

Eidetic Seeing in Practice*

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to present the methodological procedure of eidetic seeing in phenomenology on the basis of practical concerns. Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, explicates the method of eidetic seeing especially in *Phenomenological Psychology* and *Experience and Judgment*, but his discussion remains theoretically and epistemologically centered, so it would not be easy to extract its practical potentiality. In this study, I review the basic principles of eidetic seeing, focusing on the difference between eidetic seeing conducted within the natural attitude and within the transcendental attitude. Eidetic seeing in the latter case always opens itself up to mutual critique, and continual historical-intersubjective confirmation by others plays a significant role in phenomenological essentialism. Then, I assess the process of eidetic seeing presented by Husserl and attempt to modify it so that anyone (not only professional phenomenologists) can make use of the eidetic method. Also, I carry out an eidetic analysis of discrimination to lay out each step of eidetic seeing in practice.

Keywords: eidetic seeing; essence; phenomenology; transcendental eidetics

Introduction

The aim of this study is to reexamine the method of eidetic seeing in Husserlian phenomenology in terms of practical concerns. Edmund Husserl believes that the phenomenological enterprise should disclose the infinite field of study, including not only the study of consciousness but also the regional ontologies of thing, life, person, and culture. Moreover, many scholars have proved that the phenomenological method effectively works as a method for qualitative research and that phenomenology can be also applied to psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and nursing science.¹ Furthermore, it can be argued that phenomenology enables to see lived experiences filled with meanings, emotions, and values, such as the essence of love, nihilism, and sexuality.²

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However, the principles of phenomenology have sometimes been modified or distorted in correlation with the specific aim and object corresponding to each disciplinary field. Husserl himself always focuses on the transcendentalism of phenomenology led by transcendental reduction, yet it remains unclear what distinguishes among several types of eidetic seeing within the natural attitude, the phenomenological-psychological attitude, and the phenomenological-transcendental attitude. Indeed, the debate over this can be seen in the varying perspectives of different thinkers; for Alfred Schütz, “the notion of eidetic reduction is at least partially an operative one,”³ whereas Amedeo Giorgi claims that psychological phenomenological reduction instead of transcendental reduction “is more appropriate for psychological analyses of human beings since the purpose of the meanings of phenomena experienced by human persons.”⁴

In the present study, I take the side of the transcendentalism of phenomenology from the perspective of the “controversy concerning truth,” which is supported by Klaus Held. Without the universal epoché and transcendental reduction, belief conflicts among plural opinions, hypotheses, and theories cannot be conciliated in principle. Eidetic seeing must proceed on to universality as a historical project *ad infinitum*, adjusting sociocultural differences, not oppressing them. Also, this study shows eidetic seeing is regarded as a language game performed among plural transcendental subjectivities. Although Husserl himself did not clearly present the necessity of intersubjectivity in the discourse of eidetic seeing, he referred to the relativity of the intuited essence. The image of solipsism nagged around phenomenology should be turned into one of intersubjective communication. Essence in phenomenology is considered as generated through language games in which the concerns, the thinking, and the experience of each participant are mutually exchanged. Finally, I review the specific procedure of eidetic seeing by extracting the essence of discrimination. It is more difficult to see the essence of lived experience than the essence of a thing such as the *eidos* red or sound, because active insight rather than passive synthesis plays a more significant role in the eidetic analysis of lived experiences filled with specific contents.

1. The Principle of Phenomenological Eidetics

Phenomenology is the eidetic science of lived experiences. In order to clarify the method of eidetic seeing, it is first necessary to confirm the basic principles of phenomenological eidetics as the method often depends on its aim. However, this does not mean that the aim of phenomenology must be fixed but rather that the aim and method are mutually dependent; therefore, if the aim is changed on the basis of a new perspective, so should the method likewise be modified.⁵ In what follows, I focus only on the particular aim and motivation of Husserlian eidetics in terms of the difference between eidetic sciences in the natural attitude and in the transcendental attitude. I call the former “general eidetic sciences” and the latter “transcendental eidetic sciences.”

Noting that, the general eidetic sciences can be established without the operation of

transcendental reduction (e.g., phenomenological psychology and ontology of the life-world). In an article written for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (*Britannica*) and in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (*Crisis*), Husserl outlines two new ways to transcendental phenomenology, “the way through intentional psychology” and “the way through ontology,” in addition to the earlier Cartesian way, which is prepared in *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy First Book* (*Ideas I*).⁶ In both the new ways, Husserl shows the general form of eidetic sciences, which is explicated within the natural attitude. In *Britannica*, phenomenological psychology is defined as an eidetic science in contrast to positive (empirical) psychology,⁷ but simultaneously, Husserl draws our attention to the fact that “we must not overlook the fact that psychology in all its empirical and eidetic disciplines remains a ‘positive science,’ a science operating within the natural attitude, in which the simply present world is the thematic ground.”⁸ Alternatively, regarding the ontology of the life-world, which is an eidetic science of the perceivable world filled with colorful meanings and practical concerns in daily life, and which rescues the realm of the life-world from the mathematization of nature, Husserl maintains that “the invariant structures of the life-world” can be investigated within the natural attitude.⁹ However, he also argues the ontology of the life-world within the natural attitude cannot satisfy the demands of transcendental phenomenology, because “epoché which we freed ourselves from all objective sciences as grounds of validity, by no means suffices.”¹⁰ Namely, it can be said that phenomenological psychology and the ontology of the life-world must be necessarily converted to transcendental phenomenology with the operation of the universal epoché and transcendental reduction, at least in order to elucidate “the *enigma of subjectivity*”¹¹ and to avoid the crisis of European humanity.

What should be noted is that the definitive difference between general eidetic sciences within the natural attitude and transcendental eidetic sciences within the transcendental attitude lies not only in obtaining the self-responsibility of the philosopher based on the non-presupposition of philosophy, or in not delivering the things in themselves, but also in the way in which common understanding and intersubjective confirmation are created. Moreover, it is transcendental reduction that differentiates phenomenological essentialism from traditional essentialism such as that of Plato and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.¹²

Within the natural attitude, one is always exposed to the possibility of dogmatism, which is to say, general eidetic sciences cannot eliminate the possibility of “Platonic hypostatization.”¹³ An inevitable consequence of Platonic hypostatization is clear: “the controversy concerning truth,” as Held points out:

Anything—be it an object of sense perception, an institution, a concern, or a thought—in short, all that we are involved with in our thinking and acting can appear to us in such divergent ways that controversy concerning these matters inevitably arises. Controversy erupts when each involved party maintains that

the way in which something appears to him or her is the only way that corresponds to what and how this thing itself *is*. This is the “controversy concerning truth” named in the title of this paper. Such a controversy is just as likely to occur between individuals as among groups of people, indeed among entire nations and cultures.¹⁴

One of the main characteristics of general eidetic sciences lies in the naive presupposition that essence exists in an objective or substantial state. By hypostatizing or objectivizing essence, the controversy concerning truth may occur, and plural dogmatic opinions, theories, thoughts, and models may conflict with one another. The point is that there is no way to elucidate belief conflict within the logic of general eidetic sciences.¹⁵ This aporia can be resolved only when the universal epoché and transcendental reduction are required.

In comparison to general eidetic sciences, transcendental eidetic sciences always entail the universal epoché and transcendental reduction. The epoché enables us to exclude all positing of being, and the positing of ideas and essences should also be parenthesized. Based on the epoché, all being turns out to be objectivity in correlation with transcendental subjectivity through the operation of transcendental reduction. Simply stated, this is a methodological suggestion that the constitution of every being, including entity, concept, idea, and essence, should be seen and grasped as “my (or our) conviction”: “subjective belief,” “communal belief,” and “universal belief.”¹⁶ In the “Epilogue” to *Ideas I*, Husserl writes the following:

It [the world] is for me and is what it is for me only so far as it acquires sense and self-confirming validity from my own pure life and from that of the others who are disclosed to me in my own life. [...]. Absolute positing means that I no longer have the world as “given” to me in advance or with the status of straightforward existence. Instead, from now on what is exclusively given (as a result of my new attitude) is my Ego, purely as the Ego that exists in itself and that in itself experiences the world, verifies it, etc.¹⁷

Within the transcendental attitude, the world acquires its meaning and validity from the transcendental subjectivity. The range of reduction must expand to the realm of essences so that essence in transcendental eidetic sciences can be taken in correlation with transcendental subjectivity. Phenomenology treats not the “transcendent essences” but the “immanent essences” of lived experiences.¹⁸ This means that transcendental reduction proscribes the naive substantiation and objectification of essence and avoids the possibility of endless belief conflicts among plural theories, as Husserl argues that

the ideality of the universal must not understood as if it were a question here of a being-in-itself devoid of reference to any subject. On the contrary, like *all* ob-

jectivities of understanding, it refers essentially *to the process of productive spontaneity* which belong to it correlatively and in which it comes to original givenness. The *being of the universal* in its different levels is essentially a *being-constituted* in these processes.¹⁹

In this regard, transcendental phenomenology “is to be an eidetic doctrine, not of phenomena that are real, but of phenomena that are transcendently reduced,” and “the phenomena of transcendental phenomenology will become characterized as unreal.”²⁰ Put otherwise, transcendental eidetic sciences avoid the controversy concerning truth in advance by regarding essence as something that correlates with transcendental subjectivity and which is constituted within it, for essence is reduced to *my* conviction in this case. Starting from *my* conviction, the transcendental eidetic enterprise aims at creating universal consensus among plural transcendental subjectivities, but simultaneously, it should always open itself up to continual assessment by others as the infinite project. Namely, it will never be finalized as the historical project.

In short, the principle of phenomenological essentialism as a transcendental eidetic science can be determined as transcendental reduction in order to avoid the controversy concerning truth and belief conflicts that may arise from different theories, opinions, hypotheses, and truths.²¹ In contrast, general eidetic sciences without reduction may presuppose the objectivity and substantiality of essence from the outset, so they cannot have the principle to reconcile the controversy concerning truth and belief conflicts in principle. The positing of person, experience, and the world *could* lead to controversy concerning what is the real substance of them. Methodologically speaking, there cannot be any eidetic sciences within the natural attitude in the phenomenological enterprise. Transcendental eidetic sciences investigate common structures among individual cases extend beyond sociocultural differences, but they do so without oppressing sociocultural differences by starting from *my* conviction.

2. The Basic Procedure of Eidetic Seeing

Although Husserl introduces epistemological validity into phenomenological essentialism, his explanation of eidetic seeing seems in fact to leave a solipsistic and dogmatic image. Also, because Husserl’s investigations are mostly directed at clarifying the essential structures of the already approved universality, such as the essence of color or ton based on the similarity of body structures, a question arises as to whether eidetic seeing can be applied to the unperceivable realm of meaning and values in which universality has not been created so far, which is to say, whether phenomenological essentialism has a potentiality for investigating the essence of lived experiences (e.g., nostalgia, discrimination, or trauma) and the essence of ideas (e.g., freedom, goodness, or justice).

Eidetic seeing starts with the procedure of free variation. The point is that an experiential comparison of real individuals given within factual experiences is not sufficient for

seeing essences; rather, the world of pure possibilities within imagination or fantasy plays a significant role in phenomenological essentialism. In Husserl's words,

It [free variation] is based on the modification of an experienced or imagined objectivity, turning it into an arbitrary example, which, at the same time, receives the character of a guiding 'model,' a point of departure for the production of an infinite multiplicity of variants. It is based, therefore, on a *variation*.²²

Picking up an experienced or imagined object as a guiding model, an investigator of essences freely varies the starting model into similar images as copies that are resemblances of the original under investigation. Further, these copies of the original are produced "in the subjective mode of the 'arbitrary,'"²³ so that each variant should be regarded as a pure possibility that cannot be related to actuality at all. Through free variation, similar images in question are mutually overlapped, importantly, in the dimension of passivity; "it is *passively preconstituted* as such and that the seeing of the *eidōs* rests in the *active intuitive apprehension* of what is thus preconstituted."²⁴

Furthermore, freedom of imagination should be limited "insofar as essential laws of possible quasi-fulfillment are inherent here within the boundaries of the unity of an identical possible objectivity understood as intentional and still indeterminate."²⁵ Free imaginative variation has been bound by eidetic law that is under advance investigation. Thus, there is a sort of circularity in eidetic seeing, as J.N. Mohanty points out,

how can I say 'this is not any longer \emptyset ' unless I have already an acquaintance with what something must be like in order to be counted as a \emptyset or what something must lack in order to be ruled out from being a \emptyset .²⁶

For instance, if I do not know anything about what sound is, how do I pick up an experienced or imagined objectivity as a guiding model? Least of all, how do I imagine other forms of sound? Finally, how do I know that "this variant" is the last one that ends the process of free variation? This is the structure of circularity inherent in eidetic seeing. What is to be noted here is that circularity is an inevitable and legitimate characteristic of eidetic seeing, for eidetic seeing is a method for clarifying the essential structures and moments that constitute the object in question. The world has always already been articulated through various experiences and language games before conducting eidetic seeing. In eidetic seeing, the investigator does not seek for the truth beyond this world in the Platonic sense but rather inquires how the life-world or the mind is (static) and has been (genetic) structuralized and articulated through the precipitation of experiences. On the one hand, Husserl keenly distinguishes essences and ideal objects (necessity and universality) from matters of fact and experiential objects (contingency and individuality).²⁷ "*The essence (Eidos) is a new sort of object. Just as the datum of individual or experiencing intuiti-*

tion is an individual object, so the datum of eidetic intuition is a pure essence."²⁸ On the other hand, this does not mean that essence comes into existence without any experiences. What is important, as Husserl says, is instead that

no intuition of essence is possible without the free possibility of turning one's regard to a 'corresponding' individual and forming a consciousness of an example—just as, conversely, no intuition of something individual is possible without the free possibility of bringing about an ideation and, in it, directing one's regard to the corresponding essence exemplified in what is individually sighted; but this in no respect alters the fact that *the two sorts of intuition are essentially different.*²⁹

If phenomenological essentialism were aimed at the apprehension of substantial essences totally separated from lived experiences in the life-world, it would fall into dogmatism in the sense that no one would have a way to examine and assess the validity of intuited essences. The mutually dependent relationship between experience and essence makes it possible to avoid "Platonic hypostatization."³⁰ Simultaneously, it is still possible that the two different objectivities and corresponding intuitions are distinguished through reflection on how we cognize entity and idea. Therefore, essences in phenomenology have a close relationship with matters of fact and lived experiences, which is to say, essence cannot exist independently of lived experience.

However, eidetic seeing should be confounded with experiential generalization in terms of freedom of imagination and the foundation of truth-ness. According to Husserl, while all experience of the individual is constrained by a context of unanimity, eidetic seeing based on free variation owns the specific freedom.³¹ It is the freedom of fantasy that makes it possible to exceed the limits of actuality, as Wertz maintains that "[t]he use of free imaginative variations in understanding what is essential among individuals of a certain kind distinguishes eidetic analysis from induction, which in contrast infers empirical generality on the basis of a limited number of actually observed cases."³² Also, it should be said that the truth-ness of empirical abstraction itself demands eidetic insight into what truth-ness is beyond limited experiential observations and experiments, for "direct experience only presents particular singularities and no universalities; therefore it is insufficient."³³ Thus, eidetic seeing should be distinguished from experiential generalization, although essential structures are articulated through the long succession of lived experiences.

There is another problem—the biggest problem, I think—in eidetic seeing: whether intuited essences can be necessary and universal. In other words, even supposing that an intuited essence necessarily and universally can be validated at least for the self, would that obtained essence be accepted by the other who lives in different conditions?

Certainly, imaginative free variation provides pure possibilities into phenomenological

essentialism so that the eidetic analysis of phenomenology can be freed from the actuality from the limited number of experiential observations and experiments. Furthermore, as previously discussed, eidetic seeing requires the operation of epoché and phenomenological reduction as long as it avoids the controversy concerning truth. Without a transcendent factor such as God, essence in itself, and absolute truth, phenomenological essentialism investigates common and universal structures shared among individual cases. However, the question remains unanswered: “To what extent are possibilities identifiable objects and to what extent do they have an intersubjective objectivity?”³⁴ Husserl also writes that

the result is tainted by a *relativity* which is not revealed and taken into account. It is only when all relativities are displayed and brought into the contemplation of the essence that the idea arises of the regional essence of a thing in general: henceforth, in the context of an infinitely open nature in general, and, further, of a possible concrete world in general with reference to a community of subjects in general, whose open environing world it is. It is only then that we obtain an *insight into essence in full concretion*.³⁵

There is no doubt that an investigator of essences lives in specific sociocultural conditions, and there is no guarantee for insuring that an essence intuited by the self corresponds to that intuited by the other. As Burt C. Hopkins points out, eidetic seeing unavoidably entails “the relativities of historical meaning, of social, cultural, and political environing worlds, of masculine and feminine aspects of subjectivity, and indeed, of both a natural world and subjectivity itself.”³⁶ On this point, Husserl might be optimistic about being able to create universal consensus. He presupposes a symmetrical relationship between the self and the other, namely, the other can be regarded as a variation of the self.³⁷ Following Husserl’s logic, the self can reach universality through free variation of the ego of the self. Husserl writes the following:

With each eidetically pure type we find ourselves, not indeed inside the de facto ego, but *inside an eidos ego*; and constitution of one actually pure possibility among others carries with it implicitly, as its outer horizon, a *purely possible ego*, a pure possibility-variant of *my de facto ego*.³⁸

This passage unfortunately leaves the impression of solipsism and leads to a misunderstanding of phenomenological essentialism. What is important here is that essences in phenomenology always open themselves to intersubjective assessment and confirmation. Rather, it should be said that essences in phenomenology are generated through intersubjective confirmation. “The image of ‘lonely reflection’ should be replaced by the image of ‘mutual exchange of experiences’,” as Ken Nishi puts it.³⁹ The expectation that

the other will *not* be a variant of the self is apparently deficient in Husserl's discussion of eidetic seeing. In the case of an eidos color or sound, sociocultural difference indeed might be out of the question. But when it comes to an eidetic analysis of meaning (such as the essence of nostalgia, discrimination, or trauma) and values (such as the essence of freedom, goodness, or justice), we need to see whether the other agrees with the obtained essence, simply because the essential order of meaning and values would be more dependent on the specific sociocultural conditions than that of perception of things. Phenomenological essentialism always requires the dimension of intersubjective confirmation through the language game.

Also, free variation does not work as adequately as Husserl anticipated in the case of abstract conceptions and ideas, simply because it is not possible to visualize the guiding model under investigation, which is to say, lived experiences of meaning and values cannot be reduced to perceptual objects. According to Husserl, the passively overlapped, which is common among imagined various copies of the original in question, arises through free variation, and eidetic seeing can be regarded as the operation of actively grasping the overlapped essential structures. However, in the case of the essence of discrimination, for instance, it is clear that free variation itself works differently. The guiding model of discrimination is visually obscure, and free variation does not easily produce the overlapped essence. Rather, active "insight," I think, plays a more significant role in the procedure of eidetic seeing in this case. The investigator directly verges to the actual or imagined experience of discrimination and considers how the lived experience of discrimination is constituted and what sort of keywords are suitable for the lived experience of discrimination. Of course, free variation can constitute an indispensable part of eidetic seeing even in this case, but the active intuitive apprehension comes first and then imagines the other cases in order to assess whether the keywords effectively express the essential structures and moments of the object.

The investigator has to directly investigate and inquire into essential structures and moments with reference to other cases under investigation through free variation: "how shall I put this?" or "let's put it this way." Merely the operation of free variation is not adequate, however. Active insight into the essential structures and moments is more vital, although imagination contributes to seeing essence in terms of imagining other cases lived by other people. In the transition from *only for me* to *for us in general*, free variation develops a new role in the phenomenological eidetic enterprise.

To summarize, although the basis of eidetic seeing presented by Husserl can be in part preserved, eidetic seeing should be regarded as a historical-intersubjective project among plural transcendental subjectivities instead of as an image of exclusiveness in the process of solipsistic thinking. Furthermore, we cannot expect free variation to passively produce essence. Namely, active insight constitutes a necessary part of eidetic seeing while retaining the services of imaginative free variation.

3. Eidetic Seeing in Practice

Eidetic seeing can be regarded as a historical-intersubjective project among plural transcendental subjectivities for the sake of creating common understanding. The process of eidetic seeing must move forward avoiding of the controversy concerning truth. In other words, eidetic seeing clarifies not only commonalities but also differences among persons, cultures, and societies, and we can only create an attitude of mutual recognition against personal, cultural, and social differences. Starting from *my* insight, eidetic seeing requires the phase of intersubjectivity in order to determine whether the intuited essential structures can agree with each other. In this regard, phenomenology can be seen as a universal language game aimed at obtaining common understanding through the sense of mutual recognition of difference on the basis of mutual critique and a mutual exchange of words. The procedures of eidetic seeing can be described as follows:

- a. The subject-object schema should be changed to the immanence-transcendence schema through the operation of the universal epoché and transcendental reduction. Preoccupied doxastic ideas that posit objective being, absolute truth, substantial essence, and autonomous value should be all parenthesized, and authorities in the field of study under investigation, such as a dictionary, a scholar, a theory, or a famous book, should also be excluded. All being is to be thought in correlation with transcendental subjectivity.
- b. The essential and structural moments that underpin the articulation of the object, concept, and idea in question should be caught with keywords through reflection on lived experiences. Reflecting on lived experience itself, which is the only evidence of eidetic seeing, should at first be based on one's insight and the undoubtedness of the investigator of essences. "What xxx is" is the basic form of question in eidetic seeing.
- c. Through mutual critique and the mutual exchange of words, the intuited essence should be refined to generate intersubjective confirmation and consensus. What is to be noted is that one eidetic seeing should be reassessed by other eidetic seeings. Each participant sees the essence in reflection and makes sure that the intuited essence certainly and undoubtedly can be validated among all individual cases of the object. This means that a person with a merely skeptical attitude who always criticizes and rejects other opinions without offering his/her own ideas cannot participate in the phenomenological language game. The only way of critiquing is to present one's own insight and ideas.
- d. To grasp essence does not mean to grasp the absolute truth. In this regard, eidetic seeing may be considered as a specific language game that is aimed at creating

common understanding that extends beyond sociocultural diversity. The main goal of eidetic seeing is to clarify the essential structures and moment of the object under investigation by means of presenting keywords and assessing them through mutual critique and a mutual exchange of words.

Eidetic seeing is not a subjective project of a solitary thinker but an intersubjective project of plural transcendental subjectivity. Although the actual procedure of eidetic seeing may be conducted mostly all by oneself (because eidetic seeing does not necessarily have the form of oral discussion), the intuited essence must be reassessed through other transcendental subjectivities. In this regard, essence in phenomenology is not the absolute truth or an eternal substantial entity. Rather, essence is generated through the phenomenological language game: mutual critique and a mutual exchange of words.

Furthermore, it should be noted that participants need to share their concerns about and interest in the topic in question in advance, especially when eidetic seeing is conducted in the field of meaning and values. Nishi points out that eidetic seeing does not coincide with directly grasping the a priori immanent essence but that it always requires "some vital 'viewpoint,'" and therefore "essential insight or essential description is 'viewpoint-correlative'."⁴⁰ Nishi also argues, however, that this does not mean that "all knowledge is only relative. If one sets an adequate viewpoint and tries to extract essence, knowledge can arise, the correctness of which everyone can examine and confirm."⁴¹ For instance, when trying to see the essences of "the other," we have to clarify the concern and purpose of this eidetic seeing in advance, that is, why we are extracting the essences of the other or what sort of concern we share regarding the other. On the one hand, the other intersubjectively constitutes the objectivity of the world with the self in terms of transcendental concern, but on the other hand, the other can be a source of joyousness and anxiety in terms of existential concern. The essences of the other emerge out of the specific concern, so it is not easy to extract essential structures of the other that are common among participants from different sociocultural backgrounds without any viewpoint. In what field of study do we need universality? What for is essence to be extracted? What sort of perspective do we need to take? These are crucial questions that we should examine before seeing essence in practice, and the specific concern and perspective should be clearly presented in the process of eidetic seeing. This point was not explained by Husserl himself.⁴²

In what follows, I review the specific procedure of eidetic seeing by taking the essence of *discrimination* as an example. First, it is necessary for eidetic seeing to clarify and to express clearly why and from what perspective I see the essence of discrimination. My main concern is how discrimination is different from merely distinction, what can be the psychological reasons for creating such an order, and what does the experience of discrimination conduce to? Let me start with my own experience.

When I lived in Ireland, I belonged to a rugby club in college. Soon after signing up to

join the club, I sensed that I had generated a sense of aversion among some of my Irish colleagues although I had many other good friends there. Because I was the only player from an Asian country in the club, they did not want to accept me. Often, they asked me how I knew rugby if I had grown up in Japan. They did not want to accept the fact that Asian people also play rugby. One day, during practice, one of them kicked me in the face, insulting my nationality, and I was taken to a hospital. This incident was the result of discrimination. The particular distinction between Irish and Japanese led to this act of violence.

Here, it is clear that the distinction between Irish and Japanese offers something different from the distinction between red and blue, and that the experience of discrimination just because someone is a foreigner is not a special but a universal case found all around the world. Also, through free variation, I can imagine various sorts of other cases expressing *the discriminatory*, such as discrimination against women, sexual minorities, believers in a particular religion, ethnic minorities, single mothers and children, and against people with a particular accent, color of skin, and so on.

What are the essential structures of discrimination common to these cases? How are these distinctions different from the distinction between red and blue? This leads us to the next stage of extracting common structures of discrimination. First, distinction and discrimination are different in that discrimination always entails creating a hierarchy of value order. Basically, the distinction between red and blue does not include the hierarchy of value order (although there is a difference in meaning), but discrimination against Japanese produces a sense of mastery. Second, this hierarchy of value order is generated without any rational verification by making use of an inevitable sense of belonging, such as physical characteristics, nationality, and place of origin. The person who is discriminated against cannot escape from this unavoidable situation, so discrimination can diminish that person's self-worth and self-confidence just because that person simply cannot change his/her belonging. Thus, the essence of discrimination can be determined as the creation of a hierarchy of value order without any rational verification, which enables one to elevate oneself to a relatively superior position by making use of an inevitable sense of belonging. As a result, discrimination enables those who discriminate to secure a self-identity and a superiority complex, or to avoid otherness and alienation, but those who are discriminated against may feel distress and blame themselves, thinking that "possibly, the blame could be all mine," because they cannot understand the reason why "I" am rejected by others, and they assume the possibility that the cause of discrimination exists inside "myself."⁴³

It cannot be said that the eidetic analysis of discrimination presented above is adequately finalized and completed; rather, the intuited essence should open itself to continual intersubjective reassessment. Namely, through mutual critique and a mutual exchange of words, the intuited essence is redefined toward intersubjective confirmation; eidetic seeing may be considered as a sort of language game (that is, a phenomenological lan-

guage game) so that phenomenological essentialism cannot be dogmatism or solipsism. It is a study of intersubjectivity. Essence and common understanding in phenomenology are generated only through the dimension in which every participant assesses and confirms the border between what is identical and what is accidental to the object in question.

Finally, I would like to briefly describe some concrete possibilities that are opened up by eidetic seeing. Of course, I do not think that all the possibilities of eidetic seeing can be revealed in the following, but these items constitute part of the aims and possibilities of eidetic analysis.

a. Understanding of the Self and the Other

Participants in the phenomenological language game mutually exchange their own experiences. Problems consciously and unconsciously confronted in life can be clarified and deeply understood through verbalization. Through examining and understanding not only the sensitivity of the self but also the sensitivity of the other, the process of mutual recognition is of utmost importance. Eidetic seeing is employed as a method for discussion (for example, the essence of nostalgia, jealousy, anger, or death).

b. Elucidation of the Controversy concerning Truth

When plural opinions, hypotheses, policies, doctrines, or theories conflict with one another in the practical or the disciplinary realm, eidetic seeing opens up the possibility for creating a common basis on which every theory can exist. For instance, in the case of the conflict between traditional education and progressive education, the essence of education offers a fundamental regional basis for each camp. Or, before we examine whether medical care can be regarded as infrastructure in society or as a service in business, it is important first to clarify what medical care means. Eidetic seeing offers constructive engagement based on common essential conditions.

c. Reexamination of Theory

The theory that has already been presented can be reexamined through eidetic seeing. For instance, by seeing the essence of unconsciousness, the validity of the Oedipus complex proposed by Sigmund Freud may be assessed. Eidetic seeing enables us to assess and examine the validity of already existing fixed systems and theories and sometimes to reveal that there is indeed no validity or relevance to them and that they are merely a fundamental hypothesis or misconception.

d. Method of Philosophical Investigation

Transcendental eidetic sciences can be gradually established only through development in the specific eidetic analysis of lived experience, region, and idea. For in-

stance, the essence of love, faith, existence, unconsciousness, sexuality, discrimination, eroticism, language, meaning, reality, consciousness, life, person, society, the other, value, truth, freedom, beauty, goodness, human rights, and justice constitute the main topics in transcendental eidetic sciences. Eidetic seeing provides a method for transcendental eidetic sciences that attempts to counteract the outrage of violence, irrational dictatorship, and the enigma of life.

It should be said that these four possibilities and aims of eidetic seeing are entwined with one another rather than independent from one another. Further, according to each field of study, a new possibility and aim will appear. However, what should be shared among all possibilities and aims is that eidetic seeing is directed toward common understanding without the oppression of difference. When distinct characteristics between persons, societies, religions, and cultures are forced to fuse together into sameness, the phenomenological language game is faced with the end. In this regard, phenomenology is also a study of diversity and difference.

To summarize the present study, eidetic seeing is conducted within the transcendental attitude in order to avoid and to conciliate the controversy concerning truth. The possibility of universal cognition starts from a very relative position, *my* insight, but it is always oriented toward *universal* consensus through mutual assessment and confirmation. In this regard, the phenomenological language game requires that every participant create a transcendental attitude through the operation of the universal epoché and transcendental reduction. This is the historical project of essential investigation into common understanding confirmed by plural transcendental subjectivities.

Conclusion

Eidetic seeing can be viewed as a language game performed by plural transcendental subjectivities in the historical-intersubjective process. Transcendental reduction functions as an apparatus of elucidation for belief conflicts. Namely, it enables the essentialism and the universalism of phenomenology without the oppression of sociocultural differences.

It is true that we cannot completely know in what field it is *possible for us* to create intersubjective confirmation. However, more importantly, it is important to examine in what field it is *necessary for us* to create intersubjective confirmation. Particularly regarding the essence of social goodness and justice, it is important not only to exchange one's viewpoint and ways of understanding but also to reweave the order of desire and cognition and the world articulation in a different way of constraint. Social justice should be *universal* social justice as a matter of first priority; therefore, recognizing each individual justice is apparently insufficient. In this case, the possibility of the creation of universality depends on rational thinking and consensus, and sometimes we may come under pressure to change our opinions. Merely the mutual recognition of difference cannot provide the appropriate principle in such a field. Currently, I do not have a clear image of the ex-

tent to which the line of thought presented in this study can be applied to these problems. However, I am sure that the outcome of the present study will be of some use in furthering phenomenological research in terms of the phenomenological methodology of eidetic seeing.

Husserl believes that the transcendental enterprise discloses the infinite task of eidetic sciences, but this promise has not been proved yet. Only concrete eidetic analysis can undertake the task of phenomenology. The problem in phenomenology is whether we really need a common understanding beyond sociocultural differences. Essence is not easily generated when we continue to hold an ironic and skeptical attitude. In this sense, it is the process mediated through the will and effort to achieve goodness that enables phenomenological essentialism. In order to start a constructive discussion, to counteract irrational dictatorship, and to repress the eruption of violence, a phenomenologist employs essential thinking. This is the biggest challenge for phenomenology.

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¹ Amedeo Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology: A Modified Husserlian Approach*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2009. Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, (trans.), Richard M. Zaner and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973. Max van Manen, *Researching Lived Experiences: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*, London: The Althouse Press, 1990. Patricia Benner, *From Novice to Expert: Excellence and Power in Clinical Nursing Practice*, Menlo Park: Addison-Wesley, 1984.

² Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, (trans.), Peter Heath, London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1954. Jiro Watanabe, *Nihilism: Phenomenology of Inwardness*, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975. Jacqueline M. Martinez, *Communicative Sexualities: A Communicology of Sexual Experience*, Lanham/Boulder/New York/Toronto/Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011.

³ Alfred Schütz, "Type and Eidos in Husserl's Late Philosophy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1959, pp. 147-165, p. 165.

⁴ A. Giorgi (2009), op. cit., p. 98.

⁵ If we look at the history of phenomenological movement, it is not difficult to understand the vicissitude of the relationship between the aim and method of phenomenology: Husserl's phenomenology, Max Scheler's eidetics, Martin Heidegger's ontology, phenomenological sociology, or naturalized phenomenology etc. The aim and method have been varied within the phenomenological movement; each phenomenologist stands against the things themselves from his/her own viewpoint.

⁶ See Iso Kern, "The Three Ways to the Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction in the Philosophy of Edmund Husserl," (trans.), Frederick A. Elliston and Peter McCormick, in Frederick A. Elliston and Peter McCormick, (eds.), *Husserl: Expositions and Appraisals*, Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1977, pp. 126-149.

⁷ Edmund Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927-1931)*, (trans.) and (ed.), Thomas Sheehan and Richard. E. Palmer, Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997, p. 165.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁹ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, (trans.), David Carr, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 173.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹² See Shotaro Iwauchi, "Some Remarks on the Confrontation between Essentialism and Constructionism: A Phenomenological Perspective," *Transcommunication*, 3 (2), 2016, pp. 275-292.

¹³ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, (trans.), Fred Kersten, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960a, p. 41

¹⁴ Klaus Held, "The Controversy Concerning Truth: Towards a Prehistory of Phenomenology," (trans.), Amy Morgenstern, *Husserl Studies*, 17, 2000, pp. 35-48, p. 35.

¹⁵ Please note that I do not say every general eidetic science should be regarded as a dogmatist way of thinking. Here the point is the state of attitude. If one absolutizes one's opinion, one's thought and philosophy will inevitably fall into dogmatism. The universal epoché and transcendental reduction prevents this absolutization of opinion.

¹⁶ Seiji Takeda, "Renaissance of Phenomenology," in Seiji Takeda, *Husserl's "The Idea of Phenomenology"*, Tokyo: Kodansha, 2012, pp. 203-287, p. 256 ff.

¹⁷ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, (trans.), Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer, Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989, p. 416 f.

¹⁸ E. Husserl (1960a), *op. cit.*, p. 137.

¹⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, (ed.), Ludwig Landgrebe, (trans.), James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 330.

²⁰ E. Husserl (1960a), *op. cit.*, p. xx.

²¹ To be honest, I am not sure why phenomenological psychologists and sociologists tend to refuse the idea of the transcendentalism of phenomenology. For instance, eidetic analysis of trauma and resilience made by Frederick J. Wertz is outstanding, and apparently conducted as transcendental eidetic science in my view, but he himself attentively distinguishes psychological reduction and transcendental reduction, standing on the side of phenomenological psychology. I think one reason why Wertz employs psychological reduction, which still posits the existence of persons and experiences in question, instead of transcendental reduction is that psychology needs not only to create common understanding aiming at the eidetic dimension but also to cure psychiatric disorders aiming at specific individual conditions. Even so, my question remains whether his analysis can be called *transcendental psychology* instead of *phenomenological psychology*. See Fredrick J. Wertz, "A Phenomenological Psychological Approach to Trauma and Resilience," in Fredrick J. Wertz et al., *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis: Phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research, and Intuitive Inquiry*, New York/London: The Guilford Press, 2011, pp. 124-164, esp. pp. 125-128.

²² E. Husserl (1973), *op. cit.*, p. 340.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 343.

²⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Phantasy, Image, Consciousness, and Memory (1898–1925)*, (trans.), John B. Brough, Dordrecht: Springer, 2005, p. 671.

²⁶ J. N. Mohanty, *Transcendental Phenomenology: An Analytic Account*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989, p. 33.

²⁷ E. Husserl (1960a), op. cit., p. 7 f.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 9.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

³¹ E. Husserl (1973), op. cit., p. 343 f.

³² F. J. Wertz (2011), op. cit., p. 127.

³³ E. Husserl (1960a), op. cit., p. 37 f.

³⁴ E. Husserl (2005), op. cit., p. 677.

³⁵ E. Husserl (1973), op. cit., p. 363.

³⁶ Burt C. Hopkins, "Phenomenological Cognition of the A Priori: Husserl's Method of 'Seeing Essences' (Wesenserschauung)," in Burt C. Hopkins, (ed.), *Husserl in Contemporary Context: Prospects and Projects for Phenomenology*, Contributions to Phenomenology, vol. 26, Dordrecht: Springer, 1997, pp. 151–178, pp. 177-178.

³⁷ Here I must extend my gratitude to Ken Nishi for drawing my attention to the importance of the dimension of intersubjectivity in eidetic seeing.

³⁸ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, (trans.), Dorion Cairns, The Hague/Boston/London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960b, p. 71.

³⁹ Ken Nishi, "'Essential Insight' as a method of understanding our internal life," *The Journal of Tokyo Medical University*, 69 (1), 2011, pp. 15-21, p. 17.

⁴⁰ K. Nishi (2011), op. cit., p. 17.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² According to Nishi, even the essence of perception demands a specific perspective that precedes eidetic seeing such as the difference of perception and imagination. Husserl indeed extracts the essence from a specific viewpoint, but he is not aware of it. This naive attitude of Husserl's leads to a misunderstanding of phenomenology as if the essence itself could exist without any concern and perspective. Ken Nishi, *Philosophical Thinking*, Tokyo: Chikuma-shobo, 2005, p. 425 ff.

⁴³ I learned a lot regarding depression of self-value caused by discrimination from Kim Taemyeong, professor of legal philosophy and human rights at Osaka University of Economics and Law. I would like to express my appreciation to him.