

Dominik Rogóż To look and to see, to listen and to hear. An essay on phenomenology

The horizon of the contemporary philosophy, although diverse and heterogeneous, has become dominated by the reflection on the nature of human cognition. The sources of the popularity which nowadays surround epistemology can be found in the threshold of modernity, especially in the 1641, when the cautious and methodical lecture of Cartesian *Meditationes* was released. The birth of modern subjectivity – Cartesian cogito – has brought a radical change into the way of making philosophy, as well as caused a sudden avalanche of new intellectual challenges. Searching for the right and satisfying solution would clearly explain how a combination of consciousness and being has become one of the modern philosophy's most niggling problems. Phenomenology – a huge movement of thinking launched by Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl – has given birth to a new hope for the humanities. Husserl's philosophical effort was aimed at describing particular phenomena, as precisely as possible, without stepping beyond what is directly given in a certain experience. Husserl's heritage was creatively developed by his students, who however interpreted his works in many various ways. Emmanuel Lévinas – the one who translated some fundamental Husserl's works into French – challenged the idea of pure phenomenology and constructed his own program of philosophical investigation. Just like Husserl preserved the structure of Cartesian cogito, Lévinas definitely rejected the formula of transcendental subjectivity and suggested a new concept for the self. Although phenomenology is such a wide current of philosophy, I am convinced that there is a specific ethos which unifies all thinkers inspired by Husserl's ideas. Phenomenology doesn't want to interfere with the reality by putting phenomena into well-known categories, it rather struggles to describe the reality just like it presents itself. Phenomenology, in my opinion, teaches us respect for the reality which always exceeds our ability of cognition.