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Methodological Paper

Meaning Making of Lived Experiences in Phenomenological Inquiry

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Abstract

Phenomenology is all about making meaning of primal lived experiences. But it is often a huge challenge to know where to start interpreting the experiences as they are lived. van Manen has described the lifeworld existentials of phenomenology to be interwoven within the lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived human relations. These existentials have a deeper significance when we seek to interpret the lived experience for a phenomenon. In phenomenology, lived body is something more than our pair of limbs, torso, and head; lived space is not meant as physical space; lived time is different from object time; and lived relation is not merely human interaction. Simply put, they are felt body, space, time, and relation. Furthermore, these existentials are inseparably interwoven with each other in such a way that a superficial understanding of lifeworld will seldom attain those wonders hidden within the lived experiences. In this article, I have tried to simplify and elaborate on these individual lifeworld existentials with reference to my prior experience of phenomenological study in educational settings so that it is convenient for beginner scholars to understand the scope of meaningmaking in phenomenology.

Keywords: lived experience, lifeworld existentials, phenomenology

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Introduction

My professor, while supervising my MPhil dissertation at Kathmandu University, once asked me to differentiate between ‘experience’ and ‘lived experience’. At the outset, both resembled the same to me. ‘Lived experience’ seemed like philosophical jargon to me when I read it in various narrative inquiries and almost every phenomenological text. As I intensively delved into its meaning, I realized that studying experience merely would not make a study phenomenological. It had to be a study of the primal, lived, pre-reflective and pre-predictive meaning of experience (van Manen, 2017a). Ditley (1987) explained ‘lived experience’ (*Erlebnis* – German word meaning ‘something one experiences like an event’) as a nexus of lived relations in the world whose experience is expressed in the forms of arts, language, or even architecture (as cited in van Manen, 2017b). So, I resorted to an understanding that the only source of information for phenomenology is lived experience; experience in its pristine form as it is lived and not as thought, perceived, or conceptualized.

As I was conducting a phenomenological study of misfits in the classroom for my dissertation, I pondered how I would go forward to inquire about an experience that is only lived by my participants. I needed some guidelines or a framework. I felt that the passing of time is an integral aspect of the formation of lived experience. Now is when the lived experience takes place, but it is already past when I look back to consider the structure formed in my consciousness. I felt the real challenge for investigation would be in capturing that very moment of newly amalgamated sediments of lived experience, for retrospective, contemporary and prospective experiences are continuously forming, reforming, and transforming my consciousness. But my readings suggested that even amid those transformations, phenomenology abstains itself from conceptualized or theorized experiences to give the true meaning of experience that is only lived. Well, that makes sense, but where exactly do I look to find the meanings of those lived experiences? In my case, what elements do I investigate to get closest to understanding the lived experiences of misfits in the classroom? These questions for me could only be answered by understanding phenomenology as a methodology for research in educational settings.

Phenomenology as a Research Methodology

The nectar of the philosophical discussions in phenomenology funnels down to forming a sound methodology for phenomenological inquiry. van Manen (1984; 1997) has strongly mentioned investigating lived experience as integral to phenomenology. Lived experience only unravels its wonders upon the instigation of phenomenological questioning (van Manen, 2017b). I derived these learnings during my MPhil dissertation, exploring the lived experiences of students who resembled misfits in the classroom and were struggling learners. They could be misfits by having some physical or learning disabilities or differences in physical or intellectual abilities and readiness. I chose five students from different schools in Kathmandu that met my notion of being a misfit in the classroom.

I aligned my philosophical arguments with van Manen's prescriptions in developing a methodological framework for my study, which postulates key areas for contemplation for phenomenological research. The researcher ought to have a keen interest in the research topic before investigating the lived experience. In-depth interviews and behavioral observations of my participants in their classrooms were the means of information generation for my study. The derived information was then reflected on the essential themes that characterized my phenomenon of being a misfit in the classroom. Lastly, the phenomenological study required the researcher's patience to interpret the phenomenon through the art of writing and re-writing to bring out the true essence of the findings. I chose to express my critical reflections on everyday happenings (Dhakal, 2019) through artistic and literary forms through ample use of similes, metaphors, ironies, narratives, and poems to reflect upon the lived experience of misfits in my research.

As for the question of the premises of finding lived experiences of misfits in the classroom, I recalled van Manen's suggestion to study more original texts rather than trickled-down meanings. I found that Merleau-Ponty's writings shed light upon phenomenological attitude utilizing four key lifeworld existentials. Lifeworld existentials simply mean the way we experience the world as it is. Those fundamental structures of the lifeworld are called lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), lived space (spatiality), and lived human relations (relationality) (Dowling, 2007). The four existential aspects of being are regarded to be highly productive processes of

phenomenological questioning, reflecting, and writing by van Manen (1990). After using the same lifeworld existentials as my main source of information for my MPhil thesis, I believe questioning lived experience around these existential structures helps explore holistic boundaries of knowledge constructed in the consciousness of the participants as they are lived. But first, I needed a deeper exploration into these four existentials. In this article, I have tried to elaborate on the four lifeworld existentials and how I understood their essence for the purpose of phenomenological meaning making while preparing my MPhil dissertation.

Corporeality, the Lived Body

To say that it is always near me, always there for me, is to say that it is never really in front of me; I cannot array it before my eyes, that it remains marginal to all my perceptions, that it is with me. It is true that external objects too never turn one of their sides to me without hiding the rest, but I can at least freely choose the side which they are to present to me.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 104)

The body is the first and possibly the last place I may exist. If not for the body, would I even be? The body I live in is not permanent for the world, but it is an indispensable aspect of permanence on my part (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). It is not just that I have a body but exist in it and with it. I can look at external objects from different angles and sides; they can even be moved away so far that it is out of my vision. My body is different. The view of my body is almost absolute to me. I see it almost in the same fashion all the time. I barely even realize the growth that is taking place in me. If not for the mirror, I never even see my face or the back of my head. It is nothing like an external object.

The state of my lived body profoundly impacts how I experience space, time, and human relations for a certain phenomenon (Tembo, 2016). My body is by which there are other objects. I may never perceive my body how I see or touch other objects (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). My body is the pivot of the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 94). My body is the center of the universe for me. It is like the central pin around which the hour, minutes, and second hands of a clock revolve. It is like the sun of the solar system. My body is my anchorage in this world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 167). I move around in my body to every place I go, every space I dwell in, and every human interaction I make. My body is the fabric in which all the objects

are woven (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 273). Thus, all the experiential moments are captured in my consciousness, starting through the body where I exist. At a glance, it is just two pairs of limbs, a torso and a head, but when they all combine to make a complete body, it is something more. It is me.

It is through my body and the body of others that bring each other into interaction. My body reveals so much about myself, deliberately or unconsciously. The body is often like an open book that anyone can read. van Manen (1990) quotes Jean-Paul Sartre and writes, ‘when the body is the object of one’s gaze, it may lose its naturalness or it may appear to grow enhanced in its modality of being’ (p. 104). I experience this quite often. When a person I like looks at me, the comfort within my body is soothing. When someone who I do not like so much looks at me, my body maintains a posture ready to maybe retaliate to any incident that may transpire but amid a certain magnitude of nervousness. The modality of being varies for people I love, for people I respect, for family, for teachers, for a stranger, and so on.

The rather important approach here is to understand whether the experiences of a lived body are confined to physical aspects of the body. Is it only the physical object as a body that accounts for the experiences of a lived body? Is it only the halving of a biological and physical body that entails the flux of lived experiences into my consciousness? I like to think of it as a big NO. I think how I maintain my body, how I dress, how I maintain my personality, how I perceive society and how I behave, etc., also matter in living a phenomenon through the body. When the same person enters a bank or maybe a five-star hotel in an untidy and unkempt manner, they are bound to experience differently as they would have entered with immaculate formal suits. The hospitality one would receive at different tiers from the gate up until the manager’s desk would be completely different. One’s getup deliberately manipulates the other person's behavior, making the experience joyful, humiliating, or otherwise.

I sought deeper understanding of the lived body and found important aspects of its dimension, which is likely to be quintessential for the interpretation of the meaning of any lived experience. The lived body is a bit different than the object body. It is subjective to my habits, emotional attitude, personality, capacity for action, and other cultural ideas (Romluc, 2016). Besides the immediate physical body, I have categorized four more attributes that account for experiences of the lived body.

Bodily Space

I had my arm fractured when I was in college. I was riding in a public bus with one arm plastered, resting on a sling tie around my neck. The seats were occupied, so I had to stand holding on to the metal bar with another arm. As the bus started to get crowded with the added number of passengers, I started getting uncomfortable with people closing up the space near me. I was very conscious of my broken arm and made sure that there always was minimal space between my arm and other passengers. My arm would hurt long before someone intercepted that space and touched my arm. It turns out that sometimes even the immediate space around the body is also experienced as part of the body (Romluc, 2016). Now I understand that my bodily space resembled the part of the body itself.

Merleau-Ponty calls this element of the lived body ‘intelligible space’ as our instincts create it. Bodily space is distinct from external space as it envelopes the body rather than spreading out (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). When spatiality of the body is brought into ‘being’, a better understanding of ‘becoming’ is possible (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). I feel that my body marks the territory and reacts differently to intruders. The phrase ‘too close for comfort’ means the creation of unease by someone or something trespassing our bodily space, which is not open for everyone. Even the animals have the instinct to retaliate by attacking when their bodily space is intercepted. I often imagine myself in the classroom writing an exam. Sometimes the invigilator would come by and watch what I was writing or at least I felt I was being watched. At that very moment, my body would feel so weak, and I would forget all that I was supposed to write. So, I strongly feel that the sets of experiences assimilated through the bodily space of people with their teachers, peers, family, and community or even strangers contribute to a better understanding of the lived experience.

Habitual Being

The body tends to adapt various postures to respond to the given stimuli in the environment (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008). Habits establish in time those bodily behaviors or forms of conduct that are appropriate for responding to the stimuli of the environment (Moya, 2014). Therefore again, nature and nurture contribute to my conduct and behavior. I often imagine myself being different in different places despite having the same body. My body language is of a responsible person in front of the

family, a decent student in the classroom, and a person who is a complete mess within the vicinity of close friends. My body is habituated to this behavior. It is my body that understands the adoption of certain habits (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). The habit of waking early or late in the morning, the habit of being punctual or late, or any habitual activities in the classroom amounts to different forms of experience. Habit becomes an important aspect of life as it is comfortable for the body. We say that the body has understood and the habit has been cultivated when it has absorbed a new meaning and assimilated a fresh core of significance (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). The activities performed by the body on a habitual basis often set one's awareness of their capacity for action. Therefore, habit expresses our power to dilate our being in the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). But it is also noteworthy to know that habitual being may not be attributed to the limited understanding of a specific personality or capacity for action.

Lived Things

van Manen (2014), in recent years, has added a fifth dimension to his original four existentials. That is the lived experience of things or 'materiality'. The habitual instruments of use are also the elements of lived body (Romluc, 2016). So often, one gets inseparably accustomed to external objects such that the object becomes part of the body. A cane used by visually impaired people to walk around would probably be the simplest example. The walking stick is part of their body. I feel the same when I am riding a bike. I can maneuver it around the narrow gaps of the streets like they are the limbs of my body. There is no need for mathematical calculations to determine if the bike would enter the gap between two vehicles. It happens spontaneously. Any instrument that is used habitually plays a crucial role in the formation of the lived experience of the body.

The experience from lived things may not always be an accustomed object. It may only be a thing I use on a regular basis. As a student, the bag I carry, books, pen, the desk, and the chair I sit on also contribute to my experience of the body. The set of experienced things in my consciousnesses can be categorized in different ways. I have used the idea of (Adams & Yin, 2017) to describe how things may matter to me. The experience of some things may leave nostalgic imprints in my memory. Mechanical lead pencils, for example, when I see them every time, even now, remind me of how I

could accomplish my best handwriting to get praised by the teachers. Next, it could also be a thing that made me reflect on myself, my life, or my being. Some of my things were private things that I had, but I let no one know about that thing. Some of my things were hiding things. Things that I used to hide my weaknesses in front of others and so on.

Another aspect of lived things I imagine these days is lived technology. It is because of how adaptive we have become to it. Technologies that amuse us, assist us, and at times, threaten us and come down to becoming a part of us. The body is so habituated to its existence that the experience of life without it is somewhat unworthy of imagination. For instance, when you someday miss your smartphone at home, the whole day seems restless as you keep reaching your hands in your pockets only to find that the phone is not there.

Cultural Being

My body, besides natural objects, also gives significance to cultural objects (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962), like words and emotions and social indoctrination. We are pre-informed about what kind of body is a good body, what kind of dress-up is a decent dress-up, what kind of students are smart students, and so on. What if I had opposite attributes to what is considered good and acceptable even despite trying? Would that not make a difference in how I experience the world? I recall yet another incident. My hair color is brown, rare and unlikely to what almost all Nepali have. The discipline in charge of my college had once compelled me to make my hair black. He just did not believe that it was natural, and even when he did, it was not acceptable. It would encourage other students to color their hair, and that would cause students to revolt. Well, it brings a smile to my face to remember those moments, but now it gives me goosebumps to think of how natural body parts if they happened to be different, could be unacceptable in society.

Cultural being also includes the system and words used within that system. The educational apparatus also seems to have a cultural influence. It starts with how IQ serves as the measure of the student being successful. The notion of hierarchy in subjects offered in schools where science and mathematics are of primary importance, language and comprehension being secondary, and how arts are pushed down the line as sheer extracurricular options, still prevail as educational culture. The same exists in

grading and assessment systems where the body of a student is trained to achieve learning along with a stringent protocol. The words used along the same apparatus make a huge difference to the experience of the body. It is my body that gives significance not only to the natural object but also to cultural objects like words (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 273). The words like failure, dull student, or misfit send a chill down my spine just to even hear them. The body weakens to the knees when described with negative adjectives. The body reacts similarly to nicknames given to a person for their bodily attributes or even impairments.

Spatiality, the Lived Space

What I apprehend immediately when I hear the branches crackling behind me, is not that there is someone there, it is that I am vulnerable.

(Sartre 1943, as cited in Saevi, 2005)

I imagine Sartre to be in a Jungle alone. Maybe it is probably getting dark. The space around him in the wilderness has its physical objects like trees and wildlife. The events of cracking of branches, probably in the jungle and when it possibly is getting dark, makes the space treacherous. The feeling of hostility comes from pre-reflective learnings about the space as told, learned, seen, or even experienced. The feeling of vulnerability for Sartre most probably comes from his lived experience of such 'situatedness' in the past. The same space, maybe for a hunter, would mean treacherous and hostile. The cracking of trees behind would probably mean that the prey is nearby, and his lived experience would be to silently turn around and aim at the target. I feel that the same space with the same inference has different interpretations.

Perceived Space

My representation of being is deeply embedded in the space I dwell. However, the space in itself seems fascinating when I explore its literary dimensions. Lefebvre (1905/1991), formed a triad of perceived space, conceived space, and lived space to explore the deeper understandings of the production of 'social space'. His concept has influenced me to better understand the spatial aspect in which the lived experience of misfits in the classroom takes place. Perceived space, also referred to as 'spatial practices' by Lefebvre (1905/1991) is the 'real space', 'concrete or physical space' (p. 38). My understanding of this space is as intended space. A physical space that is

created or exists for a certain purpose. When I refer to my home as a space, I perceive it as security, comfort, privacy, and peace amid the physical infrastructure. That is how I differentiate a home from a house. The classroom with desks and benches, notice board, windows, whiteboard, teacher, etc. are perceived spaces intended for the practice of teaching and learning. The materialistic aspects intended to facilitate interactions accounts for physical space (Petani & Mengis, 2015).

Conceived Space

Conceived space, also referred to as ‘representation of spaces’ or ‘discourse on spaces’ (Lefebvre, 1905/1991), is the conceptualized space to fulfill the required objectives (Petani & Mengis, 2015). For me, this is the implemented space. The events that take place in the classroom through the physical instruments and teachers are the conceived space for the students. This is an integral space to dwell in as most interaction occurs here. The students conceive the implementation of curriculum and pedagogy as useless, and the whole idea of perceived space fails. Lefebvre (1905/1991) refers to this space to be inclusive of power dynamics and hence is the most important aspect of the spatial triad.

Lived Space

Lived space also referred to as ‘representation space’ or ‘discourse in space’ (Lefebvre, 1905/1991) is the space that shapes the individual's mind. It depends upon how I interpret the perceived and conceived space based on the events for me. It is what the space means to me, depending upon continuous use over time (Petani & Mengis, 2015). The continuous flux of experience stored in my consciousness about that space makes up the lived space for me. I refer to this space as contextual space as it is purely subjective in its existence. The classroom space may be highly interesting and encouraging for some students, while the same space might be filled with boredom for others. It is because another space in itself may not change, but our perception that comes from our experience can make the space finer, subtler, more profound, or more differentiated (Zhang, 2006).

The idea of Lefebvre seems a bit of a post-positivistic approach in trying to quantify the spatial dimension of lived experience. But I take Lived Space or the contextual space to be in the center of perceived and conceived space. The interactions that take place between the perceived and conceived space generates the subjective

understanding of learning that takes place in the classroom. Heidegger calls it as finding ourselves in the situated world with others in the world (Saevi, 2005). I hereby resort to a simpler concept of lived space. Lived space is nothing more than the felt space, as Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) and van Manen (1997) describe. The felt space is not necessarily homogeneous and thus characterized by vicinity or distance or narrowness or connection or separation, or attainability, as experienced by me (Fuchs, 2007). I give meaning to the space I dwell in. My space is my understanding and most likely invisible or incomprehensible to others unless I explain it to them. The only way to discover my felt space is by constantly asking me to describe my meaning of lived experiences of that space. This is the whole idea of phenomenological inquiry.

Temporality, the Lived Time

In my school days, I tried to follow the work of Albert Einstein. I empathized with his being of struggling learner with him. I was fascinated with his concept of space-time where he pointed out space and time to be the same. I could barely understand his idea at that time, but it makes some sense now. Space in dictionary meanings comes from the idea of Einstein. Space in the oxford dictionary is the lapse of a duration of time, or it is the time taken to travel between two points (van Manen, 2002). The mathematical space is of less concern to me. However, I feel it to be almost the same for the lived space too. When I enter a contextual space or maybe while reading or writing, it is the lapse of time that determines the space to be boring or joyful. I want to delve further into temporality, or lived time in my case, before I establish its relationship with lived space.

The future is not posterior to the past, or the past anterior to the present. Temporality temporalizes itself as future which lapses into the past by coming into the present.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 488)

Lived time is subjective as opposed to clock time as to how time feels when I am highly interested or immensely bored (Tembo, 2016). An interesting lesson in the class seems to pass away quickly, and every second feels like an hour when the lessons in the classroom are boring. The experience of past lived time shapes my consciousness to anticipate how time may be felt in the future. Merleau-Ponty (1962), including Husserl and Heidegger, conceptualized temporality in terms of past, present, and future which accumulate a structure of the experience of space and relationships (Mokalewicz,

2016). I preserve my experience; I get the taste of it every present day, and I savor the taste of it for the future. Whatever I encounter in the past sticks with me as my memories (van Manen, 1997). Becoming to being is moving my body from one space to another over time (Fuchs, 2014). My whole journey from being a student to being a struggling learner is embedded in the existential aspect of temporality (Ledermann, 2014). Thus, my stream of experiences in the past, situated being of now, and aspirations of the future give shape to different sediments of experience in my consciousness.

My physical and cognitive growth takes place along with time. My body builds certain habits or acquires special skills over time (Klein et al., 1995). I resorted to facilitating my learning with a self-study mechanism for higher studies because that was the set of my strength I built over time. The amazing aspect of temporality in lived body, lived space, and lived human relation is that it cannot be reversible. Every experience along the time is chronological (Patomaki, 2011). The chronological events of how I experience time shape destroy, or again reshape my being in space. When I ponder over this sort of phenomenon of temporality, I feel it is the only existential of lived experience which is least controllable by me. Once time lapses, I cannot go back to change how I felt about the time in the past. It stays in my consciousness the very way it was conceived during the time I experienced it. When thought of it in such a manner, temporality tends to be the central component of my being in this world (Caldas & Bertero, 2012). If I am a river, the pace of flow experienced is temporality in phenomenology.

Relationality, the Lived Relations

This is what happens, for instance, when I fall under the gaze of a stranger. But even then, the objectification of each by the other's gaze is felt as unbearable only because it takes the place of possible communication. A dog's gaze directed towards me causes me no embarrassment. The refusal to communicate, however, is still a form of communication.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 420)

I think the human development process has a lot to do with the relationship we have established with each other. A journey of individual nomads settled into groups and tribes for food and security. Then came families who made bigger communities. All of them combined have made cities and nations and all the nations make the human race a

global family. Relationships do not always have to be face-to-face. It is interwoven within the broader aspect of belonging within social and cultural contexts (Peperzak, 2000). Even in my solitude, I am immersed in relational action with others (Gergen, 2011). van Manen (1997) refers to relationality as commonality where I maintain lived relations with others in the interpersonal space that I share with them. I feel we are humans because we call ourselves so, and we do it to establish relationality with one other. Relationality makes us humans (Mele & Canton, 2014).

I am a social being, and I have a relationship with myself, my family, and my friends. I even feel to be related to strangers in some way. As stated above, even the gaze of strangers induces a new flux of experience in my consciousness. The relationship may be hostility per se, but it exists in that space and time. Communication, language, culture, etc., facilitate my relationship with others (Quincey, 2000) along with time and space through my body. There is no lived experience without language and no language without lived experience (Burch, 1990). The existentials do not exist isolated in themselves; thus, relationality is also interwoven within space, time, and body (Rich et al., 2013; van Manen, 1997). I have heard so many people say that relationships are complex elements of society. Therefore, I too, feel that it is unfair to take lived relations casually.

Intersubjectivity

The world we are engaged in is not a private world, but a public and communal one.

(Heidegger, 1979, as cited in Zahavi, 2001)

The idea of intersubjectivity is seen to be used intensively in psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and or philosophy. My motive is to follow the phenomenological trend of intersubjectivity and how it shapes our lived experience in our lifeworld. Intersubjectivity was the notion followed by Husserl and was transferred along a bit differently by second and third-generation philosophers like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre (Thompson, 2005). Intersubjectivity is mutual engagement between two individual subjects that shape their respective experience (Quincey, 2000). Intersubjectivity is the relationship I share with others. The otherness of the other is actually within me (Applebaum, 2012) and myness of me is with others. My experience gets shaped by my kind of relations with others. Friendly relations or hostile relations both have different implications for my 'being in the world.' Heidegger referred to

Dasien as a 'situated mode of being' or 'being in the world'. I want to complete the phrase for better understanding. Dasien is the situated mode of being with others or it is being in the world with others. Dasien is the mode of being of my being with my fundamental social structure (Zahavi, 2001). Thereby, for me, Dasien is the existential relationship of the self with the world, and intersubjectivity is nothing but a shared mode of being by me and others.

I find in things only what I have put into them. (Sartre, 1943/1956, p. 249)

I am me, and you are you in an objective world. But for me, you are who you are within me. I have you in my consciousness, and that is how I interpret my relationship with you. I meet you in a corporeal way (Tembo, 2005), but every meeting and every interpersonal space we share reforms my relationship with you. Therefore, I only find in you what I have put into my consciousness about you. This is probably the reason why I may detest a person today, the same person who I liked a few days ago. My relationship with you has deep roots in spatiotemporality we share.

From Husserl's point of view, I am an heir to my ancestral knowledge because I have crystalized the relationship by acknowledging the learnings received from them (Zahavi, 2001). I can often tell a person feels lazy or sleepy or angry or happy based on the behavior I perform under the same circumstances. The more I share the relational space and time, the more I can empathize. Now I feel Husserl preferred 'bracketing' because he wanted to transcend empathy and previously constructed ideas from social relationships. But I prefer to empathize with interpreting lived experiences. The context may differ, but I live in the world with others. The relatedness of my being with others is the reason I can make meaning out of our co-experiences (Corenjo, 2008). I can explain my relationship with teachers based on their image formed within me. I may not be able to know my teacher the way they are but what I can do is carefully reflect on the image present within me. My experience of relationships with friends, family, or teachers is not just an exclusive experience of mine because it is an outcome of embodied social construction about how things are introduced to me (Applebaum, 2012). A teacher will always be a figure of respect for me because that is the socially constructed knowledge embedded in me. The beauty of intersubjectivity enables me to describe the felt relationship to be either an earnest one or one out of fear and formality. Relationality, after all, is the felt social relationships with others.

I often feel the relationship to be dependent on space as well. I cannot talk with my father the same way I do at home when he is at his office. The surroundings of the formality of his office space make me a gentle son around his co-workers. That is how the gaze of others makes me less comfortable being expressive in formal spaces. van Manen (1998) talked about how the presence, reflexivity, and observation of others make me conscious about my relationship with myself and others. In a normal space, I become guided much with morality and ethical behavior. In an encouraging and participatory space, I become highly confident in what I do. In a hostile or embarrassing space, I may forget the moral grounds beneath my anger. The meaning for me here is that my body and space depict the variability of my relationship with others. The same thing applies in the classroom. When there is a formal distance between teacher and student, the student stays focused only on behaving with thoughtful manners. They may never ask questions that teachers and students may make fun of them. But suppose the space is of 'belonging' and participatory where teachers and students share a friendly relationship. In that case, students open up about their weaknesses, where teachers can easily support the students with their learning needs. This is the communal relation where the teacher is not just concerned but also proactively responsive to the individual well-being of all students.

This relation, in which the other must be given to me directly as a subject although in connection with me, is the fundamental relation, the very type of my being-for-others.

(Sartre, 1943/1956, p. 253)

Intersubjectivity is the foundation for relationality in phenomenology, as it began with the founder himself. The idea of intersubjectivity for Husserl was to incline it as a source of objectivity (Duranti, 2010). Sartre (1943/1956) put forward the notion of 'being for others' where I have my context of understanding each other in a relationship. When I felt shameful for my being a misfit in the class, it was me putting my idea on how teachers and classmates felt about me. It implied the same for fearing teachers or being motivated by them. The experience of emotions for me is the pre-reflective consciousness of others as experienced by me (Sartre 1943/1956). This makes intersubjectivity an essential aspect of understanding human relations for phenomenological meaning-making.

Entwinement of Lifeworld Existentials

The subjectivity of my being is stretched in space over time. Lived space is thus dynamic and dependent on temporality (Fuchs, 2007). The distance within a lived space depends upon how I feel about the time spent with myself or others (Bollnow, 1961). The lived body is you and me interacting in a space along with the lapse of time. Lived space is where you and I interact along with the lapse of time. Lived time is the felt duration of interaction between you and me. Lived relation is the whole interaction itself. Relationality, for me, is the thread that connects the whole of space and body over time. And this interrelatedness of my lifeworld comes together to form different fluxes of lived experience in my consciousness.

I relate the insuperability of existential in the form of a flowing river. A river flows along its bank, sometimes through a creek, sometimes along lowlands highlands, sometimes narrowly through a jungle, and sometimes broadly along the plains bringing into relation all that it meets. The river makes its way as it feels along these spaces making that its lived space. The flow of the river is sometimes fast, sometimes slow, or even stagnant in traveling from one point to another is its lived time. The river without the flow would not be a river at all. The space, time, and relation experienced by the river simultaneously take place, thus making it the entwined and inseparable lifeworld existentials of the lived phenomenon. I think that this interwoven entwinement of different existential with each other inseparably is what van Manen describes as the 'Lifeworld of Phenomenology'.

Conclusion

Conducting phenomenological research is seemingly a hectic task as it brings a humongous amount of philosophy tied to its back end. Research in phenomenology may bring the true essence of lived experience only if those philosophies form the guiding principles of methodology and meaning-making processes. The lifeworld of phenomenology immensely helps researchers incorporate major dimensions of interpreting lived experiences, but on the other hand, it is equally important to have a deeper understanding of these lifeworld existentials before undertaking such research. It is also important to note that the lifeworld of phenomenology is merely a means to reach participants' lived experiences. The manifestation of the meaning of those lived experiences requires a dire interest in the phenomenon under inquiry and the art of

writing, rewriting, and expressing those meanings in innovative ways. As for the matter of times, it ought to be rewritten; the researchers will themselves know when they have derived wonders in phenomenology.

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