



## In Lieu of a Review of the Latest English Translation of *Ideas I*: A Reading of Husserl's Original Intent and its Relevance for Empirical Qualitative Psychology

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### Abstract

*Husserl's phenomenology provides theory for empirical science and other practices in the form of transcendental philosophy after Kant. This phenomenology is a reflection on mental objects in relation to mental processes, some of which are shared in culture: a theoretical framework that grounds and co-ordinates theory-production for empirical practice. The importance of the original work of Edmund Husserl for contemporary empirical psychology is that it provides the conceptual justification for the methods employed and the interpretative stances taken. Informed theoretically by Husserl's phenomenology, empirical psychology is thus a discipline grounded and co-ordinated by essences. Essences are about the being of consciousness connected with other consciousness and mental senses, expressed as various forms of intentionality in connection with sense and meaning. The aim of this paper is to clarify some key features of Ideas I rather than to comment on the quality of the translation by Dahlstrom (2014) or the closeness of the readings of leading phenomenological psychologists to the original.*

### Understanding the Role of Hermeneutics

The most recent English translation of Husserl's *Ideas I* by Daniel Dahlstrom (2014) includes the required corrections pointed to by Smith (1997) of the preceding English translation by Fred Kersten (1982). However, *Ideas I* is a contentious text that serious students of phenomenology address but that often confuses and frustrates them because of its stylistic complexity. There are multiple senses that have been made of it, with even the influential readings by Derrida and Heidegger able to be shown to be inaccurate with respect to the original aims of Husserl. Contrary to any such claims, there is nothing corrupt about concepts that refer to experience, and, as will be known by those who have read *Ideas II* (drafted in 1912, but published only posthumously),

the complex non-Cartesian relationships between consciousness, natural being and intersubjective contexts are given abundant attention (Husserl, 1956/1989, §§50-52). Given that *Ideas I* explains method and provides an analytic perspective for reflecting on consciousness – the contents of the mind in relation to the mental processes that create them – it can seem that these aims are not communicated sufficiently clearly by the author. With the broader aim of assisting phenomenological psychologists to share their aims, perspective and methods, and review their own justificatory history, the purpose of this paper is to set the scene by re-stating some basic points in order to orient readers towards grasping the importance of *Ideas I*. For, if the basics are not grasped, then the distinctions that follow about method and stance make no sense.

However, before focusing on the key points of Husserl's *Ideas I*, it is necessary to explain the process of hermeneutics itself in the particular case of scholarly studies. This is best done by explaining the process of hermeneutics as it originally evolved in Bible studies and the law. The point of understanding the origin of hermeneutics in Christianity is to note the process of arguing for a specific reading of what is available for all to see. This is a use of the history of Christianity as a foil to explain hermeneutics in the specific case of philosophical argument, and therefore not a comment on Christianity, Judaism or Islam. The case of the different readings of the Bible in Christianity is a case in point, for there are many different readings of the Bible, each one spawning the birth of new forms of Christian practice: for instance, Greek Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, the various denominational modes of Protestantism, Quakerism, and so forth. Each official Christian reading of the same text produces religious practice, a culture in itself, in which each participant makes sense of the differing views available. With its emphasis on storytelling, the Bible comprises a set of often complex and contradictory stories. As all lecturers know, it is impossible to make all students receive the teaching points as the lecturer intended them. Even if it were possible to decide on the acceptable set of original Aramaic and Greek texts that constitute the Bible, with agreement amongst all concerned that these were the set of texts to be considered, there would still be no guarantee that all Christians can be taught to accept, or cajoled or coerced into agreeing on, any one meaning of any section of the leading text. Indeed, anyone who can read can get a sense of any of a book's many parts. If there is one strong message from Christianity, then it would be the Golden Rule, "Forget about the wrong things people do to you, and do not try to get even. Love your neighbour as you love yourself" (Leviticus, 19:18), and "Do unto others what you want them to do to you" (Matthew, 7:2). This rule is shared by a number of faiths. Yet the history of Christianity is written in blood, Catholics having fought with Protestants for centuries of intolerance between their differing readings, with Christians self-righteously killing each other in blasphemous contradiction to the Golden Rule. And this is my point: the right understanding of the role of hermeneutics in philosophy and psychology is that, even when there is clearly one text by one author, along with agreement in respect of the intertextual context and thus exactly which other authors and texts are crucial for understanding and getting close to a preferred reading – even then, the most diligent hermeneut cannot force or coerce a reading onto any colleague, let alone all, but can merely invite them to understand a preferred version of the text's meaning over other, less-preferred versions, each of which in turn needs to be convincingly shown, for all to see, to be less preferable, and why.

So it is with reading Husserl's phenomenology, which has spawned many different readings both among and between psychologists and philosophers since it was first published. *Ideas I* stands in relation to leading texts that can shine light on it, and yet a lifetime of immersion in its words and allusions creates an authority which can be easily dismissed in favour of less scholarly readings. For there are several schools of reading Husserl, and key texts such as *Ideas I* do not give their meaning easily. Some ways of contextualising it would be to compare it with other of Husserl's key works, such as the *Logical Investigations* or *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, and to argue for similarities with *Ideas II* and *III*, for instance, and then to substantiate these claims with evidence from the *Husserliana* volumes, letters and other key works and the influences of the thinkers referenced within *Ideas I*. However, the readings of *Ideas I* by professional philosophers do not tally with the readings of it by qualitative psychologists, and there are always the problems of detail. Even a lifetime's attendance to Husserl's work is not the same as being able to communicate beyond doubt and further counter-argument. However, steady attention to detail, along with genuine understanding and insights, can turn readers away from poor understanding and towards better understanding.

It is precisely this kind of problem that Husserl was attempting to overcome in his adoption of the methodology of mathematics in his work with Weierstrass, where the attention to number theory, the direct seeing of essences of experience, was applied to find their equivalents in meaning in the same objective way that quadratic equations are accessible and understandable to all those who understand mathematics. As early as 1891, Husserl was focused on "the phenomena, in their correct description, analysis and interpretation. It is only with reference to the phenomena that insight into the essences of the number concepts is to be won" (1891/2003, p. 136). In order to point phenomenological psychologists to the links between their practice and the original viewpoint in *Ideas I*, the focus of what follows is to define the connections between three overlapping terms – noesis, noema and object – and then to comment in brief on the reflective method. Let's start by considering the relation of phenomenology as a philosophical method to, specifically, the practice of various kinds of psychology.<sup>1</sup>

### A Return to Husserl

Philosophy has the purpose of arguing and justifying arguments. The point of philosophy for psychology of

<sup>1</sup> Similar grounding between concepts and meaningful experience could also be useful in other academic disciplines.

any sort is to provide a space for theoretical discussion and critique between colleagues. Within this context, the most basic step for a qualitative psychology of meaningful experiences would be to refer to the thoughts, feelings, intentions and other experiences actually lived and shared by research participants. The need is to faithfully represent the mental processes of participants, or the researchers themselves – how they think and feel, and how they react – and to do so in a way that supports research or clinical practice, for instance, or solves real problems. The demand is to have a justified approach to notoriously variable sets of data that are primarily a connection between the subjective and the objective (in a sense clarified later, Husserl, 1907/1999, pp. 37-39, 65-70). Whether the focus is understanding personal being in personality theory or understanding diagnostic terms that point to regularly appearing patterns, whether of experience or in the neurological, genetic or biochemical correlates of meaningful experience, the most primary needs are the same: to be able to represent research questions and findings about conscious experience and justify methodologies that conclude on this type of material in a standardisable way. These are the contemporary applications of psychological knowledge which are capable of a sophisticated, clear, self-reflexive process of understanding. Let's go a little further into the basic terminology.

Firstly, it is necessary to differentiate between the phenomenological attitude of *reflecting on the intentionality of consciousness* and the natural attitude of the ordinary citizen's everyday understanding. The natural attitude is what common sense experiences and believes in its customary cultural context. It is full of inaccuracies, preconceptions and hearsay, has no proper relation to evidence or reasoning, and so unquestioningly accepts whatever seems to make sense within its realm of everyday experience. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with folk psychology in a moral sense. It is simply what ordinary citizens believe and how they experience the meaningfulness of their world. In contrast, in the phenomenological attitude a specific type of interpretation is employed that is widely recognisable to those who are versed in the ways of natural science and mathematics. The natural attitude knows something about the mind and may have some sort of understanding of what imagination or empathy are because it has personal experience of them, but that does not qualify it as a professional narrative. Psychologists have the same, because they are human. But, through reflection and the seeing of essence, it can become clear to phenomenologists precisely what these experiences are. Professional psychologists, however, claim to be able to understand and represent what really counts in human consciousness in general and for specific groups of participants in psychological research. It

becomes important for them to justify their claims and interpretative stances, especially when they are carrying out qualitative work, or reporting the meaningful consequences of claims about biological, biochemical, neurological or genetic influences. It is the detailed understanding of the many forms of reference and representation that consciousness has that is the focus of the phenomenological attitude of research, a type of qualitative "cognitivism".

A further distinction which was not particularly clear at the time when *Ideas I* was written in 1913 is the difference between the psychological attitude and the transcendental one. Both attitudes are transcendental in the Kantian sense, in that proper argument in philosophy and rationality concerns analysing the conditions of possibility for some event or process. Whilst the desired focus of the psychological attitude may be on the ideals such as noesis, noema and object, or on studying the ways in which the views of one person overlap with those of another, say in learning something, all these meanings occur within the context of the assumed belief in the existence of the world and the possibility of natural causes that influence the meanings studied. The transcendental attitude is an exclusive attention to nothing but the intentional forms in intersubjective connections where empathy is the medium of accessing the minds of others and their perspectives on the same objects that comprise the culturally meaningful world. The psychological-phenomenological attitude thus always remains a focus on intentionality and the experienced sense of cultural objects in the existent world: "We are directed at the 'external world' in a natural manner, and, without leaving the natural attitude, we carry out a psychological reflection on our ego and its experiencing" (Husserl, 1913/2014, §34, p. 60). This should really be qualified with reference to other remarks clarifying that what is being reflected on are actually the noematic senses that are given in various modalities of experiencing.

### The Role of Noetic and Noematic Essences

Husserl was first a philosopher of mathematics, influenced by Karl Weierstrass in this area, and, in respect of representation and awareness, by the psychologist Carl Stumpf at Halle, with other significant influences including inter alia Immanuel Kant and Franz Brentano. One key aim was to refute logical psychologism and pursue the difference between the empirical and the eidetic realms. Husserl, as a mathematically-trained philosopher, understood regional ontologies as sets of essences which, as he consistently argued, need to be used as basic theoretical norms to ground and justify the proper justificatory rules pertinent to the empirical investigation of any region of being. This could be called the mathematical model at the heart of

phenomenology. Logical psychologism in this view is a grave error, because it implies that ungrounded empirical ventures are the only means accepted by empiricists as capable of accessing truth. This would be like asking people in the street how numbers and mathematics work and then averaging out their responses and presenting the mean, in whatever form, as the true answer as to how mathematics works. Husserl's early work in mathematics was precisely the grounding of arithmetic and logic in conscious experience (Husserl, 1891/2003, pp. 214-215, 225). Because of the basic human ability not only to be self-aware, but to be able to recognise and reflect on such awareness, a realm of meta-cognitive reflections is opened up to comparison and analysis by phenomenologists. Only through qualitative methods can the study of empirical instances identify ideal conditions and genuine ideals and find the normative essences that disciplines can share to guide their empirical studies. This is why theory comes first, and factual empirical sciences and laws follow from the eidetic work to ground and share ideal laws. These are gained from idealising studies of consciousness in relation to its objects, including its relation with itself. This assumes that ideals appear in real experience in the same way as mathematical insights about real shapes appear in actual experiences of performing trigonometry and geometry.

Husserl was following a well-established path in asserting theory for a future empiricism and a broad view of psychology. He wanted empiricism to be justified and co-ordinated through theoretical essences (ideals, eidetic norms, or universals about meaning for consciousness in its social matrix). Essences are well-known in the naturalistic attitude of science that focuses on physical or natural being, in that the properties of mathematics are well-proven in the gifts of science and technology they have brought humanity. For instance, if it were not for the ideals and universals of mathematics, logic and the sciences, there would be no computer software, no design or manufacturing, and none of the products of this type of rationality. Similarly, it is mathematics that is applied to understand and predict not only all sorts of waves, but all movements of bodies in a constant gravitational field, and in order to conceptualise four dimensions of space and time. Albert Einstein's work, for example, was based on the previous work of Bernhard Riemann and others who were able to throw off the constraints of previous centuries of the Euclidean influence delimiting thinking to only the three Cartesian dimensions of space. Essences are like numbers in that one, two and three are formal concepts that apply to any set of one, two or three objects. The essences of consciousness are similarly ideal and universal concepts that apply to any consciousness in general. It is the generality of a mode of conceptualising that Husserl intended to be

employed by phenomenologists. This is what it means for essences to be norms, in the sense that universal and necessary generalities about relations between mental processes and their objects are parallel to the way that statistics and equations such as " $F = ma$ " function when applied to the quantitative measurable relationships between natural beings moving in a constant gravitational field to what appears. The point of the reflective practice that aims at specifying essences is to keep focused on what appears, without straying off into side-issues, preconceptions and irrelevant initiatives.

It is important to have a well-justified set of concepts shared by colleagues in the field in order to enable participation by all in the same standardised interpretative procedures. In Husserl's pure psychology, which is aimed at producing theoretical ideals, there is a shared professional narrative whereby researchers learn how to see the essences of many experiences that only ever appear to oneself first-hand and can never be experienced in any other way. From this phenomenological perspective (the focus on intentionality as it represents mental objects in many different ways), it becomes possible to keep at bay the explanations and methods of natural science, which have no genuine ability to represent meaning for consciousness. The common perspective between Husserl and what Wertz, Giorgi and others have seen as important is capturing the meanings of others. This is what makes phenomenological psychology truly unique. Husserl, as a justifier of practice, required philosophically-grounded argument regarding the conditions of possibility of theory as the genuine means of justifying the empirical practices of therapy or psychological research.

Natural psychological science takes natural science as its model, and natural being and natural cause as its focus, and then struggles to account for its necessary dualism in stretching to grasp conscious experience too. The inevitable dualism requires two accounts: Within the naturalistic attitude of science, the focus is entirely on natural being and consciousness is omitted. Since natural science methods are entirely appropriate to natural being, there is nothing wrong with physics, chemistry, biology, neurology and biochemistry. But, if they omit consciousness, or cannot adequately represent it, then it requires co-ordination of both realms of explanation: natural being *and* the meaningful conditions and meaning-for-consciousness that natural psychological scientists work with. This last point requires some elaboration, because there has for too long been jumping between evidential bases in a good deal of natural psychology, so that factors such as dopamine, mirror neurons, behaviour or genetics, which are far from what really counts, in themselves become acceptable as adequate explanatory accounts for the meaningful experiences

of consciousness. What counts is what the research participants thought and felt, and how they reasoned, acted and made sense: all of which involve mental processes presenting senses about mental objects. Naturalistic psychology thus concerns what may or may not exist for human beings, seen only through the methodological lenses of natural science. In contrast, the psychological attitude and psychological explanations are entirely about intentionality as it is shared and presents meanings of all kinds.

### Noesis, Noema and Object

The constitution of meaning is represented according to a small number of ideal parameters, because there is only one type of understanding: meaning for consciousness. In any one moment, the conscious attention of an ego is focused on a meaningful object of attention. A specific manner of being aware of it provides or “gives” a noematic sense. *Ideas I* is the first place where the seeing of essences of this experience was employed to identify the three moments of the straightforward attention of the ego. What appears of the world are “manifolds” of appearances, noemata in various manners of noetic appearing. The noemata – or, better, noetic-noematic instances – indicate both the cultural senses of cultural objects (Husserl, 1913/2014, §52, p. 99) and the ways in which noeses give, and overlap with, connecting associated senses. Let’s take a concrete example. While sitting in a room, you hear someone you know walking up behind you by recognising the sound of the person’s footsteps before s/he appears visually. The sound of the footfalls is already known, but is usually associated with the visual manifold of senses of what the person looks like. Whilst the noesis in this example is perceptual audition, there are a manifold of possible perceptual noemata about any one person; the object (the John that I know) nevertheless stays the same. Of course, I might be able to recognise John from how he looks from any perspective or by looking only at part of him, but these visual noemata always point to the one and the same John. Also, through empathy and my having known John for more than ten years, when I look at him and listen to him, I can intuit his view on the world or even imagine empathically how he might feel and behave in a completely fictional setting.

The context in which noetic assertions arise the most is psychology, for instance when it makes conclusions about classical and operant conditioning – or, as has been the case since Freud, makes assertions about the way that defences ward off distress or operate as unconscious mental processes not under the full control of the ego. In other areas there are assertions about mental processes of attachment, or how self-esteem can be invested in the self-image or self-concept, or how these function. However, all of these

assertions serve as justifications to structure action and relating between people. And because they all theorise about intentionality in relation to mental senses about objects, they are phenomenological expressions.

Essence is a general term for what is personally experienced or empathised. Essences are found only in this form of qualitative analysis and are not available to any other technique. For instance, any meaningful instance can be broken into three necessary dependent moments: noesis, noema and object. Because of the generality of the formal conceptualisation, a concrete example seems called for. Let’s imagine a waterfall as a metaphor for the stream of contents in consciousness. The specific one I am thinking of is at the Exposition Centre in Lisbon, Portugal. The straightforward attention in perception and other mental processes is like looking directly at the water flow across a waterfall, when directly in front of it (Figure 1).



Figure 1

From left to right, there are mental processes (noeses, intentionalities) occurring at any moment; these present noemata, manifolds of senses that are changing in the moment; these manifolds of sense indicate the object that is identified in the moment, the waterfall. *Noesis* (a type of intentionality), *noema* (a given sense that appears) and *object* (the being which is appearing) all overlap and are distinct. Each term refers to one whole of experience. Yet, what figures 2, 3 and 4 show, is that there are different views of the same object from different perspectives:

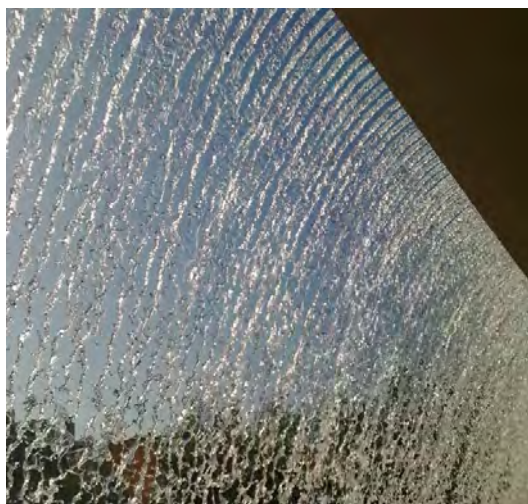


Figure 2



Figure 3

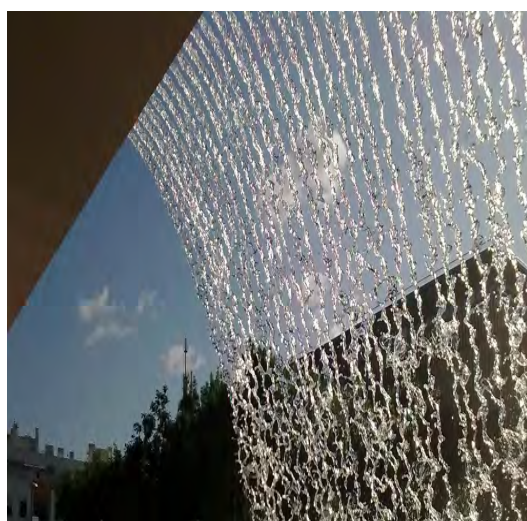


Figure 4

Strictly, noemata are a manifold of noetic-noematic senses about an object, because whatever is apprehended is conscious in a specific manner (the terms “profiles” or “*Abschattungen*” have been used also). In the specific example of the vision of a waterfall, when looking at the span of it, the noesis is visual perception; the object is a waterfall; the noemata are whatever part of the current senses of it are visually apprehended in a moment. Of course, there can be other noeses employed. The waterfall could be listened to. It could be described or discussed conceptually. It could be represented in a drawing, in photography, or by a sign: “TO THE WATERFALL”. Different instances of waterfalls could be studied in working out something about the commonalities between them all in an object-directed attention. Objects become conscious with additions of meaning from retentive consciousness, which means that previous learnings and associations are attributed when a familiar perceptual sense is encountered once more and identified in the here and now (Husserl, 1913/2014, §83, p. 159). What this implies is that, ideally understood, objects are the summation or integration of manifolds of noetic-noematic sense across past time that are held in immanent consciousness (ibid., §131, p. 259).

Reflection can work in a completely different direction to attending to noemata that imply objects, for there could be a more noetic comparison of how waterfalls appear as seen, written about, filmed, or as an object of emotion or valuing. (In a naturalistic view, there could be a science of waterfalls, although clearly that would not be Husserlian phenomenology, but waterfall science). The crucial point is that all representations appear in various noetic forms of the same object. Each modality of awareness makes a different noetic-noematic sense: as seen, as heard, as described, as discussed, as drawn, as photographed, as signified.

However, it is within the ability of the reflective ego to distinguish constant and universal aspects of what appears for any consciousness of something. For, on closer inspection, the intentionality of consciousness actually turns out to be many genera and species of the forms of awareness. One form is perception of what is bodily given in the five senses, including bodily proprioception and kinaesthesia. There is the family of purely mental giving (*Vergegenwärtigung*), the presentations of empathy, understanding pictures, imagination, hallucination, dreaming, memory and anticipation. All of these are private in the sense that they only give to the ego and its consciousness. There are also egoic (voluntary) and non-egoic (involuntary) versions. Voluntary memory, for instance, is the ego actively trying to remember where it put its keys. Involuntary memory is the spontaneous flashback – whilst doing the washing up – of where the keys are.

### Justificatory Comments from the Text

This section makes greater reference to the text of *Ideas I* so that readers can appreciate the meaning of key distinctions. What appears to reflection is *Erlebnis*, conscious experience of the experiential wholes of the intentional correlation between noesis and noema that indicate objects (Husserl, 1913/2014, §45, p. 81; §128, p. 254). Setting aside the action of retentive consciousness and its non-objectifying presencing, objective awareness is divided into three parts: the meaningful object is constituted by its *noetic form* (ibid., §85, p. 165; §97, p. 195), which produces meaningful *noematic content* (ibid., §50, p. 91; §135, p. 269) in reference to an *object* (ibid., §98, p. 198; §129, pp. 255-256; §131; §135, pp. 267-269; §138; §§141-142) that accrues or integrates across time (ibid., §143, p. 285). The noeses do not appear directly, but leave their mark on the manner of givenness of the noematic senses that appear. This is what Husserl (ibid., §98, p. 200) was referring to when writing of a “*parallelism* of noesis and noema, understood in particular as the parallelism of noetic and corresponding noematic characters”, in the sense that the noematic givenness of an object makes a large difference in how it appears as perceived or presentiated, discussed or filmed, and so forth. For a phrase like “[the noetic] bears in itself the former [noematic] as the correlate-of-consciousness, and its intentionality passes in a certain way through the line of the noematic” (ibid., §101, p. 204) indicates that there can be many forms of awareness of the same real instance of the same object, all of which can be easily identified as being of the same sort. The key phrase that “intentionality of the noeses is mirrored in these noematic connections” (ibid., §104, p. 207) is one type of expression of the idea that there are easily recognisable forms of givenness appearing to fundamental self-reflexive awareness.

With these distinctions in mind, it then makes sense how a whole of meaning can have identified within it three dependent moments, so that the definition of noema as “the correlate of consciousness” infers that it “is inseparable from consciousness and yet not really [*reell*] contained in it ... the essences *noema* and *noesis* also need to be taken as inseparable from one another. Each difference at the lowest level on the noematic side refers back eidetically to differences at the lowest level on the noetic side. That carries over naturally to every generic and specific formation” of consciousness (ibid., §128, p. 254). This expresses the fundamental premise that all conscious experience comprises three moments: (1) a noesis which presents or gives (2) a noema about (3) an object. For instance, in the performance of a play there is only one ideal object: the written play. However, each member of an audience obtains a noematic sense of it through a number of noeses, such as through empathising with

the actors by watching their bodies. And hearing their speech and so grasping the conceptual sense of the dialogue in the context of their nonverbal empathic influence stirs the audience’s emotions and provides the proper context for understanding the drama as it unfolds.

### How to Reflect and Analyse the Givenness that Appears

With the reflective viewpoint employed, it becomes possible to state the interpretative aim of an empirical psychology that follows the aims laid down in *Ideas I* (§§130-132, 149-150) and elsewhere. One aim of the work when reflecting on one’s own experiencing, or that of other persons, can be referred to as inherent interpretation, the idea of capturing an experience or representing the experiences of others as they occur. “With meticulous carefulness we have to pay attention now that we place in the experience nothing other than what is actually contained in the essence of it, and ‘lay in it’ just exactly as it lies therein” (ibid., §90, p. 180), which is an argument for an exclusive attention to interpolation of the data of givenness and the avoidance of extrapolation, of going beyond experiential data. That which is pre-reflective, before attention and analysis, is not yet an object of attention and could best be described as presence or subliminal influence (ibid., §77, p. 139). The givennesses of noemata indicate the universal type of the noesis involved (ibid., §97, p. 196; §98, pp. 199-200). Setting aside, just for the moment, the means of ensuring how well this can actually be achieved, there are the reductions, of which there are several different sorts which nevertheless have a commonality. The best way to define the attempt at reduction is to note that it is a decontextualisation, away from the natural and naturalistic attitudes, for the purpose of focusing on intentionality in relation to its meaningful senses (ibid., §55, p. 102).

However, noeses themselves do not appear in anything but the manners of givenness of noetic-noematic sense, discussed as “*noematic intentionality in contrast to the noetic*” (ibid., §101, p. 204), and “a ‘*noematic intentionality*’ as a ‘*parallel*’ of the noetic (and properly so dubbed) *intentionality*” (ibid., §104, p. 207). It would, however, have been clearer to have given a concrete example and to have said that “noematic intentionality” really means the form of givenness of a sense of an object. What Husserl wanted to achieve with his reflective method for identifying ideals and universals about consciousness was to find the essences of consciousness to co-ordinate and justify future empirical methods and stances. The justifying theory-building occurs through comparing and contrasting the manners of givenness of noetic-noematic experience. This has the purpose of differentiating the identity of objective patterns, on

the object side, and, on the other, the identity of mental process. Seeing essences is precisely about seeing across the manifolds of these differences in order to arrive at definitions to ground qualitative and quantitative psychologies, for instance.

The psychological reduction has the purpose of removing extraneous concerns of non-intentional being and enabling the theoretical “psychologist” to focus fully on “securing the noematic sense in sharp distinction from the object simply, and ... recognizing it as something pertaining in an inseparable manner to the psychological essence of the – then really construed – intentional experience” (Husserl, 1913/2014, §89, p. 177). Reductions ask of practitioners to be fully immersed, sensorily and meaningfully, with acuity of attention to detail in order to enable the kind of learning required to occur. Phenomenologists are students of the moment of insight about how different objects appear and how consciousness represents the manifold of appearances (for instance, by means of “pattern matches” between the present and learning from the past, or identities within manifolds of noematic appearance). The manner of interpreting and concluding on givenness is inevitably a comparative act. There is no substitute for having a psychology of meaningful experience that sticks to the point. It starts with theory that is representative of meaningful experience and nothing else.

A few words are necessary regarding the term “givenness” as referred to by the phrase “*object in terms of how it is determined*” (ibid., §131, p. 260) and the idea of “*noematic intentionality*” (ibid., §101, p. 204), which is, strictly speaking, a misnomer. What Husserl was referring to is how any noetic-noematic sense of an object appears. The generality of the formal terms is simultaneously highly precise. What reflective analysis and the direct seeing of universal essences of givenness show are very many types of awareness in relation to many types of object. The theoretically reflective methods compare and contrast experientially how audition presents something, as opposed to, for instance, empathy, imagination or conceptualisation. What is termed noetic-noematic givenness is what the reflective act is focused on, and the best way of describing what is being asserted is to say that the most basic building blocks, “atoms” or sememes of sense, are being defined in this attention to detail. Within a range of noetic awareness, say of specific instances of imagination, the personal learning lies in being able to differentiate the many different kinds of imagining and so to understand their functions with other experiences. However, like a shy wild animal, when one wants to summon imagination at will, sometimes it does not want to make itself known.

So, to emphasise the relevance, in a nutshell, of the

original phenomenology for contemporary empirical psychology: what the grounded theory of ideals about forms of mental processes in relation to their objects enables is a type of interpretation that is parallel to the way that mathematical essences about natural being enable natural science. For instance, Joseph Fourier realised that there is only one form of wave and that it is possible to model other types of wave by forms of mathematics that modify the sinusoidal form. For Husserl, there is only one form of objective meaning, and that is meaning for the straightforward egoic attention that can identify the adjacent aspects to any thought, feeling or other representational mode. It is interesting to note that empirical psychology does indeed sometimes define mental processes. Some schools of therapy already posit something like representation in the idea of formulation of intentional processes (which is sometimes referred to, in American terminology, as conceptualisation). The Husserlian form of representation was first defined by Eduard Marbach in *Mental Representation and Consciousness* (1993), although there have also been attempts by Rick Tieszen (1995) and Iso Kern (1988) to make notations about how forms of awareness can be implied or modified in relation to each other.

Contrary to the model of natural science, what Husserl called eidetic “science” – the reflective grounding of theoretical essences, the sort of “geometry of the mind” noted above – is the inclusive basis that he was arguing for and which offers a theoretical revolution. In order to find empirically what is, and what is not, the case for sentient and self-reflexive human beings who are intersubjective (psycho-social and historical creatures) and animals (with inherited instincts and physical conditions of possibility), Husserl urged the use of essences and self-reflexive understanding of what it is to have concepts that are grounded in lived experience. Hermeneutics, in Husserl’s eidetic practice, involves interpreting the constancies across many experiences of imaginatively generated examples of eidetic imaginative variation (Husserl, 1913/2014, §§71-75), which is an extension of seeing essences or eidetic analysis. The aim is to defer conclusions and stay open to the larger truth of merely possible noesis-noema correlations by comparing them across manifolds of noematic and noetic forms in order to show their inherent similarities and differences. This comparative and contextualising process is noted several times (ibid., §92, p. 185, fn; §94, p. 188, fn; §94, p. 189; §97, p. 196; §144, p. 286).

In order to keep the empirical and the eidetic apart, the methodological process for grounding philosophy, philosophically-based psychology and other sciences avoids committing the sin of psychologism (ibid., pp. 3-4; §79, pp. 151-153). The recognition of essences through awareness and reflection on differences



between givennesses, and comparison of these types of representation and reference, provides noetic and noematic-objective conclusions. In the region of natural being, assertions of essence lead to the identification of exact essences (like numbers, geometry and statistical procedures) as necessary and universal conditions of possibility for understanding complex wholes of experiences about natural being. Similarly, in other regions, particularly that of the relationship between consciousness and the sense of the world as the totality of all cultural objects, there are morphological essences (ibid., §74, p. 133; §145, p. 289). These play a similar role to the exact ones. The usual progression from the natural attitude via mathematics to the natural sciences can be followed by a movement from the natural attitude via morphological essences to philosophy, empirical psychology and other applications. This laudable foundationalism, essences and grounding concepts in experiences have been misread by Derrida and others. Husserlian phenomenology is unashamedly a foundationalist and theory-making procedure, and there are good reasons why this works for theory-making. Husserl's aim was to keep empirical psychologism apart from, for instance, the quest for essences of meaning and intersubjectivity. In the parallel way that numbers represent identifiable objects universally, so do the eidetic relationships between noesis, noema and object. For example, one sense of an object must never be mistaken for its manifold of possible senses. Similarly, in intersubjectivity there is a generalisable "triangular" manifold of interrelations between any self, other and the cultural objects that they share. Larger multiple views of the same objects follow the same basic insight. The finding and use of essences in empirical psychology demands the identification of repeating meaningful objects, processes, relationships and contexts – without which there would be no sense.

The origin of the natural attitude is contemporarily referred to as common sense or folk psychology. It is comprised of complex wholes of sense where behaviour, emotion, values, memories, the future, and cultural, societal and historical influences, as well as mere possibilities, intermingle. The point of reflection towards identifying repeating mental processes and relations is that perceptions can be identified, say, with respect to signs, associations and learnings that either accrue for the individual or are shared within a cultural group. In the example of a perceptual object, it shows its identity by its perceptual presence now with respect to the prior learning of what it is. How that is held in the individual's automatic memory or retentive consciousness indicates the complex experiential data that becomes associated with how it looks. Signs, on the other hand, are complexes of associations that are also learned in cultural settings and are the outcome of a complex interplay between

social learning, the overlapping of perceptual and associated forms of meaning, and between perception and various types of association and belief. The most basic connection is between the signitive pointing of the signifiers that become associated with the intentional referent, the signified meaning. Thus, a sign is a specific type of cultural object that points to a cultural sense, a state of affairs amongst others. The cultural convention of a sign-system in culture and history accordingly supplies the intentional reference of the perceptual givenness of the sign-object that mediates a meaning. Signs work because of implied contexts of their own usage in culture and history. The point is that it is possible to compare and contrast givennesses, and, instead of assuming commonsense hearsay or scientific belief, to realise that all being is cognised intentional being. The manifolds of profiles, of views of one identifiable object appearing across multiple contexts at different times, are evidence that everything that exists does so for consciousness. This is why consciousness has priority, and why it is important to have the methodological means to identify repeating psychological-intentional processes in relation to psychological cultural objects: processes that are already assumed to be possible by the natural attitude. There are comparable parts of complex wholes such as noeses, manifolds of noetic-noematic sense, contexts, and differing perspectives between two and more people on the same thing. It becomes clear that the major difference between the natural and the phenomenological attitudes is the latter's ability to identify universal and necessary relationships that are unclear in common sense and precise in the phenomenological attitude.

### Some Findings

There are several useful asides to what Husserl wanted theoretical psychologists to do in order to support their practice-oriented colleagues. In order to give the flavour of the learning points for empirical psychology, I will mention some of them now. When understanding individual consciousness socially, the concept of motivations, which are always meaningful and occur between persons and across social fields of action and time, is a core topic noted as understanding how motivations are central and require theoretical conclusions in the philosophy-first theory-producing method being advocated. "It should be noted that this concept of a universalization of the very concept of motivation, in keeping with which we are able, for example, to say that 'wanting some purpose' motivates 'wanting the means'" (Husserl, 1913/2014, §47, p. 86, fn) is in line with uniting the individual and the social. Phenomenological psychology grasps that human experiences are meaningful and concern intentionalities, and so development and individual psychology are commented on as part of its scope, which can focus on not only "personality, its personal

properties, and the course of its (human) consciousness”, but, as Husserl continues,

There is, further, a phenomenology of the social mind, of social configurations, of formations of culture, and so forth. Everything transcendent ... is an object of phenomenological investigation, not only from the sides of the *consciousness of it* ... . ... human or animal consciousness, is the object of psychology, both in empirical psychology’s scientific investigation of experiences [*Erfahrungen*] and in eidetic psychology’s science of essences. (Husserl, 1913/2014, §76, p. 137)

The phrase “everything transcendent” refers to objects that pertain to a culture, which is a general way of denoting all ideas, people, things, tools, practices and other items that are shared. This is how Husserl made it possible to take awareness and represent the experiences of participants in a view so wide that it includes social psychology, sociology, anthropology, social history, social geography and the quantitative approaches. The theoretical viewpoint begun for psychology is thus an integrative or holistic one, in that its design is to reconcile boundaries and promote co-working between psychologists from different schools of thought and practice around the centrality of the intentionality of consciousness.

As the text of *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* drawn from Husserl’s 1910 lectures (Husserl, 1973/2006, pp. 79-90, 137-139, 150-156) makes very clear, when it comes to the practice of a theoretical psychology for the creation of a justified empirical psychology, then empathic grasping of the views of others is of central significance. *Ideas I* clarifies exactly what empathy is, and this is thus a good example to use to consider the precision of justification that phenomenological philosophy and psychology provide. Empathy is “apprehending someone else’s consciousness” (Husserl, 1913/2014, §42, p. 74), and relates to the socially learned understanding of what the perspective of another might be in any situation that has occurred since birth. Empathy is a presentational synthesis where vision of the nonverbal communication of the other signifies his or her consciousness as a shared interest in the same world as our own. What appears perceptually of the other person is his or her auditorily verbal and visually nonverbal presence: “We ‘observe others’ experiences’ on the basis of perceiving their bodily expressions and exertions. This way of empathetically observing is, to be sure, an intuitive act, that gives [us something], but no longer an act that does so *in an originary way*. We are conscious of the other and the life of his soul, as ‘itself there’, and there in a way that is one with his body, but we are not conscious of

this as given in an originary way” (Husserl, 1913/2014, §1, p. 10). Empathy is non-originary. It focuses on visual perception of another’s body, but then gives a second object through presentation, with the other person’s mind and viewpoint on the shared world never appearing first-hand as s/he has it. In contemporary idiom, the process of empathy takes the visual appearance of nonverbal communication and adds the empathic givenness – a presentation – of the other’s mind. This has profound consequences for both ordinary living and psychology, because it means that the primary medium for understanding people and their views is empathic givenness. The consciousness of others is forever out of reach and only empathically given through their bodily expressiveness, paraverbally in audition and conceptually in speech. Empathy works in two ways. One is pre-reflexively, immediately, without egoic action. The second requires the ego’s imagination to deliberate and think through how other people feel, think and react. Through both forms of empathy, intersubjectivity becomes possible, and so shared meaning exists (ibid., §151, p. 303). When the object of attention is another self, what is created by consciousness is an empathised impression of the experiences of the other and his or her sense of the cultural objects that s/he experiences. The empathised senses of other persons and their perspectives on the world are interconnected with very many cultural and intersubjective contexts, and these have an ideal set of necessary conditions for them to exist as defined in *Cartesian Meditations* (Husserl, 1929/1977, §§50-55). The starting point for understanding individuals is the cultural whole to which one person belongs with others: “*consciousness has an essence ‘of its own’*, that it forms with another consciousness, a *connection* that is in itself closed” (Husserl, 1913/2014, §39, p. 68). What is implied is that what appears of consciousness is in itself an inclusive region wherein lies all experience, theory, rational arguments, agreements and differences of opinion.

### In Closing

The full set of novel conceptual points expressed in *Ideas I* is large and it is not possible to elucidate them all in this brief essay. However, some comment is necessary on the relation of consciousness to natural being in what could be called the immanent-transcendent – or subject-object – connection. In the phenomenological sense, objectivity is what all audiences can appreciate about the same ideal object of attention, be it a quadratic equation, looking at a sunset, or reading a poem. This crucial point is made clearly in *The Idea of Phenomenology* (Husserl, 1907/1999, pp. 28-30, 61-70) and is noted in an oblique manner in *Ideas I*. The important point to bear in mind as regards the relation between consciousness and being – or, better, the many forms of the

intentionality of consciousness and the noetic-noematic senses that indicate objects – is that, if it were true that there is a gap between consciousness and the meaning of being, then there could never be any knowledge of anything: meaning would never be in consciousness, and that is obviously untrue. This has certain ramifications for the false accusation that Husserl was a Cartesian dualist, which he denied several times. Those who accuse him of this cannot have read those texts where he explains that there are a number of ways of adopting an attitude towards what exists. The attitude that Husserl argues for is the phenomenological one that takes consciousness seriously. The consequences are considerable when quantitative psychology seeks to follow the model of natural science, of measuring concentrations of neuro-transmitters or ions in solution in biochemistry, and would really prefer to measure concentrations of oxygen in blood flows in the brain or measure the frequency of behaviours. Psychometric measures and statistics that manipulate experiential data bear little relation to participants' experiences and are very far from the remit of natural science, particularly when there is no attention to the meaning of the intentions implicated or any other set of measurements pertinent to testing the hypotheses. Primarily, there is nothing wrong with trying to falsify hypotheses. It is rather the lack of clarity in making claims about the actual meaning of the situations being measured, before and after some test has been carried out, that causes problems. The problem is that psychometric tests that do not clearly attend to the thoughts, feelings and other meaningful experiences of the respondents, lack precision. In this light, it is obvious why psychological findings often cannot be replicated. The assumption is that natural science methods and assumptions are transferable from the natural region of being to the region of consciousness, and this is clearly false.

Finally, the link with temporality and the meaning of being lies in making sense of a kind that observes directly the universals that appear in the time-frames of not only the past, present and future, but also the unassigned time of the imagination. Whether something truly exists or not is the outcome of checking its believability with a temporally-accruing object that appears through many different forms of awareness, according to one's own view and the empathised views of others. The temporal aspects are briefly touched on in *Ideas I*, but are not fully explained due to lack of space and possibly for fear of confusing an already startlingly novel view. To make a fuller addition in relation to temporality, Husserl defined the terms "retentional consciousness" – which, something like an implicit working memory, is the involuntary memory that captures all new experience – and "time-constituting consciousness", which is what makes every new moment always

already understood for the ego to bear witness to and understand more fully. These both contribute to how meaning is made in immediate spontaneity. Consciousness is fed by many out-of-awareness motivations and unconscious processes that, more often than not, make the majority of what we experience immediately understandable. However, for most human beings, the sense of self is experienced as unified across the past lifespan – as is the current moment usually experienced as the object-constancy of self, others and the world about us. These are identifiable phenomena that are stated as universal for consciousness.

### ***Ideas I* Defines Phenomenological Method**

A few comments on Husserl's writing style must be made by way of concluding this presentation of the content of *Ideas I*. The book was completed in six weeks and, in his enthusiasm to explain his highly novel approach, there is a lack of asides to the reader. The manner of presentation is philosophical and mathematical and includes a number of asides to key figures in both disciplines. I do not think that the originator of this style of theory-making, that engrosses and delivers insights into a justified narrative for psychology about consciousness, can be criticised for being too innovative. Nor do I think that it is easy, even for diligent and well-intentioned readers, to grasp the thoughts being expressed. Husserl was a man well ahead of his time and, despite his having had colleagues who were on his wavelength, it is interesting to note that even those who misunderstood him got something positive from what he wrote. The test of his writing is that, once the basic method as expressed in *Ideas I* is grasped, then further reference to it in, for instance, *Cartesian Meditations* (1929/1977, §§15-22) and *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929/1969) can be read easily.

Finally, a brief cross reference between the works of 1913 and 1929 seems pertinent. In the latter works, many of the points introduced in *Ideas I* are repeated. Section 102 of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* explains that the project remains the same: the aim is to understand the whole of consciousness as socially-oriented and classifiable as parts and wholes of meaning. The new addition is that consciousness constitutes meanings for higher reflective and analytic inspection by the ego, and that immediate pre-reflexive senses are always already present. Section 103 reminds phenomenologists that consciousness is a self-sufficient whole across both the personal history of individuals and across the collective history of civilization. Personal experience of the world is but a window onto shared experience – of common sense, of culture and history, as well as of it being perfectly acceptable to analyse otherness and empathisings of how others see the world (1929/1969, §102, p. 270).

The transcendent world; human beings; their intercourse with one another, and with me, as human beings; their experiencing, thinking, doing, and making, with one another: these are not annulled by my phenomenological reflection, not devalued, not altered, but only understood. (ibid., §104, p. 275)

Section 105 explains a consciousness-relative world, in the sense that the world as understood in the terminology of intentionality is a world-for-the-mind as understood. The aim is to differentiate the forms of the mental processes and represent them as qualitative understandings. The primary objects for study are the methods of capturing qualitative meanings in psychology or other disciplines that want to be self-reflexive and transparent to themselves in how they justify their practices. Thus the set of aims that were first expressed in *Ideas I* are restated in terms of

understanding the qualitative processes of parts, wholes and variations that co-occur on the subjective and objective sides of the meeting place between consciousness, other consciousness, things and ideas, and all else that is agreed or disputed to exist. I propose that a good test of the understanding of the method expressed in *Ideas I* would be to read Chapter 7 of Part II of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and find that the recapitulation of the method in the latter work can be easily understood entirely because of the attention to detail in *Ideas I*.

The connection between Husserl, Weierstrass and Dilthey is that, in the seeing of genuine objectivity, some meanings for consciousness can be understood like mathematical formulae, in that everyone who understands mathematics can understand the ideal aspects of human experiences. This is the process that Husserl was arguing for in his groundbreaking work of 1913.

### Referencing Format

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Ian Rory Owen was born with the Dutch family name van Loo in Wellington, New Zealand, in 1960. He is of mixed European descent, being part English, Welsh, Dutch and Czech. After receiving his Bachelor of Technology degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1982, he worked briefly in technical journalism and business during the 1980s before commencing his training in counselling, hypnotherapy and psychotherapy. In addition to graduating from Regents College, University of London, with a MA in Counselling and Psychotherapy in 1991 and a PhD in 2005, he also has qualifications in Medical Anthropology and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. He became a UKCP registered psychotherapist in 1995 and a Graduate Member of the British Psychological Society in 1999. As a Senior Lecturer in Counselling Psychology at the University of Wolverhampton, UK, until 2001, he led a MA/MSc programme in Counselling, and also participated in the teaching of the PhD programme in Counselling Psychology. Since 2001 he has worked for the Leeds and York Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust where he is currently a Principal Integrative Psychotherapist and provides individual brief therapy for adults. Dr Owen is the author of 76 refereed papers and three books on the original writings of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, attachment and phenomenological theory of mind as they apply to the theory and practice of individual psychotherapy. He has drawn on the common influences between Husserl and Heidegger and the work of Aron Gurwitsch, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir, Alfred Schütz and Paul Ricoeur in producing the intentionality model, a theoretical integration, to support therapy practice. In his spare time he is interested in African, Brazilian and Afro-Caribbean dance and music and has a number of artistic hobbies.

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