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Edmund Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology and Epistemological Reconstruction of Contemporary Islam

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Abstract:

The development of modern science, which is dominated by the positivistic paradigm, has given birth to epistemological problems in the form of a tendency to objectivism that separates knowledge from human conscious experience. This problem also affects the development of contemporary Islamic science which still faces a dichotomy between a revelation-based normative approach and an empirical-historical approach. This study aims to analyze the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl as an epistemological critique of the objectivism of modern science as well as explain its relevance in the epistemological reconstruction of contemporary Islamic science. The research uses *a library research* method with a philosophical-scientific approach through philosophical-interpretive analysis of Husserl's main works and relevant supporting literature. The results of the study show that Husserl's phenomenology through the concepts of intentionality, *epoché*, phenomenological reduction, *noesis–noema*, and *Lebenswelt* offers a constructive critique of the objectivism of modern science by placing human conscious experience as the basis for the formation of the meaning of knowledge. This perspective has relevance in the development of the epistemology of Islamic science because it opens up a dialogue space between revelation, rationality, and human experience without eliminating the normative position of Islamic teachings. The reconstruction of epistemology through phenomenology allows the development of Islamic science that is more reflective, integrative, humanist, and responsive to contemporary socio-religious dynamics.

Keywords: *Husserl's phenomenology, Islamic epistemology, philosophy of science, objectivism, contemporary Islamic science.*

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Introduction

The development of modern science shows a strong tendency towards the dominance of the positivistic paradigm that places empirical observation as the main basis for the validity of knowledge (Kaelan, 2020a). The modern scientific tradition develops through the assumption that knowledge is considered valid if it can be measured, verified, and objectively proven through certain scientific procedures (Tafsir, 2021). Such a pattern encourages great progress in the field of science and technology, but at the same time raises epistemological problems when human experience, consciousness, and the dimension of meaning tend to be positioned outside the process of knowledge formation (Kartanegara, 2021). This problem shows that the development of modern science is not only related to methodological issues, but also touches on philosophical questions about the basis of the legitimacy of science (Hakim, 2023).

The development of modern epistemology has had a major influence on contemporary Islamic studies, which are confronted with two different approaches (Abdullah, 2022). Some Islamic studies develop through a normative approach that relies on the authority of the text of revelation, while others use an empirical and historical approach influenced by modern social science methodologies (Mustaqim, 2021). The separation between normative and empirical approaches often gives birth to epistemological dichotomy so that the relationship between revelation, ratio, and human experience is not always dialogically constructed.(Muslih, 2022) This condition causes the development

of Islamic science to often face difficulties in building an integrative paradigm that is able to bring together theological, rational, and empirical dimensions in a proportionate manner (Kartanegara, 2021).

Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology offers a relevant philosophical framework for re-reading the epistemological problems of modern science and contemporary Islamic science. Husserl views that the crisis of modern science arises when science places too much emphasis on formal objectivity and forgets the world of human experience as the source of the formation of the meaning of knowledge (Husserl, 1970) (Moran, 2020). Husserl's criticism was directed at the objectivist tendency that understood reality separately from the consciousness of the subject, so that science developed technically but lost its reflection on the meaning of its existence for human life (Soeprapto, 1999). This position shows that phenomenology is not intended as a rejection of modern science, but rather as an attempt to reconstruct the epistemological foundations of science through reflection on human conscious experience (Zahavi, 2019) .

The study of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology has developed in various disciplines, especially philosophy, social sciences, and research methodologies (Wardah Nailul Qudsiyah & Achmad Khudori Soleh, 2024). Some studies place phenomenology as an approach to understanding human subjective experience, while others emphasize its contribution as a critique of positivism and objectivism of modern science (Wachid, 2022). Attention to Husserl's thought in Indonesian studies is generally still oriented towards conceptual discussions about intentionality, *Epoche*, and phenomenological reduction without being seriously directed at efforts to reconstruct the epistemology of Islamic science (Soeprapto, 1999). This tendency shows that phenomenology is more often understood as a research method than as a basis for philosophical reflection on the problem of scientific development (Muslih, 2022).

The development of contemporary Islamic studies shows that there are efforts to integrate knowledge through multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches (Abdullah, 2022). This attention is seen in the idea of the integration-interconnection of science that seeks to bring together religious science with social sciences, humanities, and modern sciences (Mustaqim, 2021). The space for discussion on the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic science through a transcendental phenomenological approach is still relatively limited, especially in reading the relationship between revelation, rationality, and human experience as an epistemological unit (Muttaqin, 2022). This condition shows that there is an academic space that can be developed to enrich the discourse on the integration of Islamic science through a more reflective approach to the philosophy of science (Kartanegara, 2021).

This article departs from the assumption that Husserl's phenomenology has epistemological relevance in answering the problem of fragmentation of contemporary Islamic science (Kaelan, 2020a). The renewal of the research lies in the effort to place phenomenology not just as a methodological approach to understanding subjective experience, but as the basis for the epistemological reconstruction of Islamic science through the concept of intentionality. *Epoche*, phenomenological reduction, and *Living environment* (Husserl, 1983). This position allows the relationship between revelation, ratio, and human experience to be built in a more dialogical manner without eliminating the normative dimension of Islamic teachings (Kartanegara, 2021). Such an approach is expected to strengthen the development of a paradigm of Islamic science that is more integrative, reflective, and responsive to contemporary socio-religious changes (Hidayat, 2019).

This study aims to analyze the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl as an epistemological critique of the objectivism of modern science while explaining its relevance for the epistemological reconstruction of contemporary Islamic science (Kaelan, 2020a). The analysis is focused on the main concepts of transcendental phenomenology in order to discover its philosophical contribution in building a more open Islamic scientific paradigm to the dialogue between revelation, ratio, and human experience (Milasari et al., 2021).

Research Method

This study uses a type of literature research (*library research*) with a philosophical approach to analyze the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and its relevance to the epistemological reconstruction of contemporary Islamic science (Kaelan, 2020b). The selection of literature research is based on the character of the study oriented to the conceptual-philosophical analysis of Husserl's thought, especially the criticism of the objectivism of modern science and its implications for the development of Islamic epistemology (Zed, 2022). Primary data sources are obtained from Edmund Husserl's major works, including *Logical Investigations*, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, and *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*.

Data analysis was carried out philosophically-interpretively by examining the main concepts of Husserl's phenomenology, including intentionality, *epoché*, phenomenological reduction, *noesis-noema*, and *Lebenswelt*. The analysis stage is carried out through the identification of the main ideas of phenomenology, the interpretation of

Husserl's criticism of psychology, naturalism, and objectivism of modern science, and a philosophical synthesis of its relevance in building a more reflective, integrative, and dialogical epistemological paradigm of Islamic science.

Result and Discussion

A. Intellectual Biography of Edmund Husserl and the Birth of Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl was born on April 8, 1859 in Prossnitz, Moravia, a territory of the Austrian Empire that now includes the Czech Republic. Husserl came from a middle-class Jewish family and obtained an early education in the strong European academic tradition in science and mathematics. His interest in the question of the certainty of knowledge began to develop when he studied at the Universities of Leipzig, Berlin, and Vienna with a major focus on mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy. This background shaped Husserl's intellectual concern with the problem of the validity of science, which in the late 19th century developed rapidly through positivistic and empirical paradigms (Bertens, 2002).

Husserl's intellectual development underwent an important change when he studied with Franz Brentano who introduced the concept of intentionality as the main character of human consciousness. Brentano views that every consciousness always leads to something, so mental activity is never present in an empty state. These influences provided an important foundation for Husserl in understanding the relationship between subjects, objects, and human conscious experience as part of the process of knowledge formation. An interest in the problem of consciousness prompted Husserl to abandon the dominance of purely mathematical approaches and to begin to develop philosophical reflections on the epistemological basis of science (Kaelan, 2020a).

Husserl's attention to the foundations of science grew stronger when he criticized the psychology that developed in the modern philosophical tradition. Psychology understands logic as the result of human mental activity so that the validity of knowledge is seen as dependent on the psychological condition of the individual. Husserl rejected this view because it was considered to have the potential to reduce the universality of logic to a subjective experience that is relative. Criticism of psychology then became the starting point for the birth of phenomenology as an effort to restore philosophical reflection to human conscious experience without eliminating the demands of the objectivity of knowledge (Zahavi, 2019).

The development of Husserl's phenomenology took place through several phases of thought, starting from the criticism of psychosm in *Logical Investigations*, the strengthening of transcendental phenomenology in *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, to reflections on the crisis of modern science in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. This intellectual journey shows that phenomenology was born not just as a theory of consciousness, but as a philosophical project to rebuild the epistemological foundations of science that are considered to have lost connection with concrete human experience (Muslih, 2022) (Kartanegara, 2021).

B. Husserl's Phenomenology as an Epistemological Critique of the Objectivism of Modern Science

Edmund Husserl's phenomenology was born out of a critique of the development of modern science that increasingly places empirical objectivity as the main measure of the validity of knowledge (Kaelan, 2020a). The modern scientific tradition develops through the assumption that knowledge is considered true if it can be empirically verified, objectively measured, and explained through universal laws (Tafsir, 2021). These developments have indeed resulted in significant advances in the field of science and technology, but at the same time they have given birth to epistemological problems when human experience is positioned outside the process of forming the meaning of knowledge. The objectivity of science is increasingly understood technically and formally so that human consciousness is often considered a subjective element that reduces scientific validity. This situation prompted Husserl to question the epistemological foundation of modern science, which was considered to have lost connection with concrete human experience.

Husserl's early criticism was directed at the growing psychology in the philosophical and logical traditions of the 19th century. Psychology understands the laws of logic as the result of human mental activity, so the validity of knowledge is considered to depend on the psychological condition of the individual. This view is considered problematic because it opens up the possibility of relativizing truth and eliminating the universality of logic as the basis of science. Husserl rejected the notion that the principle of logic can be explained only through empirical psychological experience because logic has an ideal validity that goes beyond the subjective conditions of a particular human being. Criticism of psychology shows Husserl's attempt to build a foundation of science that does not depend on purely subjective experience, but still has universal legitimacy (Zahavi, 2019).

The rejection of psychology led Husserl to the criticism of naturalism that developed in the paradigm of modern science. Naturalism views man as part of a natural mechanism that is subject to objective laws of cause and effect, so that consciousness is understood as an empirical object that can be explained like any other physical phenomenon. This approach is considered inadequate because human experience is not only concerned with empirical facts, but also with meaning, value, and conscious reflection on reality. The reduction of human experience to an objective approach causes science to lose the ability to understand human life more fully. Husserl's critique of naturalism shows that science requires philosophical reflection on how humans experience and give meaning to the realities they face (Wachid, 2022).

Husserl's critique of the objectivism of modern science takes on a more systematic form through the concept of *Living environment* or the world of life. Husserl views that modern science is experiencing a crisis when reality is increasingly understood through mathematical abstractions and formal procedures that move away from concrete human experience (Zahavi, 2019). The world of life is understood as an initial experiential space where humans interact, understand reality, and build knowledge before being reduced to objective scientific concepts. Everyday life, social experience, and human consciousness become the basic sources of meaning-formation that cannot be completely replaced by an objectivist approach. Position *Living environment* shows that the objectivity of science actually always has a relationship with human experience that interprets it (Kartanegara, 2021).

Husserl's reading of the crisis of modern science shows that the main problem of science lies not in the weakness of the empirical method, but in the loss of philosophical reflection on the basis of the legitimacy of knowledge itself. Transcendental phenomenology is not intended to deny the validity of modern science, but rather seeks to restore human conscious experience as the foundation of the formation of meaning. This position shows that phenomenology can be understood as a constructive critique of the objectivism of modern science as well as an effort to build an epistemology that is more reflective, humanist, and open to human experience.

C. Structure Phenomenology Transendental Husserl

Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is built on the assumption that knowledge cannot be understood in its entirety if it rests solely on the empirical objectivity that separates the subject from the conscious experience of man. Husserl views that every form of knowledge is always related to consciousness as a space in which reality is understood and acquires meaning. Thus, reality is not present completely neutral before humans, but is always related to how humans experience, understand, and interpret it. This perspective shows that the process of knowledge formation takes place through the relationship between the knowing subject and the known object, so that conscious experience becomes an important foundation in understanding the essence of knowledge (Husserl, 1983) (Kaelan, 2020b).

The concept of intentionality occupies a central position in Husserl's phenomenology. Intentionality is understood as the basic character of consciousness that is always directed to something, so that consciousness is never present in an empty state. Every activity of thinking, feeling, remembering, or understanding always has a certain object that is the goal of consciousness. Through this concept, Husserl affirms that knowledge is not born through passive acceptance of reality, but is formed through the active involvement of human consciousness in understanding the objects it encounters. This view also shows that the objectivity of science still requires human conscious experience as a medium for the formation of meaning (Soeprapto, 1999).

Husserl then developed the *Epoche* As a first step to understanding reality reflectively. *Epoche* It is understood as the process of temporarily suspending certain assumptions, prejudices, or beliefs about a phenomenon so that a person can understand something as it appears in consciousness. This postponement does not mean denying objective reality, but it is an attempt to avoid overestimating a phenomenon too quickly.(Kaelan, 2020a) In this way, conscious experience is placed as the center of reflection so that the understanding of reality can be done more critically and deeply (Muslih, 2022).

The *epoché stage* continues through phenomenological reductions aimed at discovering the essence of human conscious experience. In this process, Husserl emphasizes the importance of returning to experience as experienced directly without being influenced by pre-established metaphysical assumptions or theories. The relationship is explained through the concepts of *noesis* and *noema*. *Noesis* refers to the activity of consciousness when understanding something, while *noema* refers to objects as present in human conscious experience. The relationship between the two shows that the object of knowledge is never present completely independently, but is always related to the way humans understand and interpret it.

Concept *Living environment* or the world of life completes Husserl's phenomenological structure through the assertion that all forms of scientific knowledge are actually rooted in concrete human experience. The world of life is understood as a space of initial experience where humans understand reality before it is constructed into abstract scientific concepts. Husserl considers that the crisis of modern science arises when science places too much emphasis on formal

procedures and forgets human experience as the source of the formation of meaning. Therefore, everyday life, social experience, and human conscious reflection became the initial foundation that allowed science to develop in a more meaningful and humanistic way (Kartanegara, 2021).

Husserl's transcendental phenomenological structure shows that objectivity and subjectivity are not two elements that contradict each other, but complement each other in the process of knowledge formation. This thought has an important relevance in the development of the epistemology of Islamic science because it opens up space for a paradigm of science that does not only rely on textual normativity and empirical objectivity, but also pays attention to human experience as part of the process of interpreting religious teachings in social life (Mustaqim, 2021).

D. Reconstructing the Epistemology of Contemporary Islamic Science through Husserl's Phenomenology

The development of contemporary Islamic science shows the existence of epistemological problems in the form of a tendency to dichotomy between normative and empirical approaches. Some Islamic studies develop through a normative orientation that places the text of revelation as the main source of legitimacy of knowledge, while others emphasize a historical, sociological, and empirical approach to understanding religious practices. This separation often gives birth to scientific fragmentation so that the relationship between revelation, rationality, and human experience is not always dialogically constructed. This condition causes the development of Islamic science to face challenges in building an epistemological paradigm that is able to bring together the normative values of religion with the social dynamics of contemporary society (Abdullah, 2006).

These epistemological problems show that the development of Islamic science requires an approach that not only places the text as a source of legitimacy of knowledge, but also pays attention to human experience in understanding religious reality. Husserl's phenomenology offers this possibility through the affirmation that knowledge is always concerned with human consciousness as a space for the formation of meaning. Consciousness from a phenomenological perspective is not understood as a subjective element that interferes with the objectivity of science, but as a fundamental part of the process of understanding reality (Kaelan, 2020a). This position opens up an epistemological space for the development of Islamic studies that does not stop at normative or empirical approaches alone, but is able to bring the two together reflectively.

The concept of intentionality has important relevance in building the relationship between revelation, rationality, and human experience in Islamic science. Religious knowledge is not born through passive acceptance of the text, but develops through the involvement of human consciousness in understanding, interpreting, and interpreting the reality of religion. Revelation remains positioned as the primary normative source, but the process of understanding revelation takes place through human intellectual activity that is influenced by social situations, historical experiences, and certain horizons of meaning. This relationship shows that Islamic science is not static, but develops through dialogue between texts, ratios, and the reality of people's lives (Mustaqim, 2021).

Concept *Epoche* It makes an important contribution to the development of the epistemology of Islamic science because it allows the suspension of ideological prejudices, sectarian fanaticism, and assumptions of truth accepted a priori. The suspension is not intended to negate religious beliefs, but to open up space for more critical reflection on how to understand the reality of Islam. Such an approach allows Islamic studies to develop more openly to scientific dialogue without losing the normative orientation of religious teachings. Position *Epoche* It is also relevant in reading contemporary religious issues which are often influenced by the polarization of thought and claims of truth that are closed to other perspectives (Abdullah, 2021).

Concept *Living environment* Strengthening the argument that people's religious experiences are an important part of the formation of Islamic science. The social life of Muslims cannot be understood only through abstract normative formulations or empirical data that are separate from human experience. The world of life provides a space where religious values are lived, practiced, and interpreted in daily life. Strengthening the dimension of experience allows the development of Islamic science to be more responsive to contemporary socio-religious problems without losing its normative basis (Hidayat, 2019).

The reconstruction of epistemology through Husserl's phenomenology shows that the integration of Islamic science is not enough through the incorporation of disciplines alone, but requires a change in the way of understanding knowledge itself. The relationship between revelation, ratio, and human experience needs to be placed as complementary elements in shaping religious understanding (Abdullah, 2006) . This approach allows Islamic science to develop in a more reflective, integrative, and humanist manner without losing the ethical and spiritual orientation that is the main basis of Islamic teachings (Muslih, 2022).

E. The Relevance and Limitations of Husserl's Phenomenology in the Development of Islamic Science

Husserl's phenomenology has an important relevance in the development of contemporary Islamic science because it offers an epistemological approach that does not stop at methodological objectivity and textual normativity alone. Islamic studies have often moved on two separate tendencies, namely a normative approach that relies on the authority of religious texts and an empirical approach that emphasizes more on socio-religious realities. Phenomenology presents the possibility of a dialogical path through the affirmation that human conscious experience is an important space in the formation of the meaning of knowledge (Abdullah, 2021). This perspective allows Islamic studies to develop more reflectively because religious understanding is not only seen as a product of reading texts, but also as the result of the interaction between revelation, rationality, and human experience.

The relevance of phenomenology can be seen in its ability to strengthen the humanistic approach in understanding the religious practices of Muslim society. Religious life is not only concerned with the implementation of formal norms, but also concerns the existential experience of human beings when understanding and living religious values in daily life.(Hakim, 2023) This religious experience can be an important part of the development of Islamic science because it provides space to read Islam as a living reality and continues to be interpreted by society. Such an approach allows Islamic studies to be more responsive to contemporary socio-religious problems without losing the normative orientation of religious teachings (Kartanegara, 2021).

Husserl's thought still has a number of limitations when applied in the development of the epistemology of Islamic science. The great emphasis on subjective consciousness has the potential to give birth to difficulties in explaining the position of revelation as the source of transcendent truth in Islam. Transcendental phenomenology focuses more on human conscious experience, while Islamic epistemology rests not only on empirical experience and rational reflection, but also on the authority of revelation that has a theological dimension (Muslih, 2022) . This condition shows that phenomenology cannot be applied absolutely without dialogue with the Islamic epistemological approach that places revelation as the main source of legitimacy.

Another limitation appears in the criticism delivered by Martin Heidegger of Husserl. Heidegger considers that Husserl's phenomenology places consciousness too much at the center of analysis and pays less attention to the existence of human beings who are always in certain historical and social situations (Heidegger, 2010). This criticism shows that human experience is not only understood through individual consciousness, but is also influenced by the social, cultural, and historical conditions that shape human existence. This perspective is important in the development of Islamic science because the religious practices of Muslims always take place in a dynamic and constantly changing social space.

Husserl's phenomenology continues to have an important contribution as a reflective approach in the development of Islamic epistemology. Phenomenology can be positioned as a philosophical tool for strengthening epistemological consciousness in Islamic studies, while the normative dimension of revelation is retained as an ethical and spiritual foundation. This relationship shows that the development of Islamic science requires methodological openness that is able to bring together normative values, scientific rationality, and human experience in a more balanced manner. Such a paradigm allows Islamic science to develop more integrative, humanistic, and adaptive to socio-religious changes without losing its normative identity (Kartanegara, 2021).

Conclusion

Edmund Husserl's phenomenology was born as an epistemological critique of the development of modern science that overemphasizes empirical objectivity and ignores human conscious experience as the basis for the formation of the meaning of knowledge. Husserl's critique of psychology, naturalism, and objectivism shows that the validity of science is not only determined by empirical procedures, but also requires philosophical reflection on the relationship between subjects, objects, and the process of forming meaning. Transcendental phenomenology through the concepts of intentionality, *epoché*, phenomenological reduction, *noesis-noema*, and *Lebenswelt* shows that the objectivity of knowledge always has a relationship with the human experience that interprets it.

Husserl's analysis of phenomenology shows its important relevance for the development of contemporary Islamic epistemology, which still faces the problem of dichotomy between normative and empirical approaches. The reconstruction of epistemology through a phenomenological perspective opens up a dialogue space between revelation, rationality, and human experience without negating the normative position of Islamic teachings. This approach allows for the development of Islamic science that is more reflective, integrative, and responsive to contemporary socio-religious changes.

The limitations of Husserl's phenomenology still need to be noted, especially in his tendency to place consciousness as the center of analysis so that it requires dialogue with Islamic epistemological approaches and other philosophies in

reading the transcendent dimension of revelation. This position shows that phenomenology is not intended to replace the foundation of Islamic epistemology, but rather to enrich philosophical reflection in the development of Islamic science that is more adaptive, humanist, and still oriented towards ethical and spiritual values.

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