mind (such as psychology) can contribute to our knowledge about how minds work, even though they are limited in their scope and are often unaware of the fact that they "tell more than they can know" (to paraphrase Richard Nisbett & Timothy Wilson 1977). Take, for example, the research programme of heuristics and biases (Tversky & Kahneman 1974), which has shown that, under certain conditions, most people make certain errors of judgement in the domain of logic and probability. Of course, this knowledge is not about experience, but is still arguably a type of knowledge about the mind; and as long as researchers do not try to extend it beyond its limits, I believe classical cognitive science should be accepted as a valid – if limited – source of knowledge about the mind.

« 13 » How such science is to be reconciled with fundamentally different empirical phenomenology is a very hard problem that is most probably not only epistemological, but also ontological in nature. The question, of course, is whether bringing empirical phenomenology into cognitive science (or cognitive science in empirical phenomenology for that matter) is even possible. If it is, how would merging the two transform cognitive science – for it it would seem this is bound to happen, since cognitive science could not remain a realism-based science of the trivial? More radically, is empirical phenomenology the only possible science of the mind? It would be interesting to see whether the author would even consider bringing together cognitive science (transformed?) and empirical phenomenology and how, if at all, such an endeavour would be possible without losing the character of a non-trivial science.

« 14 » Notwithstanding the problems and issues of the target article, Kordeš's attempt to create a genuine, non-trivial science of experience is a welcome move that is much needed, both in the context of experience research as well as in the context of a (new?) science of the mind.

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# Phenomenology as Critique, Discovery, and Justification

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**> Upshot** • Consistent with constructivism, phenomenology attempts to ground knowledge in an understanding of subjectivity. Although the phenomenological method can serve as a source of new insights and important critique of the conventional modes of understanding, the method's effectiveness in the context of justification remains problematic.

« 1 » A constructivist perspective highlights the role of a skilfully engaged subject in the formation of any account (Riegler 2005). With regard to perception, for instance, such a perspective highlights the observer's sensorimotor and conceptual skills, and the history of acquiring those skills, in enabling perceptual experience (Rock 1983). With regard to scientific research, this perspective highlights the role of researchers who are not only engaged with what they study but are also skilfully participating in culturally and historically situated traditions of research (Gergen 1985; Noë 2012: 37; Riegler 2001). These insights might not always engender separate programmes of research, but they do bring new understanding of existing programmes (Fernandez-Duque & Johnson 1999, 2002; Müller 2008). What is proposed by Urban Kordeš, is a distinct programme of research that would employ the phenomenological method. Here, I join Kordeš in defending phenomenology as a source of critique and discovery, particularly one that is compatible with constructivist assumptions. It seems much less clear, however, whether phenomenology can play a role in defending and verifying new insights in the intersubjective domain of rationality, i.e., the context of justification.

## Phenomenology as critique

« 2 » Subjectivity tends to conceal itself in disclosing the objects of experience, and this includes concealment of a perspective, a set of assumptions, and a set of skills. Objects and events appear as they do, not as achievements of subjectivity. When I use a computer mouse cursor, my attention is often not focused on the cursor, or my hand, but on the object of my action, e.g., a folder or a document file. In a sense, the mouse cursor is concealed, because my extensive practice with it relegates it to the background of my experience (Noë 2012; cf. Heidegger 1962: 99). Thus, I am largely unaware that the responsiveness of the cursor to my movement could, in principle, be magnified, reduced, or reversed. I am similarly unaware that the plane on which my hand moves is perpendicular to the plane on which the cursor moves. Using tools and technology involves extension of my sensorimotor agency (Gozli & Brown 2011), but it also involves relegating new parts of the perceptual world to the background of experience. Phenomenology offers a way of coming to contact with what is often concealed, the origins of experience, and understanding how my experience, which might seem independent of my perspective, my assumptions, and my skills, is in fact their outcome.

« 3 » The tradition of phenomenology also points out how subjectivity tends to conceal itself in disclosing the outcomes of the natural sciences. Edmund Husserl (1970) traced the origin of the scientific concealment of subjectivity to Euclid and Galileo, whose great achievements yielded descriptions of space and matter that could be grasped without sharing the describer's perceptual viewpoint. When I discuss my research with colleagues, the discussion relies on the use of a set of shared concepts, assumptions, and skills that themselves rarely become the focus of attention. By concealing my subjective point of view, they conceal how the research results are a product of an extensive set of concepts (that could themselves be revised), assumptions (that could be challenged), and participation within a historically situated research tradition (that could have been otherwise). The analyses of Diego Fernandez-Duque and Mark Johnson (1999, 2002), for instance, flesh out this point in the experimental psychology of attention. They demonstrate how my investigations are, to a great extent, shaped by my a priori conceptions of what I investigate. By explicating the relationship between subjectivity and research outcomes, phenomenology can bring out concrete instances of constructivist principles. This aspect of Kordeš's roposed programme seems particularly exciting, if not necessary.

« 4 » Furthermore, the phenomenological critique reveals how subjectivity has been mischaracterized and marginalized in the natural sciences. In a recent analysis, Wolfgang Fasching (2012) wrote how contemporary researchers continue to think of subjectivity primarily in terms of qualia, i.e., the ineffable and private aspect of experience, the something-it-is-likeness, while leaving out another essential aspect of subjectivity, namely its directedness or about-ness (see also, Zahavi 2005, 2007). The latter is what is termed *intentionality* in the phenomenological tradition, and it is a concept that carries metaphysical consequences. Namely, similar to Heidegger's (1962) *dasein* or Gibson's (1979) *affordance*, the concept of intentionality challenges the subject-object (or, mind-world) dichotomy and the debate between realism and idealism (Zahavi 2003: 71). On the one hand, considering consciousness as directed to objects and events that themselves transcend consciousness seems to lead to a form of realism. On the other hand, considering objects and events in relation to, or founded on, acts of consciousness seems to lead to a form of idealism (Zahavi 2003). Given the metaphysical non-neutrality of phenomenology, it is worth asking whether it is compatible with constructivist idealism. And, if not, does this pose a problem for Kordeš's proposal?

« 5 » Regardless of the philosophical implications of intentionality, it is rather clear that treating subjectivity only as a series of private, ephemeral, unreliable, and inexpressible qualia sustains the Cartesian legacy, the separation between consciousness and the world (Husserl 1970). This treatment also sustains the assumption that if there is something about consciousness that is irreducible to non-conscious processes, it is the realm of qualia and not intentional character of consciousness (Zahavi 2005, 2007). Indeed, this stands in contrast to the aim of phenomenology, which is to see beyond the particular and inessential characteristics of experience and capture structural and invariant characteristics of experience (Husserl 1999: §34; Zahavi 2003). Thus, not every turn to subjectivity is a turn to the tradition of phenomenology. Further, in developing his programme, Kordeš will have to explicate whether he adopts the emphasis on intentionality, structure, and essence that is characteristic of the phenomenological tradition, or whether he adopts a more wholesale view of subjectivity. At present, I detect an inclination toward the latter option (§§18f).

## Phenomenology as discovery

« 6 » Although the distinction between discovery and justification is not clear-cut in contemporary philosophy of science, the distinction is useful, and indeed seems almost compulsory, in discussing the unique scope of the phenomenological method. The core of my argument is that the utility of the method might be confined to the context of discovery.

« 7 » A key factor that makes phenomenology a process of discovery is the very first step in the method, namely the *phenomenological reduction*, which involves suspension of the so-called *natural attitude* (Husserl 1999: §15). Within a given research framework, for instance, the phenomenological reduction means suspending what the framework considers relevant and irrelevant, and suspending the causal assumptions within the framework. The reduction, in principle, can enable us to discover new meanings. Of course, as Kordeš states, there is no single, agreed-upon procedure for performing the reduction (§25). But setting aside the procedural problem, another objection we face has to do with the utility of discussing the phenomenological method in discussing research outcomes. One could ask whether the phenomenological method is compulsory for achieving a given outcome. One could point to several thinkers, e.g., William James (Schuetz 1941), whose insights are very much in alignment with the tradition of phenomenology, without explicitly referring to a phenomenological method. For the audience of our research, why should it matter how our insights are achieved? Why should it matter that they were the outcome of the phenomenological method? Let me clarify this with an example from research on visual perception.

« 8 » Since the beginning of the cognitive sciences movement, research on visual perception has been largely confined to the study of the neural and cognitive responses that are thought to demarcate the "visual system." Furthermore, the study of visual perception has largely been confined to examining how this visual system responds to sensory input, i.e., what is actually present. This approach runs contrary to the phenomenological tradition, which has long argued that perception is an embodied activity (Husserl 1999: §53) and is not confined to what is sensorially present, but involves a history and an anticipated future (ibid: §19). I believe reiterating the insights of Husserl regarding the nature of perception, and for that matter any new phenomenological insight, will have minimal impact in the experimental traditions. Illustrating the embodied nature of visual perception, i.e., that the body is not separated from the visual system, one has to demonstrate in concrete terms the failure of the conventional approach. For instance, one has to show that the relationship between the body and objects of vision can make qualitative differences in visual perception (e.g., Gozli, Ardron & Pratt 2014; Huffman et al. 2015), or that considering the temporally extended nature of visual perception can more effectively account for certain patterns of behaviour (e.g., Gozli, Aslam & Pratt 2015; Gozli et al. 2013). These findings do not require suspension of the conventional approach, even though they involve demonstrating the limits and failures of the approach, i.e., the operative natural attitude, to accommodate certain intersubjectively verifiable phenomena.

« 9 » The crucial point here is that our insights, whether or not they are achieved through the phenomenological method, cannot be decisively defended unless they can show the limits, failures, or inconsistencies of a natural attitude. It seems unfeasible to ask the audience of our research to perform the phenomenological or eidetic reduction, but it is not unfeasible at all to find the consequences of our eidetic reductions within the natural attitude. Regardless of whether or not we can have consensus about one particular phenomenological method, we must continue to fight our epistemic battles within the natural attitude. We are required to meet the audience of our research where they are, and that tends to be the natural attitude. Of course, the natural attitude is not fixed, and is continuously revised, partly in response to new eidetic reductions that receive intersubjective support. This is why phenomenology, as a source of critique and discovery, presents itself as an *infinite task* (Husserl 1970).

### Phenomenology as justification

« 10 » The all-embracing phenomenological method, therefore, comes at a cost. As a matter of definition, the phenomenological reduction suspends all assumptions about causality and existence, prohibiting the discovery of new causal connections. Similarly, we cannot test new theories using the phenomenological method. Whatever insight we gain has to be demonstrated and defended within the natural attitude. Where does this leave us, with regard to Kordeš's proposed programme? I suspect we have two options. First, we can combine constructivist phenomenology with an existing empirical research programme. Shaun Gallagher's (2003) and Karl Müller's (2008) ideas pertain to this option. It is worth considering that choosing this option could mean phenomenology will have little or no role in the context of justification.

« 11 » The second option, which in my view is more in line with what Kordeš is proposing, requires changing our criteria of justification (§53). If we must accept the phenomenological method as a method of intersubjective verification, then the means of establishing verification will have to involve elements such as empathy and trust. A discussion of research, in such a context, will have to be something other than a battle between inconsistent perspectives and contrasting positions. It most likely will not involve attempts at eliminating the specificity of subjective viewpoints. It will have to involve careful (and patient) attention to differences. It will have to involve bringing subjectivity to the foreground and understanding its various ways of correspondence to how the world is disclosed. In short, the independence of constructivist phenomenology, as a research programme, requires a pluralistic philosophy of science, and a science that is aware of its foundations in subjectivity. Whether or not Kordeš's proposed programme will find such a welcoming philosophical ground in a community of researchers is a question for the future.

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## Notes on the Coupling between the Observer and the Observed in Psycho-Phenomenology

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**> Upshot** • This commentary supports the view of the target article concerning the interest of taking into account the coupling between the observing scientist and the subject, and applying it in particular to the study of subjective experience. I propose to identify three aspects of coupling: (a) the technical conditions of coupling between the observer and the subject being observed in order to guide introspection; (b) the requirements for coupling between the scientist and social transmission during the experiential learning of non-inductive aid to introspection; (c) the essential coupling of the reflexive application of the tool to itself, i.e., the explicitation of explicitation.

« 1 » The article by Urban Kordeš is very interesting in its project of deploying a constructivist viewpoint, including the necessary interaction between the observing scientist and the observed subject, in the study of subjectivity. This is the domain of the study of lived experience. This commentary supports this perspective; it will attempt to identify and to clarify various facets of the coupling involved, on the basis of my own experience with the "explicitation interview"[1] (Vermersch 1994, 2012).

### A tacit presupposition: Everybody is competent to practice introspection

« 2 » There is a presupposition, rarely formulated explicitly but implicitly shared by philosophers ever since the beginnings of Western philosophy and more recently by psychologists, according to which every human subject, by the simple fact of possessing a reflexive consciousness, is thereby automatically competent not only to know his/her own experience but to describe it accurately. It is rather as though supposing that the simple fact of having a voice is amply sufficient to enable one to sing in an expert way; or that by the simple fact of having eyes and hands, it is trivial for one to draw a portrait. However, this is not the case, either for drawing a portrait or for "drawing lived experience."

« 3 » This implicit presupposition is a major consequence of the lack of circularity between research and its object of study. In fact, scientists do not know much about the competence of conscious subjects concerning introspection. What they do find is that with their carefully predefined protocols, the spontaneous descriptions they obtain are poor in quality, overloaded with superfluous comments concerning the context and the circumstances, but almost vacuous when it comes to actual mental acts and the

1 | The term "entretien d'explicitation," was initially translated into English as "explicitation interview"; then, several years ago, Claire Petitmengin proposed to translate it as "elicitation interview." However, shortly afterwards, I discovered – when searching on the internet – that the term "explicitation interview" was already widely used in the USA, and so we have come back to this usage.