

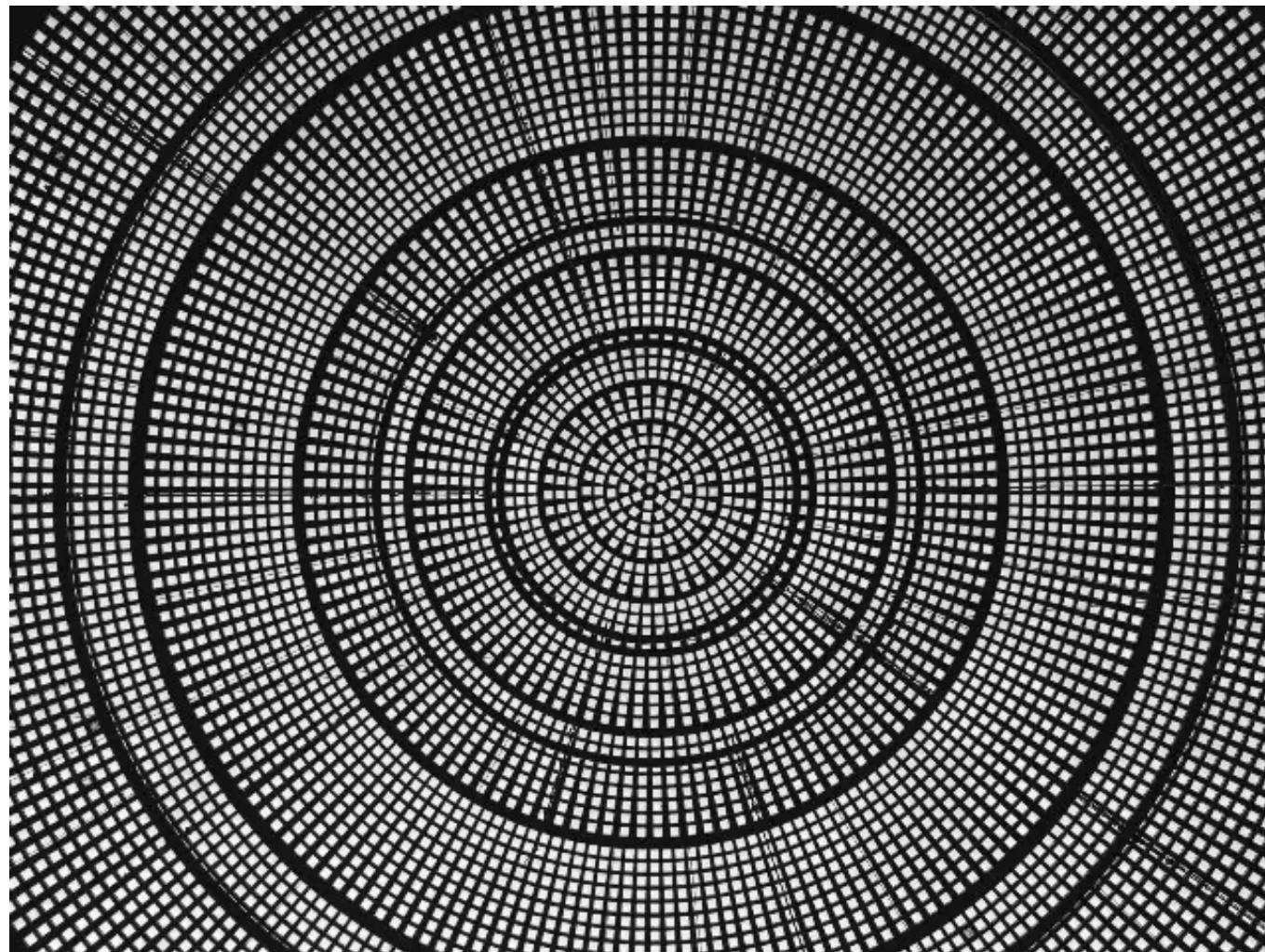


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Edmund Husserl: Experience by Itself is Not Science



By [Giulia May](#) on [Unsplash](#).

Husserl came over to philosophy from mathematics and he devoted many years to the formulation of a firm foundation for Philosophy that could even





(like Frege and Russell), he did not seek salvation for philosophy in the mathematical method.

“Just where Husserl demanded clarity and understanding, mathematical logicians were satisfied with conventionalist solutions and relatively shallow skepticism which finally, as we know, led to radical formalism and physicalism in the interpretation of logical formations.”

— (Roman Ingarden in “On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism”, 1975).



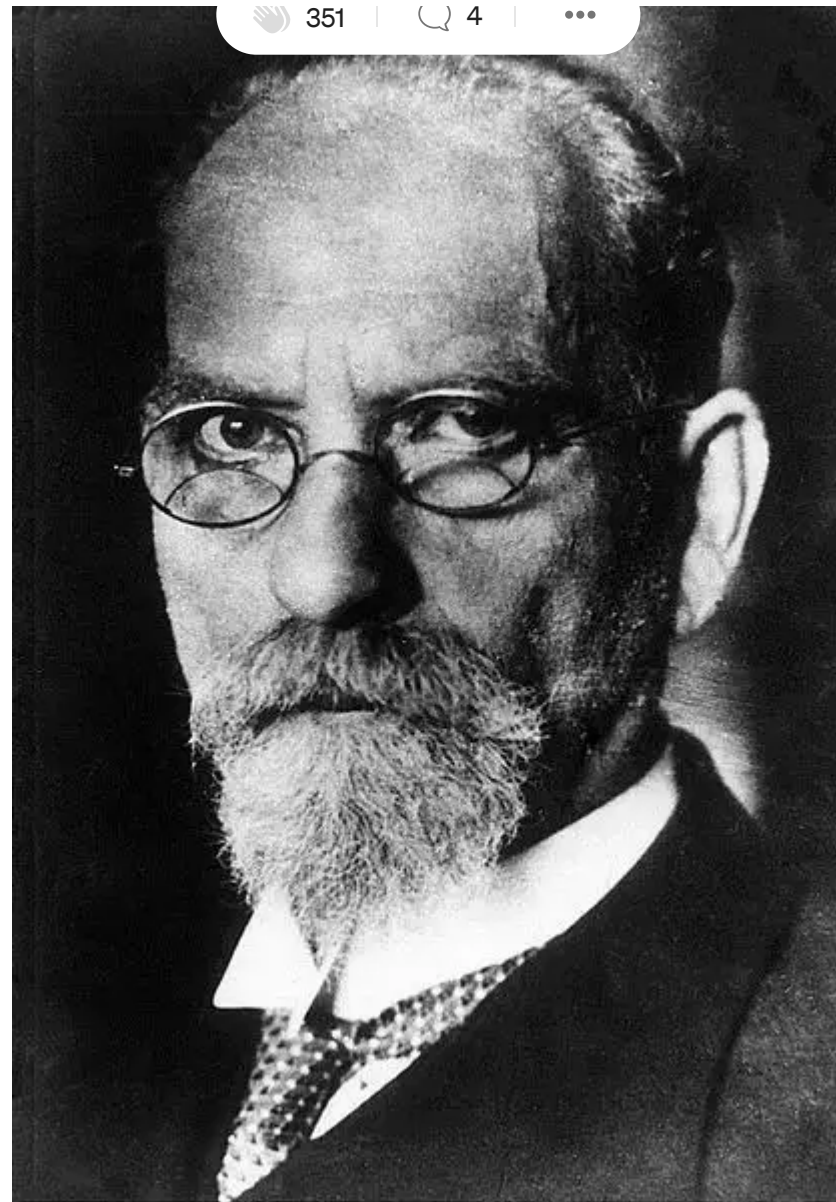
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M.A. in Philosophy. Fritz Lang's Metropolis, and a King Kong graphic novel got me into science fiction when I was a kid.

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Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). A photo posted by [Materialscientist](#) on [WC](#).

Husserl employed philosophical discussions in his tasks. He argued philosophy (like any other field of study) should pay attention to uninterpreted basic experience and this would lead the way to understanding the essence of things. Essence, then, would become conscious and this process was addressed by him as “phenomenological reduction.”


What is Science According to Husserl?

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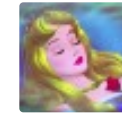
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Any theory that wants to be called scientific, according to him, would be an *immanent perception* (by immanent he means “from the world”) and the cognitive value of this perception should be tested: it should prove it has a “cognitive value”. So only through that process called phenomenological reduction, an immanent perception, or experience, could gain “meaning.”

“Experience by itself is not science.”

— Husserl’s Inaugural Lecture at Freiburg im Breisgau (1917) translated by Jordan, R. in Hilbert: Short Essays, p.16, 1981.

For him, every successful *immanent perception* would be a step in the direction of the “final subjectivity of pure conscience,” and it’s called “final” because he understands science tries to find the best subjectivity possible.

This final subjectivity of pure consciousness would be necessary

(...) to discover not only the final source of all knowledge of the real world but also (...) make possible a deduction of the real world from the ultimate source of pure consciousness.

— (Roman Ingarden in “On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism”, 1975).

This final subjectivity could even be called the “final philosophy of science,” or, as Ingarden puts it, a pure “methodological ideal of philosophy as rigorous science whose results would be indubitable” and would conduct us to *transcendental idealism* (which is a very Kantian notion).

However, the “meta physicality” of such idealism “was, as a matter of fact, not evident.” Says Ingarden in *“On the Motives which led Husserl to*

Transcendental Idealism", 1975. And by "meta physicality" we may understand "the better form", or language structure, to understand the world (see [What is Metaphysics?](#)).

Husserl, at least, showed us if a scientist asks, "what is science," that scientist is posing a very deep philosophical question.

And although Husserl didn't state the "final forms" to understand the world, he outlined the parameters for any theory to be considered as a hard science: (1) such theory should employ the best subjectivity possible, or the best perception possible, and (2) it should be somehow useful for the real world.

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