestation of the cosmos in all its dimensions was a prodding factor to its investigation by the Greek thinkers such that it can be said that philosophy first emerged in response to the appearance of the universe that needed to be understood else it had to remain opaque. Therefore, from the beginning, it was phenomenology at work since the universe was a reality in grand appearance – a phenomenon. The external world was a loosely ‘bracketed’ object of systematic critical reflection aimed at its simplification or reduction in its complexity. While Parmenides transcended mere appearances of things in the first metaphysical incursion into reality (Being), Heraclitus affirmed the change inherent in that which manifests to the senses as the real new order of things made possible by the logos. However, it is in Plato that we

meet remote striking divergences and convergences with 20th-century Husserlian phenomenology. Plato had to bypass appearances to ascend to the truth of things (Guthrie, 1972, p. 88). Husserlian Phenomenology is ultimately the quest for essences – the irreducible in the truth of the thing. For this, the world needs bracketing as an object for further inquiry. Alone with the transcendental ego, devoid of distractive intermingling, the bracketed world makes itself more available to pure consciousness.

Husserlian phenomenology vis-à-vis Cartesianism: Husserlian phenomenology and Cartesianism share a common quest and mindset – the setting aside of what used to be the case. In the bid to transcend prejudice and bias, previous heritage had to be checked. Both saw the need to go back to the very beginning to reconstruct knowledge that is pure, undiluted and sure-footed. While Descartes paved his way by systematic doubt of all of reality, Husserl found his path by bracketing the world to be able to relate to it in the most possible revealing manner. For Descartes however, the cogito in its purity did not correlate to intentionality. The awareness or consciousness of pure thought was justification for the identification of the self as an existent reality. Husserlian phenomenology would commit the cogito to an object of thought – the relation of thought to the thing it is directed to, other than the self. While Descartes would need to prove later that the world exists from dependability on the cogito, Husserl takes it for granted that the world is; although we need to access the foundation to that which appears in the world. The Husserlian-Cartesian synthesis is foundationalist: leaving behind a mass of preceding epistemological data to get to the foundations; being the only trustworthy reason why anybody could attempt the construction of a posteriori epistemological or scientific theories; for instance, the understanding that empirical descriptions have its foundations beyond empiricism.

Husserlian Phenomenology vis-à-vis Kantianism: Kant distinguished between the phenomenon and the noumenon in his metaphysics. The phenomenon is the thing as it appears to us while the noumenon is the thing in itself. The thing as it appears to us is filtered to our awareness through space and time. Since this is the case, it is only the phenomenon that is knowable while the noumenon lies beyond the realm of knowability. The non-knowability of the thing in itself implies in a way metaphysical nihilism since knowledge cannot go beyond sensory experience. Knowledge is simply descriptive science – the capacity to describe that which manifests or appears to the senses. This is the collapse of metaphysics into empiricism; metaphysics at best translates to descriptive metaphysics. Husserlian phenomenology pushed the knowability question beyond its Kantian circumscription. For Husserl, phenomenology is the science that searches for the

thing in itself (the Kantian noumenon which for Kant exists in the realm of unknowability) simply because it is knowable. Indeed, knowledge is that of the noumenon. The search for essences would not make sense if knowledge of the noumenon is beyond reach. Husserlian phenomenology pushed the frontiers of knowledge well through and into its universal destination. If anything, Husserlian phenomenology exposed the limitations of Kantian transcendentalism to its mere empirical domain.

A critique of foundationalism

The laying of claim to foundationalism is a recurring decimal in philosophy. Foundationalism is the tendency to leave aside the body of knowledge that has been inherited over the ages in the search for pure and trustworthy foundations of knowledge. It stems from the entertainment of doubt that the mass of inherited values may interfere with the laying of principles for knowledge that is surefooted; beyond doubt; stable and unshakeable. Foundationalism is an attempt to escape from bias and prejudice. Descartes' foundationalism started with his systematic doubt of all of reality.

Francis Bacon, another foundationalist philosopher, had to wrestle with identified idols which he categorized as obstacles on the way to sure knowledge. Husserl chose his way to foundationalist philosophy by bracketing the world such that the whole of bracketed reality becomes one huge object of philosophic inquiry. The question is how sustainable is the claim to foundationalism. Is the claim valid? The cogito of Descartes, for instance, has for centuries known clear articulation in the philosophy of St Augustine. In his 'Contra Academicos', where the quintessential Platonist engaged the Sceptics, he did indicate that it can be proved that knowledge is possible:

'Augustine answers that a man is at least certain of his existence. Even supposing that he doubts the existence of other created objects or God, the very fact of his doubt shows that he exists, for 'if you did not exist, you could not be deceived in anything'. In this way, St Augustine anticipates Descartes: *Si fallor, sum*' (Copleston, 2003, p. 54)

'*Si fallor sum*' – If I am deceived; then I am. Descartes systematic doubt eventually took him to the discovery of the cogito; fully expressed as '*Cogito ergo sum*' – I think, therefore I am. This may sound new and foundationalist but in reality, this is a re-expression of what St Augustine articulated in the 4th century A. D. By a coincidence of sorts, Husserl's foundationalism claim can be traced to St Augustine as well where he, St Augustine taught that 'we should return within ourselves, where truth abides ... (Copleston, 2003, p. 55). This truth from St Augustine is summative of the outcome of the procedural investigation into the real-real in the Husserlian bracketed world. Within the bracketing and the procedural philosophical activity therein, human consciousness

becomes one vast field of the phenomenalization of reality. The expansion of the conscious field of vision, when a man as it were stays within, according to St Augustine, progressively avails of the truth that the world-as-object is capable of proffering.

As for Bacon's idols; one would see this as a metaphor for a rigorous attempt at fighting bias and prejudice and not necessarily literally as renunciations of, for instance, our systems of knowledge. Bacon's foundationalism is not entirely new. A similar approach can be traced to Aristotle. In this, Quinton has this to say: 'The study of formally definable errors in reasoning is as old as logic itself. Aristotle, who turned into a science that had previously been an unsystematic accumulation of rules, including a treatise on fallacies, *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, in his logical writings. Bacon's theory of idols inaugurates something of the same very general sort, but much more comprehensive' (Quinton, 1980, p. 36). The truth is; that were things to be radically renounced as in the mindset of Bacon then there would be no need for Bacon himself to continue his quest because his pre-knowledge, experiences and presuppositions come into play in his new quest for understanding. The fact is; it is impossible to completely do away with the past, be it in knowledge or anything else. Even the whole of Western philosophy is said to be a 'little more than a series of commentaries on Plato's fundamental ideas' (Nisbet, 1983, p. 3). The present is simply inextricably suffused with the past. Progressivism may not always qualify for progress for there are elements of the past that are enduring and whose truth may be referred to as timeless.

Synthesis

Husserlian Phenomenology and the contemporary world: The world in which we live is a world in which experience remains a main feature. Experience is possible because the world is a phenomenal reality; it exists especially in its manifestations of conscious awareness. The phenomenalization of reality is a constant for, each time man returns to himself in conscious awareness, it is there (as a given). In its gross presentation, it is monumentally complex, hence the search for methodological simplifications. To relate with the world in the array of phenomena that uncritically underscore its complexity implies a gross view of the world on the part of the human subject. This path is laced with risks, especially of the unexamined appeals therein. The criterion for the absence of the Husserlian solution is a result that portrays the dispersion of the structure of consciousness. This may play a role in the determination of authentic human existence. What remains is to find out in which ways this becomes possible. There are two aspects to this possibility: the first has to do with value dilution and concomitant self-dispersion in

the consciousness that is lacking in its Husserlian adequacy. The second is the extension of this disruption to an intersubjective relationship of the self and the noumenal *Other*. This noumenal *Other* would by intentional signification, identify with the suprasensible. This completes the trajectory of the authenticity question.

What role does Husserlian Phenomenology have to play? What is its place in the contemporary world where the above remains true? A possible interpretation of Husserlian phenomenology would tend to critique the world to re-order relations and correlations: subject-object and subject-subject or the human and 'noumenal' intersubjective components. To re-order positively, there is the need to go beyond phenomena, to their explanation. The explanation is always beyond phenomena since it involves the essences that throw up phenomenization. Husserlian phenomenology is inextricable from its radically ordered constitution; a methodology to bracket the world, turn it into an object in the expansion of human consciousness and reach its hidden truth which finally gets explained in its essence. The reconciliation of the bracketed world to the subject becomes a factor in the panacea for authentic existence.

Husserlian phenomenology and religious experiences

The paper looks forward to a modest contribution of phenomenology to religious experience; that would be precise, strictly philosophical and free from the mystic phenomenon. We first start with the structure of the human subject. First, man is a being in hyphenation; capable of extensions for relationships. The intersubjectivity in correlations involves not only the human-human subjects but also the human-suprahuman subjects with possible openness to the noumenal realm. The latter is an essential structure that makes for the possibility of the channelization of the phenomenon of religious experience; that is, the breaking into the human plane of existence of this phenomenon.

Second, the paper works on the presupposition of the immediateness of religious experience. Religious experience is the phenomenization of matters of religious perceptions. Phenomenological intervention would bracket the world of religious experience thereby giving rise to a world object alone with the consciousness in need of more understanding. This is pertinent to simplify what can turn complex, and again to reach for meaning and possible explanation.

A mediated religious experience is always a function of the reality of an 'experience' through possible noumenal channelization via the human structural condition and again directly from the phenomenon of the human condition ordinarily understood. Therefore, all spheres of human endeavour are involved – sociological, anthropological, economic,

political and psychological. These in their singularities or combinations do not form the essence of religious experience but may contribute elements to the phenomenon.

In a bracketed milieu of consciousness whereby the 'lone object' needs heightened realization of what it is all about, what is the place of Husserlian transcendental phenomenological correlation of this object and the subject that is conscious of its activities? The role is basically to develop or access criterion through phenomenological transcendental reduction for proper interpretation of the mediated experience in correlation with the factors involved in the mediation. Without the success of this methodological, criteriological and procedural approach, the phenomenon of religious experience would remain complex and unclear.

Finally, because phenomenology searches for essences, it reaches beyond the phenomenon of religious experience in its final operation for accession to the essence of the phenomenon. The essence of religious experience has to be discovered retrospectively or prospectively in the coherence of religious experience with the value co-validities of the subject through whose human structure channelization of the phenomenon was made possible. The reference may have to be backwards or forwards within a defined time frame from the criterion of existential co-validities of values and about the experiences rightly applied to make for authenticity and the indirect confirmation of the essence of that phenomenon.

Conclusion

Husserlian phenomenology is the study of essences. This is made possible by the appearances or realities which are subject to human experience. Phenomenology develops a methodology of studying human experiences through the bracketing of the world. Here, expanded human consciousness relates to the bracketed world as an object of inquiry. The end is to get to the essence of things. Phenomenology is one strand of philosophy that tends to deal with bias, prejudice, disillusion and misjudgment. It tends to tame the mind by getting it focused on the intentional object. By implication, the tendency is, through proper relationship to the world-object, to create order and make for a true perspective of the world. This work did also look at the foundationalist theory with a sense of balance. While affirming any valuable new insights in the foundationalist project, it should be underscored that every claim to foundationalism is relative. This is because the past always has something of value to contribute to the present.

In the contemporary world, religious experience is topical. The paper tried to look at this phenomenon dispassionately to get to the essence(s) of these phenomena. This is

attempted by suggesting a criteriological method of assessment of validity. This appears significant since truth in the area of reference forms part of the basis for authentic human experience, progress and development in the various spheres of human endeavour.

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