

**Outline of:**  
**Do It Yourself Phenomenology**  
**by Theodore Kisiel**

- I. The **aim**: to present the phenomenological method for beginners
1. Via certain structures of experience which are more readily accessible
  2. Point to a certain natural basis for its various techniques like:
    - a. Heraclitean-Socratic **wonder**
    - b. Cartesian **doubt**
    - c. Existential **Angst**
  3. The methods all have a "from-to" structure

<b>Method</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
The Heraclitean (Wonder)	The unexamined life	The attentive reflection upon the total human situation
The Socratic	Concrete particulars	Universal definition
The Platonic I	The shadow world of <i>hoi polloi</i>	The essential visions of <i>hoi aristoi</i> in the "really real" world
The Platonic II	The dogmatic opinions of the Sophists	The scientific quest for truth of the <i>philo-sophes</i>
The Cartesian (Doubt)	Methodic doubt that turns from anything subject to even a shadow of a doubt	The clear and distinct ideas of indubitable certainties (the <i>Cogito sum</i> )
The Galilean	Subjectively "secondary" qualities (color and odor)	The objectively fixable "primary" qualities (size and shape)
The Husserlian	Natural attitude	Our most concrete and immediate experiences
The Heideggerian (Angst)	Average everydayness	Authentic existence

- II. The "from-to" structure of phenomenological method:
1. Usually expressed by two distinct and closely intertwined terms
    - a. **Epoché**
    - b. **Reduction.**
  2. Unique difference from and **reversal** of the above methods
  3. **From:**
    - a. The prejudicial beliefs of **common sense**
    - b. Technical explanatory constructs of **scientific theory**
    - c. Technical explanatory constructs of **philosophical theory**
  4. **To:**
    - a. Our most **concrete** and **immediate** experiences
    - b. The **experience as such**
    - c. **Direct**, unadulterated consideration of our experience **pure** and **simple**
    - d. In order to describe them from within, in their **own** terms
    - e. Not in terms **externally** imposed on them,
  5. Hence: *Zu den Sachen selbst*, back to the "things" themselves
- III. The specific task:
1. Letting things speak for themselves
  2. Find the *idiom* most proper to the experience under scrutiny
  3. Manifest the experience *itself*
  4. To uncover the indigenous *logos* of the phenomenon itself
  5. An articulation of the language, which is most apropos to it
- IV. The Epoché
1. Literally a "holding back" or "checking", more graphically a "bracketing", "putting out of play" or "switching off"
  2. Historical roots in skeptic's attitude of suspending beliefs.
  3. It is an attitude of **abstinence** and **not rejection**.
  4. The phenomenologist tries to **abstain** from:
    - a. The natural attitude
      - i. In which the individual takes the world for granted
      - ii. He tends to forget the experiences, which have constituted this world as it is now given *to him*.

- iii. "outer-directed" attitude of considering the world as "out there" and "before us"
  - iv. Invoke the *intentional character* of all experiences: all the objects are reciprocally correlated with and within the domain of the subject who experiences these objects
  - v. Application of the epoché: A thing is perceived perspectively and against a background before it is a thing "in itself"
- b. Scientific and metaphysical constructs.
- i. Science builds on the natural attitude in order to develop its attitude of objectivity
  - ii. Classical metaphysics did the same
  - iii. Explanatory constructs take an **external** vantage point on experiences, and thus **further** away from them.
  - iv. This sedimented superstructure of our academic learning must therefore be **re-duced** to a vantage that places itself **within** these experiences and the descriptive vocabulary that directly reveal them (Ordinary language is usually more telling.)
  - v. Application of the epoché: The **physiological** account of fear is a **derivative** account based on a more original sense of what fear is, whereby we recognize this phenomenon as fear and not some other emotion.
- c. The epoché is an **attitude** of
- i. **Precaution**, of what not to do
  - ii. **Mindfulness** while describing in a phenomenological way
  - iii. **Being on the alert** for lapses into non-experiential vocabulary

## V. The Reduction

1. Etymologically a "**leading back**"
2. The attempt to **re-call** the more experiential tenor of our experiences
3. **Explicating** the implicit pre-reflective knowledge that we already have of our experience in order to expose its meaningful "essential" structure
4. **Eidetic reduction**:
  - a. An exercise in **imagination**
  - b. Implementing a technique described as "free variation"

- c. Free flow of ideas directed toward the experience to be explored
- d. Utilizing numerous examples as the constant base to be touched over and over again
- e. Using **related** and **contrasting** examples which this experience is **not**, in order to **delineate** precisely what this experience is
- f. Explore the range of possibilities until transgressing its limits
- g. Or: to see **that without which it could not be what it is** (*Sine qua non*)
- h. Through **empathy** and **vicarious role-playing** translate myself into experiences which I will never undergo
- i. Not unlike the Stanislavsky method of acting
- j. Husserl: "fiction" as "the vital element of phenomenology"

VI. Practically speaking: find the language that will suitable and adequately articulate the experience.

VII. An Eidetic of Boredom

1. A relatively finalized **descriptive outline** of the experience of boredom
2. Using various strategies that may come into play in the course of "imaginary variation"
3. **Survey** of field of examples using intentional object as guiding clue
  - a. Bored with this class, course, semester, school, life itself
  - b. This sequence suggests **distinction** between
    1. **Particular** boredom
    2. **Total** boredom- with existence itself
4. **Intentional Structure** of Boredom
  - a. "It makes no difference to me" points to subject's attitude of indifference
  - b. "It's all the same to me"  
"The same old thing over and over again" points to objective sameness
  - c. And sameness is non-difference: the intentional correlation, where object and subject agree in structure

5. Compared with its opposite

<u>Boring</u>	<u>Interesting</u>
Same (lacks zest)	Variety is spice of life
Old (and tiresome)	New (and exciting)
Uniformity	Uniqueness
Dull (i.e. flat)	Exciting (highlights and contrasts of a rich experience)
Mono-tone	Variations on theme
Suppresses me	Arouses me
Induces passivity	Self-activating
Indifference	Involvement
Dissipated ennui	Concentrated attention
"Hollow men" with surfaces only	Intensity of experience

6. The **Tempo** of Existential Boredom (where depth description comes in)
3. Repetitious uniformity without progression: The rut of life
  4. Aimless "getting nowhere"
  5. Time drags, i.e. tempo slowed down; the pace of tedium: Life is so daily
  6. Time thus becomes a burden, weighs heavy, its oppressive weight felt, very tiresome: the suffering of passivity
  7. Excessive awareness of time, which normally falls into background consciousness
  8. In truly human sense of creative charge, this time is already dead, inert
  9. No future in that, which is what makes the difference
7. Placing in Context: **Refinements** of Finer Contrasts
1. Existential boredom close to melancholy and despair