

Chapter 19

The Radicalization of "Seeing" An Attempt To Go Beyond Reflection

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Abstract: We intend to disclose the original intention of Husserl's phenomenology as the radicalizing of the act of "seeing." Why Husserl failed to further radicalize this philosophical knowing is precisely because this radicalization requires to elucidate the nature of and go beyond reflection as philosophical cognition. This reflection is none but the self introspection presupposing the traditional subject-object dichotomy. To overcome limits of the subjectivistic notion of reflection we must achieve phenomenological epoché on the theoretical domain and even on the practical sphere. A parallel is discovered between this radicalized phenomenological approach and that of Zen philosophy for our future philosophical method.

In 1934 the late Eugen Fink published in *Die Tatwelt* an article entitled, "Was will die Phänomenologie Edmund Husserls?" from whose title we have inherited ours.¹ Although Fink was well acquainted with the unpublished manuscripts of Husserl, which have begun to become known to us now through publication of *Husserliana*, the basic conception of his article was rather determined from the historical situation in which Husserl was understood and criticized other philosophical points of view.

¹ The original version of this paper was completed on April 26, 1988, and was read at the 20th Husserl Circle meeting at Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada under the title "Was wollte eigentlich die Phänomenologie Edmund Husserls."

At this commemoration of the 50th anniversary of this great philosopher's death, it is of significance to direct our inquiry once again to the fundamental motive of Husserl's phenomenology. Phenomenology and the phenomenological movement may belong to history, yet the spirit of Husserl's phenomenology and phenomenological philosophy is more alive and active in us today so that we pursue our philosophical inquiry even more vigorously than ever. The question we are raising is not a question of Husserl interpretation or a question of historical fact about Husserl's philosophy, but is the question that we take upon ourselves.

In his article Fink attempted to reveal the ultimate conception of Husserlian philosophy as one of the epoch-making philosophical pursuits by referring back to the famous Platonic allegory of the cave. Namely, the philosophical pursuit in Husserl's phenomenology is understood primarily as a radical upheaval of our total existence, that is, a far-reaching metamorphosis of our fundamental attitudes toward the well-known, pre-scientific mundane reality as well as toward pre-existing philosophies and positive scientific enterprises.

This radical metamorphosis would be initiated by the so-called phenomenological reduction or *epoché*. This fundamental method of phenomenological philosophy possesses the "power" to "switch off" and neutralize our hitherto unquestionably held beliefs which, with self-evident familiarity, enable us to experience, imagine, and act as well as react to things in the world, in such a way that we are liberated from that which we have taken for granted. Then we will be in a position to question, doubt and inquire into the authentic being of that which has been taken for granted by us.

By means of this phenomenological reduction, we are to shift ourselves from the attitude in our mundane life to the phenomenological one to which we are awakened in order to re-examine our previously held mundane beliefs as well as their correlates, that is, those that were taken for granted as real in our pre-phenomenological attitude.

According to Fink, the groundwork of Husserl's phenomenology would be accomplished when we, through examination and analysis of the phenomenologically given, were able to reconstrue what was real and valid in our natural mundane attitude as the meanings constituted by the activities of the transcendental ego, in other words, as the intentional "objects" of the constituting subject.

When the phenomenological movement initiated by those who possessed a basically similar attitude of doing philosophical inquiry, and they agreed to call themselves phenomenologists following Husserl's fundamental tenets of philosophy, the leading motive which united them with the epoch-making movements was, needless to say, "*Zu den Sachen selbst!*" ("Return to the matters themselves!"). Although each of those who joined the movements understood respectively what these "matters" were to mean, it is as clear to us now as it was then how cluttered with many philosophical conceptions the historical situation in the German academic circle of philosophy was. To many, therefore, doing philosophy phenomenologically meant not merely liberating themselves from and doing away with the many theories and philosophical approaches of different philosophical schools which were dominant at the time: It signified further, more radically returning and redirecting their philosophical attention to a primordial experience and resuming the philosophical inquiry with such an experience. This latter claim doubtlessly presupposes that, on the one hand, there exists a reality as the primary source to which philosophical inquiry should return, and, on the other hand, reality has been forgotten by traditional philosophical preoccupations and, thus, has been covered by and concealed under layers of philosophical theories of various schools. To Husserl and other phenomenologists, however, this was more than a presupposition: Rather, it was a matter of fact. It was through an intuitive grasp that such a reality hitherto covered up and hidden would give itself immediately in that primordial experience and, thus, how to know it constituted the question about the evidence with regard to the nature of "intuition".

This is why a philosopher like Max Scheler construed the phenomenological method as a unique philosophical attitude or orientation in which what is directly grasped through a special kind of intuition (called phenomenological) is given *a priori* for analysis and description. This *a priori* given is, as its modifier clearly suggests, 1) authentically real, independent of sensory experience, 2) universally valid, 3) regulating the particular experience as an essence. Such an *a priori* intuition and its object, which gives itself immediately to that intuition, were for Scheler never a problem in his philosophy.

Contrary to this sort of philosophical inclination, Husserl's preoccupation throughout his entire life of research never ceased thematically

to inquire into and pursue minutely detailed and extensively careful analyses of the way to the primordial experience, the nature of that experience itself, and reality as its object. For to Husserl, this primordial experience and the reality which was uncovered through the phenomenological reduction (which shifts our basic attitude of mundanity to that of revelation) by no means readily constitute philosophical solutions, but to Husserl's eye it presented itself as the totality of philosophical problems to be investigated and analyzed, and ultimately clarified. This totality Husserl named intentionality.

What then did Husserl understand to be the "matter" of the basic phenomenological motive of "Returning to matters themselves!"? No doubt, it was the transcendental domain of consciousness. This return to the primordial experience of the transcendental ego was, to Husserl no doubt, self evident; it was not a matter of his choice but the necessary consequence resulted from the matter of fact as he saw it. Being extremely sensitive to and critical of the metaphysical conceptions and the speculative thinking of his immediate predecessors and his contemporaries, Husserl did rather almost unquestioningly live the tradition of the Contemporary European Philosophy and pursued his philosophical inquiries by operating with many basic concepts historically loaded with the implications of Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, etc. Husserl's inexhaustible truthfulness to fact itself and his innermost desire to faithfully see reality as it actually is often inevitably broke him away from the residue of tradition and freed him to uncloudedly see reality as it actually is. Such a case may be that he later went back to the lifeworld and was intensively engaged in analysis of the passive synthesis in our pre-predicative experience.

No matter how carefully and articulately the phenomenological reflection is distinguished from any psychological introspection, or Kantian or neo-Kantian reflection, as long as this is understood as *Sebstbesinnung*, it implicitly takes for granted that the subject as knower tries to artificially redirect his act of knowing from the so-called external world back to the internal world of self and to know itself as that which is to be known. One may see here Husserl's unconscious association of this notion with John Locke's concept of reflection, which is the cognitive faculty of the internal self.

In Husserl's basic approach, too, the fundamental trait of Contemporary European Philosophy may be ascertainable: "The way of knowing determines the way of being." Being is being an object to a subject. By means of the phenomenological reduction such an object becomes "a phenomenon." It is not difficult to hear echoes of Locke's and the other British empiricists' assertion that the idea is only the object of understanding. Special reference to Immanuel Kant here is, of course, superfluous.

Isn't it the Cartesian contention that *ego cogito* is apodictic in our self reflection? Is it so because reflection is the act of giving itself immediately to itself, or because reflection is the cognitive act with that apodeicticity? Perhaps this distinction has been overlooked. We simply assume too much of reflection such that the internal (transcendental) domain of consciousness becomes transparent to reflection once this is applied. Were not the agonies of Husserl over his later philosophical analyses on the so-called *lebendige Gegenwart* his realization of how little one can know by reflection, despite the long, honorable expectation for it? As long as reflection is the act of I and at the same time is the act of seeing myself as I, insofar as reflection is re-capturing what has really happened, there is an inevitable disparity between the reflecting I, which seemingly sees the streaming consciousness, and the reflected I, which retentively captures the self that has streamed away a moment ago. This primordial fact (*Urfactum*) of the transcendental ego as this *strömende Gegenwart* inevitably escapes the objectifying act of reflection and can never be known as what it is except as having streamed away.

This is not the place to elaborate on the nature of *die lebendige Gegenwart*, nor is it our intention to do so. Our thematic question is whether reflection, which introspects into self and captures immediately the self itself, is the sole and adequate way of knowing primordial experience. If reflection were merely the passive act of cognitively re-capturing what has been there, wouldn't reflection differ from an act of the transcendental ego, which is basically spontaneous and constitutive? Or is that explicating act of the implied meanings in genetic phenomenology no longer called a reflection?

In order for us to be able to redirect reflectively our act of seeing from our concerned immersion in our living in the world and interacting with the things in the world to the transcendental domain of our

consciousness, we need, according to Husserl, to apply the transcendental reduction to and exercise it on our mundane way of living in the world. The phenomenological reduction is not a mere procedure to redirect our attention philosophically. As emphasized earlier, this is rather the metamorphosis of our being, which is one of the central problems of Husserl's phenomenology. Therefore, let us go back to the question of the phenomenological reduction.

In order for us to understand how we live in the mundane practical world, it may be illuminating to go back to examples of the Socratic mission in conjunction with the allegory of The Cave.

In our everyday life, each one of us is able to perceive, anticipate, imagine, make judgments, give advice, as well as decide, act, react, in the world in which we live with numerous sets of well-accustomed beliefs. When we wake up in the morning, we have no doubt that we are the same person who slept last night, and the bed and the bedroom are the same as they were the previous day. We resume many activities, such as showering, combing our hair, having breakfast, going out to the garage to start the car, and are thereby fully confident of our beliefs. For instance, we have no doubt that hot water will come out when we turn the faucet on, our hair will behave in the way it usually does, when we turn the ignition, the car will start without any problem. In the normal course of our daily activities in the mundane world, we take for granted that nothing unusual will happen, and everything which we experience is as we had anticipated. In short, we believe that we know everything in our world. Even if something does happen unexpectedly, the way in which it happens unexpectedly is not totally unexpected, but happens with familiarity and in a sense is expected. We may need to modify our behavior as a reaction, but certainly we know how to do so.

The case would be totally different if we, as Athenians, were to encounter Socrates and he cross-examined us, for Socrates would, through his questioning, lead us to an awareness that, although we thought that we knew, in reality we did not. We would be forced to recognize that we did believe that we knew, while we did not actually know. Socrates would make us feel as if everything we believed to be true were upside-down by showing us what we thought was right, really wrong, what we thought was self-evident, questionable, what we thought was usual, unusual, what we thought familiar, unfamiliar. As all the beliefs which we had been

accustomed to, familiar with and had taken for granted were shown to be the contrary, i.e., unexpected in the totally unexpected manner, thus we would be totally bewildered, such that all these preconceived beliefs would have now lost their power and become meaningless. Being stripped of these beliefs, the very foundation of our existence in the mundane world would be shattered and slip away from our feet in the face of a new awareness of our ignorance. This state of our existence is called "wonder." In this psychological state, we become uncertain and insecure; we would start searching for true knowledge of what really is. Instead of being content with the pre-established and accustomed beliefs which enable us to successfully act more or less in a practical manner in the mundane world we would be filled with inexhaustible, assiduous want and desire for authentic knowledge. The Socratic mission was, therefore, to put a person in a position to be aware of one's own ignorance, and to bring one to wonder and to the questioning search for knowledge of what really is.

This is what philosophical questioning does to us, and this is precisely what Husserl anticipated and discovered in the function and achievement of the phenomenological reduction. Instead of wonder, which the Greeks saw as initiation to the questioning search, Husserl discovered the power and *dynamis* of the Cartesian universal doubt and elaborated and refined it into the phenomenological reduction.

Just as was the philosopher in the Allegory of The Cave, being at first blinded by the strong light of the sun, shocked to see reality "outside of the cave", and what appeared to be real before was apparent to him now as shadows inside the cave, so are we, following Husserl, inevitably led to a shattering experience, through the phenomenological *epoché*, regarding what we had taken for granted as being real, and then we start our questioning search for what reality authentically is. Being liberated from the pre-established, previously quite familiar dogmatic beliefs which supported our everyday experiences and activities as well as our scientific pursuits, we are authentically free and yet uncertain and insecure. For there is no familiarity nor direction to rely upon and we are free to set out on a voyage of our own for the discovery of reality in the ocean of the unknown. Do we have the compass of Reason, as Plato maintained? We might answer "Yes!" if we had positively inherited the tradition of European culture. However, has not it been the case in

the history of European philosophy that the philosophical search has been under the tyranny of European Reason? Husserl seemed well aware of this in that he, in *Die Krisis* manuscripts, advocated that the crisis of European culture (sciences and technology) today is the outcome of European rationalism and scientific objectivism derived from the (one-sided) dominance of European Reason, and at the same time, almost paradoxically, this very Reason discloses itself with its teleology in Husserl's phenomenology to overcome the crisis by revealing its absurdities. Although many Husserl interpreters argue that Husserl's contention is speculative and not phenomenological, couldn't this be a case where the philosopher accepts the tradition of European Reason?

Rather than uncritically following in the steps of philosophy in the direction of Euro-centralism, which is still latently dominant among philosophers, it should be possible to philosophize with a global perspective, and surely we see in the fundamental motive of Husserl's phenomenology and phenomenological reduction such a possibility.

In order to understand this more properly, let us now inquire into the ultimate motive of Husserl's phenomenology. It is true that the central problem of Husserl's phenomenology consisted of the intentional analyses of transcendental consciousness. It is possible to reflect upon, analyze and obtain insight into what is given in the phenomenological attitude through the phenomenological *epoché* that would achieve the bracketing of the general thesis of the world as well as all the preconceived beliefs which underlie our everyday way of life and the scientific research and technological achievements. Therefore, to return to matters themselves was, for Husserl, no other than to go back to transcendental subjectivity. Husserl's world interpretation was to construe the world neither as the Kantian phenomenal world that scientific objectivism portrays, nor as the things in themselves which are unknowable, but it construes the world as the phenomenologically reduced "phenomenon", i.e., as the intentional correlate to the constitutive transcendental subject.

To that extent, in order to return to facts themselves Husserl deliberately chose the intentional correlations of transcendental subjectivity. This choice by Husserl is by no means confirmable (i.e., self-given) by any phenomenological intuition, as Fink correctly pointed out. It is a matter of speculative thinking, which was hidden to Husserl but he would have done everything possible to bracket it phenomenologically if he had

been aware of it. We may argue that it was due to the inherited notion of "reflection." Or one can point out that Husserl was not quite free from the tradition of Contemporary European Philosophy, such as the Cartesian conception of *ego cogito* as the sole apodictic fact. Needless to say, however, there exists a "gap" between what the philosopher intended to do and what the outcome of his philosophical inquiries were. This gap may either be a result of the philosopher's latent or explicit dependence on the historical, cultural or spiritual environment of his time, or a consequence of a certain development of some philosophical thought, which no doubt is often hard to escape from.

As we all know, to take phenomenology to the road of transcendental idealism was Husserl's way of uncovering genuine reality.

Nevertheless, we can still wonder if this outcome was the ultimate motive that Husserl intended to achieve by doing philosophy phenomenologically and by exercising the phenomenological *epoché*. Doing philosophy fifty years after Husserl's death, we should be able to better see Husserl's philosophical accomplishments as a whole as well as more properly allocate their significance in the historical perspective in which he was active. Further, coming from a cultural tradition quite foreign to the European one, we are more freely able to gain insight into the ultimate motive of Husserl's phenomenology by going beyond the actual accomplishments of his philosophical investigations. As pointed out at the beginning, our concern with Husserl's phenomenology and his phenomenological philosophy is not historical, but is actual in the sense that our most sincere quest is to discover what to positively accept among his contributions in our philosophical task which is essential to our own philosophical pursuit. Only through this quest of ours are we in a position to uncover the ultimate motive of Husserl's phenomenology and not the motives that led Husserl to the accomplishments of his actual phenomenological inquiries.

So, then what is the ultimate motive of Husserl's phenomenology and his phenomenological *epoché*?

Husserl began his philosophical inquiries with a groundwork for mathematics and with his exploration of the foundation of logic. That task led him to the idea of philosophy as a rigorous science. Contrary to the other sciences, which are exact due to their methodological approach, philosophy and philosophical method are called "rigorous" because this

science investigates the *a priori* structure and relations of "essences," which constitute the groundwork for both the empirical sciences and the eidetic sciences such as mathematics and logic. The analyses of signs, symbols and concepts, which presuppose senses and meanings, directed his philosophical attention to the act of signification (*Meinen*), which as an act of consciousness "intends" its "object" by virtue of its meaning.

First of all, to guard himself from falling victim to criticism of (empirical) psychologism, Husserl fended it off by treating the analyses of intentionality, i.e., of "consciousness of something," as the analyses of essences (*Wesensanalyse*), i.e., the analyses of the eidetic structure of consciousness. For "essence," by traditional implication since the time of Aristotle, means not only non-accidental *a priori*, a being independent of *empirie*, but also a being which is universally valid as potency as well as an exemplar representative that conditions the particulars. The analyses and knowledge of the essences and their relationships were to guarantee Husserl's philosophy with the rigorous *a priori* character. Rather than taking the Kantian road to logically explore the transcendental conditions for the possibility of knowledge, Husserl attempted through the phenomenological *epoché* to have an intuitive insight into *a priori* structure and relations of our consciousness. This intuitive grasp of essences is, for Husserl, the other necessary condition for that basic science to be rigorous. Therefore, it was a natural step for Husserl to go back to the Cartesian *ego cogito* to further follow the tradition of Contemporary European Philosophy. Thus Husserl's phenomenology ended up being transcendental philosophy.

Nevertheless, it was not Husserl's intention to develop and build a systematic philosophy, but to tirelessly and incessantly pursue careful, detailed analyses of what he actually beheld as "matters" before his "eye." The above-mentioned are to us, the devotees of Husserl's phenomenology, by no means new findings, but common knowledge with which we are well-acquainted.

The most fundamental motive in Husserl's phenomenology must therefore be sought perhaps not in Husserl's achievements in transcendental philosophy, but somewhere else. Namely, from the beginning of his philosophy throughout his entire life of research his every endeavor was to try to bring back philosophical inquiry to the beginning of all beginnings, i.e., to the primordial experience in which we would be able

to "see" reality itself as it actually is. Otherwise, it is unintelligible to us why Husserl repeatedly tried to analyze, grasp and describe *die lebendige Gegenwart* through reflection without any coherent result. Without such a passionate drive towards reality itself, why did Husserl pursue his painstaking analyses of "types" and "typifying" as passive synthesis in our pre-predicative experience? What Husserl teaches us most is not the programmatic schemes of his philosophical inquiry, which are revealed in most of his published *opera* while he was alive (with such exceptions as *Logische Untersuchungen*, *Formale und Transzendente Logik*, and *Erfahrung und Urteil*, etc.), but about his passionate, ceaseless devotion to reality itself and his effort to behold it as rigorously as possible. Indeed, the sole, ultimate task and function of the phenomenological *epoché* was conceived, developed and perfected to bring us back to primordial freedom, indeed, to uncover, disempower and liberate ourselves from preconceived ideas and pre-established beliefs in such a way that we are able to return to our "beginner's mind" and freely experience reality as it actually is. It is the *methodos* of the authentic awakening, of the awakening to authentic reality itself.

If we may extract the basic phenomenon of the phenomenological *epoché* from the transcendental reductions, just as Husserl did from Cartesian universal doubt, and apply it to ourselves, then we are withdrawn from our way of knowing the world and the things in it which we believe to exist, with their "objective" distinctions and order. We are so accustomed to taking "this knowledge" for granted that we are fully convinced that it is not only familiar but also quite certain. By undergoing by ourselves the basic phenomenon of the phenomenological *epoché*, we are thrown into a state of upheaval in which everything that was familiar, certain, and self-evident has become foreign, dubious and questionable. This condition is the state of "wonder." It is precisely what we call Socratic irony, in that we can no longer believe that we know because whatever accustomed way we employed to make us know, it is not possible to do so any more. Thus, we cannot help but realize that we do not know. Through this explicit awareness of our own ignorance we are now led to begin our long journey in the questioning search. Eugen Fink refers to this as *Wissensausstand*.

In the case of Husserl, however, we shift into the so-called phenomenological attitude in which is revealed the transcendental domain, and we

are immediately provided with "reflection" with which to look, analyze, grasp and describe the intentional correlations as the "object" of our inquiry.

Was this avenue to the transcendental subjectivity the only answer to the *Wissensausstand* not only for Husserl, but also for us? It is very unlikely, particularly to us. There exists rather an alternative to this road to transcendental phenomenology, namely the long, uncertain journey of searching for reality as it actually is. In parallel, we find in the philosophy of Zen the sustained, directionless, painstaking, assiduous search for the Way, the passionate, whole-hearted commitment to the questioning search for *satori*, i.e., the total awareness of reality as it actually is. To this we shall return again soon.

In order to overcome the limitations of reflections traditionally conceived, we shall now attempt to focus in Husserl's phenomenology on the way in which reflection would be purified from the self-reflective act to pure seeing as such. In the traditional comprehension, reflection presupposes the subject-object dichotomy and has been construed not as a normal act of the subject which "intends" its object, but rather as the act of subject which looks backward at the subject itself. Because the very "object" of reflection, the subject itself, is given to reflection itself without any mediacy, reflection is an intuition. It is a self-giving cognitive act.

Suppose that we attempt to abolish or at least do away with the presupposition of the subject-object dichotomy. Suppose that we carefully liberate "seeing" itself from the subject by "diminishing" the latter to nothingness. Then in this seeing the distinction between seeing and the seen disappears and they become one and the same: In this radical seeing, the seen is not seen from the seeing subject, but from the seen itself. There is the seen, and nothing else. The seen is seen in such a way that the seen reveals itself as it actually is.

Why this radicalization of reflection? Why in fact the purifying of seeing as such?

Let us remind ourselves of Plato's Allegory of The Cave once more. The shadows in the darkness of the cave were the things in the world and the only world that the prisoner in the cave knew as real; once he was moved out of the cave into the open air, he not only could not see the outside world, being shocked by and, through contrast and change,

blinded by the brightness of the sunlight and would retreat back into the cave, but also he could not directly see the sun itself, for the sun is the source and the fullness of light itself. How does this allegory elucidate the phenomenon of reflection?

In the cave, the prisoner in his accustomed certain way experienced the so-called shadows as the real things in the world. Through the "reduction," he was led out of the cave to the open, bright sunny world, his experience of which made him aware that these he perceives are authentically real, while those in the cave became obvious to him as mere mirroring in the dark. The philosophical reflection in this context is not seeing and the sight of the prisoner dragged out of the cave, but rather the sun and its light in reference to his seeing. As the Cartesian notion of *lumen naturale* also suggests, reflection in the traditional sense not only "sees," analyzes, and distinguishes the things in the world outside the cave, but in order to do so, necessarily illuminates that which reflection sees. The subject that reflects, i.e., the Reason that possesses *lumen naturale*, *de facto* becomes the sun and its light itself in the Platonic Allegory. Isn't this an indication that, because of this conception of reflection, Husserl had to face the paradoxical situation in which he repeatedly attempted to reflectively grasp the *strömende Gegenwart* in vain? Therefore, does not the subject which reflects, that is Reason with *lumen naturale*, deify itself? That is untenable, because the reflecting subject makes itself the absolute beyond the limits of the finite human existence, as long as it interprets itself as the source of light and the light itself in seeing, and in only which reality can reveal itself. Insofar as the source of light and the light itself is sought in the reflection and the reflecting subject, it is not possible for us to free ourselves from the autocracy of European ego, from the Reason of European Philosophy, and from any form of subjectivism.

Solely through such liberation can genuine reality which the questioning search seeks to see, as it actually is, illuminate itself by itself. Possibly by bracketing this reflecting subject itself, namely through further radicalizing of reflection to pure seeing in the above-mentioned sense, the distance and estrangement from, the enmity and hatred towards as well as the desire and will to control and organize the world will be gradually replaced by the closeness to, sincere affinity with, the understanding

compassion and the universal love as well as truthfully and wholeheartedly self-devoting willingness to let it be and let it go.

This bracketing of the reflecting subject is, however, a very special case of what Zen and the philosophy of Zen consider the essential way of liberating oneself from all the attachments which we ourselves create in our mundane way of life.

What leads us to an insight into the radicalizing of pure seeing does not presuppose either our understanding of the whole philosophy of Zen nor the practice of *zazen*. We are concerned here with the fundamental attitude toward and the understanding of reality through the philosophy of Zen.

“Why the search?” asks the beginning of the book of poems entitled, “The Ox and His Herdsman.” In the face of the question about the “ultimate concern,” which man has to raise sooner or later, he experiences the nothingness of the worldly, whether it is pleasure, wealth, fame, family, achievement, everything which we consider to make one’s life worth living. Along with this we experience, too, the transiency and the finitude, thus, the nothingness of one’s own existence and, in consequence, of the being of the world. Man is held in existential anxiety in which nothingness reveals itself. This is why man begins his search in parallel to the phenomenological *epoché* namely, in the theoretical sense of what Fink calls *Wissensausstand*.

In the Zen monastery, in the beginning the search as practiced in Zen is highly structured, severely disciplined and demands enormous effort. The authentic search, however, should be spontaneous, autonomous and without discipline. Since attachment to mundanity is normally so strong and deep in us, it is considered necessary to artificially counteract such persistent and accustomed inclinations. Such strict discipline, unnatural in practice, soon becomes effortless and natural in that man does no longer practice, but he not only becomes one with practice itself but also is practice himself. This is why Dogen, the great master of Soto school, insisted on *shikandaza* (total devotion to the practice of meditation).

When man embarks such a practice as the means of his search, at the beginning he cannot completely escape from and later often falls back into attachment to gaining ideas. Since the greatest human attachment of all is attachment to one’s ego (this is called “small mind”),

man can only experience reality, not as it actually is, but as the echoes of his own self-centered ego, namely, no other than as the reflections of his desires and attachments. This "something extra" of course does not become apparent to him until the power and the exercise of his ego attachments are radically "bracketed" in the authentic manner and become, thereby, transparent.

In this attitude of gaining ideas in our everyday experience, reality is experienced as having real, i.e., "objective" distinctions, the ten thousand things rise and fall in the eye of the self who desires and is possessed by attachment without awareness.

Once, however, in the process of becoming the practice itself through the radical *epoché*, man catches a glimpse of the nature of his ego as the source of attachment and desire, which he now finds unnatural, so that all those distinguished become lucid as the product of an artificial contrivance of his own ego. Now it is natural to him to do exactly the opposite of what he used to do, including his search for the way (his way of gaining ideas), i.e., it is unquestionably apparent to him that instead of strenuous searching, to fast his ego now becomes natural and authentically spontaneous. How to fast the ego? It is by radically "bracketing" desire and attachment. Indeed, it is our desire and attachment that discriminate all the differences; it is our dualistic way of thinking that, with the help of language, reifies all the distinctions as real. In light of this understanding of Zen, it now becomes more apparent that our total immersion in the mundane way of life and thus the exercise of its *epoché* is not a matter of the merely theoretical philosophy, but is a matter of the question profoundly rooted in and penetrating throughout the entire being of our existence.

The fasting of the ego, that is emptying the self ultimately to nothing, is the return to the original self, the empty mind which is ready to accept and let reality be as it actually is, instead of artificially trying to control, change or order things other than our self. Can this not be a radicalization of the phenomenological reflection? This return to the original self of pure seeing is not to shed light to, grasp, to analyze, and to thematically behold the nature of the self. Is not it rather to uncover the unnecessary distortions of pure seeing in order to let reality reveal itself completely freely and as it actually is? Indeed the very nothingness is the primordial self in purity, calmness, and openness as the beginner's

mind to which we ultimately return through the radical *epoché*. It even resembles the Platonic *choora* in *Timaeus* on which reality simultaneously throws its shadow and in which it sees itself through the radicalized pure seeing.

There is no doubt a great difference between Husserl's phenomenology and the philosophy of Zen. We have followed through an unusual way to elucidate the ultimate motive of Husserl's phenomenology which may go beyond the limits of the actual accomplishments of his philosophy. Liberated from the subjectivistic interpretation, reflection is radicalized by comparison with the philosophy of Zen and is "elevated" to pure seeing.

Glorious as they have been, the phenomenological movement now belong to the past and the epoch-making philosophical insights Husserl laboriously attained in phenomenology are still subject to various new interpretations based on his posthumous publications. However, what interests us today is the insight into reality Husserl's phenomenology offers and on the basis of this, we are able to further pursue our own philosophy as the way of seeing reality as it actually is.