

Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Debates on Uniformity and Diversity

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Abstract

This article explores hermeneutic phenomenology as the advocacy on diversity and uniformity. While interpreting the phenomena both individual insight and cultural backup pay equal contribution. The absence of the one limits the meaning of the phenomena. Although Descartes takes consciousness a priori, he does not refuse the significance of the body. The society stays dominant for Max. However, how could his society exist in the absence of individual. The more they use different rhetoric, the more they discuss about form and content, competence and performance, superstructure and base. Although Husserl insists on bracketing to avoid unnecessary influence from others, it is impossible to stay away from culture and society. I have used hermeneutic phenomenology to look at their arguments. The more they seem specific, the more they stand biased. I disagree on the polarity of these philosophers. Moreover, hermeneutic phenomenology has multiple dimensions. It is inclusive in nature because we could not deny the plurality of things. Additionally, this study focuses on the way diversity and uniformity manifested in hermeneutic phenomenology and how these philosophers refuse the prevalence of the uniformity.

Key Words: Bracketing, Consciousness, Mimetic Circle, Presupposition, Subjectivity

Introduction

Hermeneutics stands as the theory and methodology of interpretation. In Greek methodology Hermes interprets messages from God. Consequently, hermeneutics emerges as the art of interpretation. Phenomenology, on the other hand, is the study of phenomena, experience and consciousness. As a result, hermeneutic phenomenology stands as the philosophy and method of interpreting human experiences. It interprets the experience and explains why people have different experience to the same thing. The objective of phenomenology is the study of human consciousness to recognize human experience. Additionally, Edmund Husserl stands as the founder of descriptive phenomenology. Descriptive phenomenologists advocate the method bracketing that suspends assumptions, biases and preconceptions. It aims at objective descriptive of the phenomena. Descriptive phenomenology explores the common and universal dimensions of the phenomena. It ignores the role of context and interpretation. Husserl argues that

prejudgments and biases must be suspended to get real meaning of things. My thesis is that it is impossible to suspend them. On the other hand, hermeneutic phenomenology explores the contextual dimension of the phenomena. It focuses on perspective. It is subjective and lacks the clarity and consistency of the data. Hermeneutic phenomenology concludes that human being possesses the strength of interpretation. Every event involves interpretation looked through individual background.

Husserl claims phenomenology a tool to explore individual's lived experience. To understand the nature, Kant avoids a priori knowledge whereas Husserl only avoids unnecessary presuppositions. For Husserl, intentionality is the moral consciousness that differs from natural consciousness. This intentionality creates strong bond between researcher and his object of quest. In spite of arguing intentionality as the crux in phenomenology, Husserl admits the coexistence of diverse threads. For him, intentionality of consciousness is (1) an act of doing thing and also (2) referential one. Explaining integrative characteristics of Husserlian intentionality, Francis F. Seeburger and David D. Franks (1978) illustrate:

Husserl's descriptions, furthermore, focus on the intentionality of consciousness. That is, they focus on the correlation between consciousness and its object. Husserl insisted that consciousness is not some sort of container, the contents of which could be described in isolation from all relationships to the objects of intentionality. It is just this recognition of the central importance of the intentionality of consciousness which, Husserl thought, allowed him to escape the absurdities not only of both subjective idealism and naïve realism, but also of traditional rationalism and empiricism. (p. 346)

Husserl explains that the researcher samples the reality through the process of deduction. In spite of refusing the bracketing an ultimate tool, Husserl only uses it for the time being. The meaning of a text integrates diverse socio-cultural chains, so bracketing is impossible. How intentionality of consciousness practically escapes traditional rationalism and empiricism although this review focus on suspending additional information? The more they intend to specify the meaning the more the diverse ingredients unveil their contribution. The correlation between consciousness and its object could not stay away from socio cultural foundation. That is why one could not escape the subjective ideas, tradition and society. Consequently, flux of ideas contributes for the sake of meaning.

For Gadamer understanding the phenomena unveils the historical consciousness of a person. A person with good historical consciousness reads the phenomena far better. For him, meaning is a dynamic and dialogic process. Knowledge about the tradition, prejudice and preconception enable the reader for the interpretation. For Gadamer, history is the pre-knowledge that shapes the perceptual horizon. Tracing the plural dimension of the historical consciousness, Hans- Georg Gadamer (2006) argues:

Our historical consciousness is always filled with a variety of voices in which the echo of the past is heard. Only in the multifariousness of such voices does it exist: this constitutes the nature of the tradition in which we want to share and have a part. (p. 285)

Gadamer focuses on the dialectical relation between an individual and history. The more one tries to be independent, the more history engulfs him because history

shapes psycho-social makeup of the people. The knowledge of history enables people to interpret the phenomena. In short, tradition colours the hermeneutic potentiality of each of us. Unlike Husserl, Gadamer argues in favour of diversity. Gadamer asserts that history enables for inclusive decoding. In short, Husserl stands for objective dimension of the phenomena while Gadamer for subjective one.

Ricoeur's mimetic theory of narratives consists of prefiguration, configuration and refiguration. Prefiguration is the narrative competence, configuration assembles series of historical events and characters, while refiguration is the transformation of the original narratives. As the reader retells a story, he modifies the characters, plot and even point of view. For Ricoeur, this mimetic circle, made by prefiguration, refiguration and configuration, is spiral not cyclical. In phenomenological terms, these steps of mimetic narratology are modified by human consciousness. Focusing on the crux of Ricoeur's theory of narratives, Laszlo Tengelyi (2007) outlines:

In *Time and Narrative*, the conceptual triad 'prefiguration', 'configuration' and 'refiguration' determines the triple structure of narrative mimesis. This triple structure is conceived of as forming a hermeneutical circle, which, according to Ricoeur as well as Heidegger and Gadamer, is an inevitable characteristic of our relationship to reality. (p. 169)

The meaning of social reality and the natural phenomena are perennially reconstructed. The narrative is relative and relational in their meanings. Presupposition, encoding and decoding are the fundamental ingredients of a text. The semantic structure of a text is determined by prefiguration, configuration and refiguration. This triad concept insists that the meaning is a process not a state. The hermeneutic circle ties both the variable and its holistic significance together. In spite of their differences, Ricoeur and Gadamer agree on the point that a text functions with the conceptual triad.

Husserl developed the idea of bracketing where he excludes unnecessary interferences. On the other hand, Gadamer argues that prejudice and tradition contribute for our understanding that can't be removed. Every one's lived experience generates meaning. People generate the meaning of the phenomena staying at its centre. Moreover, individual lived experience could not be generalized. Consequently, one person's experience couldn't be meaningful for other. One should do one's best to find out the meaning. Individual lived experience ignores structure, shared domain and interdependence. As a result, we conclude that the entire discourse of hermeneutic phenomenology is the debates on uniformity and diversity. Husserl's bracketing leads to the objective and unified meaning of the phenomena while Gadamer's historical consciousness enables for subjective and diversified reading of the phenomena. Similarly, Ricoeur's prefiguration, configuration and refiguration formulate mimetic circle that also advocates diversity in reading. In short, Husserl insists on uniformity of the meaning of the phenomena while both Gadamer and Ricoeur argue for the sake of diversified meaning of the phenomena. Similarly, this study discusses the ideas of Kant, Heidegger, Descartes, Ricoeur, Merleau-Ponty, Max, Hegel and Husserl. The ideas of other phenomenologists do not come under purview. Additionally, this article addresses these questions:1) How are diversity and uniformity manifested in hermeneutic

phenomenology? 2) In what way do these philosophers refuse the prevalence of the uniformity?

Methodology

This research is qualitative research because it makes use of nonnumeric data. Its data are related with ideas and experience. So far, the sampling concerns, I have used deliberate sampling since I purposively took the sampling. I have used hermeneutic phenomenology for theoretical frame work to interpret the data I have collected. Similarly, for conceptual framework I have used the ideas of Husserl, Gadamer and Ricoeur. For Gadamer, the enabling prejudices and hermeneutic consciousness assist interpretation. Ricoeur endorses the inevitability of the prejudices through his mimetic theory that consists of prefiguration, configuration and refiguration. Rene Descartes, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Hans- George Gadamer, Merleau Ponty and Paul Ricoeur make the population of this study. From these people Edmund Husserl, Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur are used as the sampling since I focus on the objective discourse of hermeneutic phenomenology postulated by Husserl and the subjective insights as postulated by Gadamer and Ricour.

Deliberately, I took data that focuses on both the objective and subjective dimensions of hermeneutic phenomenology. Fundamentally, I integrated both philosophers who discuss on hermeneutic phenomenology and descriptive one. The more the philosophers talk about suspension, bracketing and avoiding the prejudices, the more the conscience of a person gets influenced by his socio-cultural back up. His individual insights reflect his upbringing. It is impossible to stay free from such influences so suspension, bracketing and reduction are only airy hypothesis. This study relies on the secondary data that have been postulated by different philosophers. Basically, I intend to trace how both individual insight and cultural circle contribute for the formation of meaning. Additionally, I have used Husserl's bracketing, Gadamer's historical consciousness and Ricoeur's mimetic circle altogether as the research tools in this study.

Theoretical Framework

I have used hermeneutic phenomenology as the theoretical framework to discuss the views postulated by different phenomenologists. Hermeneutic phenomenology relates the way people interpret their surroundings. The more we try to explore it objectively the more our personal conscience influences our exploration. Although descriptive phenomenology provides explanatory dimension of the phenomena, the hermeneutic phenomenology rises as the inclusive practices in interpreting the text. I have included the fundamental ideas of Kant, Heidegger, Descartes, Ricoeur, Merleau-Ponty, Max, Hegel and Husserl in theoretical framework.

Analysis and Discussion

I have discussed on both sides of hermeneutic phenomenology in this section. Both philosophers denying the role of the prejudices and phenomenologists advocating

the necessity of the historical back up are included here. The two schools; supporting the historical back up and refusing such preconceptions are discussed in separate subsections. Under ‘Inclusive Properties of Hermeneutic Phenomenology’, I have discussed the arguments of diversity in decoding the phenomena. Similarly, in ‘Exclusive Traits of Hermeneutic Phenomenology, I have documented the arguments on uniformity. Although both schools have their own arguments and counterarguments, I strongly deny on their polarization. My argument is that history and cultural conscience enable people for the sake of finding the meaning. Historical backup could not be underestimated while looking at our surrounding. Similarly, the bracketing could only be used as a tool to stay away from unnecessary influences. However, there emerges a problem. How one could distinguish what is unnecessary and what is necessary while he reads his surrounding.

Inclusive Properties of Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology insists on the collective and shared dimensions. Culture, history, tradition, bias and prejudices influence the significance of the phenomena. These discourses focus on individual perspective to look at things. There is correlation between society and an individual. An individual always gets reinforcement from his society. His holistic make up is based on his culture. He looks at new things through the perspective he got from his society. Husserl admits a thing has diversified meanings but for objective meaning bracketing could be used as a tool. Similarly, Hegel believes that both historical and social consciousness shape human experience. Both history and society get manifested as people interpret the phenomena. For Marx the dialectical relationship results in multiple outputs. Both participants get empowered by their social strength. An individual is not alone. He has his own society for the backup. Similarly, Gadamer adds that historical events influence the individual insights. Moreover, Merleau-Ponty regards meaning as the recognition of both body and soul. Soul signifies subjective dimensions while body reflects the associations of sense perception. On the other hand, Ricoeur regards hermeneutic phenomenology an ongoing task that reconceptualizes the phenomena.

Phenomenology is a life consciousness and a continuous synthesis. It includes diverse socio-cultural assets that influence the conscience. It integrates emotional entity as well as logical and reasonable components. Different sensory perceptions recognize the existence of the phenomena. Conscious faculty as well as unconscious and subconscious also collectively formulate the phenomenology. In short, phenomenology is the holistic approach to look at the material world through personal conscience. Focusing on the cumulative characteristics of phenomenology Dermot Moran (2013) argues:

Phenomenology . . . proposes to study, in Husserl’s word, the whole of our life of conscious . . . it includes not just explicit cognitive states, and acts, such as judgments, but all the myriad acts and states of consciousness such as sensory awareness, perception, memory, imagination, feeling, emotion, mood, free will, time consciousness, judgment, reasoning, symbolic thought, self-conscious awareness, as well as subconscious drives and desires . . . (pp. 37-38)

Husserl’s model of phenomenology has two constituent elements (a) natural attitude and (b) phenomenological attitude. Natural attitude regards reality different from subjective

experience whereas phenomenological attitude suspends the natural attitude. Phenomenological reduction creates a phenomenological attitude that explains things as they are experienced by the person while the natural attitude regards the things in general ways. Phenomenological attitude goes beyond general definition. Phenomenological reduction further transforms into eidetic reduction that takes to the essence from the fact.

Denying Kant's transcendental consciousness, Hegel argues that historical and social consciousnesses determine human experience. For Hegel, consciousness is the combination of thought and the objective reality but for Kant, the unity of consciousness remains within the premise of thought. For Hegel, there is unity between consciousness and reality but for Kant there is gap. Hegel regards understanding as misunderstanding since a text gets perpetually modified. Showing Hegel's disagreement to the access to ultimate truth, O. Kem Luther and Jeff L. Hoover (1981) examine,

“Hegel summarizes the common but misguided presuppositions of these widely held attitudes toward religion as follows: (1) nothing of the truth can be known, (2) the human spirit only deals with conditional and temporal ‘appearances’ of truth, and (3) feeling is the only form in which religiosity retains its genuineness” (p. 237).

Hegel metaphorically denies truth through religion in three layers. Religion is a metaphor that stands for a text in Hegel's philosophy. The absolute truth, that a religion provisions, cannot be acquired. Fragments of the truth are only possible. One can only realize the truth that a religion provisions. These features of religion correlate the phenomenological suppositions of Hegel. Meaning is created by the readers who can only get the traces of the truth.

Disagreeing with Hegel, Marx considers matter all in all since it determines the natural reality. Although Hegel regards history an ongoing process, for Marx philosophy assists to transform the trends of history. Hegel idealizes the state whereas Marx refuses the concern with such idealism. He disagrees with the mystifying aspect of Hegelian dialects. For him, dialectics and materialism are inseparable. Both of Hegel and Marx found a reason behind the dialectical process of social progress. Tracing the kinetic economic dialectical relation between base and superstructure in the phenomena, Thomas Nemeth (1976) detects:

In both phenomenology and Marxism there is a dialectical interplay between all strata of the world with man included therein. The classical Marxist conception de-emphasizes, if not totally neglects, this dialectic between superstructure and infrastructure. The life-world itself is governed, in the most general sense, by man's material life, an important part of that being the existing economic relations. . . . The practical analyses of both Marxism and phenomenology help to reveal man's ‘being in the world . . . (p. 241)

Marxism postulates dialectical phenomenology and regards phenomenon as an ongoing process. For Marxists the material things exist in dialectical relation to each other. Each and everything is in motion and their live relationship is revealed in the phenomena. Marx focuses that things exist through material shape and size and all of them have economic relation. Although phenomenology postulates consciousness a predominant entity, Marxism regards the material things primary that influence the existence.

Gadamer claims that human existence is interpretative. In spite of being inspired from Husserl's phenomenology, both Heidegger and Gadamer differ from each other. Standing against the bracketing, Gadamer insists that prejudice fundamentally assists the interpretation. He distinguishes blind prejudices from enabling prejudices. On the other hand, Gadamer's hermeneutical consciousness prioritizes the self that shapes the vision. As Heidegger, Gadamer takes suspension only as a tool to be used for a time being. Tracing socio-historical context in Gadamer's phenomenology, Jack Mendelson (1979) reviews:

Gadamer wants to show that the genuine object of interpretation is the meaning of the text itself (or of the historical events), and that interpretation involves not the reconstruction of psychic states but the integration of the object into a totality which contains the interpreter as well and its application to the present. In this process a truth which still resonates in the present is maintained. (p. 52)

Gadamer takes meaning as the holistic entity which could not be excluded from historical events. Suspension, bracketing and reduction are not the ultimate goal. They are only the enabling methods to decode the reality. A text is impossible to exist in the absence of history since meaning correlates the historical context. Parts and the whole have inevitable relation for the sake of meaning. Gadamer argues that projected scientific data are well analyzed with the help of presupposition and hermeneutical consciousness.

For Merleau-Ponty, both organic life and human consciousness are related to natural world that is unable to be reduced for consciousness. Through the unity of soul and body, Merleau-Ponty integrates the essence of naturalism and transcendental thought. Mind helps for inter-subjective and virtual experience whereas body experiences through the sense organs. Both mental activities and sensory experience are synthesized for perception in Merleau-Ponty's discourse. Reduction is impossible for Merleau-Ponty since as the part is detached from the whole it loses the basic characteristics. Showing the importance of body in the study of phenomena, Carl Olson (1986) traces:

To have a body means, for Merleau-Ponty, that one is involved in a definite environment because our body is our vehicle for being in the world. Although the body is to be distinguished from the world, it is our medium for having a world and for interacting with it. If to be a body means to be tied to a certain world, this implies that being a body involves being in the world . . . the body is a point from which space radiates and around which things arrange themselves in an orderly way. (p. 108)

Disagreeing with the hypothesis of his ancestors, Merleau-Ponty postulates that body is the medium that activates the mind through the sense organs. Body feels things and transmits the sensation to the brain then only mind becomes conscious. A person shows his kinship with the environment through his body. Body is the vehicle through which one interacts and shares his sentiments with the nature. Body is the point of reference from which all types of realities radiate. Body prioritizes and arranges the natural things.

Ricoeur entwined hermeneutics with phenomenology. Focusing on dialectical relation between the symbol and the self, he implies hermeneutics as self-understanding. For Ricoeur, self-knowledge is the fusion of one's life with the world. Both Gadamer and Ricoeur agree that hermeneutics enables to decode the embodied existence. Ricoeur

regards self as inter-subjectively constructed entity. For him, hermeneutics is the lived experience, conflicting interpretations and inter-subjective meaning. Ideology, knowledge and preconception correlate the significance of the phenomena. Summing up meaning as the combination of phenomena and hermeneutics in Ricoeur's discourse, Saulius Geniusas (2015) explains:

. . . Ricoeur is the philosopher who grafts hermeneutics onto phenomenology. . . . Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology presents us with an ongoing task and not with a finished accomplishment. . . . Ricoeur's analysis fluctuates between the phenomenological and hermeneutical alternatives, without successfully resolving the tensions between them. . . . These tensions leave us with the task of reconceptualizing the relation between phenomenology and hermeneutics. (p. 239)

For Ricoeur, phenomenology does not exist alone. It needs the help from hermeneutics, which helps to interpret the reality. Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology is an ongoing process which re-conceptualizes their interrelationship. Being a process, it goes on perennial modification. Phenomena and the hermeneutics have something in between them which creates diversified meanings. Ricoeur's meaning oscillates between both components; phenomena and hermeneutics. For him material things do not convey meaning without the creative faculty of human brain. Both phenomena and human creativity contribute for the sake of meaning.

Hermeneutic phenomenology helps to interpret the text through lived experience. It studies the relation between an individual and his world. Phenomenological discourse stands as a relative and dynamic process. It is context and situation specific, as well as specific to personal behavior. It is formless, timeless and impersonal. Individual consciousness generates meaning which differs from one person to another. That is why, the same thing conveys quite different meanings to different people. Explaining the dynamism of meaning in phenomenology, Scott Davidson (2014) asserts:

. . . phenomenological discourse necessarily points back to a non-signifying or impersonal reality that precedes and gives rise to it. The role of a hermeneutic phenomenology is to mediate between these two discourses by traveling along this path back and forth between meaning and its becoming, following its composition and decomposition in the movement from sense to non-sense, from the impersonal to the personal, from formless to form- and back again. (p. 322)

Reality is dynamic and it goes on constant changing. So is human consciousness. Everyone has different conscience. Consequently, they interpret the phenomena in their own way. They have their own experience to their surroundings. Their consciousness and the way they experience the world determine their way of interpreting it. Although this review highlights the individual potentiality, it ignores the collective skills of the people. People from same socio-cultural background carry same vision, taste and skills. The aforementioned review ignores these collective facets of human culture and society.

Hermeneutic phenomenologists focus on the culture, history, tradition and prejudices. An individual always gets guided by his society. Society and culture contribute for bringing him up. His habit and taste are formulated by the society. He looks at the phenomena through the lens of his society. Although Husserl insists on suspension and bracketing, he recognizes the magical power of the society and history. Similarly,

Hegel believes that both history and society keep people under its grip. Human behaviour rises as the output of history and society. The society constantly provides backup to its members in Marx's discourse on dialectical relationship. Gadamer also adds that the historical events in totality contribute for meaning. Merleau-Ponty argues that human being understands the phenomena through his body and soul. Additionally, hermeneutic phenomenology is an ongoing task in the view of Ricoeur that reconceptualizes the phenomena.

Exclusive Traits of Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Kant, Heidegger and Descartes argue quite differently to get the unified and objective meaning of the phenomena. Kant proposed bracketing natural consciousness to enable moral consciousness. Moral consciousness helps to explore the objective meaning of the text. He believes that natural consciousness influences a person from getting objective meaning. He prescribes bracketing as the tool to remain neutral to his exploration. Heidegger, on the other hand, postulates reduction in his discourse. Although he distinguishes his reduction from suspension and bracketing, he prescribes the objective analysis of the phenomena. His reduction enables for unbiased meaning. The objective meaning ties people together in a single thread. In short, it advocates for uniformity of meaning. Similarly, Descartes believes that things exist because of mind. Mind gives recognition to body. He focuses on mind not on body but on conscience not on society. These philosophers postulate the way to look at the phenomena that stay impersonal, stay away from individual way of looking at things.

For Kant, mind gives shapes and size to experience. For him, intuition is independent from material objects because material object is prior to intuition. For him consciousness recognizes things through specific time and space. Intuition acknowledges natural world through the principle of causality. Natural consciousness and the moral consciousness are different things in Kant's phenomenology. Moral consciousness is the tools used to explore the reality. The natural consciousness gets exclusively delimited in order to exclude unnecessary threads. Focusing on the coordination between moral consciousness and good will in Kantian phenomenology, Richards S. Findler (1997) explores:

Kant wants to bracket the natural standpoint, place it under suspension, to come to the structures of consciousness that constitute morality. Precisely what is bracketed is practical anthropology, which is the way of understanding morality in our everyday world.

Once Kant has bracketed the natural attitude, he can then direct his attention to moral consciousness. The aspect of consciousness that presents itself for investigation in moral consciousness is the will. (p. 173)

On the way of explaining the fundamental features of phenomenology, this literature highlights the way of bracketing and suspension. My argument is that one could not detach oneself from his background and history he is brought in. Human being carries entire assets that makes thing meaningful. Truth gets manifested through history and culture and they give meaning to life. That is why, how can one suspend and bracket the entire history, culture and social background for the sake of finding the truth?

Heidegger is the existential phenomenologist since he seeks the meaning of a human through *dasein*. For Heidegger, consciousness results in historical context. For him, research is impossible in the absence of presupposition where reality and consciousness fuse. For him, consciousness is an effect not a determinant of existence. Heidegger relies on existentialism, ontology and hermeneutic phenomenology whereas Husserl claims that consciousness is intentional. Husserl postulates descriptive phenomenology whereas Heidegger interpretive one. Explaining Heidegger's phenomenological reduction different from suspension and bracketing, Francis F. Seeburger (1975) proves:

Heidegger maintains that the phenomenological reduction is misunderstood if it is interpreted, as Husserl appears to interpret it Thus the phenomenological reduction should not be interpreted to mean that the “suspension” or “bracketing” (the reduction) of the world reveals a pure, non-worldly transcendental consciousness. The “world” as a collection of objects present at hand together is, indeed, to be suspended, but the result is not the revelation of worldless subjectivity. . . . Thus, far from revealing a realm of transcendental consciousness wholly independent of the world, the phenomenological reduction is the philosophical operation which first makes the world itself available for phenomenological description. (p. 213)

Heidegger distinguishes reduction from suspension and bracketing. For him, phenomenological reduction is only a tool to immerse into the philosophical discourse. For him, it is impossible to bracket the entire presupposition which is the background of the discourse. According to Heidegger consciousness is itself a collective experience. Arguing consciousness as a flux of worldly and psychological entity, Heidegger disagrees with Husserl's transcendental consciousness. For him suspension does not lead towards transcendental consciousness. Although the review glorifies suspension and bracketing, there is a great flaw in sing them in practical field. What should be suspended and what should be preserved? There exists the problem. The more they try to make it easy the more they make it difficult. If we suspend the thing we don't need, it would be more meaningful for another one. As a result, a think could give different meanings to different people.

Descartes believes that an individual exists through his thought (I think, therefore I am). Even human being perceives his body through the senses. Sense organs activate the thought in the brain. Although body and mind are distinct, they are closely joined for Descartes. For him body is an extended thing whereas mind is immaterial and contracted. For him, body could not exist without mind whereas mind does without body. Descartes also advocates the removal of preconceptions on the way to the truth. Tracing Descartes' contribution to phenomenology through the dualism of body and mind, Kristin Taylor (2009) critiques:

Modernity is defined by the Cartesian idea ‘I think, I am’. In writing this, Descartes has made “being” the same as “thinking”. Existence is understood in an act of pure intuition- that which is certain and indubitable. It is known intellectually. It is from here that Descartes believes he is able to ground science in absolute certainty and also come to know the truth of the world. All truth is

apprehended through his pure intuition. The truth of the world is in the mind, not the world itself. It is this basic foundation of Modernity that Phenomenology questions and grows out of. Phenomenology is defined by the works of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty and although each of them has their own methodologies in Phenomenology, their works are determined by a critique of Descartes ideas. (p. 1)

Descartes postulates phenomenology through the division between consciousness and material thing. Although he prioritizes consciousness that determines the existence of others, he regards both consciousness and matter basic components of the reality along with other phenomenologist. Descartes initiates the systematic study of the phenomena through his doubt. It is his doubt that gets extended by the succeeding phenomenologist. For Descartes thinking is doubting whereas for Husserl thinking is the consciousness towards the world.

Kant, Heidegger and Descartes postulate ideas of decoding the phenomena objectively. Kant prescribed bracketing for suspending the influence of natural consciousness. He thinks that moral consciousness enables for exploring the phenomena objectively while natural consciousness hinders it. He only takes bracketing as the tool for impersonal exploration. Similarly, Heidegger talks about reduction in his discourse. His reduction enables the people for unbiased decoding. Similarly, Descartes prioritizes mind that gives recognition to body. Focusing on mind, Descartes gives priority on conscience not on society. The more these philosophers postulate the way to look at the phenomena that stay impersonal, the more they lose the glamour of diversity.

Conclusion

The hermeneutic phenomenologists discuss on uniformity and diversity of the phenomena. The descriptive phenomenologists prescribe the uniformity of meaning. They try to make meaning objective. On the other hand, the hermeneutic phenomenologists advocate on the subjective dimension of the phenomena. They prescribe its diversified aspects. Hermeneutic phenomenology is the way of looking at things and focus on the interpretative side. They argue that each one has individual conscience that stay distinctive to each other. That is why, the way of decoding a text is solely individual. Husserl argues that prejudices, presupposition and bias must be suspended to get real meaning of the phenomena. So, he developed the idea of bracketing. Gadamer, on the other hand argues that prejudices and tradition contribute for our understanding. So, they should not be bracketed. Universality of phenomenology seeks to explore the shared traits of consciousness avoiding the preconception of external world. Lived experience itself focuses on the diversity that hermeneutic phenomenology carries.

Rene Descartes highlights mind and ignores the matter in his saying ‘I think therefore I am’. However, I think both mind and matter go simultaneously. Kant, Heidegger and Descartes argue for the unified meaning of the phenomena. Kant purposes bracketing natural consciousness to stay away from distraction. He believes that natural consciousness distracts a person from getting impersonal meaning. He prescribes bracketing as the tool to remain neutral to his exploration. Heidegger reduction enables

for unified meaning. Descartes, on the other hand, believes that things exist because of mind. Mind gives recognition to body. He focuses on mind not on body but on conscience not on society. Although Husserl takes bracketing a tool for exploring the phenomena, he admits a thing has diversified meanings. Similarly, Hegel believes both historical and social consciousness shape human experience. They influence people differently. For Marx the dialectical relationship results in multiple outputs. A society stays as the strong back up for both participants in his discourse. Gadamer asserts that historical events influence the individual insights of people. Consequently, a person thinks differently from other. Both body and soul collectively explore meaning for Merleau-Ponty. Additionally, Ricoeur regards hermeneutic phenomenology an ongoing task that reconceptualizes the phenomena.

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