

From Naivety to Transcendence: The Bracketing of Life-World and Subjectivity

Joshua Andrei P. Pascua

University of Santo Tomas – Manila | joshua.pascua.ab@ust.edu.ph

Abstract: This paper is an exposition of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology. Specifically, this paper aims to explain the systematic process in Husserl’s transcendental conversion from naive living. I argue that bracketing with an aim towards the life-world is not the same as departing from subjectivity. There are three focal points for analysis that will be discussed—the life-world, the natural attitude, and the phenomenological epoché. To proceed, I, first, present the character of the life-world, the structure of intentionality, and the concept of body. Second, I discuss the natural attitude of the ego-subject naively dwelling in the life-world. Third, I analyze Husserl’s phenomenological epoché, the role of Cartesianism, and the transcendental attitude of the ego-subject. The scope of discussion will be limited to the relationship of the ego-subject’s naivety to the life-world, and the transcendental alteration of epoché as introducing a new one would require further hermeneutical research. Ultimately, this paper will be guided by the question: “How does the phenomenological epoché convert the ego-subject to the transcendental experience of the life-world?”

Keywords: *Edmund Husserl, life-world, natural attitude, epoché, subjectivity*

Introduction

Edmund Husserl, a German mathematician-philosopher, spearheaded the development of phenomenology in the 20th century, which profoundly influenced numerous thinkers in various disciplines. As a mathematician, mathematics had profound influence on Husserl’s phenomenological thought, yet he later recognized that phenomenology could not advance through the framework of logical positivism.¹ Franz Brentano, his teacher, greatly influenced Husserl’s principle that consciousness, in its nature, is a consciousness of something—it is intentional.² Husserl’s intentional structure of consciousness is explicated in his conception of objectivity-for-subjectivity.³ In elaborating the subject-object relation, he altered Descartes’s *cogito ergo sum* to *ego-cogito-cogitatum*, which is a reconstruction of Cartesian program that focuses on the conscious acts of self and object correlation.⁴ The intentionality of consciousness is an embodied experience that is possible through

¹ Christopher Macann, *Four Phenomenological Philosophers* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 2.

² *Ibid.*, 3. The discovery of the structures of intentionality is a discovery of new terrain—the land of transcendental subjectivity—that he had transformed phenomenology centuries after.

³ Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 16.

⁴ *Ibid.* The attempt to doubt is different to the Cartesian Doubt as it is universally restricted. In Husserlian phenomenology, we are not concerned with discarding its doubted existence; rather, we are focused on modification to preserve its actuality. The material of being cannot be held to be certain while doubting its existential reality. See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by F. Kersten (Kluwer Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers,

the living body. Through this embodiment, subjects can direct themselves to an experience of the object where subjectivity arises. Thus, the subject-object dichotomy denotes that there is a physical interaction and concrete relationship rooted within the world. Yet, as Husserl argues, there is transcendental alteration with the object's givenness. Does this mean, then, that Husserl's phenomenological epoché is a denial of this relationship? I argue that the method of bracketing is not a withdrawal from the experience of the world. Instead, bracketing is the disclosure of truth about the world, as the phenomenologist focuses on their experiences and the contents of consciousness itself. This truth is subjective, and it is produced from the subject's lived experiences. Therefore, bracketing is the precondition to accessing subjectivity.

In the flow of Husserlian phenomenology, bracketing with an aim towards the life-world is not the same as departing from subjectivity. The life-world, for instance, is the ground where subjects are naively living. The naive or uncritical living is characterized as the natural attitude. Through this attitude, subjects experience the life-world where objects are assumed to be already existing as real actualities. This means that objects are experienced without the subject's focused attention or reflection regarding their essences. However, despite the life-world being there, constantly presenting itself, it must nonetheless be radically placed into "brackets"—synonymous with other terms such as: parenthesizing, excluding, or disconnecting.⁵ The suspension of bias in our judgments undertake the attitude of the phenomenological epoche, influenced by the bedrock of Husserl's maxim "*back to the things themselves!*"⁶ While the epoché converts the subject to the transcendental attitude by way of bracketing, it is not a denial of subjectivity. This is because the epoché preserves the actualities of the life-world, such that the subject changes an attitude (internal), while the life-world (external) remains untouched. In principle, bracketing enables the subjects to suspend their belief held in naivety to realize their subjectivity in their confrontation of the life-world. Driven by transcendental motivation, subjects are able to access the being-in-the-world. This leads to pure consciousness, wherein subjectivity becomes the foreground towards critical living. Based on these, it thus becomes necessary to analyze the process from which subjectivity is posited between naivety and transcendence. Hence, this paper will follow a similar structure to Husserl's phenomenology—namely, the life-world, the natural attitude, and the phenomenological epoché.

The Concept of Life-World

In this section, I will present the life-world to establish the groundwork where the phenomenological analysis is grounded. Husserl's idea of transcendence is neither unworldly nor an abstraction as it is concerned with the lived experiences of the subject within the being-in-the-world. The natural and transcendental attitude belongs to the life-world, which cannot be detached from.

1983), 58. They are necessarily and immediately existing in the living present even if it is not immediately seen in my field of perception.

⁵ The terms can be seen as inconsistent with the different translations of his works. Husserl himself constantly rephrased it, which can be confusing. However, it is significant to note that the meaning of it remains the same. In this paper, I shall use the term "bracketing" for consistency as it is also the common term used by Husserlian scholars. See Husserl, *Ideas*, 57. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by W. R. Boyce Gibson (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 56-60.

⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. Dermot Moran (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 1: xxiii. This method posits to be a set of non-constructive, descriptive, and analytical procedures. See Elisabeth Stroker, *The Husserlian Foundations of Sciences*, ed. John Drummond (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publisher), 251.

This shows that Husserlian phenomenology is rooted in the concrete world that is actually lived where subjectivity is found.

The notion of life-world is a central problem to Husserl's phenomenological investigation that can be traced back to his earlier works.⁷ As Husserl mainly introduced in *Crisis*, the life-world is a dimension that subjects faithfully live in. The life-world can be characterized in different ways such as “the world of experience (*Erfahrungswelt*) as immediately given, already there, taken-for-granted or obvious (*selbstverständlich*),”⁸ among others. It is, nonetheless, the foundation of all praxis whether theoretical or extra-theoretical.⁹ Experiences within the life-world are based on already existing things where all subjectivity and meaning is created from a first-person confrontation. Husserl habitually uses the term “pre-given” to characterize the life-world. The pre-giveness of the life-world is passively received by our consciousness as it creates the backdrop for our natural engagement. These objects, Husserl says, are factually existing as spatiotemporal actualities. Simply, we ordinarily come across already formed objects in the life-world. More than this, it contains a certain “unsurpassability” (*Unhintergebarkeit*)¹⁰ as it is a place of certainty ready to be explored. This creates the horizon for

⁷ In *Ideas I*, Husserl distinguished the notion of world in multiple terms: “the natural world; the world as available (*vorhanden*); the world as reality (*Wirklichkeit*); the world as horizon; the surrounding world (*Umwelt*); the world of values, of goods, of practical interest (*Wertewelt, Güterwelt, praktische Welt*); the psychophysical world; the intersubjective world; the world as correlate of consciousness; the world as unity of meaning; and the world as intentional being.” See Balázs M. Mezei, *World and Life-world* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995), 35. In this paper, I will use the “life-world” to be consistent, as it is also the “latest” term he used in his later work in *Crisis*.

⁸ Dermot Moran, *Husserl's Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 181. Husserl argues: “The first, the naturally normal one which absolutely must precede the others not for accidental but for essential reasons, is that of straightforwardly living toward whatever objects are given, thus toward the world-horizon, in normal, unbroken constancy, in a synthetic coherence running through all acts. This normal, straightforwardly living, toward whatever objects are given, indicates that all our interests have their goals in objects.” See Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (United States: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 144. The life-world is the groundwork of the normality of living. For Husserl, it is fundamentally the “natural attitude” in which the givenness of the objects are appreciated without recourse to scientific beliefs. He also posited that “the natural life, whether it is pre-scientifically or scientifically, theoretically or practically interested, is life within a universal unthematic horizon. This horizon is, in the natural attitude, precisely the world always pre-given as that which exists. Simply living on in this manner, one does not need the word “pre-given”; there is no need to point out that the world is constantly actuality for us.” See also *Ibid.*, 145. Husserl emphasizes the world where objects are presented and given which do not need to be heeded, recognized, or noticed as naturally “there.” The recognition of these objects, wherein one realizes they are apprehended naturally, means that they are already in reflection, and thus entering the transcendental or phenomenological attitude which is yet unknown. Therefore, it cannot be possible for the subject to assert that they are indeed living in the natural attitude because it entails a “step back” or “detachment” from the givenness, to intentionally be conscious of what attitude is being carried. A confrontation of what is concealed, while paradoxically presented in plain sight, is a commitment where one has to know the difference between the natural and transcendental.

⁹ Husserl, *Crisis*, 142. In the introduction, David Carr explains that “the naive, pretheoretical life is engaged in the world, the milieu and horizon of its activity. The world with which the philosopher, the scientist, attempts to deal is this very world-horizon in which the naive life runs its course. This is the life-world, which is always “already there,” “pre-given,” when theory begins its work. But the world's very pre-giveness, the structure through which it envelops conscious life and provides the ground (*Boden*) on which it moves, is always presupposed by any theoretical activity.” See *Ibid.*, XI. Husserl's creation of the life-world grounds the human experience whether it is theoretical or practical interests. It is the totality of human experiences, where unique and subjectivities emerge. This, however, does not isolate the ego-subjects from each other nor to themselves. Each of our subjectivities are homogenized into a whole concatenation towards intersubjectivity. According to Husserl, it is through the initial act of mutual understanding and “empathy,” that it constitutes a unity. Despite the multiplicities of *ego* and different modes apprehending the world, there is a reconciliation.

¹⁰ Moran, *Husserl's Crisis*, 181.

possible experiences. Subjectivity, then, arises from the life-world where subjects are rightfully dwelling. However, the horizon of human experience must not be conceived solipsistically because it is a communal world. The life-world enables communalization (*Vergemeinschaftung*) as it is not only “my world,” but it is also a “world for others,” that is, “available for everyone.”¹¹ Since the life-world is shared, it cannot be entirely objectified as it essentially has a subjective and intersubjective character, which prohibits from its objective description.¹² This is not to suggest that we, as ego-subjects, are separated from each other. To support this, Husserl writes:

Prescientifically, in everyday sense-experience, the world is given in a subjectively relative way. Each of us has his own appearances; and for each of us they count as [*gelten als*] that which actually is. In dealing with one another, we have long since become aware of this discrepancy between our various ontic validities. But we do not think that, because of this, there are many worlds. Necessarily, we believe in the world, whose things only appear to us differently but are the same.¹³

The communal feature of the life-world welcomes everyone despite our subjective-having of it. The objectivity of the life-world still enables the subject to realize their subjective dimension. This is because we are capable of forming our own meaningful experiences as we live continuously in every waking moment. However, the life-world is not only concerned with the overlapping objects that surround us; it also encompasses the world of nature (e.g., sky, mountains, animals, plants, and the world of culture).¹⁴ There are two co-generative and co-relative worlds: the home-world (*heimwelt*) is familiar and normal because it is where I comfortably belong; and the alien-world (*fremdwelt*) is the “non-familiar,” “alien,” “foreign,” and only “others” kind of world.¹⁵ However, all ego-subjects are sharing the same world despite these categorizations. Indeed, the life-world is a communal type of world.

Furthermore, our experience of the life-world connotes an embodied human acting. Otherwise, experience would be impossible without the sensuous capacities of our living body. The natural interest of the subject goes back to the life-world that stems from a sensible experience of intuition. That being so, every concrete thing exhibits itself in the life-world. It has a bodily character, which our living body is participating in.¹⁶ These concrete things are never absent from the perceptual field of hearing, seeing, touching, and so on. This is through the body’s cooperation together with the ego’s motility, i.e., kinesthetics. As such, the kinesthetic function of the living body, or as Husserl would say the “bodily organs” (used in a primitive sense), coincides with the ego as an essential part

¹¹ Moran, *Husserl’s Crisis*, 198. The “communal” world, in the ordinary sense of the word, is the world which is shared by all members of the community of ego-subjects. Not only as an individual ego; but, in living together, we have the pre-given world in this “together,” as the world factually existing for us and to which we, together, belong—it is the world as a world for all with an ontic meaning. For Husserl, such is constantly functioning in every waking moment of our encounter with them, as we also function together, in the different ways of thinking, valuing, planning, and acting together toward the objects that are pre-given to us in common. However, there is a thematic modification. This thematization will bring the “unnoticed” phenomena in our focused attention, for reflection. The we-subjectivity, as continuously functioning together, becomes a thematic object along with the act through which it functions; but, there remains a residuum of unthematic that is anonymous and unknown. See Husserl, *Crisis*, 109. This, however, is a matter of the phenomenological alteration of the epoché which will be further brought to light in the latter part of the paper.

¹² Moran, *Husserl’s Crisis*, 181.

¹³ Husserl, *Crisis*, 23.

¹⁴ Moran, *Husserl’s Crisis*, 184.

¹⁵ To access a fuller explanation of the problematic home-world and alien-world, see Anthony J. Steinbock, *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995).

¹⁶ Husserl, *Crisis*, 106.

of the body in performing those experiences.¹⁷ Therefore, consciousness is received only through their collaboration with each other. Husserl, however, distinguished the living body from the physical body. The former is the only one which is actually given in perception (my own body) as living, while the latter is the living body of an “alien” ego-subject (not my own). But it is mainly perceived only as a mere physical body (objects of life-world). Again, the living body is kinesthetically functioning along with the ego, while the physical body may or may not. For this reason, the life-world is experienced through a living body that is embodied.

The living body has consciousness, and it carries the intentional experiences of the subject within the life-world. Husserl’s structure of intentionality in investigating consciousness can be explained through the relationship of intentional act (conscious act) and intentional object (object of conscious act).¹⁸ The act of loving, liking, hating, dreaming, talking, hearing, touching, seeing, eating, and drinking takes an object. It is always directed to a unique conscious experience. Contrarily, Brentano’s intentionality is the separation of the mental and physical aspect—the intentional act and intentional object can be distinguished from a causal relation (a causality). Meanwhile, this became an opportunity for Husserl to walk in a different path and center his investigation of consciousness where intentionality is the core component. Conversely to Brentano, Husserl focused on non-causal relation with objects as the precondition of studying consciousness as an “intentional” relation towards transcendental objects.¹⁹ Certainly, the example about loving, hating, dreaming and so on is still applicable to Husserl. However, unlike his predecessor, his concept of intentionality is consciousness that is fundamentally relational as it takes an object; in other words, the subject-object relation is inseparable. There is a relationship between the body dwelling (*res extensa*) and consciousness (*res cogitans*) that is in synchrony with the world. The subject is able to understand the things as it is experienced through the involvement of mental processes. Therefore, the complementary relationship of intentional act (conscious act) and intentional object (object of conscious act) cannot be separated from each other. It would be an incorrect understanding of the essential nature of psychic acts to remove one from the other. Husserl, nonetheless, abandons the “psychical” aspect as it is loaded with preconceptions and instead focus on “intentional experiences” (*Erlebnisse*) and “intentional acts” (*Akte*), which do not presuppose conscious activity or posit any claims about the nature of the physical on the part of the subject.²⁰ It is not an instruction for any presumptive thinking. Lastly, it is also important to note that consciousness is selective in its intentional activities because there are too many objects in my field of perception to which I can focus my attention²¹ and the rest are set aside.

To summarize, I discussed the characteristics of the life-world. Additionally, I presented the relationship of the ego-subject to the world of objects—the world of lived experience—including the concept of intentionality as a crucial part of Husserl’s structure of consciousness. This is done to

¹⁷ Husserl, *Crisis*, 106.

¹⁸ David Detmer, *Phenomenology Explained: From Experience to Insight* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 2013), 63-64. Indicated in Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, the correlation of the *meaning-giving* activity, along with the expressed language, of consciousness cannot be separated as independent with the signified, the *meant*; additionally, in examining the determined life of consciousness away from the concern of subjectivity in relation to the intentionally determined objectivities would be futile. See Macann, *Four Phenomenological Philosophers*, 8. The power of consciousness to process experience into meaning which is generated from our mundane activities is fundamentally relational. Meaning is created from experiential activities and likewise, experience is necessarily directed toward something that is meant.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

²⁰ Moran, *Phenomenology*, 114.

²¹ Detmer, *Phenomenology Explained*, 96.

explain how our living body is participating and functioning in the life-world. It crystallized the subject-object relationship, and thus affirmed their inseparable union. This shows that there is a physical interaction and concrete relationship with the world and that Husserl's phenomenology is practically tethered to the "real world." The next section will discuss how this life-world is lived within the natural attitude.

The Naivety of the Ego-Subject

The following discussion will focus on the phenomenology of the lived experience of the ego-subject in the natural attitude. I will explain the consciousness in naivety. This will clarify the difference between the natural and transcendental attitude that will be explored in the succeeding section.

The natural attitude or naivety can be construed as the "normal" execution of life. Beliefs are accustomed to the subject's everyday routine without making them an object of close inspection as they are already "common sense."²² I immediately experience these objects whether or not I am heedful of them. Naivety is prior to any evaluation of consciousness as it is taken in their "banality." They are apprehended through their "raw" and "organic" form as an actuality,²³ which constitutes a universal and clear-cut cognition of it. The natural attitude, in the ordinary sense of the word, is lived within the life-world. The natural world is a place filled with real actualities that presents itself as factually existing. I am conscious of corporeal physical things that are essentially "on hand," and are spatially and temporally distributed in the natural world, because of the different modes of my sensuous perception.²⁴ Thus, things are naively experienced without reflection. For instance, if I am cooking and I accidentally burn myself with the stove, I do not focus my attention on what the stove's heat discloses about the nature of pain because they are simply an object of the accident. I do not prioritize the meaning of what is immediately experienced for I am too occupied with the objects that are naturally given. In this way, physical things contain a subjective element that is produced after the act of experiencing. However, it is concealed to me and I am not aware of it. Moreover, those that are not immediately present in my field of perception still qualifies as a real existing thing. That is, even if I do not pay attention to such objects, they are nevertheless present in my field of intuition²⁵ or consciousness.

Aside from their existence, Husserl posited that these corporeal physical things have value and practical characteristics,²⁶ not just a mere space-occupying-thing. There are inherent potentialities

²² Detmer, *Phenomenology Explained*, 141.

²³ In explaining the existence of objects as indubitably spatiotemporal, Husserl would use the word "actuality" to emphasize that these concrete and physical objects are factually existing. Such objects, both known and unknown, belong to the world in which I myself, and other ego-subjects are surrounded by and more so shares it. See Husserl, *Ideas*, 52-61. I will loosely use this term for the succeeding parts of this paper to avoid ambiguity and confusion. On the other hand, Husserl further elaborates on this in *Crisis* where he explains: "for, in advance, 'world' has the meaning 'the universe of the 'actually' existing actualities': not the merely supposed, doubtful, or questionable actualities but the actual ones, which as such have actuality for us only in the constant movement of corrections and revisions of validities [Umgeltungen von Geltung]—all this considered as the anticipation of an ideal unity." See Husserl, *Crisis*, 146.

²⁴ Husserl, *Ideas*, 51.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ To elaborate on this point, I quote Husserl: "Moreover, this world is there for me not only as a world of mere things, but also with the same immediacy as a world of objects with values, a world of goods, a practical world. I simply find the physical things in front of me furnished not only with merely material determinations but also with value-characteristics, as beautiful and ugly, pleasant and unpleasant, agreeable and disagreeable, and the like. Immediately,

attached to it that serve a practical purpose. The subject's role, then, is to seize upon that potentiality. Humans and animals contain valuable characteristics because they also belong to the world whom I share with. I can see them as my enemy, friend, superior, servant that can be honest, loyal, or not. They reveal each other's existence as they encounter one another. Every endeavor that humans take is necessarily enclosed within the life-world. One may call the natural attitude as a "default" attitude because being alive means living naturally within the rules of nature. This world of corporeal beings, as it gives itself, is known to be apprehended naively in the natural attitude.

This world, to which I belong and am surrounded by, consists of the changing spontaneities of consciousness in different forms and levels, such as "complexes of investigative inspecting, of explicating and conceptualizing in descriptions, of comparing and distinguishing, of collecting and counting, of presupposing and inferring."²⁷ They are part of experience to make sense of everything around us that are inescapable. Such includes emotions and willingness: being happy or sad, fearing and hoping, liking and disliking, desiring, wishing, and admiring. The subject is actively participating in the world that is foundational to their belongingness. These examples show how I am actively participating and living in the life-world as an ego-subject. Additionally, these simple ego-acts are embraced by the Cartesian expression, *cogito*.²⁸ Such active participation translates to the continuous and naive living without making the objects of experience a subject of complicated reflection. In facing these objects that are dispersed everywhere, there is only so much that can be perceived but are nonetheless real things. It is not only objects that are in my surrounding world; I also find other human beings. They are understood and accepted as an ego-subject just as I am one, whereby the natural surrounding world is shared and treated objectively as one and the same.²⁹ However, the world is seen differently in their subjective perceptions: their physical appearances, degrees of clarity, distinctness, and features, among other things.

To clarify, we are not mainly concerned with such existence. Here, existence is only secondary. Instead, the focus is on the meaning of their existence and the contents of consciousness itself. There cannot be a world where objects are apprehended without the one apprehending it—there is an inextricable relationship. Thus, consciousness is inseparable to the object. These material things appear naturally in front of those who see them. These are always available at our disposal presented as a givenness such that they immediately yield. The objectivation of the natural attitude allows the subject to not see objects as mere things in nature, but, also, to appreciate their value and practical use (e.g., building, house, chairs, tables, books, clothes, tools and so forth).³⁰ The naive subject, however, encounters these objects without concern for its ontological value and apprehends it simply as it is. I see and apprehend the physical thing as given "in person" as a "naive" human being. On some occasions, I am deceived concerning the factual being of the thing itself because perception is, at times, not a "genuine" perception, e.g., I experience an illusion or hallucination.³¹ In the natural

physical things stand there as Objects of use, the 'table' with its 'books,' the 'drinking glass,' the 'vase' the 'piano' etc. These value-characteristics and practical characteristics also belong constitutively to the Objects 'on hand' as Objects, regardless of whether or not I turn to such characteristics and the Objects." See Husserl, *Ideas*, 53. In this juncture, Husserl speaks of the potentialities of material objects as well as of human beings. Their potentialities are revealed once the ego-subject experiences them, exposing their strengths and weaknesses, capacities and limitations, traits and characteristics.

²⁷ Husserl, *Ideas*, 53.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁰ Husserl, *Ideas*, 78.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

attitude, apparently, these experienceable objects can manipulate our perception. If so, such occurrence necessitates an active experience from direct or personal encounter of it, perhaps to confirm its ontic validity if it is truly real. Life in the natural attitude is a world-belief kind of life.³² Through this kind of naive living, mental processes do not exist only when we intentionally seize upon them through a reflection or experience of something immanent.³³

In the final analysis, the natural attitude is the naive and uncritical mode of living. In discussing the lived experiences of the ego-subject in naivety, I have elucidated the processes of consciousness prior to any philosophizing. More than this, it solidified the naive living of the subject in that they can externally relate with each other within the life-world, while preserving their subjective dimension. In the realization of subjectivity, the subject requires a transcendental conversion. In bracketing all that belongs in the naive world, the ego-subject opens the gateway to transcendence that focuses on the phenomena of experience as it is received in consciousness.

The Ego-Subject in the Phenomenological Epoché

This section will analyze the phenomenological epoché. I will demonstrate how the ego-subject converts from the natural to transcendental attitude. Moreover, I will show that the method of bracketing allows the ego-subject to realize their subjectivity, while preserving the actualities of the life-world. This then leads to the field of extra-mundane experience where transcendental consciousness is found.

The ordinary life has been distorted by our manner of engagement. Our practical concerns, folk-beliefs, and the superficial scientific knowledge got in the way of a pure account of experience as it is given to us.³⁴ Thus, Husserl offers a method of viewing a phenomenon in its experiential purity, undiluted, and without the contamination of prejudice, preconceptions, and assumptions. The practice of “bracketing” is an act of modification of all that belongs to the natural positing or judging. Husserl characterized epoché in multiple terms throughout his works: “abstention” (*Enthaltung*), “dislocation” from, “unplugging” or “exclusion” (*ausschaltung*), “withholding,” “disregarding,” “abandoning,” “parenthesising” (*Einklammerung*), “putting out of action” (*außer Aktion zu setzen*), “putting out of play” (*außer Spiel zu setzen*), and all the positing made within the pre-given of the life-world that entails a “change of attitude” (*Einstellungänderung*).³⁵ The term epoché has its roots from the Skeptics meaning “cessation,” and much like Husserl, they believed in the suspension of judgment towards an epistemological investigation.³⁶ This is not a universal negation insofar as we doubt its factual being or actuality, which Descartes had carried out with the purpose of finding apodictic evidence. To doubt universally serves only as a systematic expedient to bring out certain points that are crucial in the

22. ³² Soren Overgaard, *Husserl and Heidegger on Being in the World* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004),

³³ Husserl, *Ideas*, 175.

³⁴ Moran, *Phenomenology*, 11.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 148-149.

process of epoché.³⁷ Such is not a denial or rejection but a clarification. This is a modification of the general positing while it in itself remains what it is.³⁸

Furthermore, Husserl posits:

We put out of action the general positing which belongs to the essence of the natural attitude; we parenthesize everything which that positing encompasses with respect to being; thus the whole natural world which is continually “there for us,” “on hand,” and which will always remain there according to consciousness as an “actuality” even if we choose to parenthesize it. If I do that, as I can with complete freedom, then I am not negating this “world” as though I were a sophist; I am not doubting its factual being as though I were a skeptic; rather I am exercising the “phenomenological” *εποχή* which also completely shuts me off from any judgment about spatiotemporal factual being.³⁹

The epoché focuses on the internal structure of our unique consciousness, rather than the external and objective. This brings about the subjective representation of reality and the exclusion of the naive engagement to the life-world. However, the reversion to subjectivity does not imply a renouncement of the world or the mundane. This only articulates the being-there-for-us of the world by leaving the thematization of this world.⁴⁰ The actualities of the life-world remain to be factually existing whether or not they are parenthesized. The phenomenological epoché is an opportunity to depart from this “worldliness” (*Weltkindschaft*) and maintain myself away from being absorbed in the world (*Weltverlorenheit*) and not get lost in it.⁴¹ Despite this, bracketing is not a departure from subjectivity. The life-world remains to be the ground where I am employing the transcendental alteration of the epoché. The external world remains as it is, but my internal consciousness changes. This transcendental attitude offers an alternative perspective through which I no longer take the life-world for granted, and focus on the meaning of experience as it is received in consciousness. Therefore, the epoché enables the subject to access the question of the experience of being-in-the-world (*Dasein*) as present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*). Furthermore, epoché is selective depending on the ego-subject’s focused attention as nothing would remain a theme for reflection if it is universally carried out with respect to the existence of what is.⁴² As far as epoché is concerned, Cartesianism speaks of apodictic evidence that does not have the same phenomenological goal.⁴³ A universal scale of bracketing makes

³⁷ Husserl, *Ideas*, 58.

³⁸ Husserl further argues: “it is still there, like the parenthesized in the parentheses, like the excluded outside the context of inclusion [*wie das Ausgeschaltete außerhalb des Zusammenhanges der Schaltung*]. We can also say: The positing is a mental process, but we make “no use” of it, and this is not understood, naturally, as implying that we are deprived of it (as it would if we said of someone who was not conscious, that he made no use of a positing); rather, in the case of this expression and all parallel expressions it is a matter of indicative designations of a definite, specifically peculiar mode of consciousness which is added to the original positing simpliciter (whether this is or not an actual [aktuelle] and even a predicative positing of existence) and, likewise in a specifically manner, changes its value.” See Husserl, *Ideas*, 59.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁰ Overgaard, *Husserl and Heidegger*, 105.

⁴¹ Stroker, *Husserlian Foundations*, 117.

⁴² Timothy Stapleton, *Husserl and Heidegger: The Question of a Phenomenological Beginning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 18. Husserl’s epoché is not wholly the same as the method of Cartesian Doubt. The bracketing is unconcerned with the existence of material things, but their essence. It does not condone the life-world to which there is nothing left to experience. Otherwise, there would then be nothing to investigate if we have bracketed everything.

⁴³ Instead of using Descartes *ego cogito* as a premise to transcendental subjectivity, our focus is directed to a new kind of experience: transcendental experience. See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditation: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. by Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 27. Again, Husserl’s life-world is the world of spatiotemporal actualities that is undoubtedly existing without question. Therefore, the Cartesian evidence, *ego cogito*, *ego sum*, as a doubting tool for apodictic evidence, is used only to an extent because it neglects that the ego can systematically

the world-belief phenomenologically accessible and that the objects of belief must be maintained as “undecided,”⁴⁴ but not discarded. The epoché converts the subject to this pure ego which reveals the subjective experience of a phenomena and brings out the meaning of it.⁴⁵

To further elucidate, I will demonstrate how the ego-subject converts from naivety to transcendence. Things that are encountered reveal an aspect of its existence that is meant to be experienced in a “beginner” disposition. The phenomenological investigation begins in the natural and unreflective relationship to the world, which manifests itself as having the character of givenness. I am conscious of the objects presented to me, but I am lost in it; I am not aware of them as they are not a subject of my focused attention. It is, therefore, only through reflection that allows me to realize that I am trying to be conscious of something, or that I am intending it.⁴⁶ This is to account that I am being a part of the organic way of reflecting whereby I welcome the frankness of such intentions of the life-world, the “nakedness” of reality. However, I am not tempted to believe such a thing so long as I resist making any judgment, that I am, at this point, doubting. In the process of reflecting, I am not obligated to be a co-believing such beliefs.⁴⁷ I refuse to accept the things that are presented to me in naivety. What remains is the suspension and bracketing of it. As such, I bracket everything that I have accepted in the natural attitude and disqualify the world-belief as the epoché reveals in me the transcendental outlook on the life-world. I, as a knowing subject, sharing the same world with other ego-subjects, become a “disinterested on-looker” (*uninteressierter Zuschauer*) or rather, a “non-participant on-looker” (*unbeteiligter Zuschauer*).⁴⁸ This is analogous to say that I am a spectator without participation, wherein I am withholding the urge to be a decisive subject.

Moreover, Eugene Fink⁴⁹ elucidated the concept further in *Sixth Cartesian Meditation*:

explicate himself *ad infinitum* by means of transcendental experience, which already is a field of work. See also Husserl, *Cartesian Meditation*, 31. For Husserl, the ego is automatically in continual functioning that is a necessary term for the process of epoché towards transcendental experience, whereas for Descartes, the ego is enforced as the central instrument towards apodicticity. To put in perspective, the Cartesian program plays only a partial role in Husserl’s starting ground for a phenomenological investigation. This goes back to Husserl’s position about the existence of things as real actualities, which cannot be doubted. While Descartes’ view on the existence of things are doubtful.

⁴⁴ Stroker, *Husserlian Foundations*, 115. Husserl’s adaptation of Cartesian Doubt is not a universal negation but a preparation of the knowing subject to start in a clean state. It can be associated with the empiricist’s concept of *tabula rasa* such that of John Locke, who believed that the mind is like a blank sheet or “white paper devoid of all characters,” where knowledge about the world is acquired through experience. Similarly, what Husserl is trying to suggest is the detachment of ego from any decisiveness. The objectively apperceived objects are not accepted, including those internal experiences.

⁴⁵ Husserl further elucidates this on his later and more mature work in *Cartesian Meditation*: “On the contrary we gain possession of something by it; and what we (or, to speak more precisely, what I, the one who is meditating) acquire by it is my pure living, with all the pure subjective processes making this up, and everything meant in them, *purely as* meant in them: the universe of ‘phenomena’ in the (particular and also the wider) phenomenological sense. The epoché can also be said to be the radical and universal method by which I apprehend myself purely: as Ego, and with my own pure conscious life, in and by which the entire Objective world exists for me and is precisely as it is for me.” See Husserl, *Cartesian Meditation*, 20-21. In the phenomenological standpoint, the ego-subject is introduced in the transcendental realm of experiencing the life-world. The Cartesian program emphasizes objective knowledge toward undeniable evidence. It cannot totally be carried out in attempting to find in transcendental subjectivity the ground of all sciences and the being of the objective world.

⁴⁶ Stroker, *Husserlian Foundations*, 111.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Eugene Fink became an assistant for Husserl in late 1928 in Freiburg and closely worked with the development of his phenomenology. His philosophic thinking is heavily influenced by Husserl since Fink was under his intimate training

In the universal epoché, in the disconnection of all belief-positing, the phenomenological onlooker produces himself. The transcendental tendency that awakens in man and drives him to inhibit all acceptedness nullifies man himself; man un-humanizes [*entmenschl*] himself in performing the epoché, that is, he lays bare the transcendental onlooker in himself, he passes into him.⁵⁰

In this excerpt, Fink explains what becomes the ego-subject after the universal epoché: a phenomenological onlooker. The world-belief in the natural attitude, which all acceptedness of the pre-given resides, is nullified. It is a transcendental awakening in man through the “internal” phenomenologizing that is set in motion. The act of phenomenologizing allows man to realize his beliefs in the naivety, which will then be bracketed. The self-consciousness of the onlooker revisits the accepted ideas regarding humanness or one’s sense of belonging to the world and it is replaced with the transcendental having of the world.⁵¹ The knowledge accepted prior to the discovery of the critical standpoint serves only as a basis for reflection. Such is a bestowal of the transcendental experiential life of having the life-world. Similarly in *Crisis*, Husserl explains:

...man becomes a nonparticipating spectator, surveyor of the world; he becomes a philosopher; or rather, from this point on his life becomes receptive to motivations which are possible only in this attitude, motivations for new sorts of goals for thought and methods through which, finally, philosophy comes to be and he becomes a philosopher.⁵²

The performer of the epoché transcends from the natural and naive living. From now on, man sees the world differently as he becomes a phenomenologist. The life-world’s givenness becomes secondary to experience. As a phenomenologist, he is released from his self-incurred captivity of everyday acceptedness, which is mostly concealed in the naive-having of the life-world. Through this, the domain of philosophy is recognized where man is more critical and receptive. It places the experiencer outside of what is mere explicit and uncovers what lies beyond the apparent.

After enforcing the epoché, we are left with a residuum of pure consciousness and focus on the acts of the *ego* or the conscious act as *cogitationes*.⁵³ In this phase, I am able to recognize how things influence my perceptions, thoughts, and attitudes, as I meditate about the objects of my conscious acts and experiences. This is a total change of attitude—from natural to transcendental. Now, since bracketing of particulars is not enough, even if it is enforced *ad infinitum*, it has to be done totally and undivided such that the whole “world-presupposition” is suspended leaving with no remains.⁵⁴ After the conversion, the ego-subject must be in repeated practice to ensure that he would not relapse back to the naive realm. Conversely, reliance on the objectivity of the material being, to declare a judgment out of its given naturalness or “unrefined-ness,” would be a judgment that is unthematic, unthought of, or unanticipated experience of the “on hand.”⁵⁵ The subject is captivated with the unquestioned world—the naive subject accepts whatever is presented. As a phenomenological onlooker, the ego-subject is no longer naive and recognizes this captivation. In being a non-participating spectator, man

for a time. Fink did not only learn his phenomenology primarily in his texts because he listened to him, spoke to him, and thought with him. For a more extensive exposition of their history, see Ronald Bruzina, *Edmund Husserl & Eugene Fink: Beginnings and Ends in Phenomenology, 1928-1938* (London: Yale University Press, 2004) 1-68.

⁵⁰ Eugene Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation: The Idea of Transcendental Theory of Method* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 39-40.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵² Husserl, *Crisis*, 285.

⁵³ Moran, *Phenomenology*, 150-151.

⁵⁴ Stapleton, *Husserl and Heidegger*, 16.

⁵⁵ Husserl, *Ideas*, 58.

continues to ground his living body in the life-world, while phenomenologizing. This is because even if the ego-subject is a surveyor, or in a transcendental dimension, the life-world remains factually existing.

Furthermore, the epoché preserves the actualities of the life-world, such that the ego-subject changes an attitude (internal), while the life-world (external) stays untouched. Thus, all ego-subjects occupying the same world find themselves possessing different views of this world. However, there is a shared understanding of their practical value (i.e., chair is for sitting, plate is for eating, glass is for drinking etc.) in their external sense. There is an element of practicality, consensus, unity, and universality. But their subjective manifold cannot be seen in their peripheral appearance or face value. The individualistic nature of Husserl's epoché eventually constitutes a holistic relationship with all ego-subjects and the world which they live in. The separated worlds of experiences are joined by concatenation of actual experience, making up one intersubjective world through effecting a mutual understanding despite having no relationship to each other's mental lives.⁵⁶ It neither annihilates the shared-common-experience of certain things nor will it be an act of solipsism. Imposing judgment on another is more egocentric and reductive. In other words, the tree that I see is not just for me, but it indicates that it is a tree for others. As explained earlier, the givenness and actualities of the world, being-there-for-us-all, is indicative that it is impossible to keep it for oneself insofar as to have a separate reality to other ego-subjects.⁵⁷ The world exists in itself from the ego-subjects. Despite each experiences, appearances, constituting-objects, and world-phenomenon, the world is for everyone.⁵⁸ There is a communalization of subjectivities in the objective world. The multiplicities of separated *ego* and streams of consciousness of ego-subjects constitutes a unity of experiences mediated by "empathy," thus, making up a whole intersubjective world.⁵⁹

Conclusion

The discussion illuminates the following: first, the naivety or natural attitude homogenizes all ego-subjects. Through this natural outlook of the world, they find themselves having the same understanding of practical things through the objectivity accompanied by this attitude. Despite having different experiences, they can externally relate with each other in the realm of naive living. However, one becomes a passive subject and fails to recognize and experience the purity of material objects towards finding one's own subjectivity and meaning. Second, the phenomenological epoché allows the subject to maintain one's wholeness. The transcendental consciousness bestows the subject to believe things as the phenomenologizing ego experiences them first-hand without preconceived notions from other ego. As such, the subject is able to preserve his individuality as an autonomous being who possesses the power over his psychic processes; that is, free of manipulation or coercion

⁵⁶ Husserl, *Ideas*, 108.

⁵⁷ "In any case then, within myself, within the limits of my transcendently reduced pure conscious life, I *experience* the world (including others)—and, according to its experiential sense, *not* as (so to speak) my *private* synthetic formation but as other than mine alone [*mir fremde*], as an *intersubjective* world, actually there for everyone, accessible in respect of its Objects to everyone." See Husserl, *Cartesian Meditation*, 91.

⁵⁸ "This constitution, arising on the basis of the 'pure' others (the other Egos who as yet have no worldly sense), is essentially such that the 'others'-for-me do not remain isolated; on the contrary, an *Ego-community*, which includes me, becomes constituted (in my sphere of ownness, naturally) as a community of Egos existing with each other and for each other—*ultimately a community of monads*, which, moreover, (it is communalized intentionality) constitutes the *one identical world*." See Husserl, *Cartesian Meditation*, 107.

⁵⁹ Husserl, *Ideas*, 363.

from the egotistical and reductive Other. Lastly, all ego-subjects are relativized through intersubjectivity. There is a mutual understanding that stems from the multiplicity of mental lives. It constitutes a sense of relationship with other ego-subjects despite having “separated worlds” because of the communal feature of the life-world.

The ego-subject’s experience of the presented spatiotemporal fact-world can be transformed. However, one is obligated to habitually take account of transitioning between both attitudes. The epoché essentially annuls the life-world of any affairs that hinders authentic experience. In doing so, the ego-subject is converted as an onlooker: man becomes a phenomenologist whose world is transcendently accepted and experienced. The transposition to transcendence does not alter the life-world’s objective character as factually existing. Through bracketed judgment, the ego-subject experiences the life-world rendering no one else but himself as the primary source of knowledge where subjectivity is derived. Hence, the transcendental consciousness is not a departure from subjectivity because the life-world remains to be the ground where I am employing the transcendental alteration of the epoché. Husserlian phenomenology allows the ego-subject to access the being of the life-world and to unlock their subjectivity from an experience of transcendence.

Finally, the phenomenological epoché provides a view towards the world in the universal scope as it expands outside the self (finding a common ground to transcendental intersubjectivity). Therefore, it is neither reductive nor solipsistic because Husserlian phenomenology starts with the self as an ego, which will eventually constitute all other ego-subjects manifested in the life-world. Subjectivity is produced from the experience of the life-world, which is communally shared. It embraces subjective experiences from a holistic lens. Further, the epoché is not epistemological in the Cartesian sense. Despite Husserl using certain aspects of Descartes’ philosophy, he, nonetheless, diverged to achieve a different phenomenological goal. By nature, the natural attitude cannot be completely disowned for it is the default attitude, even if they tried to separate themselves from it *ad infinitum*. Regardless of what attitude is appropriated, the world will remain to be ever present, occupying space and time. Lastly, Husserl provided us with a system towards self-introspection and self-responsibility within the life-world where human beings are closer towards understanding the nature of subject-object relation and transcendental meaning of experience.

Bibliography

- Bruzina, Ronald. *Edmund Husserl & Eugene Fink: Beginnings and Ends in Phenomenology, 1928-1938*. London: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Detmer, David. *Phenomenology Explained: From Experience to Insight*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 2013.
- Fink, Eugene. *Sixth Cartesian Meditation: The Idea of Transcendental Theory of Method*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Translated by F. Kersten. Kluwer Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983.
- _____. *Logical Investigations*. Translated by Dermot Moran. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.
- _____. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Translated by W. R. Boyce Gibson. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.
- _____. *Cartesian Meditation: An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Translated by Dorion Cairns Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999.
- _____. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. United States: Northwestern University Press, 1970.
- Moran, Dermot. *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- _____. *Husserl's Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Macann, Christopher. *Four Phenomenological Philosophers*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Overgaard, Søren. *Husserl and Heidegger on Being in the World*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004.
- Stapleton, Timothy. *Husserl and Heidegger: The Question of a Phenomenological Beginning*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983.
- Steinbock, Anthony, J. *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995.
- Stroker, Elisabeth. *The Husserlian Foundations of Science*. Edited by John Drummond. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997.