

Phenomenological Tripod: Understanding Phenomenology's Episteme

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Abstract

The objective of this research essay is to understand the episteme of phenomenology using the recent construction of Mark D. Vagle which understands phenomenological knowledge as a conceptual tripod between encounters, way of living and crafting. There is here a preliminary view on the subject where it seeks to understand the phenomenology beyond its big names such as Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, among others. It is a phenomenology of vision for the twenty-first century, focusing on the epistemological and methodological construction of phenomenological research.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Episteme, Philosophy

While philosophical field of research, Phenomenology is characterized as a kind of third way, different from that posed by idealism, between Rationalism and Empiricism. Its focus of study is what is called phenomenon. "When German philosopher Martin Heidegger described a phenomenon as *that which manifest for us*, he was suggesting that phenomena are *brought into being* through our living in the world" (VAGLE, 2016, p. 20).

Therefore, "phenomena to phenomenologists, then, are not constructed, designed or defined in the autonomously-encased human mind separated from the world [...] Neither is it the case that they are unexplainable occurrences produced by outside forces. Rather, phenomena are the ways in which we find ourselves being in relation to the world through our day-to-day living" (VAGLE, 2016, p. 20).

Mark D. Vagle describes that "the primary purpose of phenomenology as a research methodology stemming from its philosophical roots is to study what it is like as we *find-ourselves-being-in-relation-with others* [...] and *other things*" (VAGLE, 2016, p. 20). The keyword here is experience.

"In this aspect, phenomenologists do not tend to believe that humans construct a phenomenological experience. When humans experience the world they, again, *find themselves in the experience*" (VAGLE, 2016, p. 20-21).

To characterize the episteme posed by phenomenological research, Mark D. Vagle builds an epistemological tripod. This mechanism allows us to understand how phenomenology articulates his philosophical and know how to read and develop business in that branch of philosophy.

The first point of the tripod is what we can call *phenomenological* encounter. "Humans all over the world are having numerous phenomenological encounters each and every day of their lives. Some of these encounters might go unnoticed, other faintly recognizes, and

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a few deeply felt – etched into our memories, our bodies, our beings, our identities [...] *phenomenology is an encounter*” (VAGLE, 2016, p. 11).

An encounter that goes beyond the physical and metaphysical correlation, body and mind or any other philosophical dualism. Here we see the important of justifying idea of phenomenology put by Franz Brentano: intentionality.

As Vagle says, “much like their conception of phenomena, phenomenologists use the word *intentionality* to mean the inseparable connectedness between subjects (that is, human beings) and objects (that is, all other things, animate and inanimate, and ideas) in the world (VAGLE, 2016, p. 27). But, it is any kind of world? Let’s return to the tripod.

The second point of the tripod is that “*phenomenology is a way of living*. It involves a deep and sincere commitment to [...]. It means trying to be profoundly present in our living – to leave no roundings amidst the harried pace we may keep; to remain open; to know that there is ‘never, nothing’ going on and that we can never grasp all that progress” (VAGLE, 2016, p. 12).

Here there is so understanding that the world of phenomenology is the lifeworld. Although used by German Idealism, the lifeworld in phenomenology is a contribution of Husserl, but gains examples vivid in philosophical and theatrical writings of Sartre. We must understand this lifeworld as the world of experiences posed by intentionality.

The fact that the results of phenomenological research, as exemplified by Sartre, can be academic or artistic leads us to the last point of the tripod.

The last point of the tripod is to understand that “*phenomenology is a craft*. It involves an embodied relation with the world and all things in it – and it is a creative act that cannot be mapped out in a once-and-for-all sort of way. The craft is practiced in many different ways and produces all sorts of different representations” (VAGLE, 2016, p. 12)

Thus, a fiction built through phenomenological research may have greater epistemological amplitude than an academic work. This puts the challenges to philosophical research of the 21st century, the challenge to change our writings, our methodologies. All this to enhance the pursuit of experiences made available by the lifeworld.

References

Mark D. Vagle. **Crafting Phenomenological Research**. London, Routledge, 2016.