

Husserl: *The Idea of Phenomenology*

The *Hyper-Paraphrase Series* of Philosophical Texts
Volume One

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Preface

It is, typically, difficult for common readers to read and to understand philosophical texts unaided. Apart from difficulties arising from translations of original texts into a foreign language, from Greek, say, or German, into Japanese, the fact is that most philosophical texts and commentaries on these texts are not targeted at common or inexperienced readers. This means that a certain period of specific training is needed prior even to hoping to acquire a comprehension of our great philosophical texts. It is somehow like reading musical notation. Before one can 'hear' the score, one needs to undergo some degree of more or less professional training and to learn a specialized language. On average, a continuous effort entailing three to five years of study is necessary properly to grasp philosophical texts. Taking short cuts, such as focusing on particular key terms and ignoring how these are arrived at, is always unsatisfactory and arbitrary.

The aim of this *Hyper-Paraphrase Series* – to coin a title – is, first and foremost, to save common readers the extra time and effort needed to reach a general understanding of Western philosophy, and, second, to dispense with the risk of an arbitrary understanding of philosophy, as mentioned above.

This series of specially summarized and contextualized guides to the most significant of our philosophical texts can be used as a handy tool towards understanding the content of the most important Western philosophical thought. I assure the reader that, by reading this book, he or she will need to devote only a few days to be able to grasp the essence - the big ideas - of a philosophy book that might otherwise occupy one for several months - if not years - comprehensively to read through. Moreover, if the more specialist reader studies this book alongside the subject philosophical text itself, in its original language or in translation, he or she will, I believe, be better able to approach the core of the prime philosophy.

I hope this book is used in this second, adjunctive way, especially by the younger generation.

The 20th century may be called the era of "anti-philosophy". Yet, ironically, more than any previous one, the current century is decisively in need of the essential principles and wisdom to be found in philosophy tracts. I therefore hope to achieve two things with this book: to help the common reader who has had hitherto little to do with philosophy to find an easy way into the philosophies of our mainstream thinkers; and also to empower young people who in the past have experienced difficulty in studying philosophy to learn through this guide to come to understand philosophy, to overcome its abstruseness, and to use it as a helpful instrument to pave the way for their own future.

The ideas behind the '*The Idea of Phenomenology*'

I should like here to give a relatively long explanation of the phenomenological method to help readers to gain an overall picture of what 'phenomenology' is. Husserl's text is well known for being abstruse; however, if one gets the point of his ideas at an initial stage of reading, one will, as one reads through it, be able to cope with his excessively complex way of argumentation. If the reader does not want to have much preliminary information, he or she may skip this general commentary and return to it at a later time.

There are a few important 'enigmas' in the history of philosophy. Since the emergence of philosophical reasoning in the world, numerous philosophers have confronted these enigmas, but they have rarely found satisfactory solutions. To many, the deep forest of philosophy appears to be a mysterious labyrinth unto itself, and to serve simply to pose and not to resolve intellectual problems. While this is true in one sense, philosophers have refined the problems into a small set of really intractable ones, which they call 'enigmas'. Of these there are three:

The enigma of being

The enigma of knowledge (or cognition *)

The enigma of language

Let us look at these briefly, one at a time.

(1) The enigma of being

The quest to solve the *enigma of being* has historically been the biggest motive for many people getting involved in philosophical studies. For as long as we are alive, many of us are unable to rid ourselves of such troubling questions as 'Why does the world exist at all and why is everything not nothing?', or 'Did anybody create the world?', or 'Does God exist?', or 'Why am I myself?', or 'What will happen to me after death?', or 'Why do humans live and suffer?'.

There are many such existential questions and no-one can live their life without at the very least addressing them. These and others like them are the big questions concerning the world and humans found in it; questions, so to speak, regarding *Being* itself. These are called 'metaphysical questions' in philosophy.

Since they are such fundamental questions, they had been dealt with by religion prior to philosophy; nevertheless, it was philosophers who asked these questions in the most acute way. Philosophers have continuously asked these questions concerning being from the very beginning of such inquiry. Numerous answers have so far been attempted; yet no one has ever presented decisive answers that are fully satisfactory.

(2) The enigma of knowledge (or cognition)

Philosophy came into existence about the same time as did the three major civilizations of China, India, and Greece, and originated, in most cases, as a sophisticated mode of religious ways of thinking. Religion itself has answered the enigma of Being in the form of different intriguing 'narratives'. 'God created the world' says Christianity; and 'everything reincarnates itself' holds Brahmanism. Philosophy tried to raise and answer the basic existential questions in more exact and logical ways, but has so far failed to find satisfactory solutions.

By vigorously struggling with the enigma of Being, philosophers come to encounter the next question of Knowledge, or 'Cognition'. The reason is simple. Numerous answers are given to the enigma of Being, but no one can tell which one of them could be the right and decisive one. Out of this awareness arose another important question: Can we ever know the world in a genuine way?

This is why, in any philosophical model, whether in India or in Greece, the enigma of Being comes first.

(3) The enigma of language

'The flying arrow is motionless', or 'Achilles can never overtake the tortoise', are two of the well-known paradoxes of logic presented by the Greek philosopher Zeno of Elea. Also famous is the paradox: 'All Cretans are liars'. Can this be true if uttered by a Cretan?

Philosophers who had been working hard on the enigma of Being and that of Cognition were inevitably faced with another insoluble question or enigma. We cannot do without using words or language to have valid knowledge of the world and the entities in it. But language has peculiar characteristics and limitations. While philosophers certainly try to use words properly, some of them are tempted more or less to 'abuse' language by saying whatever they wish to say, whether it is right or wrong. One can even show black is white by using rhetoric.

Some people noted this peculiarity or limitation of language and tried positively to make use of it, even in ancient China, India and Greek. They are so-called Sophists and the enigma of Language arises from intense speculation on this kind of problem.

If you want to be a philosopher, you must first familiarize yourself with these three enigmas. If you should succeed in resolving them in a very radical way, you might well be the greatest philosopher ever to have walked among mortals, as none of the philosophers in history has ever answered these three enigmas, or even one of them, satisfactorily and definitively.

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Now let us get into the main subject. I believe that Husserl is a philosopher who succeeded in elucidating - for the first time in the history of philosophy - one of the three fundamental enigmas of philosophy, the 'enigma of cognition'. Looking first into this aspect of his philosophy is, I believe, the best way to understand the essence of Husserl's take on phenomenology. The remaining two enigmas, of Being and language, have not been answered yet by him or others in a satisfactory way, but Husserl's solution of the enigma of cognition may lead to a most helpful clue to answering these.

Of course, we should not so quickly jump to a conclusion. It is certainly Husserl's claim that he gave a perfect solution to the enigma of cognition that had long been a focus of philosophy. However, his philosophy is too difficult of understanding to have persuaded the majority of people that he had elucidated this deep problem.

The primary aim of this Hyper-Paraphrase is therefore to paraphrase Husserl's text so as to offer the least difficult path to understanding of the virtues and validity of his claim to having solved this intractable problem.

It is generally not easy properly to grasp the essence of any serious philosophy. Philosophical ideas are, in many cases, like elaborately and complexly designed grand buildings. Nevertheless, when one is familiar with the total picture of a particular philosophical thought, one will more easily see the foundational logic applied by the philosopher.

Husserl's writings are copious and cover a great diversity of topics. The impact of his philosophy on our contemporary philosophy and thought is literally unfathomable, with a vast amount of arguments and debates about it. In my opinion, despite all this secondary academic literature, the essence of his philosophical method is surprisingly simple and brief. Let us begin here.

As mentioned above, the most important point of Husserl's phenomenology is that he thereby answered the enigma of cognition for the first time in the history of philosophical thought. At least Husserl definitely claims that he did. We have thus to examine his claim to see if it is valid.

To do this, we shall study in the following sequence: firstly, to understand what the enigma of cognition actually is; secondly, to see why it has been an insoluble question for so long; and, thirdly, to examine just how Husserl answered it.

What is the enigma of cognition? A number of different and conflicting philosophical ideas have emerged with regard to the enigma of being. Faced with this circumstance, people began to raise another serious question: Is it possible genuinely to know something [in the first place]? This question was asked by philosophers universally.

Posing this question frequently led the thinker into relativism and skepticism about knowledge. Relativists claim that any knowledge is relative or indefinite, and that there is no such thing as true knowledge. Relativism is associated with a feeling of desperation about one's ever knowing the truth.

We alluded above to some paradoxes introduced by Zeno and Sophists, among which is the rhetoric of Gorgias. He uniquely (and strangely) tried to prove that nothing can be said to exist; that even if something does exist, nothing can be known about it; and that, even if something can be known about, this knowledge cannot be communicated to others.

While these postulates were argued since ancient times, the enigma of cognition giving rise to them still persists as an enigma in philosophy today. In his initial work, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein famously sought to demonstrate a system of logic in which all existences can be exactly verbalized; however, he refuted all his initial ideas in his later work, *Philosophical Investigations*, claiming that language can never describe the world correctly. That is to say, in the end Wittgenstein became a stark relativist and denied the possibility of gaining (true) knowledge.

Modern philosophy, beginning with Rene Descartes, also found the question of knowing to be the biggest challenge. In this new theatre, the enigma of cognition took the form of 'discordance between subject and object'. Descartes himself first phrased the issue in these new terms. His argument was as follows. Truth (genuine knowledge), he argued, is established when an 'object' agrees (or accords) with our 'subject' (knowledge).

Everyone seems to admit this fact. When studying this thesis more carefully, however, we find that, as a matter of principle, subjects (observers) can never 'reach' the objects (entities). (Here, 'reach' implies a coming of object and subject into mutual accord.) Human faculties are never able properly to perceive the world.

Many readers may not agree with this view of Descartes. Almost all modern philosophers, however, accept the idea presented by Descartes that there is no possible correspondence between subject and object. This being so, 'genuine knowledge' (hitting or reaching the object) can never be established in our world.

What about philosophy then? What will happen to modern science? The long struggle of modern philosophy has begun with this challenge or aporia.

Why is the enigma of cognition insoluble?

Descartes cited an example of dreams to demonstrate the discordance between subject and object. We sometimes have a remarkably vivid and realistic dream, but on awakening we know it is not 'true' (an objective experience). Analogically, though we believe that the 'real world', the world we encounter after awakening, who can be certain of its actual objective reality? Could it not be a dream of a higher order?

There is a famous narrative called 'the dream of the butterfly' and said first to have been related by Chuang-Tzu (Zhuangzi), a philosopher of ancient China. Chuang-Tzu once had a dream in which he was a butterfly, and lived the life of a butterfly down to the most exacting detail. He then woke up. Since his life as a butterfly appeared to him so vivid and realistic while he was dreaming it, he was unable to tell which world - the dreaming one or the non-dreaming one - was the reality. So he posed this question: was he a man dreaming of being a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming of being Chuang-Tzu?

We cannot deny that our life invariably remains centered in our own 'subject'. And no one can be assured that this life as our subject is an 'object' (reality) itself. However vivid and lifelike is the reality, we are in nature unable to exclude the possibility that it may be an illusion. This is the enigma of cognition; that is, it lies in the principle of dis-

cordance between subject and object that is confronted by modern philosophy.

Modern philosophers found themselves in great trouble, because this imagined impossibility of genuine knowledge implies a serious impasse, to put it mildly, in philosophy itself. It also makes philosophers unable to offer a proper explanation about the fruit of modern natural science.

Modern philosophy, nevertheless, came up with a few solutions to this apparent impasse. Let us look at the more subtle of these.

1. Some philosophers, such as Spinoza and Leibnitz, disregarded Descartes' assertion of the impossibility of true knowledge and contended that the world can be known by means of rational deduction. This philosophy generally took the form of pantheism, as the world is identified as (is identical with) God. (Descartes believed in God's assurance of 'correspondence between subject and object'.) Hegel and Schelling, while arguing differently, can be said to belong to this school too. In philosophy-speak, this doctrine is called 'dogmatism', as it holds that the truth can be undoubtedly established.

2. Philosophical skeptics and relativists, typically David Hume, argue that absolutely genuine knowledge is impossible. People have different views about the world depending on the cultures they belong to or the customs they have developed, and there is no such a thing as one unique (true) way of knowing the world.

A notable extreme case of this doctrine is Berkley's solipsism in which only the subject exists, with no existing objective or external world.

3. The third solution is via the 'critique philosophy' of Immanuel Kant. He pointed out that, since man's faculty of cognition has a limitation, any ultimately true knowledge of the world is impossible; the intelligence of God alone is able to penetrate into (to perceive, to understand, to know) the 'thing in itself'.

He also said, however, that humans share their private way of experiencing the world with one another, and mutually communicate among each other, hence a form of objective knowledge is valid within the domain of human experience. In other words, Kant attempted to solve the problem by drawing a distinct line between one domain where objective knowledge is possible and another domain with no such possibility.

To date, the hypothesis proposed by Kant seems the most hopeful for answering the question of the enigma of knowledge. According to his explanation, true knowledge is only limitedly applied to knowledge of nature (of natural experience). Kant, on the one hand, contends that proper knowledge is constrained in the field of nature; on the other hand, he claims we can aspire to correct knowledge in moral questions.

The point is that while Kant's teaching is good at explaining the objectivity of natural science it fails to bring about a valid measure in judging values such as what is good and what evil, or what is beautiful and what ugly.

Despite the continuing presence of the enigma of knowledge, natural science has made great achievements that no sensible person can depreciate. Objective knowledge, or what passes for it, is firmly established in natural science and found to be 'true'. In contrast, philosophy has long been dealing with such controversial and elusive issues as what is the meaning of the world and what are the right criteria for judging right from wrong, good from evil. Since the problem has been how to come up with truthful measures to eventually answer these questions, Kant's solution has never been deemed satisfactory.

In fact, following Kant a number of philosophers of German idealism, including Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, were not satisfied with Kant's answers and unfolded numerous debates over truly knowing the world. They were, however, still preoccupied with notions such as God and the Absolute, and, accordingly, do not seem ring true to us contemporary readers.

The last stage of such endeavors of modern philosophers saw a philosophical titan named Friedrich Nietzsche, who developed a most intriguing epistemology. Let us however assume that, at this point, we have attained an overall notion of the question of knowledge in modern philosophy. At least, we can appreciate how and why the enigma of cognition is so intractable. As we read on, in order to grasp the essence of Husserl's phenomenology, it is necessary to keep in mind this overview of the problem of cognition in modern philosophy.

The methodical core of Husserl's phenomenology

Now we are ready to go into a more detailed explanation of Husserl's method. The 'Idea of Phenomenology' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Idea') is the title of a book where Husserl presents the method of 'phenomenological reduction' in a clear way and for the first time. In this, he claims that the very method of phenomenological reduction can decipher the enigma of the problem of cognition as discussed above. He also asserts that a total clarification of the enigma of cognition can alone break the impasse caused by the modern positivistic method of knowledge and enable us to reestablish the fundamental idea of philosophy as being a valid pursuit of 'meaning' of the world and of human beings.

In other words, Husserl holds that elucidation of the enigma of cognition is the most important challenge for the future of philosophy and that the phenomenological method uniquely and radically offers a bridge to its solution.

There is one thing to be noted here. Clarification of the enigma of cognition by means of the phenomenological method is indeed carried out in Husserl's book in a way that is convincing for many people, but, unfortunately, the clarification was not completed and stops midway. This may be the reason why this text is not considered to be very readable, despite the fact that this book is well known to be an ideal and personalized introduction to Husserl's phenomenology.

I should like here to summarize, if roughly, Husserl's analysis of this question, in the process additionally incorporating the content of his later works (what he left out of 'the Idea'). Without this perspective, 'the Idea' may continue to be found by the reader to be a work of extraordinary abstruseness posing as an elucidation of the question of knowing.

With this in mind, let me give the reader a general sketch of how Husserl's phenomenology resolves the enigma. In this I follow the order of his five lectures.

Summary of Argument in Lecture I

Husserl raises a problem by saying that resolving the enigma of cognition is a core task for philosophy. He divides science into natural sciences (modern sciences of positivism, what we can call 'objective science') and philosophy; and argues that only philosophy enables true criticism of cognition, that is, enables a resolution of the enigma of cognition. This is because objective science stands first and foremost on the presupposition of correspondence between subject and object. According to Husserl, the question of cognition cannot be addressed without first bringing the subject-object schema into doubt.

Husserl points out that relativism and skepticism, which positions criticize the correspondence between subject and object, has long been part of philosophical theories. Relativism and skepticism are, however, unable to overcome the problem of knowledge, because relativism itself implicitly presupposes the subject-object schema and yet, based on this premise, regards the truth of this correspondence as not established.

The enigma of cognition actually takes two forms. First of all, it can be said that if the correspondence between subject and object is impossible, then evidently no one can have valid knowledge at all. Any knowledge is then merely one's own opinion. It is like going backward to sophistic rhetoric. Secondly, if such correspondence is impossible, the remarkable and undeniable achievements of objective science (alleged to be a valid objective knowledge) would lose proper ground for account.

On the other hand, we are all sure that there are a number of things or matters in the world about which one's knowledge or opinion can hardly agree with those of others. Positivism, taking this correspondence between subject and object for granted, is unable to explain why such a decisive discordance of views and opinions arises. We are aware, though, that a higher-level objective knowledge is established and manifest in mathematics and allied sciences. The relativism that claims discordance between subject and object fails to explain this fact.

Is 'genuine' knowledge about the world possible at all? Why are there so diverse and often clashing views in the sphere of religion, humanities, etc., in contrast to natural sciences and mathematics where alleged objective truth is shared by most people? This is the enigma or question of knowledge. Answering this question is one of the most important tasks of philosophy, which is to be achieved only by the method of phenomenology. This is where Husserl sets out to tackle the problem.

Summary of Argument in Lecture II

Husserl offers the method of phenomenology to solve the problem in Lecture II.

Here he emphasizes that the problem can be resolved through breaking down relativism and skepticism, which claim there is no true or valid knowledge.

To do this, he took over the methodological skepticism that Descartes himself had adopted to refute skepticism and used it in a more refined and thoroughgoing way. He found out the ground for firm 'certainty' for knowledge by way of avoiding natural attitude (that is, the subject-object schema). Specifically, it is the method to grasp the way people know things in the form of 'immanence-transcendence schema', instead of the 'subject-object schema' that has so far been regarded as a self-evident way of knowledge. This is the method of phenomenological reduction.

Husserl's explanation about this method is complicated and difficult to understand. In particular, the terms 'immanence' and 'transcendence' are extremely confusing. So let me refrain from going into details about these terms for now, and try to give the essence of Husserl's idea in a more general way.

Husserl repeatedly urges us to suspend presuming the existence of any objective being, and says that this sus-

pension is to be achieved by phenomenological reduction. It means ceasing to take the subject-object schema for granted, that is, to eschew the belief that genuine knowledge is derived from correspondence between subject and object ('hitting the object by the subject'). In what other way, then, should we view human knowledge?

The essence of phenomenological reduction is that it is a methodological solipsism. This will sound very confusing to most people. So let me boldly claim: according to Husserl, we ought to presume all kinds of our knowledge as our 'belief' or 'conviction', formed inside our subject. In other words, we should rightly regard all our knowledge and judgment as merely our own subject's 'belief-conviction'.

In this way, the object is erased from the subject-object schema and only the subject ('immanence') remains. Never think about what the object is, Husserl is saying. The content of subject-immanence alone is brought into investigation and is shown as the structure of 'Genuine Immanence vs. Immanence Constituted'. Valid (objective) knowledge is thus, on his view, considered not as the result of correspondence between subject and object but rather as an appropriate relationship between Genuine Immanence and Immanence Constituted. This is what Husserl taught in Lecture II.

The significance of the singularly abstruse terms 'genuine immanence' and 'immanence constituted' may be understood by carefully reading the text itself. Here, I should like to explain what this argument actually tries to say.

Let us suppose I am looking at an apple. According to the subject-object schema, if the apple I perceive (subject) and the actual apple itself (object) agree with each other (are the same thing), my knowledge of the apple is correct (valid). The apple (object) itself is a primary cause here and my knowledge (subject) is its secondary effect.

The method of reduction sees the scenario with the apple in a reverse way. It states that the truth is that because I am looking at something red, round and glossy, I have a conviction or belief that there is a red apple in front of my eyes. In the phenomenological way of viewing, my subject is a cause of primary consciousness experience and the apple as an object is its secondary effect (that is, a belief in the doubtless being of the object).

Phenomenological reduction is therefore a radical way to alter one's perspective or viewpoint. What does this mean? I can explain it as follows. We have no way to make sure that what we are seeing or perceiving is truly the object or thing itself. The claim of skepticism that we can never be assured of correspondence between subject and object is correct in a sense. Notwithstanding, we are able to have objective or valid knowledge in a certain way. Why?

Phenomenology presumes that knowledge of any kind is nothing but a 'belief' of a subject. When, however, this knowledge (belief) is established in a certain condition we have a firm (unquestionable) subjective belief about the object, and with other additional conditions, we come to share a doubtless belief (an inter-subjective conviction) with other people.

If knowledge is deemed as (reduced to) 'belief', we may tend to think that knowing something is innately dubious. This is the way of thinking skepticisms adopts. Phenomenology elaborates this in a more thoroughgoing and methodical way. It shows that every 'belief' has its different 'intensity' as determined by given conditions. The 'world view', or belief, is that which can be commonly shared by many people. This kind of belief with an unquestionable intensity is what we call objective knowledge.

There is no need to consider objective knowledge as a subject's 'reaching an object itself'. This way of comprehension, rather, results in a confused understanding about knowledge. So let us think that knowledge is all about the establishment of beliefs within the subject. Such beliefs of objects have different 'modes and intensities'. The method of phenomenological reduction is the way of directly 'observing' the objectivity or universality of the knowledge of objects by examining not the correspondence of subject-object but 'the intensity and the mode of beliefs'.

Summary of Argument in Lectures III-V

The entire scheme of how to resolve the enigma of cognition has been outlined in Lectures I and II. It is then followed by Lectures III, IV and V, where Husserl actually reflects the immanence of his own consciousness and gives insight into its inner structure by means of phenomenological reduction. These Lectures therefore illustrate the exemplary sample of reduction being carried out by Husserl himself.

As discussed above, the method of phenomenological reduction is to certify the modes and intensities of different beliefs coming up within ourselves by means of our self-reflection. This is what Husserl himself is performing here, but, again, it is not an easy matter to see how he is doing so.

The reason is as follows. In Lectures III, IV and V, Husserl analyzes different types of belief of objects. He takes by example a piece of red paper, a house, a piece of music (melody), but he does not stop with these actual things; he extends his reasoning to propositions (such as ' $2 \times 2 = 4$ ' and 'A is B'). He eventually analyzes them as a meaning of object constituted within immanence. This is what is described in Lectures III, IV and V, but for common readers this kind of terminology-laden explanation makes the text even more impenetrable.

I should like, therefore, to leave in-depth analysis to the text itself, and try to show an overview of what can be actually achieved with this method of phenomenological reduction.

From the phenomenological point of view, we are constantly forming a wide variety of convictions (that is, beliefs) in our daily life. We are able to examine the mode and intensity of any such belief (i.e. knowledge) of our own by means of reduction; that is, through phenomenological reflection. In other words, we can ourselves adjudicate how far our knowledge or belief is valid and objective.

Let us take a following example. I (the subject) thought that late on the previous evening I had seen the horrible face of a ghost in the window of my room. When this kind of thing happens, I may be sure that this is a real ghost, in some cases, but not so in others. I might conclude that this particular impression I had, this belief, arises from an illusion. Phenomenologically, the intensity of this belief of mine depends on the conditions in which the image or illusion is presented to the subject, I. The conviction or belief is a subjective belief.

Next, let us take another example. I am absolutely sure that I am deeply in love with 'her' and that she loves me heartily too. The 'intensity' of this belief (and thus its validity in real time) varies depending on what kind of experiences I share with her in our daily life. That is, I cannot absolutely exclude the possibility that I am being cheated by her. Yet this could not be just my subjective belief, because I have this conviction as a "common or shared belief" with her that she too has the same strong feeling for me. We can say that common belief is originally based on subjective belief accordingly.

In another case, I believe in a religion (I believe in the actual being-ness of God X). None of my family members, friends and neighbors has any doubt in the being-ness of God X. In this case, our belief or faith is *reinforced* by one another, resulting in an even firmer faith. This belief is no longer merely my own, but turns into a 'common belief' shared by all the members of the community. At the same time, no matter how strong this common belief might be, it obviously is not shared by others having another, quite different faith (in God U or in a multiplicity gods $a - n$). That is to say, a common belief is not necessarily a universal belief.

As rational people, we accept the natural sciences and mathematics as valid common knowledge (valid belief), regardless of the particular or peculiar culture we belong to or the religion we believe in. However, it is not that the knowledge of natural sciences is in precise correspondence with the objective world. It is the outcome of a system of common knowledge concerning nature, which people have developed in an utmost rational way with a view to utilize or deal with nature.

Thinking from this new perspective will account very clearly for the reason that the natural sciences and mathematics are regarded as 'objective knowledge' whose validity is admitted by anyone, in spite of the impossibility of correspondence between subject and object.

In summary, it is the essential idea of phenomenology to suspend the naturalistic subject-object schema, 'doing epoché of a naturalistic attitude' (that is, conducting or practicing [phenomenological] reduction: taking up the phenomenological attitude) and to consider everything as a belief or conviction (as 'a thing in immanence').

We all have our own belief in the world inside our subject (outside our person); that is, we each live in his or her own particular world. Exactly speaking, there is no way in principle to make sure my own 'belief' closely or exactly coincides with the belief of someone else; but this is not the point: an approximation is existentially sufficient.

When our world belief arises in certain conditions, however, we cannot but have a firm and indubitable certainty that this belief is held in common with other people. We then live in an inevitable conviction that I and others have in

common an external objective world that exists as a straight reality.

The phenomenological shift is to alter this perspective and regard everything as an individual world belief. This is Husserl's fundamental principle to resolve the enigma of cognition, something no one has succeeded in doing since the emergence of philosophy.

One thing is to be noted here. As mentioned in the beginning, the procedure of finding a solution to the enigma was more or less incomplete in *The Idea*. Let us now see how.

As discussed above, the key element of the method of phenomenological reduction is in having a thoroughgoing insight into modes and intensities of different beliefs by means of inner reflection. I should like to term this activity as a 'clarification of the conditions for the formation of belief'. We have to exactly follow the set order to carry out the steps of this clarification so as to decipher the enigma of cognition.

First, we are to investigate the conditions for modes and intensities of our subjective belief. This is to examine in what conditions and structure it is that we as individuals have considered our knowledge as indubitable. We must then look into the conditions for the establishment for inter-subjective belief.

Inter-subjective belief is, as shown above, divided into common belief and universal belief. What we can define as objective or valid knowledge is belief that is universally held by rational persons. Clarification of the enigma of cognition is completed only when the first procedure of identifying the conditions for 'formation of subjective belief' is followed by those of identifying and analyzing the conditions in which inter-subjective belief (especially universal belief) arises.

In *The Idea*, Husserl made no progress further than his investigation into the conditions for subject belief towards founding the phenomenological method. He seriously tackles this separate problem, the issue of inter-subjectivity, in his later works, such as the *Cartesian Meditation*. This is why - to provide the reader with a rounded view - I had to include in this general commentary some ideas from those later.

I appreciate that this brief commentary is far from supplying readers with a full understanding of Husserl's claim that the phenomenological method succeeded in elucidating one of the three essential enigmas of philosophy; the enigma of cognition. Nevertheless, I believe that once readers grasp the gist of phenomenological method, many of them will feel overwhelmed at how far and deep it reaches as a philosophical principle.

There are a great many arguments and opinions about the interpretation and evaluation of phenomenology even today but I refrained from referring to this subject in this general commentary. Instead, I have added to the end of this book a brief review of the significance of phenomenology and its contemporary evaluation. I should like you to make reference to it if you are interested in it.

The Course of the Five Lectures in Outline

Husserl's text of *the Idea of Phenomenology* contains, after the Introduction, a chapter called *The Train of Thoughts in the Lectures*, written by Husserl as a summary of the lectures. This chapter is, however, less than helpful for readers. The reason is, firstly, that it is impenetrably abstruse despite its summarizing intent, and carries a number of terms that are different from those in the Lectures, yet may stand for the same thing. Secondly, when you read the *Train of Thought* and then the *Lectures*, in many passages it is unclear whether they discuss the same thing as in Lectures or not. It seems to me therefore that, for novice readers in particular, *the Train of Thoughts* rather obstructs a better understanding of Husserl's phenomenology that clarifies it. I thus decided to replace this with my own summary of the lectures, with a relevant explanation of important points as deemed helpful. I should recommend to readers to go through this new summary to grasp the general outline of the *Lectures*, and revert to it when and if one has any trouble in understanding the text.

Lecture I - Outline

This lecture is a general presentation of the problems raised in *the Idea of Phenomenology*. Let me itemize the points for convenience.

1. The most important task that philosophy confronts today is to solve the 'enigma of cognition' that philosophy has long wrestled with, in vain.
2. This enigma is entangled with the subject-object schema persistently present in philosophy. This schema presupposes that genuine knowledge is attained when the subject (a cognizing agent) reaches or corresponds to the object. Since, however, Descartes theoretically proved the impossibility of such a correspondence, cognition itself has grown more enigmatic. Many philosophers have attempted to solve this enigma, but no one has succeeded to date in resolving it.
3. The enigma is associated with the following two questions:
 - a) If there is no correspondence between subject and object, can we humans ever attain "genuine knowledge" at all?
 - b) Given the outstanding achievements of natural sciences, their findings are widely accepted as universal and objective knowledge, yet we cannot explain the reason why. Is the principle of philosophy denying the possibility of subject-object correspondence wrong? Or, is the alleged objective knowledge of natural science a mere illusion?
4. As positivistic sciences (of a natural sort) take the subject-object schema as foundational, they are unable to raise these radical questions and have thus no way even to address the problem. Philosophical skepticism or relativism has, on the other hand, persistently denied the possibility of correspondence between subject and object. Skepticism and relativism, however, involve serious problems in themselves. They simply contend that there is no universal knowledge, but cannot explain why universal or objective knowledge prevails in a certain way. Both of these positions are far from answering the question of cognition.
5. Philosophy is now required to re-examine the question of cognition in a fundamental manner and unravel the enigma with a view to the reconstruction of its essential cause. This is exactly what phenomenology pursues. There are two important points in doing this pursuit.

- Criticism of cognition:

Clarify the trouble with the conventional approach taken hitherto by philosophy and positivistic sciences (subject-object schema) and criticize it. At the same time, bring the invalidity of skepticism and relativism to light.

- Analysis of the nature of cognition:

Through this radical criticism of cognition, solve the enigma of cognition and elucidate the nature of cognition. By so doing, reinstate the ground for universality of cognition. This will result in sort of renaissance of philosophy in its essence.

Lecture II - Outline

Lecture II is the most difficult and intricate part of *the Idea of Phenomenology*, but it is also the part that is most important in comprehending the whole scheme of phenomenology.

Philosophically, there is no absolutely genuine cognition. Any kind of cognition is questionable, as there is in principle no correspondence between subject and object. Despite this, there certainly exists some allegedly objective knowledge in the natural sciences and in mathematics. According to Husserl, it is not a cognition exactly corresponding to the object, but it can be called valid knowledge.

An analysis of the puzzle of cognition needs therefore to be accomplished to explain why so-called objective knowledge or some valid knowledge is established, given that there is no correspondence between subject and object. Let me first examine Husserl's own argument in Lecture II and then give a more detailed account of important issues.

1 In order thoroughly to criticize cognition, it is necessary to dismiss the conventional subject-object schema and replace this with an immanence-transcendence schema. Whereas there is no cognition corresponding to an object, valid knowledge yet exists. Thus we have first and foremost to determine whether there is a fundamental knowledge that is indubitable for all as a basis for cognition. We call this the primal cognition or the sphere of absolute givenness.

2 The attempt to define this sphere of indubitability was already been made by Descartes, but we do it in a more exhaustive way. The sphere of cognition indubitable for anyone is the sphere of immanence to be found when we reflect the experience of consciousness.

3 Skepticism asserts that none of cognition can be certain. However, determination of the sphere of the primal cognition, that is, the sphere of indubitable cognition, will show that such assertion of skepticism/relativism is not justifiable.

4 In his analysis of the sphere of immanence, Husserl asserts that there are two kinds of immanence and transcendence, respectively. Specifically, there are two kinds of basic element of immanence. Husserl's explanation is extraordinarily difficult to grasp here.

5 Our cognition should be understood as the 'constitution' of validity of an object's meaning in the sphere of immanence, not as the result of a true correspondence between a cognizing subject and an object cognized. Any cognition is built in this sphere of immanence. The process of observing the essential structure of constitution of cognition, and verbally describing it, is what the phenomenological reduction is all about.

There are two key points:

Apprehend at the outset the significance of the immanence-transcendence schema and you will readily see why valid knowledge is given in spite of the impossibility of subject-object correspondence. You must be familiar with the structure of immanence then. Immanence has two important elements, which together form the event named cognition.

The immanence-transcendence schema is not very clearly described in this book, but in his later work, *Ideas Pertaining*, Husserl gives an adequate explanation of it. So let me discuss it in line with that later explanation.

Phenomenological reduction entails the casting out of the subject-object schema, that is, to suspend (epoché) the way of seeing things that presupposes that an object exists independently and that a subject captures it secondarily. As I said in my earlier commentary, 'The ideas behind the *'The Idea of Phenomenology'*', taking an apple as an example, we normally believe (as self-evident) that we perceive apple-redness, apple-roundness, and apple-glossiness because there is a round, red, glossy apple in front of our eyes.

The method of phenomenological reduction reverses this. We begin with the fact of the cognitive experience that

one is seeing the redness, roundness and glossiness of an apple. This sphere of one's mental experience is immanence. (Husserl calls this sphere by different names such as immanence, pure consciousness, transcendental subject, transcendental ego, etc., making his prose quite confused. Instead, I take a single term for all of these equivalent terms - immanent consciousness (in italics) as it is not precisely Husserl's own term.)

In phenomenology, any cognition is considered to be constituted (so-to-speak) as a belief in the sphere of *immanent consciousness*. The fact that a certain combination of redness, roundness, and glossiness vividly arises in (is given to) my consciousness causes me to develop a feeling of indubitable validity (belief) that an apple really exists corresponding to this. This indubitability of the existence of an apple in *immanent consciousness* is a so-called immanent cognition of the apple.

On the other hand, there is a transcendent cognition of the apple as well. The vivid sensations of redness, roundness, and glossiness make me certain that there is a corresponding apple. This is an immanent cognition that Husserl also calls 'an intentional object'. This cognition in immanence is indubitable and unquestionable.

If, however, "this is an apple" is offered as my definite cognitive judgment, it will be a transcendent cognition because the judgment that this is an apple may turn into another judgment (for example, that this apple is a well-made replica or that this was my dream). The statement, 'this is an apple', forever stays transcendent and therefore dubitable, insofar as it is given as a definitive cognitive judgment.

Bothersome as are these notions of immanence and transcendence, they are crucially important issues. Without understanding them, you may never find the answer to the enigma of cognition. Let me give another example.

I am drinking coffee and feeling it delicious. Taking this in the perspective of the immanence-transcendence schema, the definite judgment that this is good coffee is a transcendent cognition, as it may not be real coffee but artificially-flavored ersatz coffee, or I may be merely dreaming of drinking coffee. Its reality is always dubitable.

By contrast, my mental experience or feeling that this is good coffee is never dubitable, whether the coffee is fake or dreamt. This is an immanent cognition.

What Husserl stresses in Lecture II is to posit a clear distinction between cognition as immanence and cognition as transcendence. The immanent cognition is the primal cognition that is indubitable for anyone. The transcendent cognition is a definite cognitive judgment derived from immanent cognition and is always dubitable.

What does this analysis of cognitive structure mean? Note that, though the example of an apple is quite simple, this simple structure is basically applicable to all other types of cognition. This is the key idea of Husserl's theory.

Any kind of cognition (even natural-scientific knowledge) could not reach any absolutely ultimate truth. This is the first item of conclusion obtained from the theory discussed above. The second one is as follows. I may repeatedly make sure of an object (an apple, say) by all means. Other people may do the same thing. What will happen when we come to the point where there is no other ways to doubt the object?

Then I have no other choice than to certify this is an apple, and shall do that together with other people (inter-subjectively). This is still not any absolute knowledge in principle; yet it can be called an 'unquestionably indubitable inter-subjective belief'. When we go this far, we no longer hold any doubt about the real existence of the object. More exactly, it becomes pointless for anyone to doubt its existence. It is justifiable to call such cognition valid or objective knowledge. The knowledge in natural sciences has been established in this way.

Husserl thus answers the question of why valid knowledge holds with no subject-object correspondence using the cognitive schema of immanence and transcendence. This is an overview of how phenomenology unraveled the enigma of cognition. Since *the Idea of Phenomenology* has not extended to this, it is difficult to convince readers that the question has been answered, unless (as here) reference is made to Husserl's later works.

Another point to be noted in Lecture II is that there are two elements of immanence. Detailed explanation about this will be given at the commentary at the end of each Lecture. Here I shall provide only a general outline of this subject.

According to Husserl, there are two kinds of givenness in immanence, an image and a meaning when roughly put. Husserl calls them genuine or *reell* immanence and immanence constituted. (Constituted immanence is used in the Train of Thought but in the text of the Lectures it is called by several other names, such as the universal, the specific,

intentional object etc. Again this is unnecessarily confusing for readers.)

Let us reflect on the cognitive experience of looking at an apple. First, we can make sure that the sensations of redness, roundness, and glossiness are arising in *immanent consciousness*. Not only that, we are aware that the intuitive insight of 'meaning': "this is red", "the shape is round", "this is a fruit" or the like, is simultaneously given to immanence, together with those visual images of redness, roundness and glossiness. Anyone can confirm this experience on their own.

If only visual images are given to us, Husserl says, we certainly see those features of the apple, but we cannot have a belief (cognition) that here is an apple. Only when the visual images of redness etc. and also the intuitive insight of the meaning (that this is a red apple) are given to us altogether, do we have a belief in the existence of an object (an apple). Hence, the *reell* immanence (intuition of vivid images) and the constituted immanence (intuition or insight of meaning) are two indispensable elements constituting valid cognition.

The distinction of 'image' and 'meaning' in the absolute givenness of immanence is hugely significant for phenomenology. Whereas this may not seem strikingly important in case of such physical things as apples or houses, this process of intuitive insight will be much more significant when it is applied to human and social relations as well as to other social and cultural matters. Such social and cultural problems should generally be analyzed as a matter of cognizing the meanings contained in them. Phenomenology is in fact a science of essence mainly dedicated to such analysis of structure in terms of how the meanings of those social and cultural affairs are constituted in immanence.

Lecture III - Outline

Lectures I and II exhibited the necessity and significance of the task for criticizing cognition, as well as the general framework of the phenomenological-reduction method to achieve the task. Now you may see this method is to reduce everything to the sphere of *immanent consciousness* to internally see how cognition is 'constituted'.

Phenomenology shares its basic motive with Descartes' methodical doubt as he presented Cogito as the principle of philosophical epistemology. According to Husserl, however, phenomenology goes even further, because for Descartes the subject-object schema still remains.

Husserl emphasizes how difficult it is to get rid of the subject-object schema. In psychology, for instance, there is a method of reflecting the inner consciousness (introspection), but this is essentially not untied from the subject-object schema. The point is that the science of essence should be established to study the structure and condition in which cognition is constituted, instead of remaining with positivistic studies of inner consciousness.

There is a criticism that phenomenological cognition itself could not hold because phenomenology has excluded the possibility of objective knowledge by reduction. Such criticism, Husserl says, comes from a mere failure of suspending the subject-object schema.

Note that in Lecture III and beyond, Husserl is practically carrying out the method of phenomenological-reduction by himself. Without noticing this, we shall be eventually unaware of the concrete way of accomplishing phenomenological-reduction.

How cognition is constituted in the sphere of immanence is the main theme of phenomenological pursuit. The sphere must be strictly limited to *immanent consciousness*. Husserl calls it the sphere of 'pure consciousnesses'.

How does Husserl actually conduct phenomenological reflection and insight? Reflection of perceptual experience already taught us that *reell* immanence (images of perception, imagination, and memory) is given as an absolute givenness, together with the insight of various meanings (constituted immanence) given also as absolute givenness (data) besides *reell* immanence. Husserl goes further from this point.

Reflection of the structure of cognition in our 'pure consciousness' thus enables us to obtain such various insights that perception is given to consciousness as vivid (overt) images; that perception and imagination are different from each other in their nature of givenness; that the image in imagination is not vivid or overt, but can be arbitrarily

called up or called off; and that the perceptual image is vivid, but cannot be freely controlled as in imagination.

Husserl says: all these insights of essential structure of consciousness by reflection are formed as a givenness of a meaning (the universal = essence). The givenness of this essence is not arbitrary at all, but is an absolute givenness (absolute evidence).

The perceptual image certainly comes up as sort of unquestionable. How then about the meaning? Many people may wonder if it is not an absolute givenness because we ourselves 'give' an object such meaning.

Being well aware of such questions, Husserl still argues that, whereas some of such meanings are additionally given arbitrarily, there are other meanings that certainly arise as primordially unquestionable givenness. The latter of the meanings provide, together with perceptual images, the most fundamental cognition that is an absolute givenness or absolute evidence.

Husserl thus carries on reflective insights in terms of the essential nature of the givenness of meanings. His account is too intricate to follow, making the whole book more or less inaccessible. Nevertheless, his way of reflecting consciousness is quite adequate in most cases. This will be understood only when a reader carries out phenomenological reflection on his or her own. To aid in doing so, reference should be made to the commentaries on individual lectures.

Lecture IV - Outline

This lecture focuses on the point that various objects of cognition are sorted out according to the manner in which they are given (in which they exhibit themselves) in *immanent consciousness*. This is quite important for a full comprehension of phenomenology. Let me explain this in line with the two key notions mentioned here: intentional object and specific studies.

Let us begin with Husserl's idea of an 'intentional object'.

All cognitive acts (experiences) entail one or more intentional objects. In the case of the experience of perceiving an apple, the apple is interpreted as an intentional object. Seeing redness, roundness, and glossiness is thus an experience about the intentional object 'apple'. (The 'intentional object' is named noema in Husserl's Ideas Pertaining.)

Let me try and paraphrase this more concretely. The images of redness, roundness, and glossiness and the 'meaning' of the apple are given to consciousness. I then put them together to form a belief-of-object that this is an apple. An example involving purely physical things is easy to understand. Yet I may ponder, for example, the allegory of cave as used by Plato on some occasions. The allegory of cave is not a physical thing, but I still have an intentional object: what is the notion of Idea in Plato?

The point is that whether this may be a physical things or matter or an idea, consciousness always has its object, that is: an intentional object. Secondly, an intentional object is constituted by combining together its *reell* immanence (in perception, memory, imagination and thinking) and the meanings given with it. Thirdly, distinction between different intentional objects is made by us dependent on the way in which they are presented to *immanent consciousness*.

We have numerous intentional objects. They are an apple (a thing) in one case and a great success (a matter) in another and a thought of Plato's Idea (an object of thinking) in still another. We make clear distinctions between these, for instance when the thing is given as a combination of perception and meaning or when the matter is constituted as a meaning of the events happening in temporal relations or when the object of thinking is integrated as a meaning related with individual thoughts.

While *The Idea of Phenomenology* does not provide an explanation of the constitution of cognition of such refined matters or thoughts, it offers an easier example of making distinction between the cases of actual perception, imagination and memory. If an object is presented to *immanent consciousness* as a vivid perceptual image, we will cognize it as a real apple. When the image is blurred and can be freely summoned or changed, it is interpreted as an imaginary object. In case of memory, the image is not vivid, but cannot be subject to free transformation. That is to say,

what kind of object we are dealing with depends on how it is given to immanence.

Husserl formulated this basic scheme as a noesis-noema schema in his *Ideas Pertaining*. Noesis is a mental or cognitive act (such as perception, imagination, memory, thinking, valuing etc). Noema is the meaning constituted and based on such a mental act. We experience the perception of a window, a wall, or a roof (noesis) and during this experience cognize them collectively as a house (noema). Or we think about a particular society (noema) while pondering its political regime, individuals' lives in it, its history, and so on (noesis).

What the notion of intentional object means becomes obvious on thinking this way. The object of all our perceptions and cognitions is something 'constituted' as an intentional object in immanence, namely a constituted meaning of an object. Husserl contends that the method of phenomenology offers a basis for all the sciences and findings, because it grasps the essential structure of the process where any cognition or knowledge is formed.

When we go this far, the notion of specific studies is readily understandable. We form numerous intentional objects in *immanent consciousness*. Specifically, we build various beliefs about objects, ranging from small things in our daily life to grand philosophical thoughts. This makes us certain that we have the world around us as an unquestionably real entity, and that we live 'in it' actually.

We make distinction between the objects as things, matters and thoughts, depending on the way they give themselves to the *immanent consciousness*. Specific studies are to appropriately sort and divide these intentional objects in accordance with the essential way they are given to consciousness.

If I simply paraphrase his argument, it is to signify that the world for us is a bundle of meanings of objects (noema) or a network of numerous beliefs of objects. Our world certainty or belief is in fact the network of various meanings (noema) being constantly constituted in *immanent consciousness*. Husserl thus schemes his phenomenology as the science of essence on formation of all meanings.

The phenomenology that started from the structural analysis of *real/immanence* and constituted immanence in *immanent consciousness* has now stepped into a new phase of analyzing the structure where various meanings are constituted. The crux of phenomenology is in its nature of the science of essence about meanings. Consequently, its essential task is in fact not in analyzing how an apple is perceived, but in clarifying how various meanings of objects of social, cultural and philosophical nature are constituted as valid and legitimate cognition.

Husserl carries on, in and after this Lecture IV, with a basic sorting of diverse meanings of objects by means of phenomenological reflection. They are, for instance: the universal, the specific, essences, intentional objects, etc. The classification of these concepts is explained in more detail in the commentary on this lecture.

Lecture V - Outline

There are three points to stress in Lecture V. First is the phenomenological analysis of the object of cognition being temporarily constituted, which is quite important. The second point is a sequel to the classification of intentional objects as a meaning discussed in the preceding lecture, which analyzes how such intentional objects as category and abstract concept are constituted. Lastly, a general summary of phenomenological epistemology is given here in terms of the entire work of *the Idea of Phenomenology*.

1 'Temporal constitution' of an object of cognition

In the case of such physical items as apples, the structure of constitution is relatively simple. There is a perceptual process on one hand, and on the other, meanings such as redness and roundness, or specific meanings such as apple or fruit, both of which are put together to build a belief that this is an apple.

Husserl then reflects and analyzes a melody as an object of cognition in the phenomenological way. One-phrase melody is quite different from an apple. In order to cognize a melody as a live sound, it is not enough to hear a sound of 'now'. A piece of sound of 'past' must be constantly drawn into the sound of 'now' to be able to hear a continuous melody. Such reflection thus allows us to understand that a melody is constituted by the perception of 'now' and the

memory of 'past' (expectation of future in some cases) integrated together.

This fact itself is not particularly difficult to understand, as anyone is able to make sure of it within one's own experience. This analysis, however, indicates that, when carefully observed, even the simple perceptual experience such as seeing an apple is found to have the structure of temporal constitution as in melody. This supplies us with a new topic of analysis: temporal constitution of cognition of an object, but details will be discussed in the commentary of the lecture.

2 Husserl further carries on analysis regarding new kinds of object as a meaning such as categories and abstract concepts (symbolic thought).

As has been said before, phenomenological epistemology considers any object of cognition as a bundle of meanings. What Husserl seriously intends to say here is that phenomenology is not a science or theory of facts such as is the case with the natural sciences, but is the science of essence that studies the essence of human beings and their societies and culture.

It is therefore a vitally important task to grasp the structure where various objects as meanings are constituted as cognitions. This is the reason why Husserl here persistently classifies and analyzes various objects as meanings, such as the universal, the specific, categories and abstract concepts.

Notwithstanding, the key theme in *the Idea of Phenomenology* is not sorting out various objects as meanings (noema) itself, but to apprehend the fundamental scheme of phenomenological method as a principle theory of cognition. I should therefore like to add some commentary respecting this at the end of this outline.

3 Aim and prospect of phenomenological method

Natural sciences aim at valid cognition (communal knowledge accepted by anyone) regarding how physical entities exist. They have practically succeeded in offering such valid knowledge by means of mathematizing and formulating its nature.

In contrast, what humanities deal with are not physical things, but events and matters. These are, for instance: what is society, what is mind, what are human relations, and what is history. What are to be studied are not the facts, but the essence of society, mind, human relations, and history. Even so, it is quite difficult to attain widely accepted communal knowledge in this field of studying 'essence'. This is the reason why numerous theories arise and often clash with each other.

When we depend on the subject-object schema, we tend to think that there must be absolutely right or just knowledge somewhere. Phenomenology dismisses this way of thinking as it is otherwise based, that is, it is grounded on the immanence-transcendence schema. Instead, phenomenological attempts to grasp the 'structure' of how such various theories develop their own beliefs. Otherwise put, any kind of knowledge is considered as a process of 'forming a belief' in the sphere of immanence and its inner structure is analyzed according to the phenomenological method.

Understanding this will enable us to see why Husserl tried to view knowledge in general in relation with objects, and to view it as a process of constituting the meaning (noema) of an object.

We shall then understand why extensive communal knowledge is established in natural sciences in spite of subject-object discordance. It also makes obvious why such extensive communal knowledge or understanding cannot be attained in the humanities.

The reason can be briefly indicated as follows. Natural sciences, as mentioned above, deal with physical things. Physical entities are basically accepted as having common natures and structures for all humans, as human bodies and their functions are virtually identical among humans. Cotton is soft and iron is hard for any human.

By contrast, the knowledge about human and social events and matters largely depends on ethical, aesthetic,

and the like values of individual human beings. And those values are materially different between individuals, and between the nations and religions they are associated with. The views on society are largely different, for instance, dependent on which is given more weight, freedom and equality.

In short, the communality in cognizing physical things is ensured by the communality of human body as a physical thing, but such communality is difficult to attain in social events and matters as the views about them depend on their own values of humans.

Phenomenology adopts methodical solipsism, so that any knowledge is regarded as a belief of a subject. The subjective belief may however develop to communal belief and to universal belief under certain conditions. When such conditions arise, a universal cognition is established and is accepted by everybody.

When thoroughly abiding by the phenomenological perspective, you will be able to find the essence of cognition in a renewed way. There exists no absolutely genuine or true cognition in principle, as there is no correspondence between subject and object. It does not mean, though, that no valid knowledge exists in the world. Neither does it mean that knowledge is relative, as it comes from a mere logic of reduction to absurdity.

Particularly notable is that valid communal knowledge emerges when there is a mutual human consent about the aims and perspectives of cognition, that is, for what purpose humans should know the things and the world. This is an important conclusion indicated by the criticism of cognition and the science of essence of cognition by means of phenomenology.

Let me repeat, however, that, unfortunately, *the Idea of Phenomenology* failed to complete this entire discourse about Husserl's phenomenological epistemology. Reference must be made to his other major works such as *Ideas Pertaining, Cartesian Meditations* and *the Crisis* to frame an overview of his philosophy. Here it is critically important to see the basic idea in which he solved the enigma of cognition and how he initiated the science of essence concerning humans and society by applying his method, without as yet entering too far into the details of his argument.

★★ Hyper-paraphrase

[NOTE:

1. Summing-up captions are placed at the top of each Lecture in the German original text. In this hyper-paraphrase, the text is divided into sections; and, for the reader's convenience, a summary caption is put on each relevant section.
2. The quotations from Husserl's original text (in the English version) are enclosed in quotation marks.
3. Supplementary remarks (asides) by me are prefixed by the sign →.
4. Readers will note repetitions of subject matter in the paraphrases. This follows the nature of Husserl's own text. I basically refrained from abbreviating the text by eliminating these out of respect for his particular lines of argument.]

LECTURE I

1-1. Natural attitude of thinking and the science of natural sort

First let me (Husserl) divide science into that of 'natural attitude' and 'philosophical attitude'. It is because, though not generally known, the two attitudes are essentially different from each other. [Here, the 'science of natural attitude' mainly refers to natural sciences and humanities studied in a positivistic way.]

Let us look first at the science of natural attitude. Sciences of natural attitude are generally unaware of the question of whether and how correct or genuine cognition is possible, a problem that philosophy has long struggled with. The question of the possibility of cognition or knowledge has never been considered in the field of natural science; that is, it was taken for granted from the beginning that it was and is possible.

Sciences of natural attitude begin with observing things and collecting data. Direct perception of 'observes' forms the basis of the scientific method. Observes then analyze elementary units of the object of investigation, their combination and mutual relation, their changes, causal relationship and regularity, and organize them into a system by repeating experiments and compiling data. All these efforts help expand and enhance the field of investigation. A number of rules are then picked out of the data to further define the system.

The fundamental procedure of natural sciences is a combination of observation, verification and rational reduction, including presentation of hypotheses and verifying them. The hypothesis and classification initially offered are constantly corrected by repeated verification whenever a problem appears. The science of natural attitude thus acquires a further objectivity of accurate and extensive knowledge.

It is therefore considered that in sciences of natural attitude, the different fields of investigation cooperate with one another to amplify genuine knowledge about the objective world of nature that actually exists. This basic premise of naturalistic science applies not only to natural sciences but to mathematics.

Notably here, in these naturalistic and positivistic sciences, it is taken for granted that the reality of objective world is certified progressively more accurately and in a wider range as their studies advance. In contrast, in philosophy this very notion of the reality of an objective world has always been questioned and debated for many years.

1-2. The philosophic (reflective) attitude in thinking

Whereas the question of the possibility of cognition has been intensely focused upon in philosophy, from its beginning, this kind of question (if genuine or objective knowledge is possible at all) has hardly been raised in the field of the natural sciences.

Questions of *how* people know things have certainly been examined in the natural sciences. The functions of cognition or similar topics have often been investigated in the positivistic sciences. These are, however, at most physi-

ological or psychological studies concerning how the organs of humans or other creatures are able to perceive the external world or object. The more refined possibility of cognition itself has never been questioned in the natural sciences.

Logic also is part of 'natural' science. How cognition behaves is certainly examined in this field by looking at grammar and at the other rules of logic. Logic, as well as psychology, however, remains in the framework of the positivistic approach of modern the natural science. Here is no questioning or doubting about the act of cognizing itself or its possibility.

What we are to consider here is precisely this question of possibility of cognition. Its pursuit emerges, in my (Husserl's) opinion, as a task of analyzing *the essence of relationship* between cognitive experience and the object of cognition.

1-3. The contradictions of reflection on cognition, when one reflects in the natural attitude

Cognition always arises within one's subjectivity. As the subject is by no means able to go outside itself, how can the subject make sure that its cognition corresponds to (or reaches) an object? This is the enigma of the subject-object relationship. "Cognition in all of its manifestations is a psychic act; it is the cognition of a cognizing subject. The objects cognized stand over and against the cognition. But how can we be certain of the correspondence between cognition and the object cognized?" (p 15, *The Idea of Phenomenology*; translated by William P. Alston & George Nakhnikian [Kluwer Academic Publishers]).

Descartes already "proved" that this correspondence between subject and object could never be verified logically. This mystery, suggested by Descartes, took more acute forms in the exhaustive skepticism of Berkley and Hume. They claimed that there exists no certain and absolute cognition; we have merely our own views or opinion of the world. This way of thinking ultimately led to Kant's notion of the "thing in itself".

Even Hume's philosophical skepticism, however, does not seem so thoroughgoing from our current point of view, because the existence of an objective world is implicitly presumed in his philosophy.

Such an intensive suspicion of cognition is, in a sense, more deeply rooted in contemporary philosophical thought. For instance, there is a biological argument: insofar as the human organs of cognition has been accidentally developed by biological evolution, there is no ground for claiming that human knowledge or logic should be "universal".

On examination, however, such arguments of skepticism (saying that universal cognition is impossible) are not necessarily consistent and are accompanied with serious contradictions. That is to say, if human knowledge is always questionable, this relativistic view is itself not to be trusted. Whenever there is any positive contention that this or that is possible, it necessarily includes a presumption that there must be some ground for distinguishing truth from untruth.

Anyway, there exists no problem of the possibility or validity of cognition, once we remain within the framework of the natural sciences. When philosophy begins to raise a question about the ground of possibility of cognition, *any* kind of cognition arises as a mystery. All these pursuits, be it dogmatism (objectivism) or relativism/skepticism, entail more or less contradictions.

Is there then any way radically to solve this enigma of cognition?

1-4. The dual task of true criticism of cognition

Our task, therefore, is to resolve the enigma of cognition in philosophy. There are two important points here.

1 Resolution of the enigma must be achieved by criticizing the naive attitude of cognition (the subject-object schema) assumed in the sciences of natural sort.

2 The enigma of cognition is more visible in philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, logic, and other disciplines of humanities than it is in the natural sciences. It is therefore necessary to establish a theory of essence of cognition after the resolution of the enigma arising here.

We thus confront the dual challenge: a critique of cognition and a clarification of the nature of cognition. As discussed above, the natural sciences have never posed this kind of question. In fact, the current chaotic condition in modern cultural sciences has essentially emerged from the fact that this enigma of cognition has never been resolved.

In other words, this enigma is a source of "aporia" or problems intrinsic to humanities, such as the conflict between materialism and idealism, the dualism of body and mind, and a number of other conflicting theories and schools. These problems can never be overcome without a prior solution to the enigma of cognition.

I (Husserl) would say that the most important task of "philosophy", which has often been called metaphysics, is above all in seeking the meaning of existence for humans. In this context, the pursuit of philosophy seems today to be at a risk of serious failure.

Resolution of the enigma of cognition is an essential requisite to revitalize the radical theme of philosophy.

[→ Husserl often uses the term "metaphysics" to refer to an art for seeking and clarifying the meaning of existence. Metaphysics, for him, is far from "metaphysics" in a negative sense as an art of vainly pursuing the ultimate principle or prima causa of the world.]

1-5. True criticism of cognition as phenomenology of cognition

The method of phenomenology now appears essential to achieve the twofold tasks of a criticism of cognition and the clarification of the nature of cognition.

It is often believed, even in the field of philosophy, that there must be only one method applicable in common to all arts and sciences, including philosophy. This was originally the central idea of modern philosophy, which itself was more or less the father of modern sciences. Most modern philosophers, including Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibnitz, had the idea of a 'universal science' where the whole world could be cognized based on one primordial principle.

This, in turn, led to a widely accepted doctrine that philosophy must be reestablished by means of the scientific and positivistic method. I (Husserl) would, however, consider this to be a wrong approach and one that has been derived from an entire failure to understand that the method of philosophy should be substantially different from that of positivism. We are rather required radically to reexamine this excessively naive idea.

1-6. The new dimension belonging to philosophy; its peculiar method in contrast to science

It is certainly the case that the natural sciences of different kinds may lend their methodical foundation to one another. However, it is totally out of point to use the method of mathematics and the natural sciences as a ground for philosophy, insofar as the task of clarifying the nature of cognition is essential for philosophy. This is because such methods employed in the natural sciences are based on the subject-object schema, as I have pointed out repeatedly.

As for the task of a criticism of cognition, philosophy has had skepticism and relativism in different forms that have seriously brought into question the subject-object schema employed in the natural sciences. These argue that, since assuring the correspondence between knowledge and object is impossible in principle, there is no such thing as genuine cognition. This concern currently goes so far as to pose such questions as "What is the object of cognition itself?" or "Does a thing in itself exist at all?"

Against this objection of skepticism to the possibility of cognition, there have been no substantial coun-

ter-arguments raised from the natural sciences. As I said many times, the subject-object schema is a prerequisite to the carrying out of the scientific pursuit, and the basic method of the natural sciences with hypotheses, experiments and verifications is largely based on this premise. Hence there arises no motive for questioning the possibility of a correspondence between subject (cognition) and object.

Accordingly, we are unable to adopt any views or findings of the natural sciences so far obtained with which to initiate a radical criticism of cognition. The skeptic approach, obviously, is of no use either.

To accomplish this task, we have to find another method, one that is completely distinct from the traditional approaches. Those who fail to understand this point are equally unable to see the significance of criticism of cognition at all.

I should like to say that the phenomenological method is exactly what we can use to achieve the task specified above.

General Commentary on Lecture I

Lecture I presents a general overview of the different issues included in *The Idea of Phenomenology*. Though it might be repetitive, as I have already provided the reader with a commentary on these in my introductory essay, The ideas behind the '*The Idea of Phenomenology*', I should like here to give a brief summary of the important ideas.

Husserl first draws a distinction between science of a natural sort and philosophy. The science of a natural sort refers to positivistic natural sciences, mathematics, and modern humanities based on the method of the natural sciences. Such a science of a natural sort has neither motive nor measure of questioning cognition itself. This is because, whereas correspondence between subject and object is brought into doubt in the question of cognition, the science of natural sort stands on the premise that the subject should reach and correspond to the object.

In as much as the natural sciences have attained remarkable achievements in developing objective and practical knowledge during the 19th and 20th centuries, there has been no reason to doubt its validity. The question of cognition has therefore been sidelined as a mere empty theory in philosophy. Things are different in the humanities, though. They have not enjoyed the outstanding progress of objective cognition and mutual agreement of theories as we find in the natural sciences, and have rather suffered serious disputes between numerous theories and schools. The impossibility of correspondence between subject and object has been manifest in these disciplines.

Positivistic sciences also study 'cognition' on some occasions, but only in a psychological or physiological framework to examine how the minds of humans and animals cognize things. They do not ask any question whether 'universal knowledge' is possible at all. They do not even have a method of raising this kind of question in an essential way on their own. This makes more serious the disputes and incompatibilities between numerous theories in humanities, giving rise to the prevailing tendency toward relativism and skepticism in cultural and social sciences.

Another problem aggravating this situation is that contemporary skepticism and relativism contend that there is *no* absolute ground for cognition when it is considered ultimately. Skepticism and relativism have from ancient times generally been in dispute with the possibility of universal knowledge. Modern positivistic thinking has been unable to give a valid theoretical counter-argument to such skepticism and relativism. This has made the fundamental idea of universal knowledge in science increasingly dubious.

Philosophy must now undertake a renewed attempt to solve this question of cognition, namely by means of the phenomenological approach. In this enterprise, we face two important tasks:

- (1) To effect an in-depth criticism of the conventional, classical schema of cognition: namely, the subject-object schema.
- (2) To effect an analysis of the enigma of cognition through this criticism in order to reestablish the essential structure of cognition. This will reinstate the ground for the universality of cognition to revitalize the essence of philosophy.

Let me give here an example of (literally) 'hyper-paraphrase' for those readers trying to read the original text of *The Idea of Phenomenology*.

Original text:

"In the skeptical mood which critical reflection about cognition necessarily begets (...) every science of the natural sort and every method characteristic of such a science ceases to count as something we properly possess. For cognition's reaching its object has become enigmatic and dubious as far as its meaning and possibility are concerned, and exact cognition becomes thereby no less enigmatic than inexact, scientific knowledge no less than the pre-scientific. The possibility of cognition becomes questionable, more precisely, how it can possibly reach an objectivity which, after all, is in itself whatever it is" (p 20, 2nd paragraph, *ibid.*).

Paraphrase:

In so far as the question (of whether or not genuine cognition is possible) still remains at an incomplete level of skepticism, even the method of the natural sciences and positivism appears dubious. This is because skepticism

merely adheres to the rhetoric that a subject could not agree with (could reach) its object. While natural science is usually considered as a way to attain objective and accurate knowledge, it is in fact, from the skeptics' point of view, no different from uncertain, pre-scientific knowledge. The evidence that knowledge reaches the object seems, they argue, dubious even in the natural sciences.

Terms and phrases:

'Science of natural sort' or 'natural attitude': the science or attitude based on the subject-object schema. Its opposite is phenomenological attitude (epoché, reduction).

'Criticism of cognition': this mainly refers to 'critical philosophy' as is elaborated by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. In this, he pointed out the limitation of human faculty of reason and criticized the traditional metaphysics pursuing an ultimately fundamental principle of the world. Husserl's criticism of cognition is intended to surpass Kant's approach.

LECTURE II

2-1. The beginning of the critique of cognition: treating as questionable every knowing

As I have repeatedly explained, our task is to unravel the enigma of cognition. What do we need to achieve this? First of all, we have to criticize the allegedly evident conception of cognition that people have conventionally held and to find a more radical and essential way to understand cognition. Let us call this new way a science of critique of cognition.

The crucial point in this resides in abolishing the assumption that truth (objective cognition) holds when a subject 'gets at' or reaches an object.

I should call this a process of "suspending judgment". We have to rid ourselves of our conventional, tacit presupposition that an entity or object stands before us and that we as a subject come to know it genuinely. We are utterly unable to count on the conventional findings or theories of the natural sciences, logic, psychology, physiology, etc. to accomplish this radical critique of cognition, as they are all grounded on the subject-object schema.

Yet to avoid misunderstanding we have to note that our way of suspending judgment by no means purports that any kind of knowledge can be doubted, or lacks grounds for its validity, as has been argued in conventional skepticism: quite the opposite. We adopt this approach with a view to examining the significance of so-called objective knowledge or 'valid cognition'.

Skeptics have their own reason, in a sense. Admittedly, there is very little if any universally acceptable cognition established in the field of cultural and social sciences, as they have pointed out. This makes us tend to see human cognition as relative and uncertain.

Let us think more deeply about it. While the subject-object schema is certainly dubious, it is not fair to say that there is no valid or genuine cognition in the world. Everyone admits that the validity of cognition covers an extremely wide range in the field of mathematics and in the natural sciences. We have to ask accordingly why and how such cognition with proven validity can be established if there exists no possible correspondence between subjects and objects.

Despite the fact that cognition is only relative in one circumstance, there is a widely accepted validity of cognition in another. Philosophically to analyze the reason for this is the primary objective of a critique of knowledge.

Where then should we start from? As a starting point, I should raise the question: is there any cognition that is free from uncertainty or obscurity and that can be accepted as valid by anyone. According to me, such cognition exists. Let us call this "the primal cognition".

What kind of cognition, then, can we name the absolutely indubitable primal cognition?

Philosophy has so far endeavored to define this universally acceptable primal cognition, but mostly in vain. The reason for this failure is that most philosophers have attempted to solve it by means of the subject-object schema. We should now explore an alternative solution.

I term this primal cognition absolute givenness. Namely, the 'absolute givenness' of an object stands for the most fundamental "being given" of cognition whose certainty no one can doubt insofar as it is "given" to us.

Where can we find what is called an absolute givenness in this sense?

2-2. Reaching the ground of absolute certainty in pursuance of Descartes' method of doubt

The fact is that Descartes attempted his philosophical critique of cognition with the same intention as ours. Let us therefore review the significance of his efforts.

Descartes named his approach *a methodical doubt*. He tried to find the primal cognition in the manner that, even after doubting the existence of all the entities in the world, the existence of his own ego doubting them still remained as something absolutely and universally "indubitable". Descartes thus tried to demonstrate his Cogito as the primal cognition, about which doubt proves to be invalid. This is the key idea of his statement: *Cogito ergo sum*.

We, however, have to advance his idea a step further, as his reasoning seems to me to be less than satisfactory. Instead of his Cogito (thinking ego), I have come up with the notion of the act of consciousness when reflected upon by ourselves as the primal cognition.

Evidently, our consciousness perceives, imagines, judges, and evaluates various objects and matters. No matter *what* I experience in whatever consciousness of mine, I cannot say for certain that the object of this consciousness actually exists. There is no evidence that the subject (my consciousness) actually hits or reaches the object (the thing or entity). [→ Even if I am sure that I am vividly viewing a real apple in front of my eyes, I cannot exclude the possibility that I am having a dream or seeing the illusion of an apple.]

The point is that, even if the object of consciousness may not exist as a substantial entity, the fact that it is "given" to me as an object of consciousness can never be doubted. I should start from this very simple fact.

I shall consider this givenness to be an absolutely indubitable givenness I can rely on, and call it the primal cognition.

In order to make my idea clearer, I shall define the primal cognition as follows. "The thought processes that I really perform are given to me insofar as I reflect upon them, receive them and set them up in a pure seeing" (p 23, *ibid*). [→ My act or experience of consciousness (such as perception, imagination and evaluation) is absolutely given to me insofar as I directly "see" it by means of my reflecting upon it.]

This is our primary principle, which can and must be verified by everybody.

When I vividly perceive something, I am able to internally reflect on the manner in which I perceive it. Namely, I can perceive my own perception [→ perception of perception]. Or, while I am recalling something, I can see on reflection how I am recalling it [→ perception of memory]. It is straightforward for anyone to confirm by an act of reflection the way we perceive or recall.

Anyone is thus able reflectively to objectify the mental act (such as perception, memory, judgment and inference), that is, to make it an object of his/her perception. And it is more than certain that seeing this cognitive process is "absolutely and distinctly" given directly to me.

Put another way, we are always aware how, among our mental acts, perception and imagination differ from each other on reflection upon our conscious experience and we are able verbally to describe the difference. We see the difference on direct reflection and put it into words. This act of seeing in me is a givenness being directly and absolutely given to me.

Anyone can directly see or observe the way his/her mental act works. This is our vitally important starting point.

I should call this process a method of phenomenological reflection upon our own *immanent consciousness*. By way of this reflection upon, we are able to see the inner essential structure of conscious experience (such as perception, imagination, memory, judgment and evaluation) with an entirely unquestionable certainty.

Now I have established a way for radical critique of cognition as a method of phenomenological reflection upon our *immanent consciousness*.

Let us advance further. We will, as an initial example, examine the givenness of perception that is the most basic and typical act of consciousness, so as to find out what kind of intrinsic nature it exhibits.

Internal Commentary

This section is most important as it describes the fundamental phenomenological method. Let me summarize what Husserl claims:

1. Skeptics argue that any kind of cognition is dubious because a subject cannot reach an object. Despite this, valid knowledge seems to be generally accepted in the field of the natural sciences and in mathematics. While skepticism is unable to explain the reason for this validity, the method of phenomenology is believed to enlighten us in this respect.
2. The natural sciences and mathematics teach us that not all cognition is dubitable, but that certain indubitable cognition exists. Let us philosophically define this and call such indubitable cognition the primal cognition.
3. Descartes tried to demonstrate that Cogito (thinking ego) is just such an indubitable primal cognition, but his idea seems to me to be unsatisfactory. Instead, I should like to indicate it as a "mental act reflected" in itself. Suppose for instance that I am reflecting upon my perceptual experience of looking at an apple, I am sure that something red, round and glossy is vividly presented (given) to my senses. This feeling of sureness can never be questionable. Even if this image of an apple is a dream, there is absolutely no doubt about the fact that this conscious experience (e.g. seeing a vivid red colour etc.) is actually given to me.
4. An essential critique of cognition or an unraveling of the enigma of cognition must be initiated with this approach. This is exactly the method of 'phenomenological reflection'. The subject-object schema is brought into suspension in this approach (though this is not explicitly indicated by Husserl). In this approach, everything is reduced to the subject, namely to the domain of consciousness, while the being of objects is methodically suspended.

I should like to remark on another point. Husserl contended that the act of consciousness being reflected upon is an absolutely indubitable cognition (as discussed above), but many people criticize his claim in terms of indubitability. This is one of the wide-spread criticisms against Husserl's phenomenology. This criticism, however, is not based on a proper understanding of Husserl's intent.

Let us rather think in this way. We all know the difference between perception and imagination and can put it into words upon reflection. By way of example, an image coming up in imagination could not possibly offer one such vividness as what is given by perception. Besides, while a perceived image unavoidably breaks into our consciousness, an image in imagination can to a certain extent be arbitrarily summoned or dismissed. If we did not register this distinction, we could never be sure whether we are in the world of reality or only dreaming.

For many critics, Husserl's argument is not convincing because we may encounter a situation where we are genuinely unable to tell reality from dream. The point is, however, that we are not always unable to make this distinction: far from it. We live our daily life properly by making this distinction in almost all cases and we lose the condition for making an appropriate distinction in our consciousness only in certain particular circumstances.

Husserl has never claimed that human cognition is invariably provided with the conditions for distinguishing between valid and invalid knowledge. If he had, it would have meant that he insisted on the possibility of absolutely genuine cognition. Instead, he merely attempted to pursue the conditions in which valid cognition can be established, as an essential structure of consciousness. Many criticisms against phenomenology misinterpret this point. We occasionally miscalculate. If someone argues accordingly that mathematical calculation per se has no grounds for validity, he/she merely commits a stereotypical error of falsely generalizing from a special case.

2-3. The things that are absolutely given

Let us examine the discussion above in more detail.

We are now able reflectively to review whatever mental experience that may arise within us. We then capture directly, namely in an absolute manner, the conscious experience such as perception and memory. The manner of such perception or memory captured reflectively as discussed above is no doubt a 'bedrock' for givenness of consciousness, where it no longer makes sense to doubt the probability that it may not be given to us in that way.

So let us call the reflection upon conscious experience a pure phenomenological grasp, because it is something definitely indubitable and being absolutely given (absolute givenness).

Another important point is that, in such direct reflection upon our mental experience, we are able to directly see a perceiving action, for instance, to know what kind of Cogitatio (mental act) it is, how it is different from other acts such as imagination and memory, and how it is related with them.

For instance, I am now looking at an apple in front of my eyes. On reflecting upon this perceiving experience, I am able to verbally express the following two features:

1. It has a vivid and distinct, true-to-life colour and shape.
2. It never shows itself as a whole at one time, but only part by part (in adumbration).

After repeating this reflection many times, no one will doubt that this insight is sustainable. Besides, we shall be entirely certain that the features of this perceiving experience hold true not only for ourselves, but can be shared by all others.

Let us now imagine or visualize an apple. What is the difference between the apple in my imagination and the apple perceived or actually seen in the example discussed above? This difference too can be discerned by anybody by the direct reflection process. [→ The visualized apple is not vivid, is more or less vague, and, to a certain degree, can be called up arbitrarily.]

This reveals to us another crucial aspect. This phenomenological reflection method enables us to recognize, with a considerable certainty, not only how consciousness behaves in perception or memory, but also the various phases of meaning of an object (specific way of thinking).

Now we have reached another important insight. As has been initially confirmed, direct reflection upon mental process or the object of such mental act makes us certain that they are "given" to us in an absolutely indubitable way. We can grasp them as an inner structure of consciousness. It is what we call the primal cognition that forms the basis of phenomenological reduction method.

Still another insight is, as mentioned above, that reflection enables us to observe not only the mental acts such as perception and imagination but also various meanings of an object as given in an absolutely indubitable way.

These two insights offer the foundation for the phenomenological science of essence, where the givenness intrinsic to any cognition can be observed in terms of its universal structure and essence.

Internal Commentary

Let me emphasize again that we are able to directly "see" our experiences within *immanent consciousness* by way of phenomenological reflection, and what we have thus "seen" can be termed as an absolutely indubitable givenness (the primal cognition). This is radically fundamental in the phenomenological approach.

In short, it is a thesis that *something directly seen by reflection is an absolutely indubitable cognition*.

Husserl writes as follows. "Every intellectual process and indeed every mental process whatever, while being enacted, can be made the object of a pure "seeing" and understanding, and is something absolutely given in this "seeing." It is given as something that is, that is here and now, and whose being cannot be sensibly doubted" (p.24, *ibid*).

I shall give an example for the reader who still wonders if this is really so. My cognition or knowledge that I am now drinking a coffee is dubitable because I cannot exclude the possibility that I may be drinking an artificially-flavoured fake coffee. This is accordingly a transcendent cognition. In contrast, the feeling that I am drinking coffee and feeling it very delicious, or the fact that this feeling is actually happening to me, is indubitable, even if the coffee is fake or is simply a dream, provided I ask myself several times to make sure that I really had this feeling. This is what we call indubitability in immanence.

If you take this indubitability in immanence for an argument that we are capable of knowing any kind of object properly and genuinely, that is, a claim for indubitability of objective cognition, you will be gravely mistaken about Husserl's claims.

What Husserl intended is to see where an absolutely indubitable cognition can be located, and not to announce that any kind of object can be known infallibly. In other words, Husserl attempted to specify the conditions for validity of cognition. If any kind of cognition is regarded as groundless, it may lead to skeptics being dubious even of the natural science and of mathematics.

Terms and phrases:

A number of different terms are used in this text: immanence; transcendental subject; pure subject; pure consciousness; pure ego; and transcendental ego. In most cases these all refer to the same thing. Using different terms to denote the same thing is Husserl's habitual (if loose and inconsistent) way of description.

The phenomenological method is to capture an indubitable element in cognitive experience by reflection. All of Husserl's terms stand for the ego or subject grasped by this phenomenological viewpoint. To avoid confusion, I shall use the term *immanent consciousness* for all of these (Husserl's) terms, though this is not his own exact term.

2-4. Review and amplification: refutation of the argument against the possibility of a critique of cognition

Let me (Husserl) summarize the progress made so far.

I have pointed out that the natural-scientific approach would not confront the question of genuine cognition being at all possible, as it takes the subject-object correspondence schema for granted, and that it is therefore not in a position to address the problem. I have also claimed that the critique of cognition by means of phenomenological method is a requisite for unraveling the enigma of cognition.

Incidentally, I may additionally remark that the effort for essential critique of cognition is crucial for philosophy itself to explore the intrinsic problem of elucidating the meaning of existence.

Yet did our critique of cognition really start from a firm ground? "In the beginning no cognition can be assumed without examination" (p 26, *ibid*). Let us make sure of this point once more.

In order to accomplish a critique of cognition in a radical way, we are unable to rely on any findings of conventional the natural sciences that are based on the subject-object correspondence schema. This has already been confirmed. It does not mean, though, we must go the way of skepticism

We tried to define an absolutely indubitable element of cognition (the primal cognition) in line with Descartes' approach. I showed it as a domain of immanence directly reflected by ourselves. This domain is where all kinds of valid knowledge are grounded. [→ "immanence is the generally necessary characteristic of all epistemological cognition" (p 26, *ibid*).]

I also showed that the domain of absolute givenness could withstand any criticism of skepticism. Conventional epistemology has failed to do so.

Skepticism has denied any kind of certainty of cognition in line with the familiar relativistic theory (no matter on

what grounds cognition is based, no one can prove their absolute certainty). This is a false argument.

As repeatedly discussed, the correspondence between subject and object certainly cannot be verified philosophically, and the possibility of objective cognition may accordingly be dubitable. Nevertheless, some valid universal cognition is actually established in certain areas. The problem therefore is not in suspicion of all cognition, but how to interpret a certain validity or correspondence that can be built in some area.

Since skepticism claims that any certainty of cognition is groundless, it is by no means able to understand the nature of this validity. Instead, we have initiated a science of essential critique of cognition by demarcating a certain cognition “which renders such doubt groundless” (p 27 *ibid*), while suspending the judgment of subject-object schema.

2-5. The enigma of natural cognition: transcendence

What is a central problem in the question on whether genuine cognition is possible? I should like to call it by a key phrase: transcendence of cognition.

As has been confirmed many times, a correspondence between subject and object can never be verified philosophically. It means that what an object or entity is in itself remains transcendent for a subject. In other words, a subject can never hit or grip an object accurately.

How then can we explain the validity of cognition? The solution to the impasse is initially to remove the subject-object-coincidence schema of cognition. An object in itself has always been considered as transcendent.

It is therefore crucial philosophically to understand the nature of transcendence.

2-6. Distinction between the two concepts of immanence and transcendence

Let us now carefully examine the notion of transcendence.

In my view, it should be studied in its dual sense [→ there are two kinds of transcendence and correspondingly two kinds of immanence].

The transcendence in the first sense means “that the object of cognition is not genuinely (*reell*) contained in the cognitive act (p 27, *ibid*).

Something immanent corresponding to this first transcendence is a *reell* givenness or element within the cognitive experience, that is, an actual *Cogitatio* such as perception and memory.

The transcendence in the second sense, on the other hand, means that “an object of cognition is beyond what can be directly “seen” and apprehended” (p 28, *ibid*).

The immanence corresponding to it is not a *reell* immanence, but is an absolute self-givenness in a broader sense (= the entire domain of immanence).

[→ Husserl's description here is almost unintelligible. I will therefore put my commentary at the end of this section.]

While I have so far generally presented the notion of immanence -transcendence, I admit that it has been used mostly in the first sense, or that the notions in the two senses have been confused with each other (as in the *Logical Investigations*). Now, in view of our task of essential critique of cognition, we have to make a clear distinction between the two senses of immanence.

We tend to say that something absolutely indubitable in a genuine sense is a so-called *reell* (genuine) immanence alone, namely *Cogitatio* or cognitive act such as perception or memory, with all other things supposed to be dubitable or transcendent.

What is important here is not just to show what "*reell*" is but to define what is truly an indubitable element within the domain of *immanent consciousness*.

On top of everything, we have practically to carry on with the job of phenomenological reflection. We shall then find out that what is defined as an indubitable element is not only the *reell* act of consciousness (perception or memory or the like). In fact, there are two kinds of absolutely indubitable element (givenness). This is a crucial key in grasping the inner structure of *immanent consciousness*.

Terms and phrases:

The German term "*reell*" stands for honest, straight, substantial, etc. Its English equivalent is akin to "genuine". *Reell* immanence is an element actually seen in *immanent consciousness*, i.e., the mental acts of perception, recollection, and imagination. Since it is definitely an entity within consciousness and not an external objective existence, Husserl gives it the term *reell* instead of the term *real*, which would indicate an objective existence.

Internal Commentary

Since Husserl's description of the two aspects of immanence and transcendence in this section is abstruse, I will give some additional explanation about it with reference to his later work *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (simply, *Ideas Pertaining*).

The notions of immanence and transcendence, as used by Husserl, are applied to study the structure of cognition in a new way, after relinquishing the subject-object schema as discussed above.

We generally tend to think that the subject corresponds to immanence and the object to transcendence, respectively; but, in this way, it is in effect pointless to epoché or to suspend the subject-object schema. The fact is that the entire immanence-transcendence schema is within the domain of a subject or consciousness as its interior structure.

The point is as follows. While Husserl says there are two kinds of transcendence, it can be said more exactly that there are two different corresponding relationships between immanence and transcendence. Or, we should rather focus on making a distinction between two kinds of immanence. Though not clearly indicated by Husserl, the first kind is *reell* immanence and the second is the constituted immanence.

The two kinds of immanence and transcendence thus represent:

- (1) *Reell* immanence vs. corresponding constituted immanence (immanence with transcendental nature).
- (2) Constituted immanence vs. corresponding so-called transcendence (an object in itself).

In short, Husserl here wants to emphasize the significance of distinguishing between two kinds of immanence: *reell* immanence and constituted immanence. There are correspondingly two kinds of transcendence. These will be discussed later.

Let me explain about the *reell* immanence by using again the example of drinking coffee. I am drinking coffee. What I am drinking is a brown liquid; it tastes like coffee and is good to drink; this is what I am actually perceiving, namely a *reell* immanence about which I can never doubt. The fact that what I am drinking has colour and taste and is a certain kind of liquid is never questionable as a *reell* perception absolutely given to me, even if the coffee may be fake or a dream. This is *reell* immanence.

At the same time, I receive from this perceptual or sensory experience 'the meaning of the coffee' as an object, say,

that its colour is brown, it is a liquid or a beverage. The meaning of an object is "given" to our consciousness just like the perceptual experience. This is constituted immanence.

We can thus posit the general picture drawn by Husserl as follows.

- (1) *Reell* immanence: actual sensory feeling such as perception and memory (somewhat like a sense of qualia).
- (2) Constituted immanence: meaning of an object formed together with *reell* immanence.
- (3) So-called transcendence built out of *reell* immanence and constituted immanence (though not described here).

Husserl emphasizes that drawing a line between (1) and (2) is a crucial task in a phenomenological critique of cognition, but he does not mention here why this is so.

2-7. The initial problem of the critique of cognition: the possibility of transcendent cognition

An important clue to unraveling the enigma of cognition is to abide by the immanence-transcendence schema instead of the subject-object schema. Above all, the notion of transcendence must be comprehended as a key factor.

We already understood the reason why the transcendent (objective being) cannot be presupposed in terms of the question of cognition. No one can verify any correspondence between subjects and objects. In other words, transcendence (object) is in nature beyond the boundary of a subject or consciousness. In what way then should we approach this problem?

We should do this by asking: in what circumstances and manner has a subject reached an object (that is, how we have attained a valid cognition), despite a general impossibility of correspondence between subject and object.

We have therefore attempted to cope with this problem by the phenomenological method of directly "seeing" the *immanent consciousness*, instead of reaching an indirect or transcendent cognition. We have, however, found that this process of direct reflection also entails a serious problem.

Regarding the question of cognition, positivists may argue as follows. While logically, no one can ascertain the possibility of a correspondence between subjects and objects, the scientific approach has made great achievements in terms of objective knowledge and will continue to do so. Objective valid knowledge is therefore possible in actuality, apart from its seemingly theoretical possibility.

This way of handling the problem is far from its essential solution. While the positivistic natural sciences have certainly accumulated a mountain of objective knowledge, the same approach leads to utter relativism when it is applied to social and cultural studies and the like disciplines of academic studies. The answer has not been given yet: the positivistic way of dealing with this problem is by no means able to offer a satisfactory solution.

What is essentially lacking in the positivistic view is obvious. Positivists definitely fail to understand the significance of the notion of transcendence. The genuine relationship between cognition and transcendence remains unknown to them. They do not see what 'subject' and 'object' really mean.

I should like to claim that the relationship between cognition and transcendence can be understood only by the direct reflection upon *immanent consciousness*. The phenomenological method of directly seeing the domain of immanence alone enables us to see the essential relationship between them.

"Naturally the reply is: I could understand it only if the relation itself were given as something to be "seen." As long as the object is, and remains, something transcendent, and cognition and its objects are actually separate, then indeed he can see nothing here" (p 30, *ibid*).

Positivists always presuppose the subject-object schema and try to interpret valid knowledge by means of the schema of correspondence between subjects and objects. But, as has been discussed again and again, this schema

cannot be sustained, as cognition is never able to hit transcendence (object).

What will happen to those who adhere to this subject-object schema when dealing with the matter of cognition? They will unavoidably reach the conclusion that there exists no valid cognition. The question must then arise: why do we consider something that is merely transcendent to be an objective cognition. This is the path David Hume took, but we have to advance further.

Suspending the subject-object schema, reducing all to immanence and directly seeing the way cognition is constituted in our immanence: this is the sole radical method for coping with the problem of cognition. Let us explain this using an allegory.

Those born deaf, for instance, may theoretically understand that there is a diversity of sounds, with which a harmony can be formed to create a piece of music. Yet it must be difficult for them to vividly imagine how a piece of musical work is produced from individual sounds.

In summary, we cannot deal with the question of cognition merely by seeking to know its nature from fragments of information gathered about knowledge. By reducing all of our cognitive experience to immanence, we can directly "listen" to the way cognition is established, as if we are listening to music.

2-8. The principle of epistemological reduction

We have examined how the method of phenomenological reflection is required radically to resolve the question of cognition by suspending the conventional view on it. I now call this method epistemological (phenomenological) reduction. The basic steps for conducting epistemological reduction are as follows.

First of all, we are to put index of "indifference" or "nullity" on any supposedly objective cognition. This is to remove the premise that objective cognition can properly grip an object actually existing outside a subject.

Besides, we have always to bear in mind that this phenomenological insight is about the domain of *immanent consciousness*, and not about any external matter or entity. Those who do not understand this difference will always make a mistake of meta-basis (confusing one particular domain with another).

The reason why people often misunderstand the phenomenological method is because they are confused regarding the exact nature of *immanent consciousness*.

General Commentary on Lecture II

Lecture II gives a concrete description about the procedure of conducting phenomenological reduction so as to unravel the enigma of cognition.

Husserl first makes sure that the methodical doubt raised by the similarly motivated philosopher Descartes must be further evolved to ensure the absolutely indubitable primal cognition.

He then offers the idea of suspending the subject-object schema and altering our perspective to the phenomenological immanence-transcendence schema, so as to secure this absolutely indubitable domain. This is what he calls 'phenomenological reduction', which is, in effect, a scheme of considering any cognition as something constituted in immanence. This, according to Husserl, will settle the enigma of cognition that has bedeviled philosophy.

Furthermore, the immanence-transcendence schema must be studied in its dual aspect. The point is, we have to discriminate between a *reell* immanence (or a *reell* perceiving act) and constituted immanence or a meaning of an object (something universal).

One thing is to be noted here. While Husserl emphasized that the puzzle of transcendence, and therefore the puzzle of cognition, can be solved by clarifying the structure of this 'immanence', he does not satisfactorily specify how these puzzles can be solved.

More accurately speaking, he says that the problem can be eliminated by directly observing how the consciousness of object can be constituted in immanence; but what he intends to mean by this notion of 'constitution' is quite equivocal, and there are a multiplicity of interpretations of this term among phenomenologists.

As has been discussed in my introductory essay, 'The ideas behind the '*The Idea of Phenomenology*', this is one of the difficult aspects of trying to make sense of Husserl's book, one which will never be clarified by reading this alone. Further reference to *Ideas Pertaining and Cartesian Mediations* is necessary in gaining a better understanding.

Why could this direct seeing of *immanent consciousness* and analysis of its structure lead to resolution of the question of cognition? I may offer two clues to answer the question.

First, the constituted immanence referred to by Husserl is not merely a consciousness of an object but should be considered as a consciousness of belief or certainty of the object. Thinking in this way will make clear why the phenomenological method is able to answer the question of cognition.

We may say that, from this point of view, seeing how the world is constituted in immanence simply denotes seeing how we are establishing our belief or feeling of certainty about various objects in immanence, that is, analyzing the condition of belief formation.

This interpretation of phenomenology as an analysis of constitution of world belief perfectly explains why transcendence is ever dubitable. Any kind of cognition is, in fact, our belief constituted within immanence.

Secondly, such belief is always indubitable, insofar as it is given to my consciousness or immanence. Otherwise put, the fact that the belief about the object is given to my consciousness cannot ever be doubted. No matter how firm the belief, at the same time, it remains a mere belief (and is not a fact in itself) and cannot point-blank 'hit' an external entity. The belief itself is therefore transcendent.

On the other hand, when this belief about an object is given to my consciousness in a certain condition, I cannot but believe that the object really exists. We are thus able to extract the condition in which the object is confirmed in our consciousness as indubitably existing. This is the first step of our analysis.

We are able to paraphrase it as follows: when we have a vivid perceptual experience, we cannot but believe in the object (for instance, an apple) as an actual entity. We can say this in a more exact way. When a vivid image with the features such as adumbration and horizon is given to our *immanent consciousness*, we sense it as a perceptual image and cannot but believe that this is an exact image of the actual object. This should be observed by anybody as the same structure provided it is given in the same condition. The fact that, given a certain condition, we cannot but believe in an object, is exactly the reason why we accept a certain object as transcendent (an objective being)

This is only the first step of the analysis as discussed above. The second step is as follows. As can be readily understood, this stage refers to the condition in which only "I" believe in an object as an objective thing; that is, to the condition underlying my subjective belief.

In order to unravel the enigma of cognition, we have to define the condition in which an object or entity is generally believed to be an objective entity. This can be formulated as the condition under which one can say: "I am sure that all others, besides me, believe that it is This is only the first step of the analysis as discussed above. The second step is as follows. As can be readily understood, this stage refers to the condition in which only "I" believe in an object as an objective thing; that is, to the condition underlying my subjective belief

This approach fully demonstrates why a certain objective or valid cognition can be established despite the impossibility of a correspondence between subjects and objects. The puzzle of correspondence is not resolved by the subject-object correspondence schema, but is answered when certain conditions hold for reaching a firm common belief shared by all.

In my view, the phenomenological method must be accepted as a general theory for forming a world belief. Otherwise, phenomenology may be mistaken as an obstinate theory for grounding an absolute knowledge of truth that has nothing to do with Husserl's intent, or merely as an enigmatic metaphysical ontology.

General Commentary on Lecture IV

The primary point of Lecture IV is that Husserl redefines what he has called 'absolute givenness' by the term of 'being evident' or 'evidence'. Husserl himself defines it as a consciousness "which has a direct and adequate grasp of itself (p47, *ibid*), though this is not easy to understand. Otherwise put, it is a consciousness of vivid certainty that something is given to *immanent consciousness*, which recurs the same way no matter how often you reflect your mind.

The second point is that we sort out many objects (things, nature, living creatures, matters, society, history, concepts, super-sensory things, etc.) and that we can make them distinct one from another because they are given to our *immanent consciousness* in different ways.

That is, the differences in givenness of objects naturally entail different sorts of objects. This could not be properly understood unless one is totally free from the subject-object schema. According to the latter, various objects appear in front of us in different forms because their essential natures themselves are different from one another. Phenomenological reduction reverses this and assumes that the distinction between different objects results only from the difference in the ways the objects are given. If you grasp this firmly, you have generally digested the phenomenological way of thinking.

Now you see that our cognition of various objects is established depending on the conditions under which they are given to our *immanent consciousness*. This is supported by the above example of four different experiences about the colour red, that is, four different kinds of givenness of the particular colour.

(1) red in simple perception; (2) red in imagination; (3) red in simple statement; and, (4) essential insight to extract the structure of perception in general from perception and imagination, if red.

We all know "deep in our mind" the difference between a perceived redness and an imagined redness. We also know "deep in our mind" the difference between mere perception, imagination and observation.

Once we are enlightened about this fact, the contradiction of skeptics becomes obvious to us. Skeptics refuse all grounds for validity of any cognition. Despite that, there are no skeptics who cannot tell the difference between reality and a dream, between reality and illusion, and between fantasy and possibility. As is often said, there are no skeptics who jump in front of a coming bus. Apart from their theory, they too know evidently in *immanent consciousness* the distinction between real and non-real perception.

Now we understand that Husserl has attempted to define the notion of absolute givenness (evidence) as the most fundamental ground underlying our world belief in general. It is also becoming clear that the notion of absolute givenness has little to do with the efforts of grounding an absolutely true cognition, as is often pointed out by critics.

Phenomenological grounding the validity of cognition is nothing like grounding the condition for correspondence between cognition and object (transcendence). It is instead the process of demonstrating the condition for some cognition to be called a valid cognition, or (if otherwise put) to turn into a universal belief. It is not to base the ground for the existence of the world, but to philosophically base the ground for a belief of the world.

In *The Idea of Phenomenology*, however, as mentioned before no adequate theory about the condition for inter-subjective belief has been unfolded. As this may somehow leave the reader dismayed, I should like later to discuss it in detail.

General Commentary of Lecture V

Lecture V is a general summary of the entire set of Lectures and focuses largely on the following points.

- (1) Husserl first mentions the perceptual experience of listening to a sound or melody and observes its temporal structure by means of inner reflection. This is a newly introduced theme he names the 'temporal constitution of an object'.
- (2) Next, he accomplishes reflection and observation about categorical judgment (abstract conception), besides perceptual experience, in order to certify the evidence of essential givenness (the givenness of meanings). The point here is that we can make sure of essential givenness *even in the case of imagination* in exactly the same way as we can in perception. This possibility is to form a basis for phenomenology as the science of essence.
- (3) Finally, he offers an overall review of phenomenological theory about the essence of cognition.

This is actually a repetition of the foregoing description, but he emphasizes the fundamental structure of *immanent consciousness* consisting of *reell* immanence and constituted immanence. The character of the object to be constituted depends on its givenness. The states of the objects constituted in the immanent structure are extremely diverse. The fundamental task of phenomenology is consistently to carry out the essential insight of those diverse states of constitution.

The temporal structure of auditory experience is most intriguing. The experience of hearing a sound may seem to one to be a vivid evidence of "now", but in fact it is made up of a perception of "now" and the memory of "past" bound up together. Listening to a melody is therefore not entirely *reell*, but is a sort of givenness or evidence being constituted. This account is, I believe, quite convincing.

Yet a difficulty still arises when we go so far. Husserl has discussed this in his example of seeing a house, but his explanation there is not very clear. We have already seen that a melody and a house are different in terms of their 'evidence' (indubitability). The judgment that *this is a house* is an evident immanent experience; the belief *that I am looking at a house* is given to my consciousness, making any doubt about it quite pointless. Yet I can never be certain that the house is objectively real. It might indeed be part of a film set, or perhaps be an illusion or a dream. The judgment that this is a house is dubitable in terms of its reality and therefore it belongs to transcendence.

Unlike the case of looking at a house, when I am listening to a melody I cannot doubt that I am listening to a melody or that listening to it gives me pleasure. But when I say the melody is part of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, the statement is then dubitable. This distinction, however, is not very clear in *The Idea of Phenomenology*.

There is another difficulty with the experience of looking at a house. Our previous explanation about the example of sound shows that the *reell* immanence – that is, the perceptions of individual parts of the house, such as a white wall, a red roof, etc. – has already undergone temporal constitution.

Specifically, the perceiving function of looking at a red roof can be broken down into shorter segments of "now". What will happen then? We are no longer able to establish the fundamental unit called *reell* immanence as introduced by Husserl.

This is a core issue of the well-known criticism of phenomenology raised by Jacques Derrida; and many readers may feel this criticism justified. Husserl argues that, despite apparent difficulties about this point, there is no problem with the phenomenological method itself. Yet he fails to give a definite answer to the criticism against the possibility of defining *reell* immanence as a fundamental unit. (This notwithstanding, I do not see this criticism as being acceptable, as briefly mentioned before. As this is an interesting issue, I go into further details in my Addendum: *Phenomenological Reduction and the Condition of Belief Formation* at the end of this book.)

As for the categorical judgment (abstract conception) in (2), such judgment as "is", "not," and "same" is a thinking act but it still has evidence. However, Husserl does not clarify his understanding of when (under what condi-

tions) a judgment is right or wrong. The point is that categorical judgments remain dubitable as objective cognition, but the givenness arising in immanence has its own evidence. It is always important that the distinction is established between indubitability of immanence and dubitability of objective being.

In (3) an emphasis is placed on the point that, though a troublesome problem seemingly persists, the essence of the problem of cognition can be located by carrying on essential studies in the sphere of *immanent consciousness* while abiding by the principle of phenomenological method.

What follows is a general overview of the phenomenological reduction method, which has already been repeatedly discussed.

Firstly, one must methodically give up (epochè) all the traditional ways of thinking according to the subject-object schema. Secondly, one must reduce everything into the sphere of *immanent consciousness* and study the *structure of givenness* of an object. One performs essential insight by means of phenomenological reduction and reflection. Thirdly, one can note that the basic structure consists of *reell* immanence and constituted immanence. Fourthly, one must clarify the structure of givenness in immanence and the evidence of givenness, and any enigma of cognition will be fully unraveled. The pursuit to be done by this method alone will form the fundamental principle theory for all the disciplines of science.

Husserl's book ends up with persisting puzzles, despite the readers' expectation of their complete solution. As I mentioned in the beginning, the enigma of cognition can be unraveled *only* when we step forward to reach the condition for forming inter-subjective belief, and after making sure of the condition for indubitability of the belief formed in our subject (immanence), but this book hardly mentions the important matter of inter-subjective belief. Nevertheless, it perfectly exhibits the leitmotif of phenomenological reduction and the procedures needed to carry it out. As for the entire course of unraveling the enigma of cognition, I should like the readers to consult my in-depth argument at the end of this book, which also includes the contemporary circumstances involving phenomenology.

Closing Essay

Phenomenological Reduction and the Condition for Belief Formation

In 5 Sections

1. Contemporary Thought and Phenomenology

It is perfectly usual for a certain philosophical theory to invite different interpretations. This is merely indicative of how an abundance of theories and discourses can be cultivated within free thinking. Regarding Husserl's notions of phenomenology and their acceptance/rejection, however, it does not seem to me that the response is merely the case of a natural and productive diversity of opinions and interpretations. More than this is going on. I hope I have established in this study what the case is: one of a systemic and fundamental misunderstanding.

Let me first present my general understanding of the subject in question. Husserl's brand of phenomenology has been faced with a number of virulent criticisms from different contemporary thinkers. With such a wide spectrum of harsh responses, belief in phenomenology as a valid philosophical theory has significantly declined since the mid-20th century. The key critics are the French post-modern thinkers, who introduced themselves as tough critics of French phenomenology, as well as some other scholars of contemporary analytical philosophy. The thinkers involved in positivistic social and cultural studies are also aggressive in their opposition to phenomenology, probably because the latter is seemingly critical of the positivistic humanities.

In short, phenomenology has been subjected to a strong criticism from contemporary thinkers who basically adopt the standpoint of relativism and from the school of positivism-oriented, allegedly 'scientific' human and cultural studies. This is a natural outcome, in a sense. As I have argued, Husserl dismisses the positivistic approach as one based absolutely on the old 'subject-object schema', as he does also the relativistic approach as it too relies on a non-correspondence between subject and object. Accordingly, criticism from both schools is, so to speak, counter-argumentation against the criticism of conventional epistemology that is offered by phenomenology.

What would you say, however, if all of these arguments derive from a serious misconception of the core theory of phenomenology? How would you respond if the approach to phenomenology that is advocated by Husserl involves a truly epoch-making philosophical advance, which these positivistic, post-modern and analytical philosophers were unable to attain?

I should like, firstly, to reexamine the general take on phenomenology that most of those criticisms operate from, and, secondly, to offer a new 'hypothesis' concerning the key idea of Husserl's version of phenomenology. I will then leave it to the fully informed reader to decide whether or not the contemporary criticism of phenomenology is justified.

*

The core idea of Husserl's phenomenology is that the so-called 'phenomenological reduction' is a valid method of analyzing the condition and structure of *belief formation*. My point is that only in this way of understanding phenomenology – Husserl's intended way – can one solve the puzzle of cognition, the most important problem for philosophy (as I thoroughly discuss in my commentaries on the Lectures).

As it appears to me, in the general understanding/criticism of phenomenology there is no acceptance that it (phenomenology) is an art of analyzing the condition for belief formation: that it is a universal theory about world belief. There is certainly a widely accepted interpretation that phenomenology is a theory about the *constitution* of the world. This term (world constitution) gives rise to a number of different interpretations. Crudely put, phenomenology has been understood to be a 20th-century version of the Kantian *theory of cognitive constitution*.

It is also generally accepted that the most central motif of Husserl's phenomenology is an ontological quest for the world and the self knowing it. Phenomenology seems to be interpreted as an attempt to address the enigma of

'being' in philosophy.

Yet this last misunderstanding is, on my view, destined to encounter a dual difficulty. Firstly, it locates phenomenology in the stream of traditional German-style 'metaphysics'. This has prompted the criticism from post-modern and positivistic thinkers that phenomenology has ambitions for a revival of obsolete metaphysics. Secondly, it (the misunderstanding) is absolutely incompatible with the method of phenomenology that aims at resolving the puzzle of cognition. This is because Husserl's approach in addressing the enigma of knowledge will eventually resolve the conventional enigma of being, namely metaphysics.

Accepting my argument to be true, why and how could the fundamental method of phenomenology have undergone such an extensive misunderstanding and misconception? I should like in this addendum to clarify this question while at the same time avoiding scholastic discussion as much as possible.

Husserl's phenomenology has been absorbed by such maestros of contemporary philosophy as Martin Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and JP Sartre, and it has achieved mainstream recognition in current thought. However, there were considerable deviations between philosophers in terms of their understanding and acceptance of Husserl's phenomenological method. This has made it quite difficult for a general audience to acquire a more or less consensual understanding regarding the import of phenomenology. (I myself was originally quite perplexed by the discrepancies we find between the different advocates/opponents of phenomenology and, as a consequence, was initially unable coherently to contemplate phenomenology in general.) We are, however, at last beginning to notice that there is a good reason for the difficulty in understanding Husserl's phenomenology.

There are several people said to be prominent disciples of Husserl: Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger, Eugen Fink and Ludwig Landgrebe, for example; yet even these few named have disagreed with each other regarding the import, meaning, and proper criticism of Husserl's phenomenological method. This general ambivalence is manifest even among those who learned directly from Husserl since his time in Freiburg, that is, among individuals such as Eugen Fink, Ludwig Landgrebe, Klaus Held, and Gerd Brand, not to speak of Scheler and Heidegger. Fink raises the following question regarding Husserl's notion of constitution.

'Husserl opened the dimension of absolute subjectivity by means of the fundamental method of reduction. All the objects in the world are 'constituted' in the course of the life of absolute subjectivity with intentionality. The constitution of the entities existing in the world is ascribed to this absolute subjectivity. (.....) What does constitution mean? (...) When Husserl receives the notion of constitution from the naïve use of the world and allocates to it new kinds of transcendental significances, all these significances for him are entangled together and vacillating' (Fink: *The Operational Concept in Husserl's Phenomenology* – translated into English from a Japanese translation).

Phenomenology is generally taken to be a theory about the constitution of the world or of an ego. Fink here points out that this notion of constitution vacillates in Husserl, with no exact definition of the word ever been given. He also argues that other key terms in Husserl's phenomenology – terms such as phenomenology, epochè, constitution, and transcendental logic – are not strictly defined, but should properly be called mere 'operational concepts'.

Landgrebe also raises an objection. I quote his argument (though it is a bit verbose) as it typically indicates the view of Husserl taken by the so-called 'orthodox' school of phenomenology.

'It is impossible to trace the in-depth analysis of 'living present' by Held and the unfolding of the puzzle of this living present. I may just say as follows. Husserl had always postponed the analysis of this deeper dimension in his earlier works, including *the First Philosophy*. However, only this analysis justifies the way he specifies transcendental subjectivity as absolute subjectivity. (...) The ultimately functioning ego is a standing-still-flowing ego-present or an absolute ego that is present for itself while flowing. (...) Simply see the fact that the ultimately functioning ego is characterized as such an absolute entity, and we understand the following. How is the question: 'in what sense is constitution spoken about here, it is to be a signifier or a creation?' legitimately linked with the characterization of the ultimately functioning ego mentioned above? Does the origin mean the ground for all the constituting functions that bring the given into being, or the ground for the given themselves?' (Landgrebe: *Reflection on Husserl's Constitution Theory* – translated from a Japanese translation)

The point of Landgrebe's argument is this. Husserl's later philosophy went beyond the theory of 'world constitution' (epistemology) and strayed into the realm of 'ego constitution' (ontology) as a ground for epistemology. In this

realm of pursuing an ultimate ego, however, Husserl's method of reducing everything to pure consciousness posed a fundamental problem. That is to say, a question whether ego is something to be constituted or a ground to constitute itself. Husserl's theory begins with the presupposition that *everything* is to be constituted. It would then entail that the ego is an object to be constituted and at the same time be a subject to constitute it. Accordingly, the phenomenology as a pursuit of ultimate ground would end up as paradox.

This 'limitation' of the phenomenological method in terms of ego-constitution is a questioning of Husserl's phenomenology that is common among the 'orthodox' phenomenologists, including Fink, Landgrebe and Held. Incidentally, Michel Foucault points out the same problem in his study, *The Order of Things*, saying that phenomenology is locked in the paradoxical circle of being simultaneously a subject to know and a subject to be known. Notwithstanding, I honestly suspect the correctness of this particular criticism of Husserl's phenomenology. Let me explain why.

An unfortunate thing about Husserl is that all of his brilliant students, despite their phenomenological background, were after World War II more or less sympathetic towards Heidegger's philosophy. Heidegger, who has been regarded as his most distinguished disciple, quickly distanced himself from Husserl's phenomenology on publishing '*Being and Time*'. He advocated his own ontology and eventually broke away from phenomenology. (Their well-known dispute and parting are reviewed in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article.)

Heidegger's ontology is, so to speak, a metaphysics of the 20th century in pursuit of a meaning or truth of being that could form a basis for human being. It sets about a quest for the grounds (being) that enable the self or consciousness. From the viewpoint of Heidegger's philosophy as such, Husserl's approach of reducing everything to pure consciousness, claiming that consciousness is a source of all insight, may not seem 'unfathomable' enough in terms of a philosophical quest for profoundness. The discontent with Husserl's phenomenology among his disciples probably resides in this context.

Are we able to capture a genuinely primordial source that substantiates our ego merely by reducing everything to pure consciousness and directly 'seeing' it? Could we not better say that the constitution of the world by my ego takes place in some deeper dimension (such as passivity, sub-consciousness, body, and being)? Could such deeper dimensions ever be grasped by the phenomenological ego? Such questions led those disciples of Husserl more or less to disapprove of and criticize his theory.

The claim that Husserl, in his later life, got deeply involved in the quest for the ground of being of 'ego', where he faced a critical limit, is the theory prevalent among the above-mentioned 'orthodox' scholars of phenomenology. Besides, this theory is widely accepted today in Japan as a legitimate understanding of phenomenology. As far as I can see, however, this general theory is derived from a fundamental misunderstanding (or lack of understanding) of the conception of Husserl's phenomenological reduction. Such a misunderstanding seems to me to be the main source of the harsh criticism found in contemporary thought.

There are two sides to the problem. First, this 'orthodox' interpretation of phenomenology does not appreciate that phenomenology is primarily a theory about the constitution of world certainty or 'belief'. This obscures Husserl's notion of phenomenological constitution as a *constitution of belief*, and leads to a belief that it 'vacillates' this way and that. Second, this misinterpretation by the orthodox school by and large takes the stance of Heidegger's ontology, with no adequate comprehension between the radical discrepancies between Husserl's phenomenology and Heidegger's ontology. As a result, they could not but interpret Husserl's teachings in a more or less distorted way.

Let us consider the first point in more detail.

On my view, the basic scheme of Husserl's phenomenology is quite succinct. Its three major theses are itemized as follows.

(1) In order to decipher the puzzle of cognition (present since the beginning of modern philosophy), there is no other way except adopting the stance of methodical solipsism and rejecting the subject-object schema. We call this the fundamental method of phenomenological reduction.

(2) This method reduces all of cognitions to beliefs in (held by) a subject. This reduction enables an analysis of the condition on which various cognitions (transcendence) can be constituted within immanence.

As this analysis is conducted by directly 'seeing' the immanence, it can be confirmed and updated by anyone as a creditable theory of cognition constitution, unlike such fictitious and unverifiable epistemologies as proposed by Kant and others.

The method of reducing all cognitions to world belief is also referred to as the method of reducing them to the *noematic* meaning (constituted immanence in *The Idea of Phenomenology*). This entails that phenomenology will be an essence theory about all kinds of formation or establishment of 'meaning'. Consequently, phenomenology will offer a basis for the general theory of 'sciences of essence', instead of sciences of facts.

Why did Husserl in his later years dedicate himself to the study of ego-constitution theory? It is because the presupposition of phenomenology (that any cognition is a constituted belief) necessarily leads to the two poles of 'world' and 'ego' as the objects of cognition. In this instance, it would be impossible in view of this methodological premise that his pursuit of 'ego' is to head in the direction of pursuing what substantiates the ego (ground of ego). Such a pursuit could allow a deviation of phenomenology to go into the unverifiable realm of metaphysics, which is a totally prohibited area for the phenomenology method, as will be discussed later.

Many 'legitimate' scholars of phenomenology point out the limit of Husserl's method, mainly because they see it from the viewpoint of ontology. Yet Husserl, if he had had the opportunity, would have said that those students failed to grasp the fundamental method of phenomenology and fatally deviated from its important principles.

Most obviously, their interpretation of phenomenology never helps one to understand why and how the method of phenomenological reduction is able to contribute to the unraveling of the enigma of cognition. In fact, there is no reference at all to this question among their arguments. Without understanding this, we shall never see why phenomenology carries great significance in modern epistemology, and, above all, why it would play a decisive role in our understanding of people and society.

From the standpoint of this misconception, phenomenology may be considered merely as metaphysics in quest of the ground of being, generally in vain. If phenomenology was a philosophy as understood by the so-called legitimate phenomenologists, there would be no reason for us contemporary people to particularly select it again and make it our key theme.

I should now like to show how Husserl's phenomenology as a theory of constitution of world belief succeeds in resolving the puzzle of cognition and discuss what kind of criticism has been derived from this failure to grasp the basic idea of Husserl.

2. The Condition for Belief Formation and the Resolution of the Puzzle of Cognition

The core of the phenomenological-reduction method is that it takes the position of methodical solipsism in order to solve the question of cognition. The aim is almost the same as Descartes' methodical skepticism that he came up with solely to refute all other skepticisms.

The methodical skepticism of Descartes was, however, not quite thoroughgoing in that it was not itself entirely free from the subject-object schema.

Solipsism in general contends that everything is what is perceived in the mind, and necessarily goes to dogmatism in contending with George Berkeley that, with no world existing, only the mind exists. In contrast, methodical solipsism does not give up belief in the world, but merely 'suspends' it methodologically. This leads to the idea that the entire existence of the world should be a belief or certainty within oneself.

Let us think about this idea from the aspect of the question of cognition.

Husserl repeatedly says in *The Idea of Phenomenology* that while the impossibility of correspondence between subject and object certainly teaches us the impossibility of absolutely objective cognition, how should we understand the objective knowledge accepted as the achievements of sciences and mathematics, or how should we think about valid or legitimate knowledge?

This question, according to Husserl, is answerable only by assuming the attitude of methodical solipsism. This is to say, that something considered as objective cognition is a *world belief* constituted under given conditions.

All of our knowledge is a belief constituted within our subject. We are able directly to ‘see’ the structure of constituting the belief, that is, the way it is constituted, its intensity and its mode by means of phenomenological reflection. By so doing, it can be a general theory of world belief that can be confirmed and verified by anybody.

Seeing the method of phenomenological reduction as being a general doctrine of world belief is not currently generally accepted. There are reasons for this, other than the orthodox acceptance of phenomenology mentioned above. Let us examine Husserl’s own words.

‘Already in Descartes’ *Meditations* (and this is precisely the reason why he was the epoch-making awakener of transcendental problematic) the insight was already prepared, namely, that, as far as the knowing ego is concerned, everything we declare to really be and to be-thus-and-so -- and finally this means the whole universe -- is only as something believed-in within subjective beliefs, and is-thus-and-so only as something represented, thought, and so on, as having this or that sense.’ (*Encyclopedia Britannica* article, translated by Thomas Sheehan *et al*)

Descartes’ *Meditations*, says Husserl, already includes the idea that what we consider as material substance and its objective nature – and therefore the whole universe as an object – is in fact our *belief* and is constructed intra-subjectively.

‘To be sure, that objects in the broadest sense (real physical things, subjective processes, numbers, states of affairs, laws, theories, and the rest) exist for me is a statement that says nothing immediately about evidence; it says only that objects are accepted by me – are, in other words, there for me as cogitate intended in the positional mode: certain believing.’ (*Cartesian Meditations*, translated by Dorion Cairns)

Here, Husserl says that not only material substance but also number, laws and ideas are all what is *valid for me*, namely the state of my belief. The terms ‘certainty in the positional mode’ may be interpreted as the particular intensities of various beliefs of objects. The same holds true for the following quotations.

‘Each is in the broadest sense an act of believing (*ein Vermeinen*) and thus there belongs to each some mode of certainty---straightforward certainty, surmise, holding-to-be-probable, doubting, etc.’ (§20 *The Crisis of the European Sciences*, translated by David Car, referred to below as *The Crisis*)

‘The life-world, for us who wakingly live in it, is always already there, existing in advance for use, the “ground” of all praxis whether theoretical or extra-theoretical. The world is pre-given to us, the waking, always somehow practically interested subjects, not occasionally but always and necessarily as the universal field of all actual and possible praxis, as horizon. To live is always to live-in-certainty-of-the-world’ (§37 *ibid*)

How then is the question of subject-object or the puzzle of cognition to be solved when everything is considered as ‘world belief’ (*Weltgewissheit*)?

Insofar as we take the natural attitude (worldview) that here is a subject and there is an object beyond it, the puzzle of correspondence reaches an impasse. If, on the contrary, we consider an object (transcendence) as a belief-of-an-object (world certainty or world belief) formed in *immanent consciousness*, the question of correspondence can be answered, as this certainty or belief can be called an objective cognition, provided that this is proved to be an absolute certainty (evidence) for anybody.

Some people may raise here the objection that it is merely a common certainty shared by us humans. Exactly so: a universal certainty established between humans is exactly the essence of what we call an objective cognition.

Such a question may come from the approach of viewing the world as a ‘thing in itself’, or in the way of ‘noumenalism’ depending on the subject-object schema. This question will never disappear unless we abandon and replace the noumenalistic way of thinking.

We can say from the epistemological point of view that, insofar as we adhere to the subject-object schema and presume some absolute truth or object, we shall never be able to solve the question why there are so many different thoughts and opinions in the world.

According to Husserl, correspondence can be found between something considered as transcendence and immanence, but not between subject and object. Differently put, we do not know how perception reaches or corresponds to a transcendent object, but we can see 'how perception reaches the immanence' (Lecture III-3 of *The Idea of Phenomenology*), by means of purely immanent reflective perception, namely phenomenologically reduced perception.

Perception here represents cognition of an object. Cognition of an object does not coincide with the transcendent (the object itself). It coincides with the immanent, namely the immanence (*noema*) constituted in consciousness. On the contrary, something transcendent is established as our belief of an object.

Let me give a concrete example. We cannot prove that our genuine or *reell* perception (cognition) of roundness, redness and gloss objectively corresponds to an apple. This is a basic schema of epistemology indicating the principle of non-correspondence between subject and object. On the other hand, an intentional object ('this is an apple') or belief of an object is built on the basis of *reell* perception of redness and roundness. This is what Husserl intended in saying the object of perception corresponds to the immanent.

This correspondence holds only as a belief or certainty and therefore always remains dubitable, because the apple might be fake or a dream-image. If this belief becomes unquestionable for me first, and then equally so for anyone else (more exactly speaking, if it is such a belief or certainty for me and everyone else is absolutely certain about it too with thus inter-subjective certainty), my belief may be called objective or valid knowledge.

Newtonian dynamics had been accepted by all as genuine/valid, and the associated knowledge had been applied to numerous human facts and practices, but only so until a certain point of time. It is now replaced with the findings of relativity theory and quantum physics. It is not that Newtonian dynamics was an erroneous theory. It was, and remains, a theory *valid only for the terrestrial space*. When human activities have begun to extend to outer space, a new way of viewing the world has been required to establish a new system of communal knowledge.

We can thus say that what we have so far taken as objective knowledge is nothing like an absolute 'truth' that is given by ascertaining the correspondence between subject and object, but is some knowledge or cognition that provides conditions in which someone's belief about some matter or being can turn into everyone's belief. This is what Husserl clarified in terms of the matter of correspondence.

The example of Newtonian dynamics is the simplest one, but the structure is always the same for all kinds of human knowledge. Basically, this approach can and does solve the question of cognition.

As has been repeatedly discussed, however, Husserl does not give a complete explanation about his approach in *The Idea of Phenomenology*. The problem is as follows.

In order to ensure a correctly phenomenological analysis of the question of cognition, it is first of all necessary to persist in the practice of reducing all cognition to the belief-constitution of a subject and examining the conditions for such a constitution. This alone, however, can merely analyze the condition for intra-subjective belief or certainty about the cognition of an object.

A second step is required: that of clarifying the conditions in which the intra-subjective belief turns into an inter-subjective belief. This second step is *not* described in *The Idea of Phenomenology*, and therefore, it is not clear why Husserl's method of reduction based on the methodical solipsism is able completely to elucidate the question of cognition. Husserl thus becomes deeply involved in the problem of constitution of the other ego in and beyond *Cartesian Meditations* translated by Dorion Cairns)

Let us reserve this problem for later discussion. Here, I should like to refer to another important point of the phenomenological reduction method that has scarcely been brought into focus by other thinkers.

We are all able to know the condition for belief constitution by means of phenomenological reflection, and therefore to attain an inner structure common to us all by confirming the belief with each other. Although this is the

primarily basic premise of phenomenological reduction, most critics of Husserl seem to be quite ignorant about this fundamental aspect.

In *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenology Philosophy* (referred to below as *Ideas Pertaining*) Husserl names two major condition for validity (certainty or belief) of perceptual things, one being that the object is given as a perceptual representation (*vorstellung*), or, more exactly, that the object is perceived with the structure of actuality, adumbrations and horizons. The other condition is that the belief of the object thus constituted remains with a continuous harmony.

‘To their (perceptions’) essence belongs the ideal possibility of their changing into determinately ordered continuous multiplicities of perception which can always be continued, thus which are never completed. It is then inherent in the essential structure of those multiplicities that they bring about the unity of a harmoniously presentive consciousness and, more particularly, of the one perceptual physical thing appearing ever more perfectly, from ever new sides, with an ever greater wealth of determinations.’ (§42 *Ideas Pertaining*, translated by F. Kersten)

It is essential that we are all able check to see if Husserl is really right here, or not, by means of our own inner reflection. So let us try it for ourselves.

Suppose I am looking at an apple. When I assume the attitude of phenomenological reduction, I can just say I see something red, round and glossy. If the image of this something is given to me with vividness or actuality, adumbration and horizon, I shall consider it as an image of the actually perceived object. I cannot but believe this is an apple that really exists (i.e., have a belief in it).

I then touch the apple and find it to be a very accurately made replica. Now my belief that this is an apple will lose its ‘continuous harmony’ and I will now profess: ‘This is not a real apple.’ That is to say, insofar as a certain perceptual image of an object is given to provide an overall belief (*noema*) about what the object is, *and insofar as* this image remains in continuous harmony, I can persist in my belief that this is certainly an apple. This is the essential structure of constituting a belief or certainty about a perceivable object.

Whoever conducts such inner reflection can get the same structure and condition for reaching such belief, though the way of stating the matter may well vary from person to person. This is what we call the essential structure. If the structure were different between individuals, what could happen? The answer is simple. If someone’s structure of belief is different from that of someone else, they do not mutually share the same reality and order of the world. In this event, they live two different worlds.

Is it so bizarre? Not particularly. We all know by intuition that the structure for belief of objects may be considerably different between normal people and young children or those who suffer mental disturbances. This fact tells us that most of us share the same structure and condition for belief about physical things with one another. This mutual participation of the belief structure is exactly the ground for the widely accepted objectivity of natural-scientific knowledge.

This also gives us a clear account of the important question of why studies in the humanities hardly ensure objectivity of knowledge, as commonly occurs in the natural sciences. The reason is obvious from the viewpoint of phenomenology.

The disciplines of the humanities do not investigate the objects of natural sciences as a physics of the natural world and the order of scientific relations. Instead, they focus on the *relations* in humans and their societies, the meanings and values created in them, the order of languages and art, historical interpretations, etc. The structure for belief of objects in these fields varies immensely, depending on the views on human beings and values of the observers themselves and the culture they belong to. This makes it extremely difficult for them to establish any commonly shared cognition among themselves.

If human cognition was limited to dealing with physical things, there would be no room for the skeptical question of cognition. Knowledge about physical things has been empirical long before the emergence of the modern natural sciences. Incorrect or erroneous knowledge (which could not by its nature develop into any mutual agreement)

has been filtered out by the numerous processes of practical verification.

This does not hold for the knowledge about various meanings or essences of things or matters. Ever since philosophical ideas emerged in human consciousness, there has been no mutually agreed knowledge about 'being' and the world. Despite this, the pursuit of mutual agreement (common knowledge) has been incessantly carried out in the form of questioning if any truth (genuine knowledge) exists and in the studies on cognitive methods to attain truth, namely epistemology.

The method of phenomenology is the first approach capable of completely solving this puzzling question of cognition in a manner that conventional philosophy, whether Western or Oriental, has not thought of. However, one cannot grasp the significance of this solution of the question of cognition unless the phenomenological method is first accepted as an analysis of the condition for the formation of world belief.

There is a common and general criticism of phenomenology that it is essentially solipsism, as it reduces everything in the world to the dimension of consciousness. This kind of misconception is rooted in a fatal lack of understanding that the scheme of phenomenology is a process of moving on from the constitution of transcendental subject to inter-subjective constitution.

'The following insight was already included in *Cartesian Meditations* in its preliminary state. Whatever we insist as something <that exists in reality> or <that exists as such>, and therefore eventually the whole universe is for a cognizing ego something that exists insofar as it is believed in subjective belief.' (*Britannica Article* translated by Thomas Sheehan et al.)

Analysis of transcendental subjectivity (or clarification of the condition for formation of transcendental inter-subjectivity) is, Husserl says, a key task for acquiring genuine knowledge of the transcendent in the world (substantial things, matters and ideas), namely knowledge of being of all the things and the meaning of the being itself.

As has been discussed, if world belief merely ends up with the reduction of a transcendental subject, it would be only the analysis of the condition for 'my' world belief. My natural world belief is sustained only by its being parallel to that of others in the world. This is because the theory of world certainty or belief has to go forward from the condition for a belief or certainty in myself to the condition a belief in others. This must be obvious to anyone.

We should remember here that the process of this belief of others itself must be accomplished as a process of belief of my subject.

Perhaps reduction to the transcendental ego only *seems* to entail a *permanently* solipsistic science; whereas the consequential elaboration of this science, in accordance with its own sense, leads over to a phenomenology of transcendental inter-subjectivity and, by means of this, to a universal transcendental philosophy (§13 *Cartesian Meditations*)

Here we see the very marrow of Husserl's phenomenology as methodical solipsism.

What Husserl asserts here is not that phenomenology parts from solipsism at a certain point of time. Methodical solipsism must be thoroughly unfolded in line with its intrinsic significance. This alone enables phenomenology to analyze the condition for reaching communal and universal belief and to elucidate the essence of the question of cognition, so as to allow phenomenology to evolve into a universal theory of essence.

We could not find any coherence in Husserl's theory of inter-subjectivity, unless we take it as the methodical solipsism that assumes everything in the world as world belief so as to examine the possibility of universal cognition. Whoever fails to grasp this methodological principle could only discover in phenomenology an apparition lingering in pursuit of the ultimate source of being of metaphysical ego or other egos.

Part of the *Crisis* indicates how Husserl elaborated the problem of the analysis of cognition as a theory about the belief of other subjects 'within' the belief of a subject or ego. I offer below my own interpretation or deciphering of this, so that you can check with reference to Husserl's original text.

<Hyper-paraphrase: Let us see the question discussed above in more radical way. Looking back, we have in our tran-

scendental pursuit depicted the transcendental ego certainly as an ego pole constituting itself against the world as an object. This was too simple a way of description in a sense.

We were yet unable fully to deal with the problem of the constitution of communal certainty, in which the meaning of ego alters in such a manner that a solitary ego turns into the other ego, that is, myself being among 'us'.

'In connection with this, what was lacking was the phenomenon of the change of signification of [the form] 'I' ---just as I am saying 'I right now --- into 'other I's,' into 'all of us', we who are many 'I's', and among whom I am but one 'I'. What was lacking, then, was the problem of the constitution of inter-subjectivity---this 'all of us' --- from my point of view, indeed 'in' me' (§54 *The Crisis*)

<Hyper-paraphrase: Now I cannot but direct attention to this problem, as the following question arises: Who are 'we' as a set of subjects to form communal world certainty? How can our belief be constituted? This is the next question coming forth. I should say that, as far as we properly comprehend the fundamental principle of phenomenological method, it will take the following course.

First there must be a constitution of belief that the other person is a substantial human existence, one based on the perceptual recognition of the existence of this person. This belief then extends to a further belief that he or she exists not only as a physical entity but as a personal existence. This belief of personal existence includes a process of identifying him or her, for instance as the person I have been acquainted with, and there should take place in that person, as well as in me, a constitution of a shared belief.>

[Original English Version:] 'Here it is a case of inquiries proceeding from real human being back to their 'manners of givenness,' their manners of 'appearing,' first of all in perceptual appearance, i.e., in the mode of original self-givenness, of manners of harmonious verification and correction, of identification through recognition as the same human person: as the person previously known 'personally' to us, the same one of whom other speak, with whom they also have become acquainted etc' (ibid)

Let me particularize these gradations of belief:

(1) Subjective belief:

This is my inner belief in the being of an object ('it exists'), or in its mode of being ('it exists in this or that way'), which is applicable only to me.

In such case as you have experienced some supernatural phenomena in which nobody else seems to believe, witnessed a ghost, doppelganger, UFO or some such impossible event, or have a firm belief that is shared by nobody else, such belief could not be called inter-subjective belief.

(2) Communal belief:

This is a firm belief or conviction established necessarily between me and someone else: a secret shared by two alone; e.g., an illusion of eternal, absolute mutual love. Otherwise, it is a belief shared by multiple people such as community folklore, sailors' legends, justice in community; more typically, a strong faith in ethnic gods. The faiths found in world religions are, of course, also communal belief. World views and values often provide a widely accepted communal belief.

(3) Universal belief:

This is a belief or certainty about things or matters that people having normal reasoning ability naturally attain when given sufficient evidence or reason. Among such everyday 'self-evident' matters is the knowledge that 'people die', 'the sun rises', 'touching the fire can cause a burn', 'iron is harder than wood', and so on.

A communal belief (such as a world religion) is shared by a great many people and may potentially expand further. Yet it is never equipped with the inner condition for turning into a universal belief. The limitation lies in the nature of religious doctrine itself (as religions are originated in narratives).

In counter distinction, the cognition found in the natural sciences and in mathematics offers inner ground for building a universal belief. Although, of course, there is always a gray area along their marginal zones, the scientific achievements have established in their center zones a vast area of universal belief that any rational person must admit as justifiable. This cannot therefore be a communal cognition governed by custom, as suggested by David Hume. No matter how many people share a communal belief, it has no inner condition for turning itself into a universal belief.

The point is that, while cognition in one area always remains communal, cognition in another area can be a universal belief. The condition and grounds for attaining universal belief can be brought to light only by way of insight into the structure of evidence in the sphere of immanence through phenomenological reflection.

As Husserl emphasizes, this latter cannot be attained in the naturalistic sciences, because the subject-object schema is there *presupposed*. Contemporary thought, such as is found in post-modern and analytical linguistic philosophies, equally fails in this respect, as it adopts skepticism and logical relativism as its basic method.

3. Criticisms of Phenomenology and 'Prior Constitution'

I believe the foregoing description makes it clear that phenomenological epistemology, which is to ground valid or genuine cognition, has nothing to do with grounding so-called objective cognition or pure 'truth'.

Husserl, however, often mentions 'grounding exact knowledge', 'grounding universal sciences' and 'ultimate grounding of sciences': this kind of expression leaves room for the interpretation of phenomenology as a quest for the ultimate source of being.

There have to date been few theories that accept (as I do) phenomenology as a general analysis of the structure of certainty in terms of world belief. In many cases, it has rather been interpreted as a doctrine about the ultimate origin of consciousness, ego and being.

This is clear from reading texts written by Europe's leading scholars of phenomenology, including Fink, Landgrebe, Klaus Held, Antonio Aguirre, Gerd Brand, Michael Theunissen, Heinrich Rombach, and Paul Ricoeur. Most of these thinkers more or less share the argument that, while the intent of phenomenology is certainly grand in its pursuit of the source of world and ego, this pursuit has its limitation in that everything is reduced to the sphere of absolute consciousness.

That is, the common criticism of phenomenology is that its method faces serious limitation in its pursuit of absolute origin or ultimate source in the sphere of absolute consciousness or pure consciousness.

'At any rate, we still have the following question regarding Husserl's phenomenology. (...) There should be no such philosophy that, as a human philosophy, could completely free all of its concepts from the shadow and possess them on their own, and that is illuminated by the crystal-clear, universally penetrating light of truth.' (Fink: *The operational concept in Husserl's phenomenology* [translated from the Japanese translation]).

'Consequently, phenomenological reflection may be understood as an attempt to infinitely approximate to such limit situation. That is, the attempt of phenomenological reflection is promoted and sustained by the fixed idea that it is able to reach the limit situation. Such an attempt aims at obtaining an endless series of results by experiencing the primordial nearness and primordial brightness as a start of remoteness and as a start of concealment.' (Held: *The Puzzle of <Living Present>* [translated from the Japanese translation]).

'That the place of ultimate grounding is subjectivity and that all transcendence is dubitable only with immanence being indubitable will in turn be dubitable immediately when *cogito* itself is found to be exposed to exhaustive criticism which phenomenology applies to all kinds of phenomena from separate perspectives.' (Ricoeur, *Phenomenology and Hermeneutics* [translated from the Japanese translation]).

A greater problem arises from this situation. Criticism of Husserl such as the above has led commentators to the general assertion that phenomenology roots itself somewhere in the sphere of pure consciousness (in a quest for some absolute source and origin). This interpretation eventually led to the view of contemporary thinkers, who see phenomenology as a current or updated version of metaphysics.

'The most general form of our question is formulated as follows. I wonder if the requirements which are met by phenomenological necessity, the strictness and precision of Husserl's analysis and his analysis itself, that we have to meet first of all, may, nonetheless, hide some sort of metaphysical premises. They may secretly embrace some dogmatic or speculative coalescence.' (Derrida: *Voice and Phenomena* [translated from the Japanese translation]).

'Under necessity of discovering something of which apodictic truth can be spoken, Russell uncovered his logical form and Husserl his 'essence', that is, a purely formal aspect which remains even after the non-formal aspects of the world are bracketed. The efforts for austerity, pureness and strictness started again with this discovery of privileged representations. The efforts have lasted for almost 40 years since then.' (Rorty: *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* [translated from the Japanese translation]).

'Accordingly, phenomenology is much more than the restoration of old Western rational goal, but is nothing other than an extremely clear and consistent formal proof of a deep gap developed in modern <episteme> around the turn between the 17th and 17th centuries. (...) This is why phenomenology was always induced to various questions, or the very question of ontology, though it had been initiated by reduction to *cogito*. To our eyes, the phenomenological projection seems to be under disassembly into two, one the description of experiences which are empirical against its intention and the other, ontology of unthought things which keep the superiority of *cogito* outside the circuit.' (Foucault: *The order of things* [translated from the Japanese translation]).

Most critics imply that Husserl sought some absolute source and origin of being human and attempted to locate this in the area of pure consciousness, totally in vain. Our consciousness is already 'constituted' by a great many things. The essence of consciousness or ego is certainly a key theme in the pursuit of comprehending human nature, but we are unable to uncover it in the area of pure consciousness. Instead, should we not strive to find what sustains and enables such consciousness or ego? Or, is such pursuit of ultimate origin perhaps impossible?

In any event, we cannot have access to a deep dimension of human beings by directly 'seeing' the consciousness, that is, by means of a solipsistic approach. I call this central issue of their arguments a criticism based on prior-constitution theory, or a prior-constitution criticism. The philosopher who first introduced this prior-constitution criticism of Husserl's phenomenology is Martin Heidegger.

'By showing how all sight is grounded primarily in understanding (the circumspection of concern is understanding as common sense (*Verständigkeit*), we have deprived pure intuition [*Anschauung*] of its priority, which corresponds noetically to the priority of the present-at-hand in traditional ontology. 'Intuition' and 'thinking' are both derivatives of understanding, and already rather remote ones. Even the phenomenology 'intuition' of essences [*Wesensschau*] is grounded in existential understanding' (§31 *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson)

Here Heidegger reviews and analyzes the world surrounding people (the environmental world) not from a general objective viewpoint, but from his original standpoint of existentialism.

It is here to be noted that Heidegger's approach is an existentialistic application of the phenomenological reduction method of reducing the natural attitude to a consciousness-related view. While Husserl reduces a substantial object to a phenomenon of consciousness, the substantial objects surrounding us (people) are taken by Heidegger as a correlate with our 'concern' (interest, desire and concern in our daily life), something central to human existence.

According to Heidegger, all those things around us reveal their being and meaning in dependence on our concern. A desk in front of my eyes, for example, from the objective point of view is a presence-at-hand (*Vorhandensein*) of such and such a size, of this or that material and in this or that design. On the other hand, from the ontological view, it is a readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandensein*) that can be 'a bit too low, unstable, or just fit as a stepstool' when I

want to change the light bulb on the ceiling. When a robber breaks into this room, it could be something too heavy for a weapon, but usable for blocking the door. Ontologically speaking, a thing becomes a presence-at-hand that reveals its own meaning of existence depending on my care and concern. Grasping the meaning of the object from the viewpoint of concern is called *existential understanding*.

Heidegger contends that the phenomenological intuition of essence gained by directly ‘seeing’ consciousness is in fact not primordial, as it is based on the world understanding developed in connection with the existential concern of humans. The phenomenological intuition or insight is thus deprived of its predominance over the existential approach. Existential concern is exactly that which enables objectifying the world by means of consciousness.

This argument may ring quite convincingly. Interestingly enough, philosophers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty came up with the idea that all objects reveal their being and meaning(s) in correlation with will-to-power, concern and body. I myself call this idea ‘desire-correlativity’. In view of this, Husserl’s approach could be said to remain only in the stage of consciousness-correlativity. As far as this point is concerned, Nietzsche and Heidegger might well have advanced Husserl’s principle a step forward.

This, however, is only half true. The view of desire-correlativity certainly goes one step beyond Husserl’s consciousness-correlativity as a philosophical principle. Despite that, the principle of desire-correlativity can never be predominant over consciousness-correlativity. The point is that Heidegger’s argument here takes the form of typical prior-constitution criticism. And it is invalid for criticism of phenomenology.

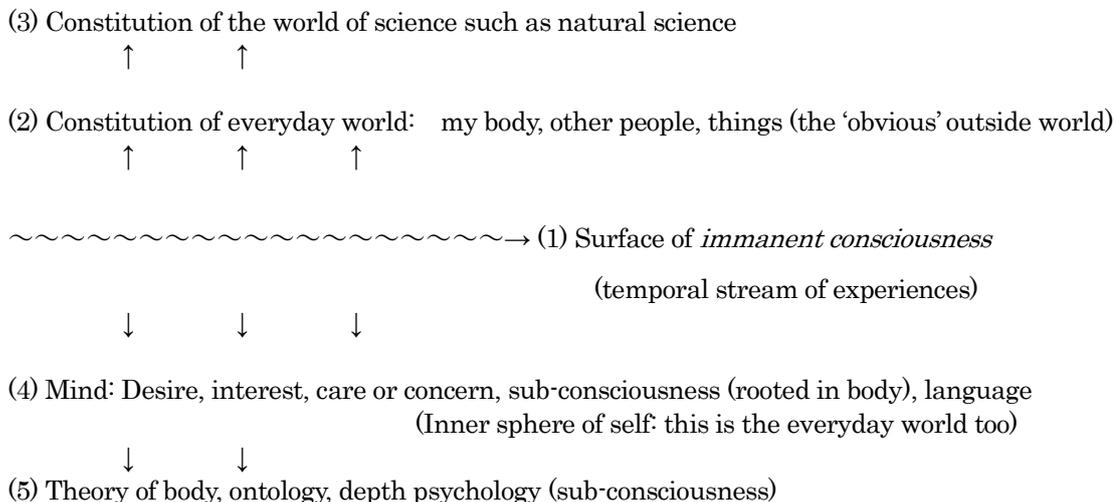
Why is this so? There are two reasons. First, Husserl’s method of phenomenological reduction makes it a core theme to resolve the traditional question of cognition. As far as this aim is concerned, Husserl’s approach of reducing everything to belief of objects is the most fundamental one. The scheme of desire-correlativity suggested by Nietzsche and Heidegger is unable to solve the problem of cognition.

Another more important reason is that, while the method of essential insight can be derived from the principle of phenomenological reduction, the insight of desire-correlativity is made possible only by using essential insight as a fundamental method.

The elaborate existential analysis by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty has been enabled only by relying upon Husserl’s method of essential insight, as seen in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, which analyzes the essence of World-hood of world, In-being (existence) and death, as well as Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of the essence of body, human or world, which is not just a material entity but an existential being for individual persons.

I offer below a diagrammatic view of the general constitution of world cognition from the phenomenological point of view, so as to demonstrate the invalidity of this prior-constitution criticism (which claims that Husserl’s approach is merely a consciousness-centered solipsism and is unable to analyze some deeper dimension that enables the consciousness).

Diagram showing the general constitution of world cognition



(1) Sphere of *immanent consciousness*: Surface of *immanent consciousness* with temporal stream of mental process. Any single person keeps his/her own current self in this stream of mental process. Husserl's terms are 'transcendental subject', 'pure consciousness', 'pure ego' etc. with subtle difference in nuance.

(2) Our everyday world constituted with the consciousness experience in (1). Obvious world with firm beliefs about various things, human relations and the relationship of meaning between those things and people. No one doubts the being-ness of apples, desks, houses, buildings and nature in front of one's eyes.

(3) The scientific world verbally describing the overall order of causal relations in the natural world, established by scientific observations of daily phenomena. Typical of this are the natural sciences. Communal knowledge (universal belief) is developed over a vast area by incessantly making hypotheses, evidencing and verifying. Yet they are 'transcendence' in principle. They never reach any ultimately genuine cognition in principle. They are always general cor-relatives with human desires and interests, or collective, inter-subjective images of people's belief about the world.

(4) Mental world with desire, interest, concern, and the sub-consciousness (body-ness). Just as a belief in a house, a natural entity, a town, people or the like, is created from a bundle of various perceptions, we constitute a being of our mind as a substantial image from our various living experiences. We cannot see our mind, but still posit it as an indubitable substance and are certain about this positing. The contents in it are desire, interest, concern, characters, sub-consciousness, language ability, etc.

(5) The sciences that focus on the body as an obvious physical existence are physiology and medical science. Objective sciences that focus on the mind as an obvious existence are depth psychology, a theory about body, ontology and logics, if it refers to language ability.

This diagram will, in my belief, make clearer the reason why Husserl insisted on locating the foundation of all sciences within the domain of phenomenological essence studies in *immanent consciousness*.

First, the entire world obvious to us – namely, the realities of our daily world – are constantly being constituted on the surface of (1) *immanent consciousness* (a stream of mental process). The structure of indubitability is dominant here, so that no one does and can doubt the being and reality of this world. Second, we are also scientifically constituting, again constantly, the overall image of the world from innumerable data accumulated in this daily world. This scientific world is in nature transcendent too, and is always subject to some dubitability (potential alteration).

As I have repeatedly said, a broad-range universal belief can be established in the area of the natural sciences (3), but in the humanities (such as depth psychology and ontology), it is impossible to build a widely accepted universal belief as it is in the natural sciences. This is because studies within the humanities deal with the ambiguously-varying order of meanings and relations, instead of the order of unequivocally describable sensory materials, as we find in the natural sciences.

In any case, I should like to particularly note what those criticisms based on prior-constitution attempt to suggest by contending that phenomenology has thrown away the deeper dimension (prior-constituted part) enabling consciousness by reducing everything to consciousness.

Husserl adopts the method of reducing everything to the level of *immanent consciousness* because we must be aware that our everyday life of natural sort constituted in this sphere and the scientific world as its methodical modes both essentially belong to transcendence (belief constituted), that is, to the world of '*doxa*' (knowledge by conjecture).

Modern humanities (the domain of (5)) launched themselves with a conviction that the use of a natural-scientific approach could enable them to create 'universal cognition', in view of the successfully spreading universal cognition we find in the domain of the natural sciences. This was a grave misconception. They have failed to understand that there are critical differences in the essence or nature of the objects of cognition between the domain of nature (3) and the domain of mind (5). The result is an eruption of numerous contending theories. This is what Husserl emphatically pointed out in *The Crisis*.

The objects cognized by the natural sciences are physical things, that is, things essentially related with human physicality. Instead, the humanities study mind, society, cultural affairs and etc., abstractions that are all involved with individual views on people and the world. Whereas the former field has a potential for the development of an intensive communal cognition, there can be little unequivocal communal cognition in the latter.

According to the major arguments of many kinds of 'prior-constitution' criticisms, there is something constituting 'pure consciousnesses' prior to itself. The pursuit of this prior-constituted 'something' should be materially important, but phenomenology which clings to consciousness-centrism could not achieve this task.

Those criticisms, however, fail to understand Husserl's stated principle to *exclude* the subject-object schema, wherein he insists, insofar as any social or cultural science starts from transcendence, there must arise contending theories based on doxastic deduction, with no potential for universal cognition.

As noted, there are two major streams of criticism of phenomenology: one from contemporary thought saying that the consciousness-centrism of phenomenology is a sort of metaphysics in quest of an absolute source or origin of *Being*. The other is the phenomenologists' own criticism that phenomenology is unable to reach a deeper dimension of *Being* as mentioned above. Both of those criticisms are wrong, but not just wrong. The method of phenomenology itself should be a radical criticism against such contemporary skepticism/relativism and metaphysical dogmatism.

Many Japanese scholars of phenomenology adopt the views of the allegedly orthodox school of phenomenology, which accepts and criticizes Husserl in accordance with Heidegger's interpretation. Heidegger argues against Husserl from the viewpoint of *Being* as a primordial ground to enable the *Being* of overall entities. Let me give an example.

'Against the relative existence of transcendent objects, the consciousness is considered to define itself as such an absolute existence with which 'thinking about it as impossible is a paradox' (...) This is a source of misunderstanding after all.

In connection with this, the description about absoluteness of consciousness prior to reduction is in itself contradictory to the authentic nature of reduction. Naturally, to discuss the essence of consciousness prior to reduction is (...) based on the self-reflectivity of the phenomenological method. The problem is not in the preliminary investigation into the nature of consciousness to attain the possibility of reduction but in Husserl's attempt to preemptively define the absoluteness of consciousness so as to thematize consciousness in terms of its absoluteness.' (Nitta, Yoshihiro: *What is phenomenology?* Written and published in Japanese in 1992. The quoted passage was translated into English by K. Isobe)

Briefly speaking about Nitta's acceptance of phenomenology, in his later years Husserl tried exhaustively to explore the ultimate source of consciousness, ego and Being, to face the methodological limit after all. Here too we see a heritage of the basic view of 'orthodox' phenomenologists who mostly rely on Heidegger's understanding and criticism of phenomenology.

Nitta sees the problem in that Husserl defined consciousness as an absolute existence where 'thinking about it as impossible is a paradox' and that 'he also attempted to preemptively define the absoluteness of consciousness' so as to thematize consciousness in terms of its absoluteness. In short, Nitta claims that the problem with the phenomenological method is that it groundlessly presupposes the absoluteness of consciousness.

It can readily be seen that this objection by Nitta tacitly uses as a support the argument made by Landgrebe and Held that the absoluteness or primordial nature of consciousness must be examined, but consciousness itself is unable to do so, because consciousness can never be an absolute origin, but is always constituted by something else prior to its existence.

What Husserl means by saying that in consciousness, 'thinking about it as impossible is a paradox' is rather simple: it refers to the fundamental principle that what is reflected upon in the sphere of consciousness is intrinsically indubitable as an object of immanence. When I feel that this cup of coffee tastes good, there is no point of doubting that this experience may not exist. The absolute indubitability of immanence is no such a hypothetic assumption as preemptive definition, but can be confirmed by anybody by means of the reflective method. The phenomenological method started with this primal cognition that anyone is able to verify. If you say this is questionable, you may return to skepticism, which doubts everything and denies the standpoint of phenomenology altogether.

In summary, they presuppose that there must be something more primordial 'prior' to consciousness, against

the idea that consciousness is an absolute origin. They therefore blame Husserl for his alleged premise of absoluteness of consciousness. I cannot help but say they are mistaken about both the basic method of phenomenology and the notion of absoluteness of consciousness itself.

Another counter-argument given below also contains a typical misconception about the method of phenomenology.

I must admit that ego (I) exists. There is no necessary reason for this, though. It is so just as a fact. (...) This 'fact' is the most primordial fact sustaining all the constitutions, which Husserl called proto-fact. That I exist is above all a proto-fact. However, that there pre-exists the time/world that makes me exist is also the most primordial proto-fact (Tani, Toru: *This is Phenomenology*, written and published in Japanese. The quoted passage was translated into English by K. Isobe)

The 'pre-existence' referred to by Tani means some existence that prior-constitutes the ego as a proto-fact. Let me paraphrase what he contends. That we all have our own ego (consciousness) is an absolutely unquestionable fact. Despite this, the fact that we have our ego should also indicate another absolutely unquestionable fact: that this ego and the time and the world sustaining (or enabling) it all exist with absolute certainty.

Tani may imply that, though objects can certainly be reduced to a subject (ego), the subject is made possible only by the objects (time/world), as these are the most primordial proto-fact. That is to say, the subject is prior-constituted by the time and the world. In fact, what Tani means by 'proto-fact' is totally different from what Husserl intends. Here is found a typical 'mata-basis' (a confusion due to the failure to make a clear distinction between the objective and the phenomenological attitude), one that Husserl repeatedly warned against.

What Husserl actually means by proto-fact is the proto-fact of the phenomena of consciousness. In phenomenology, we have to methodically stay in this field of consciousness and should not go beyond it. This is the principle of epoché. Another reason why Husserl refers to proto-fact is that, regarding what we 'see' in the phenomena of consciousness, we can never know its source or ultimate cause. This sphere should therefore be the primal or 'proto' sphere for all cognitions where only inference could serve to inquire as to its cause.

The 'proto-fact' referred to by Tani that enables ego/consciousness as a pre-existence is nothing but transcendence (from the phenomenological standpoint). If you set consciousness against world to purport that the world is a pre-existence prior-constituting consciousness, you would revert to the subject-object schema. This would be by no means acceptable as an explication of phenomenology.

The immediately succeeding description about Heidegger and Levinas made by Tani is quite curious too. Heidegger, for instance, considered *Being* as *es gibt* = it gives (as a gift). *Being* is not what a subject constitutes, but 'gives' the subject itself. It is therefore said that the authentic or genuine attitude to be assumed by humans is gratitude and thinking about this fact.

On the contrary, Levinas counters that human existence is nothing like a gift from *Being*, but is rather the subject's escape from the uncomfortable state named *il y a*. For him, *Being* is neither gift nor deprivation, but exists just by chance. Fink, on the other hand, regarded *Being* both as gift and deprivation. Here is no necessity either. 'Proto-fact is interpreted in such diverse ways' (Tani, *ibid*).

The thinkers named here all contemplate on the question: what is *Being*. Husserl would say their contemplations are all their personal efforts, and have little to do with something universal. I do not think it nonsense to ponder such things as *Being* and existence (metaphysics). The diversity of the way people grasp the meaning of human life and existence is a significant part of the contemporary humanities or studies on the human condition in general.

It is obvious that such criticism of the phenomenological method in the angle of metaphysical speculation is totally pointless. Even if such a Metaphysics of Being is not necessarily entirely meaningless, it should lead to varying interpretations of *Being*, which will result in infinite unproductively pedantic disputes, and a situation in which people are not aware of the reason that such diversity arises.

4. Limit Line of Indubitability

Now let me handle another 'prior-constitution' criticism that I reserved for this addendum.

In Lecture V, Husserl discusses the structure of 'constitution' of temporal objects such as sound/melody, where the elements of 'past' (= memory), besides those of 'now' are incorporated to constitute an experience of listening to a melody. To put it strictly, this temporal structure of perception is found not only in the simple case of melody, but in any kind of cognitive experience. The experience of looking at a house, for instance, is associated with temporal factors too. This finding may however encompass a difficult problem in view of Husserl's theory of constitution.

We have so far understood that an intentional object of 'a house of this and that character' is constituted as an integration or synthesis of genuine or *reell cogitationes* (perceptions) of white wall, red roof and glass windows. Here, the white wall and red roof are *reell* elements and the house is an object constituted. Examining this more carefully, however, the white wall considered to be a *reell* element is found to have the structure of temporal constitution. Logically, then, we must say that any *reell* element is something 'already constituted'. The problem of prior-constitution arises here again. This temporal analysis reveals to us that even Husserl's fundamental conception of 'unquestionably indubitable *reell* element', which is an absolute givenness, has a factor of prior constitution.

Derrida used this argument in his *Voice and Phenomenon* to criticize Husserl's attempt to ground exact cognition. This acute criticism catapulted him into the status of one of the leading post-modern philosophers. The following passage is indicative of the point of his argument:

'Thus, against Husserl's explicit intention, *Vorstellung* (representation) itself is made dependent on the possibility of repetition, and *Gegenwartigung* which is the simplest *Vorstellung* is made dependent on *Vergegenwartigung*. The <presence-of-the-present> is made derived from repetition, not vice versa' (Derrida: *Voice and Phenomenon*)

Here (typically) we see the method of 'deconstruction' that points out a logical contradiction of the argument by making use of the very logic of the opponent.

'Deconstruction' seems almost equal to the traditional sophistry called the theory of reduction to absurdity.

Derrida's argument can be specified as follows. When proceeding with the analysis according to Husserl's idea, the most primordial element for Husserl, namely the present simplest images of perception (vivid presence) is admittedly dependent on incessant taking-in the memory of past (*Vergegenwartigung*), i.e., possibility of repetition. The most primordial 'present' depends on the motion of '*differance*' which is here a repetitive inclusion of the past.

The 'primordial' element thus disappears when rigorously examining perception. There is no way of establishing the absolutely indubitable primal cognition. The primordial depends on '*differance*'. Or, 'difference' prior-constitutes the primordial. This is Derrida's prior-constitution criticism of phenomenological primordial in terms of its temporal factor.

This seems to be a logically consistent, materially convincing criticism. Notwithstanding, I must say this is a totally invalid criticism just as the prior-constitution theories regarding 'ego' or 'Being'. We should particularly note this criticism by Derrida because it is an objection to 'indubitability' in phenomenology from the viewpoint of skepticism and relativism.

We are never able to reach the ultimately fundamental unit (ground) for certainty of cognition when examined carefully, this is the governing argument made by all kinds of skepticism and relativism across the world. It has always proved effective when critically applied to realism. (See for instance, Hume's criticism of Spinoza and Leibnitz, criticism of Hinayanist's realism philosophy made by the philosophy of 'void' based on Mahayana Buddhism.) It is because realism always presupposes the subject-object schema insisting that the subject corresponds to the object.

It is not that skepticism denies the subject-object schema itself. Skepticism rather stands on the subject-object schema in its nature, and contends that logically there is no proof of correspondence between subject and object. Skepticism does not call for abolishing the schema, but just denies any correspondence between the two items.

Philosophically, such impossibility of correspondence is inarguable in principle. Any realism that dogmatically takes this correspondence for granted is thus unable to refute skepticism. If, however, skepticism claims that, so, there exists no world, it would be another dogmatism (as has been elaborated by Kant in his teaching of antinomy. A proposition that the world exists and another that the world does not exist form a philosophical 'antinomy' so that one can never shoot the other down decisively.)

Husserl's grounding of the universal cognition is not based on realism. It dismisses the subject-object schema shared by both skepticism and realism, and examines in its place the intensity of belief of object in our immanent experience. The contemporary criticism of phenomenology led by Derrida merely picks up seeming contradictions associated with particular terms such as 'primordial element' without seeing the crux of Husserl's method.

Let me say again that what phenomenology attempted to locate and determine is a limit line of indubitability, instead of any absolute primordial element, though Husserl's wording is more or less responsible for such misunderstanding.

Note that G.W.F. Hegel already offered an essential insight that any radically fundamental element can never be uncovered within consciousness (see *Phenomenology of Spirit*).

Human consciousness is at any point of time found as a result of constitution already accomplished in the dialectic evolution. Since it is nothing like a computer program, it cannot be reduced to elemental units of 0 and 1. This may be instinctively accepted by anybody. Any absolutely elemental unit such as 0 and 1 cannot be found in consciousness. What Wittgenstein attempted to do in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was exactly to discover this elemental unit, but not surprisingly he failed to do so.

The limit line of indubitability in consciousness is contrary to such an absolutely fundamental element. Anyone is able to make sure of its existence by means of phenomenological reflection. Let me take the following example.

There is a psychological experiment regarding perception as follows. Mark a black dot on a white board and make it smaller and smaller. Check to see how far you can reduce its size until you no longer recognize the dot. At some point, then, you will be uncertain if you are actually looking at the black dot, or if it is a mere flickering trouble with your eyes. This is generally considered as indicating uncertainty of perception.

This understanding is however a sort of reduction to absurdity.

That we can see there is some domain of vagueness could never provide the ground for skepticism claiming *everything* is dubitable: quite the opposite. If you reflect on this perceptual experience in the phenomenological way, the essential structure to be observed is as follows.

- (1) The domain where a belief is given that the black dot is so far certainly recognizable.
- (2) The domain of vagueness where you are not certain if it is a black dot or a mere eye trouble.
- (3) The domain where a belief is given that you can see no dot at all.

This is an essential boundary demarcation (structure) in terms of clarity of all kinds of perception. (Wittgenstein 'discovered' this domain of vagueness in his later work *Philosophical Investigations*.)

Divide a wall surface into two parts and paint one part white and the other black. The boundary between the two parts is apparent to actual vision. Yet it is known that no one is able to accurately define the boundary when trying to do so. The fact that the domain (2) always exists in perception is the ground for analog nature of perceptual experience.

Additionally mark that not only the division into domains (1), (2) and (3), but also the impossibility of absolutely defining the boundary lines belong to the essential structure of human perception. This fact makes fatally invalid the theory (elementary proposition) proposed by Wittgenstein in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* where he suggested the absolute correspondence between facts and language. This also signifies that the discipline of mathematics

is to completely exclude the domain of vagueness. This is why it is an important task of the natural sciences to exclude the domain of vagueness as much as possible by means of a mathematical description.

The structure of the domain of vagueness efficiently teaches us the ground for analog nature of perception. Besides, this structure of perception with three distinct domains is in itself the fundamental ground for 'indubitability' of perception. Otherwise put, the fact that, in human perceptual experience, the three domains arise not arbitrarily but always with the same structure is the evidence that a certain belief always stays in different perceptual experiences. Furthermore, this essential structure of perception is a ground for the possibility that we try to make sure of the existence and modes of different objects through constantly doubting and confirming them.

This is made clear on actually reflecting upon our experience.

You try to read some small print in dim light, but are unable to make it out. You are not sure if the letters spell 'credit' or 'crest' and are unable to understand the text until you learn the answer. You could close your eyes for a while, and then try to make the letters out again. Adjust to dimness, you find the letters to spell 'credit'. It means you have made a transition from domain (2) to (3). Only then, an unquestionable belief comes (is given) to you that the letters spell 'credit' and that the text means such and such.

When you cannot make out the letters despite all your efforts, you suspend your 'belief'. It is, however, not that you have no way of judging the reality. You have a distinct judgment that the letters are not eligible. We thus learn that while perception has a domain of uncertainty, this does not provide any solid ground for the skeptic argument that everything is uncertain.

It is an obvious philosophical finding that there is no absolute elemental unit of evidence in the sphere of immanence. Philosophy, whether Oriental or Occidental, has provided numerous proofs of this, since Derrida allegedly argued for it. Hegel's argument is notably adequate, as mentioned above. However, this of course never justifies the idea that we do not have a ground for belief to make a distinction in our everyday life between what is real and what is not.

The counter-argument based on skepticism/relativism is effective only for dogmatic realism. Such counter opinion is, however, utterly incapable of solving the question of cognition. This is because the problem here is essentially not any absolute elemental unit but the ground for indubitability, or, in other words, not the ground for 'being' but the ground for 'belief'.

Let me think in the reverse angle. We are creating 'beliefs' with different intensities about all kinds of objects in the world. The world is, so to speak, a 'bundle' of beliefs of objects. What would happen if such beliefs of objects were just arbitrary in essence, with no definite condition and structures, as is purported by skeptics?

The result is patent: we could then make no clear distinction between reality and illusion (phantom or hallucination), between the realistic and the non-realistic, between the existent and the non-existent, between present, past and future, and between the conceptual, the sensory, the empirical, and the abstract.

In such a scenario, people would live in their individual and private world orders, and be unable to share the 'one' world with one other (as may be seen in a group of insane people). There could be no such thing as a communal world belief, with neither natural laws nor logical rules being possible.

If there is no such a thing as the limit of indubitability in *immanent consciousness* and commonness of its order and structure, any belief in an objective world could not be established. This means that even skepticism could not survive because it claims the impossibility of correspondence between the subject and the object while standing on the premise of this schema. On this view, there would necessarily be as many distinct world beliefs as there are heads among all the people and creatures that live in the world.

It is utterly unquestionable that the world exists, that the world is given as a whole universe in continuous experiences which incessantly flow into overall union. It should be however a totally different thing to understand this indubitability sustaining life and positivistic sciences and the ground for legitimacy of such indubitability ' (See Postscript written by Husserl in 1931 for the first English translation of *Ideas Pertaining*)

Husserl contends that no cognition logically corresponds to transcendence (=object) . Notwithstanding, none of us doubt the reality of the world. What kind of reason and ground is there? If we want to explore them, we need directly to inquire into consciousness. Consciousness is the very place where various beliefs of objects, and their dubitability and indubitability come and go. The problem is not how to verify the correspondence between subject and object, but to see how people's world beliefs could become communal and then universal, how to grasp this necessary structure of this world belief.

The core of phenomenology is in the analysis of the ground for indubitability of the world. I am convinced that the phenomenological method has fully accomplished this analysis. When we understand phenomenology to be the analysis of the condition and structure of belief formation, it is readily seen that all the various criticisms of phenomenology are derived from a misconception of its methodical essence. In fact, such misconceptions are more properly revealing of the intrinsic limitations of such contemporary criticism as philosophical thought.

5. The scope of the science of essence

The criticism of the subject-object schema in modern epistemology has been a central theme of modern philosophy. The major reason for this is that the dogmatic world of Marxism occasioned grave ideological conflicts in the 20th century. Not only that, it fueled the violent disputes of political fundamentalism, resulting in the dire situation of totalitarianism and Stalinism.

Analytic philosophy beginning with Wittgenstein and post-modern thought inspired by post-structuralism both came into existence as a criticism of those dogmatically-alleged legitimate world views. The theoretical principle of contemporary thought is logical relativism. It is necessarily natural that Nietzsche and Wittgenstein were the origins of such twentieth-century relativistic thinking.

Rorty declared that the 'linguistic turn' in contemporary linguistics would be a decisive paradigm change overcoming the epistemological deadlock of modern philosophy. This was a fatal miscalculation, because the disputes between dogmatism and skepticism/relativism in linguistic cognition have continued to return exactly in the same pattern as in modern philosophy.

Wittgenstein's two texts, his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*, are the very theatre of war between sheer dogmatism and sheer relativism, in a war as fought by a single philosopher. Whereas the problems (the question of cognition) were all raised here, contemporary linguistic philosophy has had no way to address these problems. In my view, only the phenomenological approach to the linguistic problems could cope with the task, as suggested in my work *Toward the Linguistic Thoughts*.

Phenomenology is another essential criticism of the modern subject-object schema. We have already shown above how it can and did settle the problem of cognition. This phenomenological analysis tells us why the criticism of objectivism based on contemporary relativistic thoughts is unable to provide any fundamental solution of the problem. Not only that, it also teaches us that contemporary philosophic thinking is generally of a skeptic/relativistic nature and how such skepticism/relativism should be one of the prevalent trends to be overcome for the sake of a meaningful progress of philosophy and thoughts.

We appreciate how the method of reduction to absurdity or proof by contradiction was adopted by many ancient philosophers and thinkers, including Sophists in Greece, Buddhist thinkers of the Middle Way school in India, and Gongsunlongzi from the School of Names, one of many schools of great thinkers around the fifth century BC in China.

The most well-known example of logical relativism with reduction to absurdity is Zeno's paradox of Achilles and the tortoise. Achilles who started after the tortoise cannot overtake the tortoise despite his fast running. This is 'proved' by the logic that, to overtake the tortoise, Achilles must pass the infinite number of points in a finite period of time, but this is impossible. While this is of course an unreasonable logic in terms of reality, it is not so easy to refute it and logically to 'prove' that Achilles can and will outpass the tortoise.

Some skeptics skilled in contestation organized such rhetoric into a system of criticism. A Greek philosopher Sextus Empiricus classified the paradoxical logic of criticism into five types and discussed these in detail. In the twelfth century, Moksakara Gupta listed 16 types of negative reasoning in his work *Tarkabhāṣa* (<http://openlibrary.org/works/OL10728237W/>). Despite these examples, skepticism and relativism are not just a philosophical theory rooted in ancient philosophy.

History distinctly shows us that the method of reduction to absurdity (logical relativism) largely developed to become a dominant weapon in the refutation of dissident opinion, for instance in the course of Indian Buddhism changing from Theravada to Mahayana thought, or in the course of European Christian theology unifying the orthodox doctrines.

In Western philosophy, Greek sophists emerged as the philosophers who deliberately methodized logical relativism as an instrument of criticism. Zeno's argument is typical (though he himself is not a sophist), and a number of sophistic dialogues are depicted in Plato's works.

Any philosophical thought starts from presenting an overall world view. It can always be divided into more than one type, because it intrinsically provides a synthetic inference about the entire world.

Skepticism itself may be exhibited as a worldview ('the world is nothing at all'). Normally, however, skepticism/relativism grows powerful when some different world views clash with each other, whether in the West or in the East. There have been disputes about beliefs or views with respect to the world and people since ancient times. The deep chasms between different world views have hardly been narrowed at any time of history. Thus we have Taoism versus Confucianism, Theravada versus Mahayana, The Middle Way versus Maatrataa, Stoic versus the Epicureans, Athanasian versus Arian: which is right or just?

These philosophical disputes are in many cases associated with the typological opposition between world perspectives, for instance, realism versus idealism, monism versus pluralism, absolutism versus relativism, the existentialistic attitude versus the society-oriented attitude. These clashes are derived from a difference in world views based on general inferences about the world. They therefore form a philosophical antinomy resulting in reconcilable metaphysical disputes, as has been pointed out by Kant. The thinkers then tend to make use of either dogmatism or relativism (reduction to absurdity) as a firm ground for supporting their claims.

Logical relativism (reduction to absurdity) develops in this situation because this logic of reduction to absurdity is most effective in logically arguing for the validity of their opinions.

The problem of such clashes of beliefs was radically analyzed for the first time in European modern philosophy by Immanuel Kant. Kant was successful in his attempt simply because modern philosophy instinctually discovered the method of universalization in mathematics and in the natural sciences. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was able to prove the impossibility of traditional metaphysics by elaborating the cognitive method of modern science into a comprehensive philosophical thought.

Modern natural sciences were established as a way appropriately to measure nature after the exemplary model of mathematics. There is no other work than Husserl's *Crisis* to offer such a point-blank understanding of the essence of the natural sciences. The natural sciences have pursued a way of describing the overall order of nature that is free from any vagueness in cognition and therefore is acceptable to everybody, and established it as a systematic (scientific) method. What is most important here, according to Husserl, is the method of quantifying the sensory characteristics of nature.

The method built by the modern natural sciences is to coordinate and describe nature in the most efficient order in terms of usability and manageability for humans in general. It is not that the method is capable of cognizing nature as it is in itself. The natural scientists, however, idealized it to be exactly this. The method defined by natural scientists as such has been applied to modern humanities with little adjustment. Positivist epistemology made a great mistake in doing so. This is roughly what Husserl claims.

Despite all this, the human race has an important and decisive tool in acquiring 'universal knowledge' by means of the modern scientific approach. While it acts *as if* the subject infinitely approximates to the object, what science has actually accomplished is constantly to update its findings by means of numerous repetitions of hypothesizing

and verification, to the point where people, however different the cultures to which they belong, reach an agreement and their intra-subjective cognitions are universalized. Modern science has interpreted its own method as a process to make the subject/cognition correspond to the object (something it in fact presupposes), but, what is actually present here is a sure method of translating intra-subjective beliefs into inter-subjective ones.

The above notwithstanding, it is important that philosophical epistemology somehow finds a way to break out of the dead end of infinitely lasting clashes between dogmatism and relativism in view of the systematic universalization of cognition as realized in the natural sciences. The first step was made by Kant, followed by the new epistemological principle of Nietzsche and Husserl.

That the enigma of subject-object relationship remains unsolved does not greatly affect natural sciences, but it gravely affects all social and cultural sciences. Here there is no mutual agreement in terms of exact cognition to be attained. Numerous rival schools will arise with constant and sterile disputes. Besides, the science as a whole will be deprived of the trust for universality, spurring the tendency toward relativism.

The concern and foresight of Husserl came true as post-modern thought almost conquered the human and social sciences in the late twentieth century.

What will happen when logical relativism becomes influential in the scientific field? Relativism will likely damage the assumption that universality of cognition should be pursued by discussion and investigation. Scientific findings will be made dependent on the influence of particular schools, that is, on how many 'professors' were produced by these schools. The method of scientific positivism by no means offers a ground for the attainment of scientific universality in the field of the humanities, and instead, tends to serve as a logical reinforcement of their partisan (prejudiced) beliefs. The scholars have their own belief about their theories, but do no longer 'believe' that these must be verified by universal investigations.

Here is the circumstance of 'irony' mentioned by Hegel. In his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel named this attitude of logical relativists (who know that there exists no omniscience) as 'irony' after Socrates' attitude towards knowledge ('I alone know that no one knows the truth'). Although 'ironists' have a belief that some righteousness itself exists, they don't believe that there is a way to temper it to universality (common understanding). This is the path taken by skeptics according to Hegel.

Ironists subjectively suppose that they are able freely to assume *any* attitude to the world. Yet in practice they are unable to find a way that can lead to a universal thought. Accordingly, they have no other method of contention than the reduction to. For this reason, the reduction to absurdity prevails when different world views conflict with each other.

Marxism has claimed that it can offer the sole legitimate world view, but, from the philosophical standpoint, this is nothing but dogmatism

Post-modern thought and analytical philosophy, which emerged as a counter to Marxism, have obviously taken the position of ironists with no belief in genuine knowledge. Contemporary thought has consequently exercised a strong power of criticism in our times, but it is difficult to conceive of a new scheme for people and society as they have in a way tabooed the very idea of universal knowledge and thought.

Opposed to the above, phenomenology thinking is as follows. No omniscience exists. Neither objective knowledge nor truth exists in principle. Yet there nevertheless exists valid cognition or universal knowledge that is acceptable by everybody. The thinking method to attain this exists too.

Traditional epistemology (according to the subject-object schema) holds truth or objective knowledge to be something that is hidden behind the world. Phenomenological epistemology (according to the immanence-transcendence schema) regards *any* cognition as an intra-subjective world belief. Universal knowledge is to be defined as a communal (inter-subjective) belief *derived from different individual beliefs*. Do you not feel here that the concept of truth (or objective knowledge) has been essentially renewed?

Phenomenology analyzes the question of cognition as a general theory on world beliefs. When an understanding of this perspective is made possible, it will also be possible for *The Idea of Phenomenology* to open up a new horizon for the science of essence as a potential for universal thought.

The science of essence is a theory on relations between meanings and values in people and their society. The phenomenological sphere of immanence is exactly where meanings and values for humans are constantly being created. In practice, the efforts for unfolding the science of essence as a new domain of philosophy have been begun by Husserl. This task must and will be reinitiated by a new generation, engaged in re-capturing the core of his phenomenological method.

(The end)