

Liberty University

A CASE FOR A HUSSERLIAN WILLARDARIAN APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE

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by

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Introduction to the Problem

#### 1. Current Epistemology

The discussion in current epistemology primarily concerns a lively debate between externalism and internalism. Internalism, broadly speaking, is the view that in order to have knowledge an agent must have access to one's justificatory reasons. Their view is rooted in the classical view of knowledge presented by Plato. For Plato, justification for some belief (the reasons for why the belief is true), one's holding of that belief, and that belief's being true are all necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the primary motivation for most internalists, in regards to their accepting a view which is heavily based on this classical approach, is that the classical approach is meant to distinguish knowledge from mere opinion and lucky guesses. Suppose Ted guesses that his friend Bob is at work but he has no reason for thinking it. And suppose that it just so happens that Bob is at work. Should we say that Ted knew it? Most would say "No." We seem to just recognize that knowledge is something more than true belief. Justification is meant to be the reason/s one has for thinking the given belief is true.

Externalism, once again in very general terms, denies that access to the reasons that make a belief true is necessary for knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Reliability, the main concern for most externalists, means the process which produces the belief produces mostly true beliefs. So if the process which produces the belief is reliable and the belief is true then the agent has knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> Plato, "Meno," in *Ancient Greek Philosophy*, edited by S. Marc Cohen, Patricia Curd, and C. D. C. Reeve (IN, Hackett 2011) 264 97e-98a.

<sup>2</sup> Although some externalists would maintain that such access may be necessary in some cases. Nevertheless they hold that it is not necessary for all cases and this is enough to label them as externalists.

Externalists are more varied in terms of what motivates their theories. Space does not permit us to go into detail on these factors. The purpose of the paper is not an elaboration of the various externalist views. However, a few examples may be helpful. Some externalists think that there are many beliefs which we are rational in holding and have a right to claim as knowledge without any justificatory reasons (e.g. belief in other minds or belief in God).<sup>3</sup> Most think that for some reason or other a belief's being produced in a reliable manner is all that is needed.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the primary reason for this debate between internalism and externalism is due to what is known as the Gettier problem. Gettier problems are cases where an agent has justification, true belief, and the agent holds belief on account of the evidence available to the agent, yet the beliefs being true has nothing to do with the agent's justificatory reasons.<sup>5</sup> (The Requirement for justification, true belief, and that belief's being true is known as the tripartite criterion for knowledge. Gettier problems seem to show that the traditional tripartite model of knowledge fails to distinguish between lucky guesses and knowledge.) The internalists have largely attempted to remedy the problem by specifying a fourth criteria which will serve to differentiate between the two. Five decades, full of such attempts, have yet to provide a single likely candidate. However, externalist positions have fared little better. Gettier problems can be constructed for them as well. In these cases a belief is true and produced by reliable processes, but the belief's being true has nothing to do with the reliability of the process which generated

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<sup>3</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, (New York Oxford University Press, 2000), chapter 6.

<sup>4</sup> David Armstrong and Alvin Goldman are motivated by a materialist metaphysics to this conclusion. And Plantinga holds this as well on the condition that the belief's production, on top of being reliable, is a process which is part of a design plan aimed at truth. See David Armstrong, "The Thermometer-Model of Knowledge," in *Knowledge*, ed. Sven Bernecker and Fred Dretske (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 72-85, Alvin Goldman, "Discrimination and Knowledge," in *Knowledge*, ed. Sven Bernecker and Fred Dretske (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 86-102 and Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 154ff.

<sup>5</sup> Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23, no. 6 (1963) 121-123.

the belief.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, externalists seem to still be have trouble dealing with Plato.<sup>7</sup> The likelihood of either side specifying the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge seems to be low.

This thesis will introduce certain aspects in the thought of Edmund Husserl as a sort of third option.<sup>8</sup> Husserl's work was centered on cognition in general and the possibility of knowledge in particular. His detailed analysis of cognition has application to epistemology and addresses in great depth an area which in the current discussion is often tertiary and shallow at best. Little is said about what cognition essentially is in the current discussion, though much might be assumed about it. Husserl's work on the essence of cognition may provide insight into how to move forward in the current discussion.

Furthermore, it is argued that in both internalist and externalist camps there is a common assumption about cognition which Husserl argues forcibly against. This assumption is that thought, or cognition, is essentially linguistic. (The notion that 'thought is essentially linguistic'

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<sup>6</sup> For a nice discussion and some examples of this see: Linda Zagzebski, "The Inescapability of Gettier Problems," *The Philosophical Quarterly* vol. 44 no. 174 (1994), 65–73.

<sup>7</sup> Plato seems to show us that we need reasons. If Ted believes that his friend Bob is currently at work because he usually works at this time, and Bob really is at work, this still seems like a lucky guess. The 'usually' here denotes a probability (we can assign whatever value we want to it, e.g. .5<, or .75<. And most of us seem to want to say that such guesses are not knowledge. But what is the difference in this case and a case where belief forming mechanism X causes Bob to believe that Ted is at work and this mechanism has a probability of producing a true belief greater than .5 or .75? There seems to be a need for something more than probability or likelihood here.

<sup>8</sup> In what sense Husserl is a third option will be clarified later but a brief explanation may be helpful here. Let us call the set of Internalist approaches I and the set of Externalist approaches E. Husserl's work, strictly speaking, is on cognition not epistemology. Thus the argument is not for H, a Husserlian approach to epistemic issues, in distinction from I and E. But rather that by starting with a Husserlian view of cognition we wind up with a range of approaches to epistemic issues. Let us call these I' and E'. Husserl does not force us into a specific view or even a specific camp, e.g. I or I' only. It should also be pointed out that some views within E or I might be entirely excluded from E' or I'. An externalist view such as Goldman's which seeks to naturalize epistemology, hence requiring a materialistic view of cognition, will not work with a Husserlian view of cognition. Again due to the limitations on this thesis exactly what theories can be combined with a Husserlian approach to cognition and which ones cannot is something which lies outside the scope of this paper. All of this shows that this "third approach" is more like a new foundation which allows for many new approaches which to some extent mirror the current "two approaches."

means that thought requires the use of language.) Whatever else *thinking* may be, when we do it we do it in or with language. This assumption about thought means that whatever justification may be it is linguistic (that justification involves clear and effable propositions).<sup>9</sup> This thesis holds that the rejecting of this assumption is critical to advancing the discussion past the current stalemate.

In order to provide a foundation for the two points above, i.e. that Husserlian insights into cognition itself are needed and that the assumption of thought as being linguistic ought to be rejected, we need to understand Husserl's own theory. This launches us into the field of phenomenology.

## 2. Phenomenology

One of the reasons this thesis is needed is that Husserl's work is largely considered to be in another field of philosophy. His phenomenology, the rigorous science he developed of investigating cognition and its parts and structure, has largely been insulated from contemporary discussion in the various areas of philosophy, outside of those publications and authors who specialize in Husserl and Phenomenology. As Dallas Willard, an expert on Husserl, points out the significance of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, the central piece in Husserl's work, is entirely disconnected from and neglected by the work of the "trendsetters" in each area of philosophy, including epistemology, and the only real concern about it is in the form of "someone, surely, ought to know something about Husserl and his writings."<sup>10</sup> This insulation

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<sup>9</sup> What it means for a proposition to be effable and clear might be relative to the person and subject to variation. There may also be a sort of translation problem when offering one's thoughts to another. All of this is consistent with what is meant by 'clear and effable). The assumption holds that (regardless of what communication problems there maybe) what is going on in the mind of the knower is linguistic in nature. To see this assumption explicitly stated in the works of several philosophers and a fuller treatment of it see Dallas Willard, "The Absurdity of 'Thinking in Language'," *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* IV(1973) 125-132.

has resulted in a general disinterest of Husserl and an attitude which sees his work as irrelevant to current issues. Husserl's work is voluminous and complex. His terminology differs from what has become typical in most journals and papers. But his work is dealing with the same fundamental questions.

There has also been a bias in recent epistemology to neglect Husserl because of historical reasons. Logical Positivism and its emphasis on language became the dominate force in philosophy at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Few would consider themselves logical positivists now but much of the underlying approach to philosophy that logical positivism embodied has largely been unquestioned. This approach is heavily devoted to language and the process of explanation. The process of explanation is the listing of necessary and sufficient conditions for something and the postulating of entities to explain some relevant fact (the author thinks that examples of both of these in current epistemology are quite readily available, indeed the whole of Gettier problems centers on difficulties in listing the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge). These historical points are important to the current discussion. They have contributed to the assumption that thought is linguistic, that we must adopt an explanative approach, and they require us to devote a significant amount of space just to understanding Husserl and his phenomenological approach.

Dallas Willard specialized in Husserl's early work. Much of his philosophical work concerned arguing for the importance of Husserl's work and advancing a specific understanding of Husserl. Willard took a view of Husserl which lies outside the typical views of most interpreters. Willard saw Husserl's work holistically. Most interpreters see Husserl's later work

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<sup>10</sup> Dallas Willard, "The Significance of Husserl's Logical Investigations," (paper presented at The Society for the Study of Husserl's Philosophy at the APA meetings in Albuquerque, April 7, 2000), § 1. Available at <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=60>

as being a form of idealism which rejected his earlier realist views. On Willard's side though stands Husserl himself, who claimed he never reverted to idealism.<sup>11</sup>

Willard provides us with a contemporary voice speaking for Husserl.

Furthermore, Willard's overall epistemology has not been researched and discussed and his own work has yet to be synthesized in with the current discussion. This paper is also an attempt to bring Willard's work into the discussion. However, it should be noted that Willard was a thoroughgoing Husserlian. His view was the view that he took Husserl to have developed. Gregg Ten Elshof, a former PhD student of Willard's, writes: "He (Willard) loved to think, write, and talk about a philosopher by the name of Edmund Husserl. He saw in Husserl a few crucial insights required to make sense of our ability to have knowledge of the world."<sup>12</sup> Willard himself once said "In my view, Husserl had resolved in principle all of the issues about the possibility of knowledge in the sense of epistemic realism by the time he finished the *Logical Investigations*."<sup>13</sup> Therefore, much of the development in this paper concerning Husserl's view also serves as an elaboration of Willard's view. Because of this little distinction is made throughout the piece between Husserl's view and Willard's. The approach is thus best termed a Husserlian-Willardian approach to knowledge.

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<sup>11</sup> Edith Stein, who worked for a while as Husserl's assistant, notes that many of Husserl's students after *Ideas* was released felt that Husserl had slipped into idealism. Stein notes that Husserl himself tried to "dispel their misgivings." This shows how long running and deep the debate is concerning some of Husserl's work and that Husserl himself is at least on Willard's side. See Edith Stein, *Collected Works of Edith Stein Vol. 1* (Washington DC: Washington Province of Discalced Carmelites, 1986), 250 (Found in Greg Jesson "The Husserlian Roots of Dallas Willard's Philosophical and Religious Works," *Philosophia Christi* Vol. 16 No1 (2014), 15-16.

<sup>12</sup> Gregg Ten Elshof, "On Dallas Willard, Husserl and the Perennial Problem," EPS blog.

<sup>13</sup> Dallas Willard, "The World Well Won: Husserl's Epistemic Realism One Hundred Years Later," in *One Hundred Years of Phenomenology*, edited by Dan Zahavi and F. Stjernfelt, (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 2002), 69.

## B. Statement of Purpose and Limitations

The aim of this piece is *not* to try to enlist the philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Dallas Willard in order to settle the great debate currently being waged in epistemology and declare either externalism or internalism or any other of the various competing views a winner. Rather, the aim is to try and explicate Husserl's insights and to encourage the continuation of the discussion along lines which utilize those insights. The general aim is to show that a detailed analysis and application of a Husserlian-Willardarian (HW) approach to cognition offers a potential way forward in the current discussion.

This progress hinges on Husserl and Willard's uniform rejection of making language central to the discussion and thought itself. If thought is essentially linguistic then one's justificatory reasons must be linguistic. Therefore, access to those reasons must be essentially linguistic as well.<sup>14</sup> The whole discussion then between whether this access is necessary or not for knowledge is undermined if we reject the initial antecedent, the one that held that thought is essentially linguistic. Husserl gives us a theory of cognition which is not essentially linguistic. His theory of cognition in general and his work concerning the possibility of knowledge in particular must both be made clear. The clarification of those two are the focal points of chapters two and three. Chapter four shows that, despite the assumption of many, HW is compatible with certain aspects of externalism.

### 1. Limitations Concerning Current Epistemology

The current discussion is highly nuanced and voluminous. Any real overview or development of current epistemology or even of the externalism-internalism debate far exceeds

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<sup>14</sup> The whole issue of justification is certainly central to the current discussion and therefore language is too. For justification involves thought and all thought (it is assumed) involves language.

the scope and space of this paper. It should be understood that a tremendous amount of nuancing is available concerning internalism, externalism, the terms ‘justification,’ ‘reliable’, etc. What is offered here is a very broad approach to these views. But this should be accurate enough for our purposes. Our purpose is to show that if one were to reject the assumption which they all share (i.e. that thought and hence justification are essentially linguistic), then a new direction to approaching these old problems opens up.

Discussions on Gettier problems, virtue epistemology, and many other areas are again outside the scope of this paper. The HW approach developed certainly has implications for these issues. But that application should and will be left for subsequent research. Again the thesis is that HW provides a new way of looking at these issues, which offers us a more optimistic way of addressing them. But the addressing of these current issues is not part of this paper.

It is recognized in general that there is a recognized stalemate between internalism and externalism. The thesis presented here argues that HW is compatible with aspects of each of these theories, but the application of HW to these theories or an in-depth analysis of what areas of each theory are, or are not, compatible with HW is far too lengthy for this paper. In current epistemology there are theories and there are “insights” (i.e. claims, often commonsensical which we find hard to deny), about what we should and should not count as knowledge, which drive those theories.<sup>15</sup> Again, broadly speaking, the insights which drive internalists are the classical insights attested to by Plato, (i.e. they revolve around the distinction between knowledge and lucky guesses). The externalist insights revolve around beliefs which we are rational in holding and for which we do not and need not offer evidence, provided the world is

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Data’ would be somewhat similar to what I mean here by ‘insights’. However I have used ‘insights’ for the following reasons. There is more disagreement concerning these “insights” than what is typical in situations where ‘data’ is used. Also these “insights” are often the result of much hard work and lengthy discussion.

working properly. This thesis concerns the indicated insights, the motivational factors behind the theories, rather than the actual theories which attempt to account for them. In applying the work developed here to the current discussion we would move back up to the level of working with theories and out of the confines of this paper. In this way this paper concerns what could be called meta-epistemology.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Limitations Concerning Phenomenology

Husserl's work is large, complex, and very little of it escapes dispute even among Husserlian specialists.<sup>17</sup> The view that is being applied to the current discussion though is a Husserlian-Willardian one. Willard was an expert on Husserl and forcefully argued for a specific understanding of Husserl. This thesis does not argue that the view presented is Husserl's own, though the author thinks this historical claim is correct. The thesis simply claims that the view presented has a strong case going for it in terms of whether it is true or not and that it has much potential in regards to the current discussion. By labelling this view 'Husserlian-Willardian' it allows us to avoid detailed discussions in Husserlian scholarship that would exponentially expand and deter from the goal. This provides the basis for the lack of discussion concerning Willard's somewhat unique view of Husserl which disagrees with many other Husserlian specialists. It is one thing for us to ask whether Willard's interpretation of Husserl is correct. This is a historical and exegetical question. And it is another question for us to ask if Willard's interpretation of Husserl's theory is a viable option with application to current epistemology.

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<sup>16</sup> It seems to me that any work which is as concerned with theorizing about cognition as this work is it will inevitably fall into this meta category, e.g. much of Kant's work would be on this meta level.

<sup>17</sup> There has been a long history of debate about Husserl's own view, which goes as far back as one of his very own and very early students, Martin Heidegger.

Willard and his work, though, stand in a different relation to this paper than do Husserl and his work. Because, what is being promoted is not Husserl's view but Willard's interpretation of it. If there are misunderstandings about what Willard said in regards to Husserl's theory then this would be in opposition to the claims provided here. In other words if one were to disagree about what Husserl meant when he said something, that does not concern us. However, if one were to disagree about what Willard meant when he said something concerning Husserl then that would concern us. So while this is not strictly speaking an exegesis of Husserl, it is an exegesis of Willard. While much of the early work in this paper may seem like an exegesis of Husserl, it should be remembered that it is an exegesis of a certain understanding of Husserl. Willard, throughout his career, forcefully developed and expanded upon this understanding of Husserl. Willard developed his own theory by arguing for Husserl's. An exegesis of Willard then must rest heavily on reading Husserl.<sup>18</sup> This Willardian interpretation of Husserl is our concern. Many of the references selected from Husserl's vast corpus are chosen with that in mind. Hence our thesis centers on a Husserlian-Willardian approach to knowledge.

### C. Overview

#### 1. Chapter Two: Phenomenology

Chapter 2 begins our discussion of phenomenology. One aspect which is often overlooked in Husserlian studies is his early work. This early period of Husserl, roughly speaking his work before the *Logical Investigations*, was the area of Willard's expertise. His view was that Husserl's later work should be understood in light of his early work. This paper

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<sup>18</sup> There may be a similar situation when discussing the theories of certain medieval philosophers who, while contributing to the field, largely did so by way of commentary on, for example, Plato.

adopts the same approach, again contributing to the lack of emphasis on Husserl's later works, e.g. *Ideas*.

We begin by investigating the problems of mathematical knowledge which Husserl himself started with in the early 1890's. The focus is on Husserl's insight into the type of symbolic thought which characterized mathematics and which he later realized extended to all thought in general. Husserl's emphasis was on the possibility of knowledge. This emphasis focuses on questions concerning what sort of operations a subjective mind would have to perform in order to reach an objective world and what sort of investigative procedures are appropriate for answering such questions.

Before investigating the specifics of Husserl's theory of cognition we must understand his approach concerning how one must address cognition. This leads us to a discussion of Husserl's science of cognition, phenomenology. Phenomenology in this sense concerns an investigative methodology, not a specific theory. In order to understand Husserl's claims about knowledge one must first understand his methodology in addressing those claims.

The beginning of our discussion concerns Husserl's claim that the mind does grasp, get at, know, reality and that to think otherwise is a contradiction. This does not mean that we have knowledge of the whole external world, though. It only means that there is something which the mind can grasp. Husserl is a direct realist, but many more steps are needed before it can be affirmed that we have knowledge of the external world in any way that would include things like balls, chairs, cars, etc. Husserl's transcendental reduction must first be analyzed in order to find out *if* we can get at the external world. The transcendental reduction focuses us on the acts of cognition and their parts and relations. It treats the "truthfulness" or "accuracy" of the images, sense data, and various other parts of cognition, with indifference. Rather than using these parts

to get at the world, the reduction attempts to simply analyze them (i.e. to get clear on what they are and what they are doing). The first step laid out for investigation into cognition regards our getting clear concerning what is meant by ‘immanence’ and ‘transcendence.’ These terms are explained in both their epistemological and ontological contexts. And the second reduction, *eidetic* reduction, is explained as the means by which epistemological immanence is achieved.

At the heart of epistemological immanence lies the distinction between *Aufklärung* and *Erklärung*. *Aufklärung* is understood as a kind of clarification that does not rest on premises or use argumentation. It concerns the mind’s removing of ambiguities in regards to what it is looking at. *Erklärung* is viewed as a kind of explanation. It uses argumentation and hence necessarily premises as well. The whole investigative process of the physical sciences is a type of explanation. Much of philosophy is also an explanatory process. It is argued that in order to comprehend the possibility of knowledge, all premises must be excluded and therefore the process of clarification, simply seeing what is going on, must be adopted. In closing it is argued that the clarification process yields inspectable universals and some objections to this claim are discussed.

## 2. Chapter Three: Knowledge

Chapter three applies the phenomenological method developed in chapter two and provides us with an explication of knowledge along Husserlian-Willardarian lines. Having worked through the reductions in the previous chapter it is now determined what acts of cognition and what relations within those acts still remain for investigation. First a discussion concerning intentionality is given. In a HW approach the mind is intentionality. That is to say the mind does not possess intentionality as a property but the mind simply *is* active intentionality. Therefore, the discussion of intentionality cannot be left aside.

We begin by pointing out the major difference between Husserl and both Brentano and Frege. The latter two both begin by stipulating some problem, e.g. how can we intend objects which do not exist, and then trying to propose the necessary and sufficient conditions for the solution to the problem. Both of these approaches are also heavily focused on intentional objects. Husserl's starting approach is quite different. Husserl's approach to understanding intentionality treats intentional objects with indifference, regarding whether they exist or not. It is argued that Husserl focuses on trying to gain clarity through the phenomenological method of the acts and relations involved in intentionality.

The first aspect of intentionality investigated is the *noetic*. The *noetic* process concerns the structuring of information which is presented to it. A stream of sensory data is not sufficient (nor even necessary!) for intentionality. There must be a structuring process involved which operates off of, in our case, *hyle*, or sensory data. The noetic process turns this raw data into something meaningful, it sees the data *as being* something.<sup>19</sup> This structuring process is the function of *noesis*. *Noesis*, it is explained, is the foundation for having a single unified experience which is necessary for intentionality, and hence knowledge.

The second aspect dealt with is the *noematic* component of intentionality. The *noematic* aspect emerges from the prior *noetic* activity and it specifically concerns the object as it is thought to be. This "as the object is thought to be" is itself an object, referred to as *Noemata*. It is argued that Willard helps us to avoid error by rejecting a common assumption in Husserlian interpreters, i.e. that if the *noema* is an object then it is *the* object of the mental act. The relation to *noema* and the intentional object, the relation between, the *hyletic*, *noetic*, and *noematic* are

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<sup>19</sup> Cases of visual agnosia are cases where the noetic structuring process is not working properly. See Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales*, (New York: Summit Books, 1985).

explained by example of a white ball under various coloured lights. It is explained that *noematic* intentionality is a supplement to and not a replacement for *noetic* intentionality.<sup>20</sup>

Next it is explained how the essence of a mental act must contain its intentional direction. The intentional direction is simply what an act is about. ‘Direction’ is used as opposed to ‘object’ because in Husserl’s view a mental act can be about something that does not exist. If ‘object’ was used then it would be hard to make sense of how a mental act as a whole is about *something* which does not exist. The essence of any intentional direction is not contained in any act. This is seen because many thoughts, mental acts, can be about the same thing. So part of the essence of an act, what makes it that particular act, is that it has that particular intentional direction. But the essence of any intentional direction, what makes it about X as opposed to Y, is not part of any particular act. Husserl’s careful work here is what allows for an act to be what it is because of what it is about without transforming what it is about into being a part of the act.

This serves as the basis for showing that a mental act which can be drawn into epistemological immanence has two different parts, ontologically immanent parts and an ontologically transcendent part. The ontologically immanent parts are what makes it *that* act. They are part of its essence. The ontologically transcendent part, which is the essence of the intentional direction, is a universal. It is a universal since it can be a part of many different acts and it is part of the act but not part of the act’s essence. This serves as the bridge between the subjective and the objective.

With all these points in mind we are then equipped to turn to HW’s approach to what knowledge is. After a reminder that the objects of consciousness can be given in one of two

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<sup>20</sup> Husserl’s work on the *noetic* and *noematic* aspects of cognition are his most difficult and debated sections. They are the focal points of Husserlian interpreters. Summarizing them is quite difficult. If the work here is not entirely clear the author apologizes and recommends turning to Chapter III: A §2a.

ways, authentically or symbolically, it is argued that knowledge is the process of seeing a symbolic act pass over into an authentic act, this is the process of fulfillment. It is thus a higher order act of cognition which relates two other acts in a specific way.

In closing, a comparison to Kant is given. It is argued that Kant's work in ethics took a similar approach to Husserl's analysis of cognition. Kant started with an analysis of what is necessary for something to be possible before analyzing it in a given situation (for example, analyzing the necessary conditions for morality before analyzing its application to humans.). It is argued that Kant's failure in his own work regarding cognition largely concerned his abandoning this approach.

### 3. Chapter Four: Husserl, Willard, and the Current Discussion

Chapter four concerns the approach to applying HW to the current discussion. Its main emphasis is on showing that, contrary to popular opinion, HW is open to certain insights from externalism. HW is normally seen as a type of internalism in the classical sense explained above. It needs to be remembered that this thesis argues that, because of its very different approach to cognition, it is neither a classic internalist view nor is it externalist either. Again the key to all of this is the assumption, rejected by HW but accepted by both internalists and externalists, that thought is linguistic.

The beginning of the chapter contrasts the traditional definitional approach to epistemology, which is characterized by an attempt to provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge, and a HW approach. The HW approach does not hold that a complete list of the noetic conditions for knowledge are possible. This shows that HW takes an approach significantly different from most current positions. It is then argued that in rejecting the idea of

defining specific normative conditions for knowledge HW has something in common with reformed epistemology. The question is then raised as to whether HW is compatible with externalist features which are found in reformed epistemology. Reformed epistemology is used in this chapter as a type of test case for HW to see if it is compatible with aspects of externalism. Since it is widely accepted that Husserl's theory, and by association Willard's as well, is an internalist theory there is no attempt to show that it is compatible with internalist lines of thought in epistemology. However, if HW is meant to provide a new way forward, a hopeful avenue to reconciling internalist and externalist notions, then it must be shown that HW is compatible with *aspects* of both sides of the discussion.

Again the *rejection* of a lingocentric model of cognition and adoption of a Husserlian model is the solution to reconciling HW with certain externalist features and the key to moving forward in the current discussion. Two interrelated arguments are offered for why this rejection is the solution and key. The first explicitly attacks the lingocentric model and attempts to clarify HW's position. This shows that the supposed irreconcilability between HW and externalist notions or insights rests on the faulty assumption (i.e. the assumption that thought is linguistic).

The second argument attempts something more substantial. It first argues against certain Heideggerian interpretations of Husserl, i.e. that Husserl's belief that all cognition is intentional commits him to a very strong form of internalism. It is then argued that while cognition is essentially intentional both Husserl and Willard have argued for types of subordinate awareness with a corresponding subordinate intentionality. In brief the subordinate intentions are ones that we are less aware of. These subordinate aspects of cognition allow for the rejection of the strong internalism which Heidegger's interpretation imposes on Husserl. Next an attempt to further explicate this subordinate intentionality in light of the current discussion is given. The idea of an

intentionality threshold is developed and shown to distinguish between these subordinate and primary aspects of intentionality. It is argued that the setting of the threshold is intentional. So whether some intentional aspect is one which an agent is highly aware of or one which they are not is the result of a previous intention (here one may read choice). This maintains the Husserlian claim that cognition is essentially intentional. It is also argued that there is a normative aspect to the setting of the threshold, which is to say it can be set rightly or wrongly. It is not argued in detail how the threshold ought to be set but rather that one's view of how it ought to be set will make one more or less internalist in their theory.

#### 4. Chapter Five: Closing

The final chapter summarizes the main points of the paper and attempts to give a very precursory view into what lies ahead. It is argued that HW does not settle the current debate or cause us to start the discussion all over again. However, it does give us a new starting point and approach to the old problems. A standpoint which is more optimistic.

## II. Phenomenology

### A. Introduction

Phenomenology has a history full of disagreement concerning its meaning, use and role. This disagreement goes as far back as the misunderstanding between Husserl and his very own student Martin Heidegger. In looking specifically at Husserl's development of phenomenology the problem of gaining clarity is increased by his voluminous output and continued disagreement concerning his own position. The approach to and application of phenomenology in this paper rests heavily on the work of Dallas Willard. Willard was a well-recognized Husserlian expert and his own theory of knowledge was purposefully and closely aligned with Husserl's. Willard not only defended and explicated Husserl's theory but he also applied Husserl's theory to contemporary epistemological issues.<sup>21</sup> Willard thus serves as both a guide and a notable contributor in his own right. Thus, the area of phenomenology under development here may accurately be termed a Husserlian-Willardian phenomenology of knowledge.

### B. Phenomenology: An Historical Development

In many respects (contra to current assumptions which relegates phenomenology off to its own separate corner) the field of philosophy is the same as that of phenomenology. In ways that will be clarified, the task of Husserl's phenomenology (specifically his transcendental reduction)

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<sup>21</sup> Willard's work was largely outside the main discussions in epistemology. You will be hard pressed to find an article or entry by him in a compilation on epistemology. However, his work was often epistemological, albeit at the meta level referenced above. Also his work often focused on interpreting Husserl though he regularly makes side comments about how Husserl or some point being developed, fits with, challenges, relates to, etc., with the current issues. His article *Knowledge and Naturalism* serves as perhaps one of his best papers for directly addressing the current discussion. It should be noted that work though is largely apologetical in nature.

was to exclude particulars and practical concerns and to focus on “the whole of things.”<sup>22</sup> Aristotle differentiates first philosophy, or metaphysics, from the study of individual beings to that of the study of being as being. Likewise, Husserl attempted to explicate the intellectual process that goes on in *nous* (to use a classical term) as opposed to what goes on in individual minds. Robert Sokolowski notes the connection between Aristotle and Husserl as both being *theoria tes aletheias* (theory of truth) and calls Aristotle’s a *ta meta ta physika* (beyond the physical) and Husserl’s a *ta meta ta psychika* (beyond the psychical).<sup>23</sup> Aristotle focuses his philosophy on substance, contrasting his philosophy against the lesser field of physics and the study of particular substances. Husserl focuses his philosophy on mind, specifically its relation to truth.

In understanding Husserl it is best to follow the example of Willard and seek to first understand Husserl’s early work (beginning with his early work in mathematics). Willard notes that what originally piqued the interest of Husserl was his endeavor to explain the reasoning processes of mathematics. Husserl sought the means by which the mind of the mathematician was directed to truths concerning numbers and number relations.<sup>24</sup> Husserl recognized that mathematics (the long standing paradigm of objective knowledge) had a rigorous and lawful order to it which allowed the mathematician to have a clear understanding and nearly indubitable knowledge of mathematical truths.<sup>25</sup> What Husserl came to realize though is that the

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Sokolowski, “Husserl on First Philosophy,” (paper presented at Husserl Memorial Lecture 2009), 1. Available at <http://philosophy.cua.edu/res/docs/faculty/rss/HUSSERL%20ON%20FIRST%20PHILOSOPHY.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>24</sup> Dallas Willard, “Wholes, Parts and the Objectivity of Knowledge,” *Parts and Moments: Studies in Logic and Formal Ontology*, Philosophia Verlag GmbH. München (1982), 382.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 382.

mathematician arrived at this knowledge by means of “a mere rule-governed manipulation of sense perceptible symbols.”<sup>26</sup> What is important here is that what is being used and what the mind is focusing on in the process of even simple mathematical operations (like addition or multiplication) are not numbers themselves, specific numerical concepts, but symbols.

“(Calculating) is not an activity with concepts, but rather with signs.”<sup>27</sup> Numbers and number relations are the foci of study early on for Husserl but ‘concept’ can include any substance, essence, relation, property, etc., that thought can be directed toward.

Now concepts can come before our minds in one of two ways: Authentically, where the concept itself is present to the mind, or inauthentically, where the concept is represented by something else which is authentically given, i.e. a symbol.<sup>28</sup> It might be held that simple numbers, say 0-9 or so (even simple relations between numbers, e.g. that 2 is twice that of 1) may be intuited and perhaps even authentically given. However, as the numbers get larger and the relations more and more complex (e.g. the number 926,536 or the relation between it and 1,389,804) this becomes impossible. The mathematician then in order to find a specific concept focuses entirely on things which lie outside of the concepts themselves, symbols. So to find the number one and half that of 926,536 one does not focus on the concept behind the symbol ‘926,536’ and on the concept “one-and-a-half.” Rather, one focuses on a set of symbols arranged in a pattern, both of which are determined by historical and cultural influences, manipulates

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 382.

<sup>27</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Philosophy of Arithmetic: Psychological and Logical Investigations* trans. Dallas Willard, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2003), 254.

<sup>28</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, edited by Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 140.

those symbols according to set rules, then writes a new symbol, ‘1,389,804’, and is then directed by that symbol to the proper concept.

Husserl, having established this “epistemic progression” then sought the answer to the question: What are the mental processes and their order and relations which allows for this symbolic thinking, thinking focused entirely on things other than numbers and their relations, “that nevertheless allows those processes to eventuate in a grasp of truths about numbers and number relations”?<sup>29</sup> Husserl then realized that this problem of symbolic thinking was not limited to mathematics alone. In the long running philosophical tradition it is not the things themselves (objects, i.e. the *ding en sich* or *die Sachen selbst* in Husserl’s terms) which enter into our subjective minds and with which we are acquainted. Rather, we interact with images, or mental symbols, of those things. Aristotle himself pointed out “It is not the stone which enters the soul.”<sup>30</sup> Willard describes this shift in thinking which provided the starting point and the goal for Husserl’s latter work:

(Husserl) therefore found himself involved in a more general epistemological inquiry concerning how ordinary as well as scientific thinking — both of which largely deal in highly partial or extrinsic determinations, or even mere symbols, of the subject matters at issue, instead of with the matters themselves — nevertheless can result in an accurate grasp of truths about *die Sachen selbst*, and in many cases even a grasp of those very things themselves? What are the laws of cognitive experience that account for this? It is in this form that the problem of the objectivity of cognitive experience in general first addressed itself to Husserl.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Dallas Willard, “Wholes, Parts and the Objectivity of Knowledge,” 382-383.

<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, III 8. The translation I used here is Anton Pegis’ and can found in Anton Pegis, “St. Thomas Aquinas and Husserl On Intentionality,” in *Thomistic Papers I*, (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1984) 114.

<sup>31</sup> Dallas Willard, “Wholes, Parts and the Objectivity of Knowledge,” 383.

This emphasis on the subject-object gap represents a further development in Husserl's thought. The symbolic problem that has been under discussion can be seen as a subset of the subject-object problem. The problem that Husserl now focuses on is how can *any* form of thought or cognition, symbolic or otherwise, reach something objective.<sup>32</sup> Husserl maintained that we do in fact know things and that this knowing relation between the subject and the thing known is something objective. That is to say that "there is an objective difference between one who has knowledge of something and one who does not."<sup>33</sup> This follows the paradigm set up in considering mathematical knowledge. It is commonly conceded that the answers to mathematical questions are right or wrong, that there is an objectivity about them. However, the use and manipulation of symbols is subjective, for they are part of our mental experiences. And mental experiences are unique and non-repeatable, even within the mental life of the selfsame person.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, there seems to be no reason to hold that mental experiences (of any sort) have any existential import. Mental experiences seem to remain shut off from the objective realm (hence skeptical and epistemological questions in the first place).

This subjective element is perhaps harder to see in mathematical inquiry as opposed to other inquiries, e.g. about colour. The two inquiries, of colour and number are quite similar though (apart from the fact that the objectivity of the former is much more disputed than the latter). There just is no guarantee that what you see as being the colour red matches with my image of red or that what you see as being the number two or an addition sign matches with my experience of them. In the case of numbers this difficulty is disregarded due to the fact that we

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<sup>32</sup> Dallas Willard, "Knowledge" 150.

<sup>33</sup> Dallas Willard, "Knowledge and Naturalism," in *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*, edited by William Lane Craig (New York: Routledge, 2000), 24.

<sup>34</sup> Willard, "Wholes, Parts, and the Objectivity of Knowledge," 380.

commonly accept '2' or 'II' as being symbols. But this disregarded difficulty is of great importance and it returns us to the problem which faced Husserl: How does the use and manipulation of symbols lead to a grasp of the objective non-symbolic things themselves? Any system which allows for the possibility of knowledge and the thesis that our mental experiences are unique and lacking in existential import is faced with the same problem which Husserl investigated. This is a problem concerning all matters which fall under the purview of thought, mathematical, colourful, or otherwise.

This brings us to Husserl's way of answering this problem. However, before going on to look at Husserl's solution we should note that this problem concerns the possibility of knowledge. It does not address the issue of defining knowledge.

Current epistemology focuses largely on the definition of knowledge (namely the listing of necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge). Quine and natural epistemology would have us hold that issues of normativity are not necessary for knowledge and they then attempt to provide sufficient conditions for knowledge without reference to normativity and within a natural framework.<sup>35</sup> Gettier troublesomely points out to us that justification, truth, and belief are (as a set) insufficient for knowledge. Virtue theorists attempt to show the sufficiency of being responsibly or reliably functioning agents in order to have knowledge.<sup>36</sup> Plantinga insists that evidence, of the classical evidentialist variety, is not necessary for knowledge.<sup>37</sup> All of these

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<sup>35</sup> W. V. Quine "Epistemology Naturalized," in *Knowledge* ed. Sven Bernecker and Fred Dretske (Oxford University Press, 2006), 274.

<sup>36</sup> Phillip Olson, "Putting Knowledge in its Place: Virtue, Value, and The Internalism/Externalism Debate," *Philosophical Studies* 159, no. 2 (2012), 246.

<sup>37</sup> Alvin Plantinga, "The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology," in *Arguing About Religion* edited by Kevin Timpe (New York, NY Routledge: 2009), 33.

theories assume that knowledge is in fact possible. They focus on either providing a definition of it (the listing of the sufficient conditions for it, thus taking on a positive role) or they focus primarily on refuting the definitions of other theories (taking on a negative role. Of course a mixture of these positive and negative roles is quite common as well.

Husserl's work, thus far, makes no attempt to affirm or deny any definition (in the sense dealt with above) of knowledge. Husserl is addressing the sole question concerning the analysis of the possibility of knowledge. Husserl distinguished then the definitional aspect of a theory of knowledge from the aspect concerning its possibility by differentiating between *Erklärung* and *Aufklärung*.<sup>38</sup> *Erklärung* concerns explanation and explanation itself regards taking knowledge as a natural fact and then subjecting it to various tests to further understand or define it. As there are physical tests for scientists and their theories so there are thought experiments for philosophers and their theories. In this way epistemology which follows the process of *Erklärung* borrows from the natural sciences.<sup>39</sup> *Aufklärung* though concerns clarification which does not rest on any form of argumentation. One must simply "see what is there to be seen."<sup>40</sup>

Husserl is advocating for an entirely different way of attempting to answer the question concerning the possibility of knowledge. While much more will be said about the difference between *Aufklärung* and *Erklärung* and the primacy of the former, Husserl's clarifying approach to the question concerning the possibility of knowledge rejects the idea of grounding this

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<sup>38</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, translated by Lee Hardy (Hingham, MA : Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 63. The author read two different Translations of *Die Idee der Phanomenologie* the reference will be to the translation which seemed most fitting and will be indicated in abbreviated notes by "Hardy" or "AN" for The Alston and Nakhnikian translation.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>40</sup> This is a very brief description of *Aufklärung*. The author apologizes for any confusion which results from this brevity. A more detailed analysis is coming shortly. This location unfortunately did not seem suited to a more detailed analysis (the author feared it would detract from the main flow of the argument). *Ibid.*, 35.

possibility in an argument. Arguments move from premises to a conclusion. But when dealing with the possibility of knowledge all premises must be set aside at the outset. The process of clarification does not rest on argumentation or experimentation (in any way close to the usual sense of those terms). It concerns very careful and focused attention on what is happening. A good example here may be what happens when thinking about the law of non-contradiction and why it must be true. The law does not rest on any argument. That would be circular. But careful thought which brings the law into clarity reveals why it must be true.

Given though that there is a subjective and an objective component to knowledge the question arises: How does the subjective mind reach out and grasp the objective?<sup>41</sup> The question concerning the subject-object gap is the foundational epistemological question. As Willard points out the answer to how this is possible turns into, at minimum, a necessary condition for the possibility of knowledge.<sup>42</sup> What Husserl offers us is a *description* of “the relationship between the subjectivity of the knower and the objectivity of the content of knowledge.”<sup>43</sup>

### 1. Foundations for Locating Knowledge in a Husserlian System

Before delving into the epistemological work of Husserl it is necessary to lay out the foundations of his philosophical methodology (his phenomenological system as a whole). Husserl’s phenomenological methodology is deeply intertwined with his epistemology.

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<sup>41</sup> This represents a development in the thought and work of Husserl from his work which focused specifically on the symbolic vs authentic. For symbolic thought is but one way of describing the subject-object gap. As Willard Points out “Husserl’s question about the nature and possibility of knowledge is no longer stated in terms of what is present and how it enables us to grasp what is not present – though that always remains an issue to be dealt with. Rather, as of 1900 at least, it is in terms of “the relationship between the subjectivity of the knowing and the objectivity of the content known.” ” Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 150.

<sup>42</sup> Willard, “Wholes, Parts, and the Objectivity of Knowledge,” 381.

<sup>43</sup> Willard’s translation of Husserl Ibid., 381 and Dallas Willard “Knowledge,” 150.

However, its meticulously detailed development over tens of thousands of pages makes his phenomenology far too broad and deep to cover here at any real depth. What will be given here is a brief overview and introduction to the phenomenological method with the aim of equipping us to understand Husserl's epistemology.

The question which guides Husserl's theory is "What is it about the nature of the mental act which allows it to be 'about' something which may or may not exist?"<sup>44</sup> This is a question concerning the possibility of philosophical thought. Hence in addition to Sokolowski's description of Husserl's thought as a *ta meta ta psychika* (beyond (in the foundational sense) the psychical) we might further clarify it as being *ta meta ta Sophia* (beyond wisdom or Philosophy).<sup>45</sup> Characteristic of all philosophy, including skeptical philosophy, is that it attempts to explain reality, it is directed at truth. In Husserl's own words:

Philosophical thinking is circumscribed by one's position towards the problems concerning the possibility of cognition. The perplexities in which reflection about the possibility of cognition that "gets at" the things themselves becomes entangled: How can we be sure that cognition accords with things as they exist in themselves, that it (cognition) "gets at them"?<sup>46</sup>

Skeptical philosophy then offers the greatest restraint to philosophical thinking, circumscribing it to dealing with only the mind's inability to grasp reality outside of it. However, this inability is intended to be a statement or description of reality and as such it is philosophical (having no regard for the practical import, or lack thereof, of such a theory). In such a system our

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<sup>44</sup> Dallas Willard, "Knowledge," 166.

<sup>45</sup> Sokolowski supports this when he notes that Husserl's philosophy is only concerned with the mind and its operations which enter into truth Robert Sokolowski, "Husserl on First Philosophy," 4. Also note that this 'beyond' is meant in the foundational sense as well. Meta-ethics is still ethics. Meta-philosophy is still philosophy (it is just philosophy in its most foundational form).

<sup>46</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, translated by Willaim Alston and George Nakhnikian (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), 1.

minds do get at reality but the only bit of reality that they “get at” is quite small and rather pessimistic. In even this restricted philosophy we see that there is a particular type of thinking which “gets at” reality. The claim that “I can know whether there is a mind independent reality” and the claim “I cannot know whether there is a mind independent reality” are both claims about the reality of the knowing situation. So too is the claim “I do not know if I can or cannot know whether there is a mind independent reality.”<sup>47</sup> As such they share a particular form; a form which they share with other claims such as “I know this is a pencil”, “God exists”, and “Science is the only path to knowledge.” The assertions that “there are no such claims” or that “all such claims are false” are self-defeating. Gregg Jesson remarks that:

The rejection of truth and knowledge simply presupposes some truth and knowledge. If one is not claiming that his or her view is true, or if one is claiming not to know the view he or she is defending, then the whole position collapses into self-contradiction. To say, “Today is Tuesday but I’m not saying that this is true” or to say, “401 is a prime number, but I am not saying that this is true,” is as confused and muddled as any view can possibly be.<sup>48</sup>

It seems to be unquestionable that there is a form of thought which is directed at grasping reality. However limited these claims may be: “Cognition (read ‘Knowledge’) in general is beyond question for to assert otherwise is a contradiction. The question of epistemology is not “is there cognition?” but “Can cognition reach its objects?”<sup>49</sup>

Willard called the skeptical position (which attempts to deny that knowledge of objective reality is possible) “Midas touch epistemology” (meaning whatever bit of objective reality the mind tries to grasp hold of it immediately transforms into the subjective).<sup>50</sup> He further points out

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<sup>47</sup> Feel free to continue reducing this question as much as you like.

<sup>48</sup> Greg Jesson, “The Husserlian Roots of Dallas Willard’s Philosophical and Religious Works,” 11.

<sup>49</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (AN) 23. Note that here again the foundation of epistemology is built on the analysis of the possibility of knowledge.

<sup>50</sup> Dallas Willard, “The Significance of Husserl’s Logical Investigations,” §3.

how even this skeptical position is giving us an objective essence of cognition. Hence there appears once again the overlap between world and mind.<sup>51</sup>

What Husserl undertook was an investigation into this peculiar form of thought, the form of thought which is directed at “grasping” reality. An investigation which excludes all particular claims of truths and looks at the nature or form of that particular aspect of cognition which “gets at” reality; “when investigating cognition we look not at the particulars of some mental event but at the universals, which are about cognition in general.”<sup>52</sup>

## 2. The Transcendental Reduction

In order to focus on the essential or universal form of anything (or simply to find out if there is an essence or universal form of something) there are several things which must be excluded according to Husserl. The first is all transcendences. This exclusion is brought about by the *epoche*,<sup>53</sup> or transcendental reduction.<sup>54</sup> Husserl pointed out that during our everyday lives we have a tendency to focus on the corporeal world (that is, on empirical data, and not on essences, universals, or ideals). The former set quite naturally and easily lends itself to us and our perception of it occurs with no deliberate effort on our own part.<sup>55</sup> However, it is not in this readily accessible natural world that essences are to be found if they are to be found at all. And

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., §3

<sup>52</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (AN) 44.

<sup>53</sup> George Nakhnikian, Introduction to *The Idea of Phenomenology*, translated by Willaim Alston and George Nakhnikian (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), XVII.

<sup>54</sup> Jaakko Hintikka, “The Phenomenological Dimension,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, edited by Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 79.

<sup>55</sup> See §27 in *Ideas* particularly the second paragraph, Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, translated by Boyce Gibson (New York, NY: Routledge 2012).

the ease with which we attend to the corporeal and the empirical then becomes a hindrance to our attempts to not attend to it “The spell of naturalism... makes it so difficult for all of us to see “essences” or “ideas”.”<sup>56</sup>

This transcendental reduction is not to be confused with the Cartesian method of doubt. The existence of the transcendences is not to be doubted or indeed dealt with at all. Husserl says it is assigned “the index of indifference.”<sup>57</sup> As David Cooper helpfully points out the role of the transcendental reduction serves in a similar way to the role of quotation marks.<sup>58</sup> When in a class studying Kant, Kant is quoted and his words put into quotation marks. The point of this is usually not to *focus on* the words in such a way as to be *directed towards* an analysis of their truth value. But instead to *focus on* the words in such a way as to be *directed towards* an understanding of what is meant by the quote. “A likely purpose of putting... words inside quotation marks is to concentrate attention on what is *meant* (Cooper’s emphasis) by them and away from the question of their truth.”<sup>59</sup> Attention (for the transcendental reduction) is to be *focused on the hyle* (the raw sensory material presented to our minds) but, contra the natural mindset, we are not to then be *lead away* to transcendences and inquiry concerning their nature and possible or actual existence. Instead, one is to *focus on the hyle* in such a way as to be *directed towards* an analysis of the structuring process of this raw material along with all the

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<sup>56</sup> Edmund Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” in *Husserl, Shorter Works*, edited by Peter McCormick and Frederick Elliston (Notre Dame, IN University of Notre Dame Press 198), 181. Husserl in this essay uses ‘naturalism’ in two senses. The first regards to the natural attitude in discussion. The second is a particular type of clinging to that attitude which results in a refusal to abandon it and philosophy which recognizes the natural attitude and the objects to which it can be directed as the sole objects of all legitimate investigations. The reader then need not be confused by the use of ‘naturalism’ in the quote given. See also Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy) 30.

<sup>57</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy) 30.

<sup>58</sup> David Cooper, *Existentialism*, (Malden, Ma: Blackwell, 1999), 42.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

objects and relations found therein. This structuring process is called *noesis*, which is the unifying act which makes any type of perception possible.<sup>60</sup> “Thus there is little more to his transcendental *εποχη* and examination of essences than a determination to examine the meaning of common concepts and ordinary beliefs rather than to add factual detail to our knowledge.”<sup>61</sup> And of course one of the results of this transcendental reduction is that what we are left with is entirely immanent to us.

However, a mere excluding of transcendences does not constitute a sufficient condition for the examination of essences though it is a necessary condition. Our mere attending to the structuring process of cognition or mental acts as a whole does not yield inspectable universals. To best understand Husserl’s way of getting from the inspection of non-transcendental hyle, *noesis*, and all the other components and relations which make up a mental act, to essences we must understand the *eidetic* reduction. The *eidetic* reduction ultimately concerns not removing bits of data but in forming a different way of looking at those bits of data present in consciousness. We must also understand Husserl’s two conceptions of transcendence and his two conceptions of immanence.

### 3. The Beginner’s Immanence and Transcendence

One of the results of our aforementioned instance on an overlap between our consciousness and reality is that reality in some way (no matter how small of a way it is) interfaces with our consciousness and is immediately given to us.<sup>62</sup> The first type of immanence

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<sup>60</sup> Hintikka, “The Phenomenological Dimension,” 81.

<sup>61</sup> George Nakhnikian, Introduction, XXI.

<sup>62</sup> Hintikka, “The Phenomenological Dimension,” 82 and 83.

involves nothing that points outside of itself and is fully self-given without evidence. Husserl calls this *reell* or genuine immanence.<sup>63</sup> Here one may think of the example of being appeared to freely as the indubitable aspect of seeing a tree. This is what Husserl calls the beginners view of immanence and transcendence.<sup>64</sup> The immanent being that which is in me, such as my being appeared to freely, and the transcendent being that which is outside of me, such as the tree itself, which seeing a tree necessarily implies.<sup>65</sup> Willard calls this ontological immanence and transcendence. “Something is, of course, immanent to the act (read ‘mental act’ or ‘cognition in the broadest sense’ as clarified below) or to the mind if it is genuinely (*reell*) contained in it as a constituent, and correspondingly transcendent if it is not.”<sup>66</sup> As noted above the transcendental reduction excludes all transcendences because it is questionable and because our aim is the explanation of how knowledge can reach its transcendent object and so all transcendent knowledge or purported claims to knowledge are categorically ruled out.<sup>67</sup>

The parts of cognitions which are *reellen* immanent are particulars (that is they are isolated and non-repeatable). But they stand in relation to one another. As Husserl says “They (particular or isolated cognitions) enter into logical relations with each other, they follow from one another, they “cohere” with one another, they support one another...”<sup>68</sup> Willard points out that seeing properties of and parts of a table, nonetheless something like the underside of *this*

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<sup>63</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (AN) 3.

<sup>64</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy) 63.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>66</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 158.

<sup>67</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy) 63.

<sup>68</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (AN) 13.

table, cannot occur without a very complex flow of mental cognitions and relations between them.<sup>69</sup> To be appeared to, for example, undersided-tablely is not possible in just any flow of cognition. Consider being abducted, blindfolded and placed in a room under a table. Upon having the blindfold removed and opening your eyes you will not be appeared to undersided-tablely. It will take a stream of several cognitions at least, e.g. being appeared to table-legly, floorly, etc., and will require a significant background of cognitions. Similarly being appeared to at all or any other form of mental act falls under what Husserl calls “cognition in the broadest sense.”<sup>70</sup>

#### 4. The *Eidetic* Reduction and Epistemological Immanence and Transcendence

Now it must be noted that these isolated cognitions are objective or transcendent in this first sense in a special way. Swinburne notes that in order to tell a complete story of the universe it would not only involve things like the battle of Waterloo but also Napoleon’s thoughts during the battle of Waterloo.<sup>71</sup> They thus have an objective element about them. Any person’s particular cognition at any moment has “sensory content (which) stands there as content that is given, sensed, and recognized by this person, and integrates itself within the perception of objective time... it appears as a datum in objective time... thus it is a phenomenon in keeping with the sense of the positive science we call psychology.”<sup>72</sup> This fact (of the transcendent aspect of

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<sup>69</sup> Dallas Willard, “Finding the Noema,” in *The Phenomenology of the Noema*,” edited by J. J. Drummond and Lester Embree (Boston, Ma: Kluwer Academic, 1992), 37.

<sup>70</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (AN) 23.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Swinburne, “The Argument from Consciousness,” lecture given at Plantinga Conference, Baylor University (November 18 2014), 0:59. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD3agKZZLVA>

<sup>72</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy) 33.

cognitions) requires us to perform an additional reduction which further excludes such transcendences.

This reduction Husserl calls the phenomenological reduction or *eidetic* reduction or abstraction.<sup>73</sup> It is a way of looking at things. As in the former reduction the emphasis here is not on excluding bits of data but excluding ways of looking at that data. The natural tendency, it was noted, was to merely use the ontologically immanent cognitions in order to add to our factual knowledge or merely in order to function appropriately. There is then a similarly “psychological” tendency to look at these given cognitions in such a way as to attend to the objective transcendent facts of our inner “psychic” or “mental” experiences.<sup>74</sup> In so attending we miss the key to the witness of essences. It was an analysis of these objective mental components that Kant based his critique of pure reason off of (where he worked at establishing objective laws and regulations which govern subjective consciousness).<sup>75</sup> And for not excluding these objective mental cognitions in the appropriate way Husserl criticized Kant and claimed superiority over Kant’s critique of knowledge.<sup>76</sup> What Kant needed, on a Husserlian account, was the *eidetic* reduction. In bracketing out these psychological, or egological, transcendences we are left with a pure perception of consciousness (e.g. perception of all that is going on and contained in the act of being appeared to tablely).

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>75</sup> Immanuel Kant, “Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics,” in *Classics of Philosophy* edited by Louis Pojman and Lewis Vaughn (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011) 867 §59.

<sup>76</sup> Dallas Willard, “A Critical Study of Husserl and Intentionality (I),” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 19, No. 2 (May 1988), 190. See both Willard’s comments and his quote of LI 833-834.

This “pure” perception corresponds to the second type of immanence and transcendence. This second form of transcendence Willard refers to as “epistemological transcendence.”<sup>77</sup> Lee Hardy refers to this latter concept of immanence and transcendence as “Phenomenological transcendence and immanence.”<sup>78</sup> The “pure” perception is a perception which is directed at a purely ontologically immanent perception. As Husserl says it is “a reflective and purely immanent perception which has undergone the reduction.”<sup>79</sup> The purely immanent perception refers to nothing transcendent and so it makes no sense to doubt it: “to have an appearance before one’s eye, which refers to something that is not itself given in the phenomenon, and to doubt whether it exists or how its existence is to be understood- that makes sense. But to see and intend nothing other than what is grasped in the seeing, and yet still question and doubt-that makes no sense at all.”<sup>80</sup> Since this reduction places these cognitions before us in such a way that we see them clearly they thus become immanent in the second sense.

These individual cognitions are not necessarily immanent in this latter sense though, hence the requirement of the second reduction along with the attention to perception that necessarily accompanies it. Consider the case where one is driving home and being appeared to treely repeatedly yet the individual pays no attention to them. These appearances (when investigated as mere appearances of trees) are purely immanent in the first sense. But, as many mature and skilled drivers can confirm from their own experiences, they remain very transcendent in the latter sense. We pay no attention to them at all such that we would have to

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<sup>77</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 158.

<sup>78</sup> Lee Hardy, introduction to *The Idea of Phenomenology*, translated by Lee Hardy (Hingham, MA : Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 7.

<sup>79</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy) 38.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

“replay” our appearances in order to answer the question “Were you appeared to treely during your drive?” A further example is when something suddenly “clicks” with a person. Consider when someone finally understands the difference between validity and soundness. What their mind is doing is purely immanent in the first sense (the ontological sense). However, these mental operations are often opaque to them (i.e. transcendent in the latter sense, epistemologically). Imagine asking someone who finally grasped this distinction “What did you do just now to make sense of it?” Think about the confused look and muddled response you would get in turn.

The trouble, says Husserl, is that on the beginner’s view of immanence and transcendence the two different forms of immanence and transcendence are conflated. It is implicitly assumed both that what is ontologically immanent is epistemologically immanent (but as argued above this is not so, and it certainly is not necessarily so) and that what is ontologically transcendent is epistemologically transcendent. Willard succinctly puts the point this way: “Something immanent in the latter sense (epistemological immanence) may be transcendent in the first sense (ontologically)... and something transcendent in the second sense (epistemologically) might be immanent in the first sense, as with a thought or valuation not fully focused on in intuition.”<sup>81</sup> It is this epistemological immanence that is the goal of both reductions.<sup>82</sup> And Husserl uses the terms ‘*evidenz*’ and ‘*anschauung*’ (or what Husserl says is the correct use and conception of the *a priori*) to denote this concept.<sup>83</sup> In English translations this concept appears as ‘evidence’ or ‘intuition’ (these being the common translations of the

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<sup>81</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 158.

<sup>82</sup> Jaakko Hintikka, “The Phenomenological Dimension,” 84-85.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 86 and Edmund Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*, German edition (Springer, 2011), 35, Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 143, and Lee Hardy, introduction, 5.

aforementioned German terms but ‘the immediately given’ or ‘“seeing”’ often appear as well).<sup>84</sup>

This distinction between the two types of immanence and transcendence immediately opens the door for the possibility of something being ontologically transcendent but epistemologically immanent. Hence, for the possibility of the subjective mind to reach objective reality. What remains for Husserl is to find out what it is exactly that survives this final reduction (and as such is thus able to be “seen”) and then to determine whether the overlap of mind and reality into a state of intuition can be drawn into this sphere.<sup>85</sup> As Willard notes this determining of *how* it could be possible to draw in this overlap must be prior to the answering of the question as to *whether* it is possible or not.<sup>86</sup>

#### 5. *Aufklärung* and *Erklärung*

Before further explication of Husserl’s view it is important to reemphasize the difference in function of and nature of *aufklärung*, or clarification, as opposed to *erklärung*, or explanation. Doing so will help us understand what it is that survives the reductions and what type of analysis we should expect to be given. Husserl helpfully explains the difference between these two, and provides a nice illustration as well, in his introduction to *The Idea of Phenomenology*. In the section where he is discussing his search for the possibility of knowledge he says,

What I want is *clarity* (emphasis in the original). I want to understand the *possibility* of this contact, that is, if we consider what we mean here: I want to bring within my purview the essence of the possibility of this contact, to bring it to givenness in an act of seeing. A “seeing” cannot be demonstrated. A blind

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<sup>84</sup> See the aforementioned references in note 53 as well as Jaakko Hintikka, 87-88, Lee Hardy, introduction 24.

<sup>85</sup> Lee Hardy, introduction, 8.

<sup>86</sup> Dallas Willard, “The Significance of Husserl’s Logical Investigations,” § 2.

person who would like to be able to see cannot acquire that ability through scientific demonstrations; physical and physiological theories of color yield no intuitive clarity about the sense of color comparable to the clarity possessed by those who can see.<sup>87</sup>

Here Husserl is describing how to obtain clarity (*Klarheit*) in the understanding of the contact between the subjective and the transcendent. What Husserl is opposed to is any process of “deducing, inducing, calculating, and the like” which reasons from things given, or established, to something not yet given while in the process of understanding the possibility of knowledge.<sup>88</sup> Such an instance is easily understood when one considers that the answer to the possibility of knowledge would be viciously circular if any such attempt was made. Deduction and induction both depend on something already being given and proceeding from there (either with certainty or probability respectively); even the simplest argument must have a premise. All positive sciences proceed by such methods and therefore cannot be used in answering the question of the possibility of knowledge. Such sciences would only constitute what Husserl called “a mistaken μεταβασις.”<sup>89</sup> Husserl ties the process of *erklarung* with the positive sciences and insists that to avoid the vicious circularity and find a true μεταβασις our only option is to seek and use *aufklarung* instead. To best understand the basis for this claim it is helpful to go back to the domain of mathematics.

Richard Tieszen discusses the problem different theories of mathematics have in trying to do justice to the objectivity of mathematics and provide a metamathematical theory which provides a basis for the practicality and usefulness of mathematics as well as the seemingly

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<sup>87</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy), 63.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

objective and intuitive pull of mathematics.<sup>90</sup> He notes that Hilbertian projects, which constitute an explanative approach through the use of theorems, is plagued by Gödel's incompleteness theorem.<sup>91</sup> As in the case of mathematics (or in the case of the law of non-contradiction as discussed earlier) or (and this is the center for our discussion) the possibility of knowledge, our ability to explain or argue for certain key bits of data *cannot* be covered by argumentation, explanation, or any other type of maxim.

Other pragmatic or Quinean approaches suffer from a non-intuitiveness and subject mathematics to the natural sciences.<sup>92</sup> While in mathematics the distillation of math to the natural sciences may be undesirable and counterintuitive it does not fall prey to the Husserlian criticism of a mistaken μεταβασις in the same way that such an attempt would when applied to the possibility of knowledge (in the latter case it is truly impossible to do so. The only way even a pseudo attempt to do this can be made is by shifting, albeit subtly, the question).<sup>93</sup> Regardless, what is of importance here is the need for a foundation for math that extends beyond the merely practical. Gödel's incompleteness theorem was developed with Husserl's philosophy in mind and directed at all attempts to fully "explain" mathematics.<sup>94</sup> Both Husserl's and Gödel's approach is that below all explanation there must be an intuitive "seeing" which relies on nothing outside of itself and neither needs nor can have a full explanation. The clarity of "sight" is itself the only proper and possible foundation for such knowledge (indeed for knowledge in general and the

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<sup>90</sup> See the full article Richard Tieszen, "Mathematics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, edited by Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 441.

<sup>93</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy), 63.

<sup>94</sup> Richard Tieszen, "Mathematics," 440.

possibility therein). After painstaking development of the phenomenological reduction Husserl says, “This discussion is, of course, only a roundabout way of helping us to see what is to be seen here.”<sup>95</sup>

Husserl’s processes is not what has become the common method of analytic philosophy. The analytic method is that of the postulating of entities, relations, causes, and the like, and then attempting to show how they explain the relevant data (how the data can be “deduced, induced, calculated, and the like” from them). Willard also supports this understanding of Husserl and his position when discussing intentionality. He shows the infinite regress and circularity of appealing to “meanings” (which amount to the postulation of an entity to explain intentionality) and shows Husserl’s marked distinction from this approach: “The goal for Husserl is, instead, to *describe* intentionality in terms of its essential characteristics and differentiations, and in relation to the internal complexities of the acts upon which, in its various forms, it is founded or essentially depends—the descriptions to be guided by *intuition* of those characteristics, differentiations and inner founding structures themselves.”<sup>96</sup> Tieszen also rightly says in regards to Husserl’s theory of mathematics that “Husserl is advocating a descriptive method for clarification of the meaning of mathematical concepts.”<sup>97</sup>

Whatever the status of such a clarifying approach is it remains clear that in several cases (e.g. the possibility of knowledge, mathematics, and intentionality) this approach avoids the problems of infinite regress and vicious circularity. It is thus at least able to provide an account (albeit a descriptive one) where explanative processes are lacking. Again specifically in the case

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<sup>95</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy), 35.

<sup>96</sup> Dallas Willard, “A Critical Study of Intentionality (1),” 190.

<sup>97</sup> Richard Tieszen, 458.

of the possibility of knowledge this approach seems to be the only possible option due to the nature of explanation.

Now, one might object that such an account (i.e. one that offers clarification) is subpar to an explanatory account. I think Husserl would rightly argue that since all explanatory approaches rely on or assume an account which is based on clarification (per the above arguments concerning Gödel and Midas touch epistemology) such preference is a mere bias for the “scientific” or natural mindset. This is further established by the points made above concerning skepticism and “Midas touch epistemology.” Something must be given to us without mediation. And the answers to “What is given to us?” and “How much is given to us without mediation?” requires clarification of the unmediated process. Furthermore (whether this process is less desirable or not) it would remain for the detractor to provide an additional account of the possibility of knowledge or of some defeater to the account given above. An alleged superiority of *eklarung* over *aufklarung* amounts to neither.

## 6. Essences and Universals

So in returning to our development of the question “what is it that remains after the reductions?” Husserl’s answer is (as was noted at the beginning of our discussion) essences or universals. Husserl says that eidetic abstraction “yields inspectable universals, species, essences, and so it seems to provide the redeeming idea (the redeeming idea concerning how to connect the subjective with the objective).”<sup>98</sup> What lies before us after the reductions is the essence of cognition in Husserl’s broad sense. And so any act of cognition, any mental act, can be laid before us in a pure “seeing.” We can “see” perception and other various mental acts, including

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<sup>98</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (AN) 6.

knowledge itself. The phenomenological reduction has laid bare to us not things like an individual perception but perception itself (perception as a universal or the essence of perception). Husserl says, “Surely I can get clear on the essence of knowledge when I see it for myself, and when it is itself given to me, just as it is, in “seeing.” I must study knowledge immanently, through a pure seeing, within the pure phenomenon, within “pure consciousness”: its transcendence is, of course, dubitable; the existence of the objectivity, to which it refers, is not given to me insofar as it is transcendent.”<sup>99</sup> We should now have, then, a clear understanding of the phenomenological method for obtaining an understanding of how Knowledge is possible.

### 7. A Defense of “Seeing”

Before moving on to the final stages of development of Husserl and his theory of knowledge it is appropriate that some objections to Husserl’s theory of “seeing” should first be dealt with. So what of detractors who claim that such pure acts of “seeing” are impossible, unlikely, or even that they themselves are not able to obtain such “seeing” and so cast doubt and suspicion of the legitimacy of the process? The first line of response regards all arguments against “seeing” which argue against “seeing” because of some other “fact” which serves as a defeater for Husserl’s theory.<sup>100</sup> This approach to objecting to this aspect of Husserl’s theory, though, rests on a false *μεταβασις*. Since Husserl is here dealing with the problem of the possibility of knowledge to rely on some datum or any number of data, of “evidence,” “fact,” or the like to defeat “seeing,” or any other component of his theory at this level of the discussion, is to attempt to use what has already been thrown aside at the outset of the discussion (and thrown

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<sup>99</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy), 35.

<sup>100</sup> I mean to include here all such notions of defeat, inconsistency, the rendering something less probable and all other notions of defeat that are common place among most philosophical arguments.

aside necessarily due to the nature of the discussion). It would only be fitting to either show where Husserl himself has broken this rule or provide an alternate account of how knowledge is possible.

The second line of defense concerns arguments which appeal to experience. These arguments claim that either they themselves do not experience “seeing” or that what is there to be seen are not universals or essences. In response to the first form of argumentation it is helpful to return to the discussion of symbolic thinking that led Husserl and us down this path of discussion.

As Willard notes, strongly rooted in common sense is that things appear before us (i.e. that we have minds and things appear to us in our minds).<sup>101</sup> Those objects can be represented to us in our minds in one of two ways, authentically, where the object itself is fully present (if this were to occur then I could have certainty concerning the object for it would be epistemologically immanent) or symbolically (i.e. inauthentically, the object itself is not fully present in the manifold of experience but mediated. This mediation process may, of course, be accurate or inaccurate and so we do not have certainty here). The fact that something appears (though we need not take ‘appears’ here to denote some sort of visual or image based process) before our minds when we think of things requires that these two are mutually exhaustive. But note that the mediation process requires a stand-in of sorts, a symbol. And this symbol is given to us authentically. For if it was not, we would run afoul in one of two ways. First by an infinite regress. If the symbol is not given authentically then it is given through something else, another symbol. And that symbol would be given authentically or symbolically. If given symbolically

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<sup>101</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 140.

then the question repeats and we find that we have an infinite regress or we must terminate in something authentically given. If we answer that this second level symbol is given authentically then we find that (due to the definition of our symbol as a stand-in, which is necessitated by our division into authentic and inauthentic givenness) the true object of our consciousness was our first level symbol and not the object which stands behind it. So we have simply found out that what was claimed to be the object of our consciousness was not the object of our consciousness and we have reaffirmed and clarified our position (the symbol for the object of our consciousness is given to us authentically). And this authentic givenness is nothing more than the process of “seeing.” So even in the claim “I don’t experience or see “seeing” ” it is required that something, some object of cognition, be authentically given.

The last defense of Husserl’s theory is a response to arguments which claim upon inspecting what is there to be “seen” universals or essences are not found. Husserl, rather pointedly, considers this a form of blindness. He says, “blindness to ideas (essences) is a kind of psychic blindness, which through prejudices’ renders us incapable of bringing into the field of judgment what we have already in our field of intuition.”<sup>102</sup> Willard notes that Husserl did not see essences or universal as mysterious at all.<sup>103</sup> One of the major forms of prejudicial blindness comes from naturalism. Husserl says:

The spell of the naturalistic point of view, to which all of us at the outset are subject and which makes us incapable of prescinding from nature and hence, too, of making the psychical an object of intuitive investigation from the pure rather than from the psychophysical point of view, has here blocked the road to a great science unparalleled in its fecundity, a science which is on the one hand the fundamental condition for a completely scientific psychology and on the other the field for the genuine critique of reason. The spell of inborn naturalism also consists in the fact that it makes it so difficult for all of us to see "essences,' or

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<sup>102</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, 40.

<sup>103</sup> Dallas Willard, “A Critical Study of Intentionality (1), 190.

"ideas"—or rather, since in fact we do, so to speak, constantly see them, for us to let them have the peculiar value which is theirs instead of absurdly naturalizing them, Intuiting essences conceals no more difficulties or "mystical" secrets than does perception.<sup>104</sup>

The readily available “natural” world and our overriding, and often understandable, concern with practical matters is the natural attitude and it is the foundation for naturalism. Looking at essences or taking psychical (mental) experiences as objects of thought is too “unnatural.” And so one resolves to look only “naturally” “physically” or pragmatically at the data. This can all too easily lead to the claim that natural entities, as well as the methods used to explain them, are all that exist. But this is no argument for naturalism or the view that essences cannot be clearly brought before one’s intuitive grasp. Husserl, rather than attempting to prove that essences are grasped, that “seeing” is legitimate, explains why it is hard and why some think it cannot be done. The defense of “seeing” is not through explanation but an insistence that those who put forth the effort can gain clarity about it and so “see” that “seeing” is actual.

Willard also in his own right argued that essences are commonly seen and understood and made use of.<sup>105</sup> Willard in a lecture titled “What it Means to be Human” gives the example of books. He argues that the filing system for books in libraries by author, subject material, etc. (as opposed to being filed by something like color or size) is based off of knowledge of the nature or essence of books.<sup>106</sup> This filing system is not unintuitive nor does it require deep analysis, or even a listing of the necessary and sufficient conditions for any X being a book, to understand. It “just makes sense.” And no one seems to have any difficulty understanding why these categories

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<sup>104</sup> Edmund Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” 181.

<sup>105</sup> Dallas Willard, “What It Means to be Human,” lecture given at the *Veritas* forum (Ohio State University November 11 2002), 13:40. Available at <http://www.learnoutloud.com/Free-Audio-Video/Philosophy/Modern-Philosophy/What-Does-It-Mean-To-Be-Human/22219>

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 10:30

are used and not others. This echoes Husserl's claim that "Our critics in truth see, and so to speak continuously see, "ideas", "essences" ---makes use of them in thought, formulate judgments concerning essences--- only from their epistemological "standpoint" they explain the same away."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, 40-41.

### III. Knowledge

#### A. Knowledge and the Acts and Relations of Consciousness that Survive the Reductions

##### 1. Introduction

Now we should be equipped to return to our discussion of what it is that survives these reductions and how Husserl draws knowledge, the overlap of the subjective with the objective, into the field immanence. It was noted earlier that cognitions do not stand in isolation from each other but they stand in relation with other cognitions, cohering with them, supporting them, etc. These inter-cognitive relations (as well as intra-cognitive relations) can be given in a pure act of “seeing.” And these “seeable” relations will prove most important. Hintikka rightly notes that it is erroneous to see the function of the phenomenological reductions as focusing one’s intentions on mental objects and blocking out transcendences (Hintikka means metaphysical transcendences here): “Such an exclusive concentration inevitably brackets, not merely (metaphysically transcendent) objects, but the relation of noemata (intentional or mental objects) to (transcendent) objects.”<sup>108</sup> It should also be reemphasized that the aim of the reductions is not to block out metaphysically transcendent objects and relations but epistemologically transcendent relations.<sup>109</sup>

##### 2. Intentionality

To understand these specific relations, we must first better understand the general inner structure of mental acts and their objects. This paper allows for neither a thorough treatment of

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<sup>108</sup> Jaakko Hintikka, “The Phenomenological Dimension,” 80.

<sup>109</sup> Hintikka remains somewhat ambiguous as to what type of transcendences he is referring to and so perhaps this need not be added.

Husserl's general theory of intentionality nor for an avoidance of it altogether. A full development of the inner structures of consciousness according to Husserl lies outside of the scope of this paper. What follows is largely Willard's development and interpretation of Husserl's position. This is warranted for the focus of this paper is on the application of a Willardian-Husserlian account of knowledge and its application to current epistemology. This limitation enables us to avoid a thorough treatment of views which lie outside of Husserl's (including Husserl and Willard's arguments against these counter views, as well as some of the applications and implications of Husserl's own view). Some mention of these opposing views and the problems associated with them (as claimed by Willard and Husserl) will be given in order to help clarify and understand their own position. But this should not be taken as a refutation of those views. The aim here is only an explication of an HW theory of intentionality as it pertains to the possibility of knowledge. .

It must be remembered that the primary question which concerns Husserl's philosophical works is "How can the objective be grasped by the subjective?" Frederick Olafson correctly notes that Husserl was concerned with avoiding the sequestering of both the intentional act and the intentional object as being ontologically immanent (what Olafson refers to as the "intramental").<sup>110</sup> Husserl's theory of intentionality was not something developed in separation from (and so not something that should be understood apart from) his epistemological work. Hence our need to explicate his view (the two are connected). Husserl's concern is with establishing (through the phenomenological method developed above) the connecting of the subjective with the objective. Hence his method differs from many of his contemporaries as well

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<sup>110</sup> Frederick Olafson, "Husserl's Theory of Intentionality in Contemporary Perspective," in *Husserl: Expositions and Appraisals* edited by Frederick Elliston and Peter McCormick (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 1977), 161.

as current methodologies. The more influential approach (taken by Husserl's mentor Brentano and others) was quite the opposite from Husserl's. Brentano tried to explain how one can intend things like unicorns even though they do not exist (what I shall call the unicorn problem).<sup>111</sup> Husserl's starting point, in contrast, was not to try and explain how non-existing things could be intended but what it meant for anything at to be intended.

Their views on intentionality were not entirely opposed though. Willard notes that for both Husserl and Brentano the object of an intentional act is part of what makes the act what it is (it is part of the acts essence).<sup>112</sup> Two intentional acts of consciousness are partly individuated by the object they are directed toward or about. In cases where two acts are of or about the same thing but differ, they have the same intentional essence but differ in properties which are accidental to their intentionality (e.g. their location in time, or in the person which performs the act).<sup>113</sup> Due to this relation of the act and its object, Brentano's description of the intentional act centered on the object. This explains, in part, Brentano's focus on the object of intentionality and trying to solve the unicorn problem by positing the intentional object as something which is always ontologically immanent. Husserl, with his phenomenological method, on the other hand focused on the 'ofness' or 'aboutness' of intentionality (the nature of the act itself, independent of all other objects), which contains a specific relationship between the act and its object.<sup>114</sup> Thus making the object of the act and its existence secondary (without sacrificing the thesis that two acts with differing objects cannot be the same or that two acts with the same object must be

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<sup>111</sup> Again see Olafson's insightful comments on the difference between current concerns in intentionality, as well as those of Brentano's, from Husserl's. *Ibid.*, 160-162.

<sup>112</sup> Dallas Willard, "For Lack of Intentionality," *Phenomenology* 2005 5, no. Part 2 (2007), paragraph 6.

<sup>113</sup> Dallas Willard "Intentionality 1," 188.

<sup>114</sup> Dallas Willard, "For Lack of Intentionality," paragraph 6.

intentionally the same). Husserl's theory can then roughly be put in the camp of adverbial theories of intentionality.<sup>115</sup>

Husserl's approach to the question then was quite different from Brentano's or even Frege's. Frege (though his theory was different from Brentano's) similarly focused on explication of a certain type of entity and our interaction with it to explain intentionality. Willard helpfully summarizes the difference between Husserl's methodology in regards to developing a theory of intentionality as opposed to Frege's (though it applies equally well to Brentano's and to the Fregean legacy which lives on through the analytic tradition).

It is the radical difference on this point which must, above all, be kept in mind when comparing Husserl and Frege, and which leads one to think that Frege's views perhaps have little use in the exposition of Husserl. It is, I think, not clearly true that "The goal of Husserlian theory of intentionality is to tell us just what kind of entity an act's content is and to convince us that an experience's involvement with an entity of that kind is both necessary and sufficient for the intentionality of the experience." The goal for Husserl is, instead, to *describe* intentionality in terms of its essential characteristics and differentiations, and in relation to the internal complexities of the acts upon which, in its various forms, it is founded or essentially depends – the descriptions to be guided by *intuition* of those characteristics, differentiations and inner founding structures themselves.<sup>116</sup>

#### a. Noetic and *Noematic* Intentionality

As previously mentioned *noesis* is the structuring process which operates on *hyle* and it is carried out by the *noeses*. It is responsible for structuring the *hyle* into intentional experiences and serves as the foundation for both knowledge and intentionality.<sup>117</sup> Certainly a mere

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<sup>115</sup> See Dallas Willard "Intentionality 1," 188.

<sup>116</sup> The section in quotes is from the Macintyre and Smith book to which Willard is responding. Dallas Willard, "Intentionality 1," 190.

<sup>117</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, 176 and Dallas Willard, "Intentionality 1," 191 and 192.

representation, or even a stream of representations would not be sufficient for the kind of consciousness that would be required for knowledge to be possible (Here the familiar points of Searle's Chinese room thought experiment have application).<sup>118</sup> A mere possessing of sensory data is not sufficient but a certain kind of possessing them must be in place as well. Hence the man in the room though possessing the data (the cards with Chinese on them) does not possess it in an appropriate way to be considered to be aware of what is going on or even of communication. Husserl says "it is evident *a priori*... that thinking subjects must be in general able to perform, e.g., all sorts of acts in which theoretical knowledge is made real. We must, in particular, as thinking beings, be able to see propositions as truths, and to see truths as consequences of other truths, and again to see laws as such, to see law as explanatory grounds, and to see them as principles, etc."<sup>119</sup> Willard explains that the noetic conditions are what make human and any other type of knowing possible.<sup>120</sup> Though not all *noeses* necessarily operate off of *hyle* or sense data (as is the case with humans), the process involved in seeing propositions as truth (and the other examples given by Husserl) must be there in order for knowledge to be possible. The noetic component, however, is not the whole of a mental act. Although the *noesis* is the foundation for having a single unified process.

There are three parts of a mental act as a whole, the hyletic, noetic and noematic. The first two parts have been addressed to some extent (much more will be said about the noetic component, though) and the third will be addressed shortly. The noematic part is that which

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<sup>118</sup> John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 3, no. 03 (1980), 417-424.

<sup>119</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Logical Investigations* 232-233 as found in Dallas Willard, "Intentionality 1," 191.

<sup>120</sup> Dallas Willard, "Intentionality 1," 191.

relates to *noemata* and their relations. A *noema* is often stated as “the object as intended.”<sup>121</sup> It is often accompanied by an image or linguistic entity but whether these appear or not it is an ontologically immanent object (like the image or linguistic entity, though it is something distinct from them).

In discussing *Noemata* we must be sure to steer clear of what Willard calls “the common assumption” (this is in regards to interpretations of Husserl and his theory of intentionality). The assumption is that if a *noema* is an object then it is *the* object of the act.<sup>122</sup> From this assumption two major views develop. The first is that the *noema* is an object and is therefore the object of the act (it is the intended object). This results in Husserl slipping into some form of idealism. The second is that the *noema* (being ontologically immanent) is not the intended object and is therefore not an object at all but something along the lines of a Fregean sense. Both views are misguided by the same assumption though.<sup>123</sup> The *noema* is an object (it possess predicates) but it is not the intentional object.<sup>124</sup>

We here enter into what Husserl calls the essential two sidedness of intentionality, the *noetic* and the *noematic*.<sup>125</sup> For Husserl intentionality is a complex stream not a singular strand. Much confusion arises from pitting *noetic* and *noematic* intentionality against each other (it is this area of confusion which leads to seeing Husserl’s later work in *Ideas* as being a replacement to his work in *The Logical Investigations* and the beginning of his slip away from realism into a

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<sup>121</sup> See Jaakko Hintikka, “The Phenomenological Dimension,” 95

<sup>122</sup> Dallas Willard, “Intentionality 1,” 197.

<sup>123</sup> One Husserlian interpreter’s *modus ponens* is another’s *modus tollens*. But it is better to just reject the conditional altogether.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 194 and 197.

<sup>125</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*,” 268.

form of idealism).<sup>126</sup> Let us start with an example and then try to explain Husserl's position from there.

Imagine seeing a ball on a stand that appears to be blue. The ball then changes to a green colour and then again to a red. Upon further inspection it is noticed that several different lights are directed at the ball. One is blue, one green, and one red. Now when viewed under a neutral light the ball appears white. We now understand that the ball is white and appears to be the differing colours because of the lights shining on it. Now when the blue light shines on the ball the mental image that we have of the ball will be (most likely) blue. However, the ball will not be *thought* to be blue but rather white. We have here then a case where our mental image does not match the object itself but yet is not really misleading either.

Let us run through the moments of the initial mental act. Sense data is given and received and this represents the *hyletic* phase. The *noetic* phase follows which interprets the data and directs it towards an object, the intentional object. This directing process produces and is then accompanied by (as opposed to producing and then being replaced by) the *noematic* phase which produces a *noema* and often an image or a linguistic entity. The *noema* has a sense, in the Fregeian sense of the term. The *noematic* phase then includes the generation of an object (i.e. the *noema*) as well as a specific meaning for that object. So in our example the sense data of a blue ball is given, this is interpreted as "there being a blue ball" and a specific mental object comes onto the scene which is represented by an image. The *noema* is not an image but is the source of that image (the image itself has a specific direction towards the intentional object). This process repeats, though differing in minor aspects, for the seeing of the green ball, red ball, the lights,

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<sup>126</sup> The majority of Dallas Willard's "Intentionality 1" focuses on this exact interpretive issue.

and the white ball. These mental acts, the seeing of a blue ball etc., stand in a specific relation to each other. The *noesis* operates on these individual mental acts, in much the same way as it did with the individual datum which composed the *hyletic* data. It restructures them and forms a new intentional object “there being a white ball.” The new intentional object is likewise accompanied by a *noema* and it should be clear that both the *noema* and the intentional object are produced by the *noesis*. As Willard points out the *noetic* comes first both in study and in the actual sequence of the mental act.<sup>127</sup>

The image that we have of the white ball when the blue light is shining on it, after we have realized that it is white, may yet be blue. So while the sense data is relevantly similar (it does differ in time and almost assuredly to some extent place) to our initial sense data from when we first saw it under the blue light, it will nevertheless appear quite different to us (i.e. our engagement with it, what we take it to be, is totally different). In this case the intentional object and the object as it is intended are different though the sense data remains similar. We can alter the case to one of the familiar situations where we see something in the distance or see some strange picture but in either case we cannot “make sense” of the data.<sup>128</sup> This presents the same situation where sensory data remains the same but the object differs (though in this case the actual image corresponding to the *noema* will be different). Likewise there are cases where sensory data changes but the intentional object does not, as when the different coloured lights shine on the ball but it is understood to be white. These examples serve to show that sensory data

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 193-194.

<sup>128</sup> Research did not lead me to discover the name, if there is one, for “hidden object” illusions. But that type of illusion is what I mean by a “strange image.” These illusions require the perceiver to look at the data in just the right way to either find the object or to see the real object, that is to say to make sense of the picture or to make the correct sense of it. One example of the former is “The Hidden Dog” illusion and one for the latter is the “False Head Photo.” Links to the referred to examples: [http://www.michaelbach.de/ot/cog\\_dalmatian/](http://www.michaelbach.de/ot/cog_dalmatian/)  
<http://www.moillusions.com/strange-false-head-photo/>

and images, or linguistic entities, are not sufficient to determine either the intentional object or the object as intended. The above cases show where sensory data changes but both objects remain the same and cases where the data remains the same but the objects differ (hopefully the remaining two cases, where data and object remain the same and where both differ, are easily understood without examples). What this shows is that we think in senses (in this context ‘senses’ refers to the various possible types of images and linguistic units) but not with them. As Willard neatly puts it (along with a helpful analogy): “As Husserl lays out the act/object nexus nothing at all is *done with* the concept *in* the act of which it is the sense - though a long story is to be told about how the various parts of the act function. We walk in steps, not *with* them. Stepping is walking. And fundamentally, we think, perceive, etc., *in* senses (concepts, propositions), not *with* them.”<sup>129</sup>

This allows for Husserl to explain why the objects that we are perhaps naively disposed to think of as *the* objects of our consciousness are ontologically immanent (are objects of our consciousness) and do play a complicated part in the acts, but all the while not being *the* objects of our consciousness (it would be hard to imagine what it would be like in the ball example above to not have some accompanying image but have identically the same intentional act). We are conscious of these things in our mental acts but this does not mean that they must therefore be *the* objects of our acts.<sup>130</sup> And *noemata* are the “enlivened” and used (used in the way that Willard above means by “in”) images, concepts, propositions, etc. They are therefore a part of

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<sup>129</sup> Dallas Willard, “The Integrity of the Mental Act: Husserlian Reflections on a Fregean Problem,” in *Mind, Meaning, and Mathematics* edited by L. Haaparanta (Netherlands, Kluwer Academic 1994), 259. Emphases in the original.

<sup>130</sup> Dallas Willard, “Intentionality 1,” 196.

the *reellen* components of the act, meaning that they are part of the “individual, dependent phases or “moments” which, like the whole act itself, are non-sharable and non-repeatable.”<sup>131</sup>

Similarly one aspect of the *noetic* is *reellen*: the unifying aspect which uniquely fits the individual act within a history of acts and makes it this specific act. However, both the *noetic* and the *noematic* phases also have an *irreellen* content to them. As *irreellen* they do belong to the act but are not parts of the act.<sup>132</sup> The *hyletic* components as a whole and the *noetic* and *noematic* components in part belong to the essence of this specific act. Any act identical to A1 contains H1, N1, and M1 and any act containing H1, N1, and M1 are identical to A1. They are thus a part of the act. However, the *irreellen* components of the *noetic* and *noematic*, N2 and M2, may belong to A1 but an acts having N2 and M2 does not mean that it is A1. The *irreellen noetic* and *noematic* components are those which “belong” to the object of the act.<sup>133</sup> They are thus ideal or universals.

Let us return to the white ball example to try and further explicate what was just said. Consider the situation where the blue light shines on the ball but we know it to be a white ball. Certainly, as was pointed out above, the *hyletic* components of seeing the ball are non-repeatable and non-shareable. Also the image, senses, and the like which correspond to the *noematic* phases of the act are non-shareable. Also the unifying feature of the *noesis* which fits the act into a specific subject’s history of acts is likewise non-repeatable and non-sharable (reflection on the

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>133</sup> The essence of hyletic data is also a component of the *irreellen* and ideal parts of an act. Though the essence of the specific bits of *hyletic* data are not. I have avoided this part of the discussion above to avoid the confusion between the essence of a bit of *hyletic* data which is contained within the act and the essence of *hyletic* data which is not contained within the act. To be sure all parts of the act have *reele* and *irreele* components (Ibid.,192.). However the way in which the essences of the three phases, the *hyletic*, *noetic* and *noematic*, are related to a specific act seems to be similar for the latter two but dissimilar for the first.

mere fact that the *hyletic* components are what the *noesis* operates on and that the *noematic* components are dependent on the *noetic* ones shows this to be true). However, any act which has the white ball as its intentional object will have a similar “intentional direction.” This intentional direction is something which belongs to the object itself then rather than the mental acts which are thus directed.

#### b. Intentional Direction

Part of *the essence of an act* is that it has this or that “intentional direction,” (i.e. meaning). But *the essence of this or that intentional direction* is not part of any specific act. Willard helpfully shows why this must be.<sup>134</sup> If we allow for the essence of the act to be outside of the intentional direction then we could have identically the same act but directed at a different object (in this case seeing the white ball under the blue and taking it to be blue, as in our first case, and seeing it under the blue light but taking it to be white would be the same). But if we allow for a specific intentional direction to be indifferent to the types of acts it appears in then this would allow for the act to have any content whatever and still be about the same thing. “The intentionality of an act has to be its (the acts) essence.”<sup>135</sup> But what remains open to us in an act of pure intuition, “seeing,” is the fact that differing acts have the same intentional direction. Thus the essence of the intentional direction is not a part of the essence of any particular act which has that intentionality as *its* essence. The intentionality of an act is thus part of its *reellen* and *irreellen* parts.

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<sup>134</sup> What follows is my summary, coupled with the previous examples, of *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

It is on the basis of this insight that Husserl argued against psychologism. (Husserl's rejection of psychologism was another of his career defining and theory shaping beliefs. It worked alongside and was intimately connected to his concern with the grasping of the objective in the subjective.) The objects and relations under investigation by the logician are the objects of *her* thoughts or mental acts, her non-sharable non-repeatable thoughts. But upon phenomenological investigation she can see that the objects of her investigation remain the same under many different acts (one must remember that the mental acts are non-repeatable even for her). These logical entities are then something which transcend her individual thoughts (the *reellen* components). They can be grasped by multiple minds, hence Quine's and Husserl's assertions about *modus ponens* are about the same thing.<sup>136</sup> The *noetic* process leading one to a grasp of these logical realities may be, *indeed must be*, different for each person and even the same person at different times. Yet they all share in participating in a common essence of some intentionality, or meaning or intentional direction.

What this shows is that objects and relations which survive the reductions are of two types, ontologically immanent (the *reellen* components of a mental act) and ontologically transcendent (the *irreellen* and ideal components). The ideal are universals since they can be multiply instantiated, "identically the same in many acts."<sup>137</sup> For Husserl, then, what matters is

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<sup>136</sup> And it would seem Quine, at certain points, even agreed with this: "The thinness of the account of how those (logical) laws may be so understood is due to the fact that in the works cited above he (Quine) is coming to them *von oben*, from his speculative theory of language and mind, not *von unten*, from an examination of those laws themselves. When dealing with the laws themselves, on the other hand, as is done in writings which engage with logic as a field of scientific research, a quite different picture of logical law emerges. When one examines any of Quine's expositions or proofs of logical laws, one finds that they are presented as theoretically complete without a single reference to, or invocation of support from, any psychological matter of fact. We will make just a few comments about his actual procedure in the process of logical research and exposition, since his writings in this field are so well known." See Dallas Willard, "The Case Against Quine's Case for Psychologism," in *Perspectives in Psychologism*, edited by Mark Notturmo, (New York: E. J. Brill, 1989).

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

that through the reductions the objects of our mental acts are brought into epistemological immanence. But ontologically eminent objects are not brought into this epistemological immanence in any special way as distinct from ontologically transcendent objects. Husserl then differs drastically from Kant in this way who seems to offer no real explanation for, or clarification of, the connection between sense data and the concepts which emerge from them. The connection of the minds “grasp” or knowledge of these clearly ontologically immanent relations remains obscure. Willard’s comments and quotes on Husserl here are invaluable:

“He (Husserl) points out that Kant tried to “save” knowledge, show *that* it is possible, before determining *what* it is, “before subjecting it to a clarifying critique and analysis of essence” (Logical Investigations 833). This is further traced to Kant’s failure to get clear on the specific nature of “pure Ideation, the adequate survey of conceptual essences, and the laws of universal validity rooted in those essences” (Ibid.). On Husserl’s view, such a failure is built into any effort that is not “a critique based on “seeing” ” (Idea of Phenomenology 50).”<sup>138</sup>

### 3. Knowledge

#### a. Authentic and Symbolic Knowledge

We are now ready to consider Husserl’s theory of knowledge. Hopefully what has been said already concerning intentionality and the phenomenological method as a whole will provide ease of insight into Husserl’s thoughts here on this matter.

It is time to revisit some of the concepts that we dealt with in the preceding sections. It was argued that the objects of consciousness fall into one of two types, either authentically given or inauthentically given (i.e. to be given symbolically). We also mentioned earlier that one of the important things which survives the reductions are relations between mental acts and that the

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 160.

function of the reductions is not to exclude transcendences in the ontological sense but in the epistemological sense. It remains, therefore, for the intentional object to be given symbolically and to be given authentically. And the recognition of a certain relation between these experiences, the moving from the inauthentic to the authentic, to be laid open in a pure act of “seeing.” In short the recognition of this relation between two acts is knowledge. Willard succinctly puts it as “Knowing is... finding something to be as it is thought to be.”<sup>139</sup> And this can occur in one of two ways. The first is when the latter act contains an act of pure intuition and the second is when the nature of a specific type of symbolic representation is given to us and a specific symbolic representation *of that type* directs us to a concept (though that concept itself is not given in an act of pure intuition). As Willard points out it is therefore wrong to attribute the view to Husserl that all knowledge rests on a state of intuition: “We must, then, permanently set aside the misunderstanding that, for him (Husserl), knowledge of a truth, a state of affairs or an object, either is or requires an intuition *of it*.”<sup>140</sup>

It is here that our talk of the inauthentic (i.e. symbolic) and authentic and Husserl’s work in mathematics is most helpful. Small numbers are easily grasped in intuition, such as the number 2. And the specific relation “ $2 < 4$ ” is also easily grasped in intuition. But large numbers such as 3,141,592,653 are just beyond our intuitive grasp. And the relation specified by “ $3,141,592,653 < 5,897,932,384$ ” is just not something we can bring into our intuitive grasp (similar examples can be construed in logic). While a simple argument demonstrating *modus ponens* may be grasped in intuition a twenty or thirty step proof is not. Hence in working with one of these longer proofs the simple steps are merely referred to without actually having to

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<sup>139</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 138.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 142.

write them out (e.g. we write the conclusion of an instance of hypothetical syllogism and merely reference the lines we used and ‘HS’ on the side). This is normal and acceptable because those moves can be “seen,” intuitively tracked. But the argument as a whole (the twenty or so steps) needs to be broken down into these smaller bits. After that we can know that it is valid. But we know this not through an intuition of the two or three premises and the conclusion and their relation (as in *modus ponens* and the like) but through our understanding of these smaller steps and their relation to the whole.

Husserl points out in regards to mathematics (and the same can be said for logic) that if these relations could be drawn into intuitive grasp then the processes of arithmetic would be superfluous.<sup>141</sup> “Indeed, the whole sum of arithmetic is... nothing other than a sum of artificial devices for overcoming the essential imperfections of our intellect.”<sup>142</sup> Hence even after our logical proof it would be odd and unacceptable to refer to these twenty or so steps as something like ‘A1’ and use it in a longer forty or so step proof. What is of special note here is that the oft given paradigm of knowledge (mathematics) largely rests on this symbolic representations.

In both of these cases (the mathematical examples and the logical examples) what can be brought into intuition is the symbolic system used to represent these numbers or propositions and their relations. And so knowledge of these sorts of truths, states of affairs or objects which stand outside our intuitive grasp can be known by us when the nature of the symbolic form of thinking which *represents* (where the mental act does not include its object as an epistemologically immanent content) the truth, state of affairs or object is known to us, that is brought into intuitive

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<sup>141</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Philosophy of Arithmetic*,” 201.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

grasp.<sup>143</sup> “It is, Husserl thinks, only our *experience* of symbolic representations passing over into authentic consciousness of their objects that gives us the concept of *sign*, and then makes us “familiar with that practical equivalence between authentic representations and their symbols which make possible the use of the latter in place of the former.”<sup>144</sup> The symbol system of logic or mathematics (or any other symbol system) must be brought into intuitive grasp for them to function in extending our knowledge to things which we cannot bring into intuitive grasp.<sup>145</sup> Insight into these knowledge advancing relations of symbol to symbol and symbol to object are “logical.”<sup>146</sup> The grasping of things like dependency and independency, genus and species (in the Aristotelian sense of the terms) and the like, are logical insights which hold true to the developed symbolic forms of representation and to the things themselves. Thus it is true that all knowledge rests on *evidenz* but it is not true that all *objects* of knowledge must be brought into a mental act as an epistemologically immanent object (the symbol, under the previously specified guidelines, is sufficient).<sup>147</sup>

#### b. The Knowledge Relationship

It was stated previously that knowledge is the relation between an act in which an object is not given and an act in which it is either given authentically or through the appropriate symbol. What was spelled out above was the “appropriateness” of symbolic giving and that something is

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>144</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 141-142. The quotation within is from Edmund Husserl, *Early Writings in the Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics*, edited by Dallas Willard (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers 1994), 35.

<sup>145</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 143.

<sup>146</sup> Dallas Willard, introduction to *The Philosophy of Arithmetic: Psychological and Logical Investigations* trans. Dallas Willard, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2003), xlv.

<sup>147</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 143.

given symbolically does not epistemically demote it; “In the (symbolic) practice of arithmetic one senses no loss of epistemic status upon abandoning the “numbers themselves” along with actual operations on *them*.”<sup>148</sup> What remains now is for us to provide a further explication of this relation.

There are three fundamental components which make this relation possible. The mental act which intends the object as such, the mental act which contains the intuition of the intended object (understood as being inclusive of the appropriate symbolic types of givenness dealt with above), and the mental act which unites these two previous acts. Without the former two the latter would not be possible but it is the latter act which is referred to as ‘knowing;’ “An act of knowing *consciously* incorporates that relation between thought and intuition.”<sup>149</sup> In all three of these acts the selfsame object is the intentional object. The first act intends an object but the intended object may or may not exist. As we pointed out Husserl’s theory of intentionality (falling roughly in the adverbial set of theories) allows for the intentional object to not exist. The thought still has an intentional direction but that “road” may or may not lead anywhere. Thus the first act stands as an empty intention. The second act involves the ‘givenness’ of the intentional object which allows for no inexistence of the object. In this case the mental act draws something (which is often ontologically transcendent) into epistemological immanence. The third act then relates these two act together. Thus knowledge is a higher order act of cognition, showing that the empty intuition has found its fulfillment in the latter intuition. Knowledge then for Husserl is often denoted by the term ‘fulfillment.’<sup>150</sup> It is an act distinct from the first two. It has the same

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<sup>148</sup> Dallas Willard introduction to *The Philosophy of Arithmetic*, xlvi.

<sup>149</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 150.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

object as the first two but is related to it in a different way. The first merely intends it, the object, the second finds it, the third finds it to be as it was intended to be. Willard again beautifully summarizes this and provides a helpful example:

The fulfillment of the thought – the “knowing” involved – is my consciousness of this object, the pen in the desk, *as* being *as* thought. The thought or “empty intention” is what is fulfilled, and the intuition is what “gives” the thought its fulfillment. But fulfillment (knowledge) is still a relation to the object, even though it rests or is “founded” upon a kind of “gathering up” or “synthesis” of other cognitive acts directed upon the same object.<sup>151</sup>

While I used ‘intentional direction’ earlier in order to stay with current terminology it might be better put ‘intentional velocity.’ Direction tends to mean or imply towards or away from *something*. Velocity has speed and direction but it has nothing to do with whether, say an arrow, will reach any given target or thing whatsoever. Some objects on some velocity simply will not reach anything at all. Intentionality is the same way. It has a specific type of intentionality (desiring blue, repulsion at blue, believing in blue, etc.). It also has a certain direction (in the previous cases all directed at blue). But just as an arrow with a given velocity imparts no relation to its target so also intentionality has no relation to its target (i.e. the intentional object). Hence the inexistence of the intentional object is possible (such as is the case when we believe in Pegasus). But the mental act which has the intentional “velocity” of believing in and being about Pegasus has those properties (as the arrow with no existing target has the properties of speed and direction). The knowledge relation on the other hand does have an actual relation to the object of knowledge (albeit an external relation) hence it allows for no inexistence of the object. An external relation allows for the *relatum* to pass in and out of the relation without losing its identity (e.g. the ball that is hit by a bat).<sup>152</sup> In being related to the act

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 155.

which takes it as its object, the object of knowledge has a property attributed to it that it did not have before (i.e. being known by X). And since this object has properties it must exist; “nothing can have properties and not exist.”<sup>153</sup> This provides the basis for a comparison between an act which merely intends an object and an act which intuits the object. It allows for the “possibility of comparing object with meaning and of observing the agreement or disagreement between the conceptualization and its determinatively qualified object.”<sup>154</sup>

For Husserl, having distinguished between the two types of transcendence/immanence, there is no real difference between bringing an ontologically transcendent object into intuitive grasp as opposed to an immanent one. It is simply a question of what one takes as their intentional object. Hardy says “Transcendence is no longer the problem of reaching out from one part of the world (the ontologically immanent) to another (the ontologically transcendent), but the transcendence of a pure consciousness to which both the empirical object and the empirical subject appear.”<sup>155</sup> The backing for this is again by going through the reductions and “seeing” what happens. Our cognition of intramental events and objects has the same essence as our cognition of extramental events and objects. The key for Husserl is to bring this essence before one minds and then recognize it in its instances. “Only if the essence of this relation is somewhere given to him, so that he could see it, so that the unity of knowing and the known object, which is suggested by the phrase “making contact with reality” (Triftigkeit), would itself stand right before his eyes. Then he would have knowledge about its possibility, rather this possibility would be clearly given to him.”<sup>156</sup> The essence of knowledge is revealed and it

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<sup>153</sup> Dallas Willard, “The Significance of the Logical Investigations,” §VI point 1.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., §VI point 2.

<sup>155</sup> Lee Hardy, introduction to *The Idea of Phenomenology*, 8.

becomes possible for us to recognize its instances. As Willard says “That possibility (The possibility of knowledge) is just the possibility of the mind fully coming... into direct relation with what is not a part of, not genuinely (*reell*) contained in, the relevant acts directed upon it.”<sup>157</sup>

### c. A Comparison to Kant

Hence Husserl’s criticizes Kant’s attempt to save knowledge because “Kant tried to “save” knowledge (show that it is possible) before determining what it is, “before subjecting it to a clarifying critique and analysis of essence.”<sup>158</sup> Interestingly Kant took an approach similar to Husserl’s when investigating morality. His *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morality* ignores all human conditions and their relations to morality and seeks to gain a clear view of morality itself (the essence of morality). The essence of morality must be laid bare and then its connection and relation to the human condition can be understood. Kant never really questioned whether morality was possible for humans but he did recognize that one must get a grip on morality itself first. Surely we can say that just as contingent human factors may change the way morality is applied (something Kant deals with in *The Metaphysics of Morals*) these contingent factors could also make morality impossible or inapplicable for humans (as Kant would admit to be the case if all Humans were *arrational* sponges or something of the sort).

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<sup>156</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy), 29.

<sup>157</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge,” 159.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 160 (The quote of Husserl is from LI 833).

Kant, at least attempted, to get clear on the essence of morality before proceeding to human morality.<sup>159</sup> In relation to knowledge though he did not properly “reduce” the question, seeking to get a grip on knowledge itself (i.e. the essence of knowledge, and come to terms with the methodology one must embrace to do so).

“The question that initially drove us is also *reduced*... not how can I, this person, in my experiences, make contact with a being in itself, something that exists out there, outside of me; in place of this question... we have now a *pure basic question*: how can the pure phenomenon of knowledge make contact with something that is not immanent to it how can the absolute self-givenness of knowledge make contact with something that is not self-given, and how is this contact to be understood?”<sup>160</sup>

All attempts, such as Kant’s, Frege’s, and what seems to have become the analytic tradition (they all start from a postulation of what must be in place and are tied to the process of explanation) to account for knowledge are doomed to fail from the outset. This stems from what we pointed out above is a mistaken μεταβασις. “If this shifting (shifting to a false μεταβασις) is to be avoided, and we are to remain focused on the sense of the question concerning this possibility, the *phenomenological reduction* is required.”<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> It is worthwhile to point out that a very interesting comparison can be made between what Kant is doing in the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, particular his famous four cases, and what Willard does in regards to phenomenologically developing a clear view of intentionality in *Intentionality and the Substance of the Self*. Since Kant’s work is familiar I will avoid quoting it but here is Willard at length. “The appropriate comparison to begin to grasp what “consciousness-of” or intentionality is would be to compare mental acts of certain types to other mental acts, of those and of other types. Stay within the genus. Compare a sensation of blue to an imaging of blue, to a remembering of blue, to a judgment about blue, to a revulsion at blue, to a comparing of a certain (shade of) blue with other blues, and with other colors, in imagination or in perception, and so forth. You keep the “object” steady, as in these cases, and vary other features of the mental acts and of the intentions or “meanings” directed upon it. Then, to proceed further with the investigation, one must vary the objects and hold steady other aspects of the acts directed upon them. One goes through the whole range of possible variations of mental acts and their objects. In this way the complex and rich nature of intentionality, and of the corresponding mental acts of all types, with their intentional properties, can be made to stand out before the reflexive consciousness, and systematic descriptions can be developed. That is exactly the mode of research developed by Edmund Husserl. He eventually called it “Phenomenology,” and held that the overall theme of Phenomenology is intentionality.” Dallas Willard, “Intentionality and the Substance of the Self,” *Philosophia Christi* vol. 13 No. 1 (2011), 14.

<sup>160</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, (Hardy), 64.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

## B. Conclusion

Husserl then has given us a description of the essence of knowledge. A description of what it would mean for God, angels, hippos or humans to know something. This provides us with an account of the possibility of knowledge. And by the phenomenological method we can “see” it take place in our own consciousness. That shows that knowledge is actual in human life. That things can come before our mind and we can grasp them. And so “Exactly what recourse do we have but: “*Zu dem Sachen selbst* (to the things themselves)!”<sup>162</sup> Lee Hardy summarizes Husserl approach to the problem of knowledge as dealing with the possibility of transcendence and the problem concerning correspondence.<sup>163</sup> The first is solved by means of a theory of intentionality and the second is solved by the phenomenological approach which allows for “seeing” and the higher order act of synthesis between a merely intentional act and the intuition which stand as its fulfillment. What remains now is for us to apply Husserl’s theory to the current discussion of epistemology.

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<sup>162</sup> Dallas Willard, “A Critical Study of Husserl and Intentionality (II),” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 19, No. 3 (October 1988), 315.

<sup>163</sup> Lee Hardy, introduction to *The Idea of Phenomenology*, 3.

#### IV. HUSSERL, WILLARD, AND THE CURRENT DISCUSSION

##### A. Investigation of *Noetic* Conditions as Opposed to a Definitional Approach

We noted above that Husserl's emphasis was on the question concerning the possibility of knowledge and not on listing the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge that characterize current epistemology. Willard followed suit in this regards. His oft made claim that Knowledge is "the capacity to represent a respective subject matter as it is on an appropriate basis of thought and/or experience" leaves out entirely the fine points of "appropriateness" that are the major and fundamental concerns of current epistemology.<sup>164</sup> He also went on to say that:

What constitutes an "appropriate basis" will vary from subject matter to subject matter, of course, as is generally acknowledged of the corresponding methods of inquiry. It is, no doubt, impossible to define "appropriate basis" in any perfectly general way, or even to specify perfectly general necessary and sufficient conditions for having an appropriate basis. Certainly I will make no attempt to do so here. However, a few things may be said about the *necessary* conditions of knowledge and knowing, without attempting to be definitional or even comprehensive.<sup>165</sup>

Both Husserl and Willard were more concerned about responding to and refuting views which undermined certain necessary conditions of knowledge than with offering a definition of knowledge itself. (Willard's remark above that he "would not do so here" seems to hold for all of his work; it just wasn't something he was concerned with.) Both of them were concerned with rebutting the claims of the naturalistic and relativistic views of their time. For Husserl this was primarily in regards to psychologism and the atheistic naturalism which developed into logical positivism. For Willard it was in regards to the various forms of naturalism and scientism (both

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<sup>164</sup> Dallas Willard, "Knowledge and Naturalism," 31.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

of which were strongly connected to the logical positivist movement which developed during Husserl's life).<sup>166</sup> Though neither of them were concerned with such definitional work it does not seem that they were necessarily opposed to it either (though we will have to make some allowances for both of their discussions on noetic structures). Willard's quote above may make it seem like he was opposed to trying to flesh out necessary and sufficient conditions but two things must be understood about this quote.

First of all though he did not hold the full listing of the necessary and sufficient conditions needed for a "definition" of knowledge to be possible this does not mean that discussion on such things are not worthwhile or that progress cannot be made in discussing them. Part of both Husserl's and Willard's concern with current epistemology (in their own respective times) was that it was starting on the false *μεταβασις* discussed above and that it overlooked the question concerning the possibility of knowledge. What was necessary for real progress to be made was to start from the right questions and develop the correct methodology based off of and necessitated by this fundamental question and then to proceed from there. To start with a list of the necessary and sufficient conditions and proceed to testing it with barn facades, clocks, and beliefs in other minds, is, at least it was to them, to overlook the most important aspects of knowledge and doom oneself to making no real substantial progress.

Second, the important role of the *noesis* developed above takes place within a complex and "messy" "web of life."<sup>167</sup> A helpful example here is what often transpires when attempting to teach logic. One can explain the principles of inference and *modus ponens* and one student "gets

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<sup>166</sup> See Nakhnikian's intro to *the Idea of Phenomenology* and Willard's "Knowledge and Naturalism" on this point.

<sup>167</sup> Dallas Willard, "Knowledge and Naturalism," 44.

it” and another does not. One tries example after example and then suddenly, there it is, it “clicks.” The concept is understood. The student knows and can represent *modus ponens* on an appropriate basis. But what one student needed to noetically “connect the dots,” to be lead to the universal concept, is different from the other (i.e. the noetic conditions upon which they come to understand the concept are different). Why did one student get it early on but not the other? A spelling out of the sufficient conditions for an “appropriate basis” would have to offer an explanation here.

Certainly a spelling out of all the “appropriate” noetic conditions for which one could come to know something as simple as *modus ponens* is out of reach. It seems, furthermore, like even developing a general heading under which they could all fit (so that one could say “If one has noetic conditions of type X then one knows *modus ponens*”) is also unattainable. Willard points out that the very noetic structures of creative genius, as exemplified in persons like Einstein, just seem fundamentally out of our reach in terms of our ability to explain and categorize. “This (inability), I believe, is why it is impossible to lay down general sufficient conditions of an “appropriate basis.””<sup>168</sup> But this does not imply that discussions of noetic structures are to be avoided all together or that they are all entirely in vain. Willard would only seem to be against attempts to fit noetic structures into a box, so to speak. Now this, it seems, is exactly what is going on in much of current epistemology. Trying to formulate criteria for which all noetic structures must fall under (consider that theories of epistemology are normative concerning noetic structures). Alvin Plantinga points out that this judging of noetic structures is

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 44.

the case for foundationalism.<sup>169</sup> Willard concurred with Plantinga's statement and extended it to "the many versions of coherentism, verificationism, *Aufbau* projects, social constructionism, externalism, internalism, and "linguistic rule" theories."<sup>170</sup> The assumption is that we all want to be and ought to be rational (I'm not here challenging this assumption, just drawing attention to it). And these theories flesh out the conditions for rational belief. Thus much of the normative discussion is perhaps obscured under talk of rationality.<sup>171</sup> The normative aspect though in contemporary discussions are about specifying the conditions for which all *noetic* structures *ought* to fall under.

### B. HW and Reformed Epistemology

The outlier in this regards in the current discussion is reformed epistemology. Reformed epistemology rejects normative noetic structures which reject belief in God as properly basic but, (and most important to the current discussion) it makes no attempt to offer a replacement criterion. (Reformed epistemology does not reject normative noetic structures entirely though. Hence they are an outlier but only in the sense of *defining* the conditions for a normative noetic structure) Plantinga helpfully points this out by comparing the Reformed epistemologist to the person who rejects the positivist's verification criterion for meaningfulness without offering a replacement formula.<sup>172</sup> It is important to note that Plantinga shows that this does not commit the

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<sup>169</sup> See Alvin Plantinga, "The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology," 33ff for a helpful summary and *Warrant the Current Debate*, (New York : Oxford University Press, 1993), 73 for a fuller treatment.

<sup>170</sup> Dallas Willard, "Knowledge and Naturalism," 43-44.

<sup>171</sup> See Plantinga's helpful treatment of this in "The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology," 33-34.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

Reformed epistemologist to accepting any belief as basic or (in line with our current discussion) any noetic structure as normatively in the clear (i.e. rational).<sup>173</sup>

So where does this leave us? Plantinga's view is that rational noetic structures are to be advanced not by a universal statement which captures all rational structures of belief (again given what said above concerning Einstein and creative genius how could we?) but by induction.<sup>174</sup> His view is that progress is to be made from "below rather than from above."<sup>175</sup> What he means is that we start with beliefs that we are rational in holding and find other beliefs that are similar to them, accepting them as rationally in the clear, and reject other beliefs which are dissimilar on that basis (though they may be rationally supported by some other process). This seems to get us on the right track and is perfectly consistent with Husserl and Willard. What phenomenology offers us though is a science of analyzing those specific noetic structures and a means of grasping their essence. This is a "below" method since it starts with an investigation of mental acts, their objects, essences, etc. The phenomenological method offers deep going cognitive analysis which supplements the inductive method proposed by Plantinga.

### C. Opposition to HW's compatibility with Externalism

#### 1. Introduction

Now the point just developed shows that Husserl and Willard are compatible with certain forms of externalism (though not forms of externalism which seek to have a corner on the market concerning noetic structures). But it is commonly held that both Willard and Husserl are firmly

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<sup>173</sup> See Plantinga's comments on the great pumpkin objection *ibid.* 37-38.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* 38.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

entrenched internalists.<sup>176</sup> This claim will be challenged on two lines, the first is that the lingocentric process of justification in most internalist theories is incompatible with Husserl and Willard's approach. And the second is that a clearer understanding of intentionality for Husserl and Willard, and the development of an intentionality threshold, both open Willard and Husserl to externalist theories.

## 2. Lingocentric Justification

“True opinions are a fine thing and do all sorts of good so long as they stay in their place, but they will not stay long. They run away from a man’s mind; so they are not worth much until you tether them by working out the reason.... Once they are tied down, they become knowledge, and are stable. That is why knowledge is something more valuable than right opinion. What distinguishes one from the other is the tether.” Plato<sup>177</sup>

Phillip Olsen rightly points out that what makes up this tether (the listing of the necessary and sufficient conditions for it) is much debated but that articulate reflection is one of the necessary materials for the classic internalist.<sup>178</sup> By ‘articulate reflection’ Olsen means “the ability to provide reasons for believing the things one rightly believes.”<sup>179</sup> In current philosophy the providing of reasons has been closely linked to the ability to provide a linguistic framework (both in one’s own mind and so naturally in speech as well) which explains those reasons. Hence Olsen sees it fit to substitute ‘*articulate* reflection’ for “the ability to provide reasons for believing the things one rightly believes.” The linguistic component is at least implied, and

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<sup>176</sup> See Greg Jesson, “The Husserlian Roots of Dallas Willard’s Philosophical and Religious Works,” 9, and 10 for this on Willard and on Husserl see Dan Zahavi, “Husserl's Noema and the Internalism-Externalism Debate,” *Inquiry* 47 no 1 (2004). Although Zahavi’s work focuses on theories of intentionality and not specifically epistemology, a parallel can be held since our beliefs are *about* things.

<sup>177</sup> Plato, “Meno,” 264 97e-98a.

<sup>178</sup> Phillip Olson, “Putting Knowledge in its Place,” 244.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

perhaps required by, the ability to *provide* the reasons. In the case of chicken sexers (supposed persons who can tell the sex of chicken that will hatch from an egg) Olsen says “The conditions that make the chicken sexer’s skill possible and successful remain mysterious and inarticulate—in the sense that the chicken sexer cannot “state” or “express” her reasons for judging that a particular chick is male or female.”<sup>180</sup> And again note the emphasis on a linguistic foundation: “If the skill were to become articulate, if chicken sexers were able to explain the principles according to which their skill operate, the value of the skill might increase as its usefulness in practices, inquires, and activities *other* (emphasis in original) than chicken sexing becomes apparent.”<sup>181</sup> Similarly what Plantinga and other reformed epistemologists reject is that they need to provide some sort of explanation, some *stated* criteria, for why belief in God is properly basic and belief in the Great Pumpkin and other such things are not. Olsen’s article deals with a vast range of authors and it is worth reading to see that the common (but rarely explicitly expressed) view is that if something is not or was not a linguistic mental act then it fails to provide an appropriate basis for being a reason. Hookway’s division between inquiry and knowledge is linguistic; Sosa’s division between knowing and knowing full-well and Zagzebski’s division between higher and lower knowledge are both linguistic; Code’s comments on understanding and knowledge also imply a linguistic division.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>182</sup> See Ibid., 253, 248-249 and 248 for a summary of Hookway, Zagzebski and Code and Erenst Sosa, *Knowing Full Well*, (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2011). It is also worthwhile to pay attention to what is often meant or implied by ‘reflection’ in Olson’s article and elsewhere.

This emphasis on articulate reflection is connected to what has become the standard view in contemporary philosophy: thought or reasoning is linguistic.<sup>183</sup> Hence what is internal to the knower (open to her consciousness) must be linguistic. To suppose that she has justification is to imply that she can articulately reflect. To say that something is external to her seems to mean that it is not on or open to her linguistic/conscious radar. So to the extent to which one would reject the requirement of articulate reflection for knowledge then one would be categorized an externalist and to the extent that they would accept it, they would be an internalist.<sup>184</sup> Because of Husserl and Willard's insistence on the openness to consciousness of one's "tether" for knowledge it is assumed that they are internalist in a fairly standard sense. However, there is a strong rejection of this lingocentric model in Husserl (which was adopted and heavily emphasized by Willard). This in turn opens them up to some forms of externalism.

Perhaps the best example here is in regards to Plantinga and the *sensus divinitatis*.<sup>185</sup> Plantinga says the *sensus divinitatis* is something which "in a wide variety of circumstances produces in us beliefs about God."<sup>186</sup> This is widely considered to be an externalist theory due to

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<sup>183</sup> See Dallas Willard, "The Absurdity of 'Thinking in Language'," for some comments on this assumption and an impressive and highly compelling list of quotations from trendsetters who all hold this view.

<sup>184</sup> It should be noted that some of the discussion on basic beliefs and the like center around ideas, or impressions, as opposed to words. i.e. mental entities and types as opposed to linguistic ones. But what is argued here is equally applicable to ideas to words. The mistake is the positing of entities of any sort at the basic structures of consciousness as opposed to Husserl's process of *aufklärung* and "seeing." Willard points out, in agreement with Hillary Putnam, that the "linguistic turn" just brings back the same problems that were developed by Locke and others under the discussion of ideas. See Dallas Willard, "The Significance of the Logical Investigations," §III and his comments on the move from the egocentric problem to the lingocentric problem in Dallas Willard, "Attaining Objectivity: Phenomenological Reduction and the Private Language Argument," in *Topics in Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence* edited by Liliana Albertazzi and Roberto Poli, (Bozen: Istituto Mitteleuropeo di Cultura, Bozen, 1991), 15.

<sup>185</sup> This paper assumes the reader has some knowledge of Plantinga's work and is not meant to be an in depth treatment of his work. See Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 172ff for a nice summary of his work here.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

its rejection of any need to provide articulate reflection or meet the classic evidentialist's standards of basicity. However, this theory is not out of place in a Husserlian/Willardarian (HW) model. Plantinga himself compares this type of belief formation to that of beliefs concerning logic, specifically *modus ponens*.<sup>187</sup> What the phenomenologist has to offer here (once again) is a way of reflecting on this process of belief formation that can draw it into clarification. Just as Husserl and Willard held that there is a type of *eidetic* blindness there may also be type of spiritual blindness (as Calvin, Aquinas, and Plantinga have all seemed to argue). This does not mean that a HW approach implies or is implied by Plantinga's theory but only that it is compatible with it. Husserl's statements on belief formation in logic, specifically the essential mental acts and relations which represent them, and Plantinga's statements on logic and belief in God display this common thread.<sup>188</sup> For believers in God it might just be that there our symbolic situations (e.g. the contemplation of the starry heavens or the moral law within) which can lead to the appropriate grasp of the existence of God and provide a proper foundation for belief in him.

Now one objection here that should be dealt with is that Husserl's insistence on the understanding of methods which lead us to truth through phenomenological insight to be had in order for those methods to produce knowledge.<sup>189</sup> Let us quote Husserl at length to best understand his position here.

Following such a path of insight, and with constant reference to the peculiarities of our mental constitution, the pioneers of research discover methods

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>188</sup> An interesting point of discussion which lies far outside the boundaries of this paper were be a phenomenological analysis of the ontological argument. I think this would show more commonality between Husserl's work and some of the views which Plantinga has argued for.

<sup>189</sup> See Dallas Willard, "Knowledge," 143 and his quotation therein from *The Logical Investigations*.

which they justify once and for all. When this has been done, such methods can be used without insight, so to say mechanically, in each given case: an objectively correct result is assured. This far-reaching reduction of insight to mechanism in our thought-processes leads to an indirect mastery over those endlessly winding paths of thought that admit of no direct mastery: such a reduction rests on the psychological nature of signitive-symbolic thinking. It plays an immeasurable role in the construction of blind mechanisms, e.g. the rules for the four arithmetical Operations, and for higher operations with decimals, where a result emerges, perhaps with the help of logarithmic or geometric functional tables, but without assistance from insight. But it also plays a part in contexts where insight guides our researches and our proofs... These surrogative, operational concepts which turn signs into a kind of counters, preside exclusively over the most extensive fields of arithmetical thought and research. They represent a vast easing of the latter, they take them down from the exhausting heights of abstraction to comfortable, intuitive ways, where imagination, guided by insight, can move, within the limits of rules, with freedom and with relative effortlessness, as in regulated games. One should point, in this connection, to the revolutionary thought-economy which occurs in the purely mathematical disciplines, when genuine thought is replaced by surrogative, signitive thinking, an economy which leads imperceptibly to formal generalizations of our original thought-trains, and even of our sciences. In this manner, almost without specially directed mental labour, deductive disciplines arise having an infinitely enlarged horizon. Out of arithmetic, the original theory of numbers and numerical magnitudes, a generalized, formal arithmetic arises in more or less spontaneous fashion: in this numbers and magnitudes no longer count as basic concepts, but in this numbers and magnitudes no longer count as basic concepts, but merely as chance objects of application. Fully conscious reflection now takes over, and the pure theory of manifolds emerges as a further extension. In its form this covers all possible deductive systems: the form-system of formal arithmetic is merely one of its special instances.

To analyse these and like types of method, and fully to clarify their achievement, is perhaps the most beautiful and least developed field in the theory of science, the extremely important, instructive theory of deductive method (of mathematical method in the widest sense). We do not of course get to do this through mere generalities, through vague talk of the surrogative function of signs, of mechanisms which save energy etc.: deep-going analyses are everywhere needed.<sup>190</sup>

What this quotation shows is that Husserl held that mathematical and other similar types of symbolic thinking, such as logic, are developed (that is they actually have historically

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<sup>190</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Logical Investigations (Volume I)*,” translated by J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 2005), 127-128.

developed this way) by insight, “seeing.” Hence they do produce knowledge. What was lacking was a clarification of how these types of research do so. It was this task of clarification which Husserl set out to do in the “Philosophy of Arithmetic.” It was not the case that insight was lacking in the field of mathematics but that insight into this insight was lacking. Tied to this point is that Willard points out that on a Husserlian framework you can know  $x$  without knowing that you know  $x$ .<sup>191</sup> Hence, insight into God’s existence can be achieved for some without insight into this insight.<sup>192</sup> This would just make belief in God just one of the many areas where “deep-going analysis” is needed. Just like the mathematician could “see” certain deductive relations and proceed from this genuine insight without insight into the nature of this “seeing” so belief in God can proceed the same way. And it would be a mistake, on the basis of a lack of insight into insight (or knowing how you know that) to disregard the belief on that basis.

What Husserl is concerned with excluding as knowledge is people who are, for example, told to write down certain numbers and symbols and then perform mathematical operations but have no understanding of what anything means or why they are doing it, regardless of the reliability of their operations. Perhaps a good example here is where certain formulas are memorized when learning algebra but no explanation is given as to what they mean, what they stand for, why they work, etc. This aspect of Husserl’s thought would certainly cause tension between Husserl and some externalist theories (particularly naturalistic ones, which claim reliability alone to be sufficient for knowledge). But I see no point of contention here between Husserl and Plantinga but rather great concord. Plantinga requires a certain “maturity” for the

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<sup>191</sup> Dallas Willard, “Knowledge and Naturalism,” 33.

<sup>192</sup> C. S. Lewis entertains the idea that perhaps the ontological argument was such an attempt to explicate this insight into the insight that God must exist. See C. S. Lewis, “The Language of Religion,” in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper, (Grand Rapids, MI., Eerdmans 1985), 141.

*sensus divinitatis* to work and again compares it with arithmetical knowledge. The objection that HW is necessarily opposed to all aspects of externalism then is unfounded and rests on a confusion between insight and insight into types of insight.

Lastly, this again shows the disconnect between articulate reflection and the HW model. Just as the small child may have real insight into why  $2+2=4$  but not be able to adequately articulate it, especially if we raise questions concerning his use not of the numbers themselves but of symbols (i.e. '2', '+', '=' and '4'), so in other areas of knowledge where it is based on real insight there need not be any reliance upon some standard of articulation.

### 3. Intentionality and the Intentionality Threshold

The second challenge to HW being incompatible with aspects of certain externalist theories centers on the theory of intentionality it employs. The error being addressed here largely stems from Heidegger's criticism of Husserl. A criticism which was influential to the existentialism of Heidegger, Sartre and others. To begin with it is helpful to look at Heidegger and his theory of intentionality.

Heidegger saw Husserl as standing at the head of a long line of philosophy which went back to Descartes, where the ego is a "spectator."<sup>193</sup> Heidegger's theory of intentionality must be first and foremost be seen as a reaction against the Cartesian mode of thinking which considers man as basically a subject contemplating objects.<sup>194</sup> Primarily, both in terms of that which is most foundational and that which is most common, humans are not beings which

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<sup>193</sup> David Cooper, *Existentialism*, 48-49.

<sup>194</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Being and Time," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 69.

analyze things, like hammers, but beings which simply are thrown into the world, *Geworfenheit*, and then function in that environment (often without being conscious of how one functions in such a way).<sup>195</sup> This is to say they exist and function without being subjects contemplating objects. In contemplating objects subjects have an intentional direction towards them. So for Heidegger persons fundamentally exist: unintentionally, merely using or coping with objects.

As Hubert Dreyfus points out, this basic and unintentional way of living is “so pervasive and constant that he (Heidegger) simply calls it being-in-the-world.”<sup>196</sup> This sub-intentional coping is the standard *modus operandi* and the most basic way of being, from which all other forms arise. Individuals remain in this mode unless they encounter some sort of difficulty (e.g. a door handle not working). Upon such an encounter a person then become intentional and functions along the lines of the Cartesian paradigm, as a thinking subjects contemplating objects (that is to say, they become intentional). Dreyfus and Heidegger both agree that as the skill of the person increases in regards to the situation they are in they become less and less likely to rise to the intentional level.<sup>197</sup> This lack of intentionality because of the presence of skill (as opposed to the mere lack of problems) is called skilled coping.<sup>198</sup> The threshold for shifting from unintentional to intentional being, which is a combination of both the difficulty of the event and the skill of the agent, I shall call the threshold of intentionality (All actions then will either fall above this line, thus being intentional, or fall below it, thus being unintentional, for Heidegger at

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<sup>195</sup> Hubert Dreyfus, "Heidegger's Critique of the Husserl/Searle Account of Intentionality," *Social Research* 60, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 37.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

least.). What is of note here is that for Heidegger the primary, the basic way, of being in the world is an unintentional one. For Husserl it is intentional.

The relevancy of this to our current discussion is that it makes Husserl appear to be someone who is committed to the view that the reasons for our beliefs and actions are something for which we are consciously aware of all the time. This would again lend itself to Husserl being labeled an internalist of sorts. (Which is of course against our thesis that HW has application to both sides of the current discussion which puts it in a unique position to combine insights from both internalism and externalism.) There are two problems with arguing from this view of Husserl's theory of intentionality to internalism.

#### a. Problem One: Non-Linguistic Intentionality

Along the lines of the previous section, there is a great divorce between Husserl and current lingocentric models of thought. Just because we are aware of objects and have an intentionality which is related to them in some way (this "related to them in some way" will be flushed out more fully shortly) it does not mean that we have or experience some mental articulation of them. Consciousness just is not inherently articulate. Hence there can always be a breakdown between what we are aware of (what is open to us in an act of intuition or being used in symbolic representation) and what we can articulate (what we can bring into articulate reflection). This was precisely what was going on in the case concerning mathematics, dealt with in detail above. There was real insight into the nature of mathematics but there was a lack of insight into how this insight was brought about. So while there was knowledge being advanced there was not an understanding of how that knowledge was being advanced (This lack of a higher order knowledge clearly necessitated that there be a lack in articulate reflection). Husserl clearly was not attempting to advance knowledge of mathematics in the usual sense (by coming

up with new mathematical theories). He was concerned with developing a metamathematical theory (i.e. with providing an account of the advancement of knowledge in mathematics).

There is also “(a) “marginal” type of subordinate awareness.”<sup>199</sup> Willard’s example is of our awareness of the letters and symbols on a page.<sup>200</sup> The letters and symbols are objects, they have properties, we use them, our intentions are placed on them, but they are not the objects of our intentions. This draws us back to the confusion brought about by the “common assumption,” that if *noemata* are objects they are the objects of our intentions. This assumption is false. They are objects but they are not the objects of our intentions. Yet they nevertheless “bear” our intentions (i.e. they are part of the intentional stream). These subordinate objects (such as the letters on a page) then bear intentionality in a way analogous to *noemata*. The problem is that the common assumption holds that if *something*, some object, bears intentionality, then it is *the* intentional object (this is a more general statement of the common assumption given earlier, earlier it was limited only to *noemata*). And the intentional object is something which we are aware of in the fullest sense, not in a “marginal” or “subordinate” way. Hence for Heidegger (since he sees no subordinate type of awareness and represents the more common view of an intentional beam) there must be a very large extent to which we are not intentional at all. This is because the objects we are using, in many cases, are not *the* intentional object and we are not fully aware of them. Husserl would agree that we are always fully aware (i.e. never marginally aware) of the intentional object but that the common assumption overlooks the vast complexity of intentionality. Hence there are many objects which bear intentionality in any one act. There is

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<sup>199</sup> Dallas Willard, “A Critical Study of Intentionality I,” 196.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

only one intentional object but many of the subordinate or marginal type. Intentionality is not a laser like beam but a vast streaming web of intentionality.

Now if there can be a breakdown between what is going on in mental acts which have real insight into *the* intentional objects of mental acts and our explanation of these acts, as was the case in mathematics, then surely it seems there would be a similar division between objects which are subordinate and our ability to provide an explanation of them. Thus, both the intentional objects and subordinate objects can be things which we are aware of (are intentional about in either the full sense or the subordinate sense) but this does not require that we have articulate reflection concerning them (this is doubly so for the marginal or subordinate objects). I am not here arguing that Husserl's account of intentionality is better than Heidegger's but only that a strict internalism does not necessarily follow from Husserl's view.

#### b. Problem Two: The intentionality Threshold

There is a further way in which Husserl's theory can be divorced from necessitating a fairly traditional form of internalism. The previous section dealt with a specific aspects of Husserl's theory (its non-lingocentrism and its complex view on intentionality), which offered some distance between it and many contemporary models of internalism. This section deals with the setting of the intentionality threshold (something which as far as the author is aware is not a part of Husserl's theory) and how this setting is compatible with HW. However, one's view of how it ought to be set can alter, without losing compatibility to HW, and subsequently allow for one's theory to be more internalist or externalist.

We made reference above to what we called "the intentionality threshold" let us now develop this idea more fully. We noted that for Heidegger the threshold delineates the shift from

a non-intentional state to an intentional one. For Husserl this threshold would delineate intentions which are “marginal” (and so “marginally” aware of them) from intentional states which are the full focus of our consciousness. Let us call the type of intentions that fall above this threshold (the intentions which are not marginal) *first order intentionality*. And let us call the type of intentions which fall below it *second order intentionality*. So, for example, when I awake in the morning and decide to get out of bed I have a first order intentionality towards the state of affairs “my being out of bed.” But some of the actions I make and their corresponding states of affairs (such as pulling at the covers and “not having the covers on me”) represent a second order intentionality.<sup>201</sup>

Now the question that most concerns us here is “What determines the intentionality threshold, i.e. what determines whether I rise to first order intentionality or not?” For Heidegger the setting of the threshold was not something determined by the intentions of the agent. But rather by the circumstances the agent found themselves in. For Husserl though the setting of this threshold must be intentional. While Husserl’s view does not exclude factors external to the agent’s intentions from playing a role, such as skill (skill in the broad sense of the term which would include things like intelligence, coordination, strength, etc.) or environmental concerns, (e.g. difficulties due to the physical surroundings), the interference of other agents, etc., the fundamental setting of the threshold must be something set by the agent. Otherwise Husserl’s theory would at bottom be the same as Heidegger’s where intentionality is not the most basic

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<sup>201</sup> There are similar parallels to this development in Searle’s work which are attempted to be dealt with by Dreyfus. See Hubert Dreyfus, “Heidegger’s Critique of the Husserl/Searle Account of Intentionality.” Particularly Searle’s skier example *ibid.*, 30.

form of existence in the world.<sup>202</sup> The intentionality threshold is set intentionally then for Husserl. Two questions remain “Is the threshold set with a first order intentionality or a second order intentionality?” and “How *ought* it to be set?”

#### i. How the Threshold is Set

In regards to the first question, “Is the intentionality threshold set by a first or second order intention?” by means of a first order intention seems to be the correct answer to me. The answer to the question hinges on how one interprets the mental acts which have (as one of their parts) the setting of the threshold. Let us take tying one’s shoes for an example. This is something that we all start out unable to do and then, hopefully, learn to do. While in the process of learning we intend to tie our shoes. And these early attempts are certainly at the first order level of intentionality. Now though we tie our shoes “automatically,” “without thinking about it.” Most of us probably cannot recall an instance where we entertained and intended (first order) the thought “I’m not going to pay attention to tying my shoes anymore.” At first the lack of this specific thought process might seem to indicate that the threshold is set by a side-effect of what we repeatedly intend on the first order level (thus becoming something which is “marginal” in our mental acts and so correspond to the second order level of intentionality). However, I think what might be our initial interpretation of this process is incorrect. What we are really intending in the beginning of these processes, like our example of shoe tying, is not “to tie our shoes” but “to *learn* to tie our shoes.” (The language above actually reflects this to some extent: “in the

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<sup>202</sup> Unfortunately whether Husserl or Heidegger’s theory is better equipped to explain our own nature and our experiences of the world is something which lies outside of the domain of this paper. I should like to point out that I think Heidegger’s view will have problems when it comes to moral experiences and that it goes against what we experience about how we live and grow in the world. As far back as we can go in our minds we see ourselves able to do things, follow complex patterns of thought, focus on things, etc., on the second order level of intentionality only after we have devoted a significant amount of time on the first order level trying to do it, follow the train of thought, not be distracted, etc.

process of learning to tie our shoes.”) This is to become shoetiers, persons who readily and easily tie shoes. And of course we realize that tying our shoes today and tomorrow, and so forth, is the means to our end. And intending to be shoetiers does not force us to hold that we never intend here and now to tie our shoes on the first order level (especially not while we are learning to tie them). But since we did first order intend to become shoetiers then upon becoming capable at tying our shoes we began to do this process on a second order level. The setting of the threshold then corresponds to the initial intention, first order intention to become shoetiers, and is so set by first order intentions.

#### ii. How Should the Threshold be Set?

Now one of the implications of the fact that the threshold is set intentionally is that it can be set correctly or incorrectly. To change examples, a person may go through the same process as the boy who learns to tie his shoes in learning to drive. And many intend to become capable drivers (persons who naturally and easily drive well). But because of pride, laziness, inobservance, etc., one may falsely take it to be the case that one is a capable driver. This hasty conclusion can, nevertheless, result in a shift at the intentionality threshold. Here we must remember Husserl’s account of knowledge given above and the concept of fulfillment. The situation which stood as a possible fulfillment for some person’s intentions, call him Jack, was his actually being a capable driver. And fulfillment of that intention is brought about when he finds himself to be as he intended. This is a direct parallel to Husserl’s account of knowledge. If Jack allows desire to outrun knowledge then he will take what is not a case of fulfillment to be an actual case of fulfillment. He will then begin to function below the threshold when driving.

This is a development of Willard's claim that one of the dangers in human life is that our lives will run off of desire rather than knowledge.<sup>203</sup>

The development of the intentionality threshold given has considered actions as opposed to beliefs (this was done because it seems easiest to understand in regards to actions). But the threshold is equally applicable to belief. In fact, no strong delineation should be made between its application in regards to action as opposed to belief. The strong connection between the thresholds application to action and belief and the parallels that we saw with Husserl's theory of knowledge is precisely because of the strong connection between belief and action. As Willard says "Belief is the rails upon which our life runs."<sup>204</sup> And since the threshold is partially set on the basis of our beliefs (e.g. if we believe we are competent drivers then we will allow for certain actions to fall below the threshold) then we have a responsibility to ensure that our beliefs are based off of real insight rather than desire. As Willard says, "All of us bear a primary ethical responsibility to make sure that how we are speaking and thinking of things is as they are, that is that our thoughts and words are true."<sup>205</sup> All of this reinforces the normative aspect of the setting of the intentionality threshold but it does not answer the question of *how* it ought to be set.

Husserl recognized that we often do not carry our thoughts through to a pure act of "seeing" but we assure ourselves, sometimes wrongly, that we could do so.<sup>206</sup> At this point we should clearly get before our minds Husserl's theory concerning knowledge and quoting Willard

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<sup>203</sup> See Dallas Willard, "The Genius of Jesus," lecture given at Veritas Forum (Ohio State University 2002), 7:30ff (particularly the comments around the 10:40 mark). This lecture is available for free at <http://www.learnoutloud.com/Catalog/Religion-and-Spirituality/Christianity/The-Genius-of-Jesus/22208>

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 6:58.

<sup>205</sup> Dallas Willard, "Knowledge and Naturalism," 34.

<sup>206</sup> Dallas Willard, "Knowledge," 153.

is very helpful in this regard. “In the dispositional sense we “have” knowledge, are knowledgeable, when we are in a position or are qualified to actualize the path toward the re-cognitive union of concept and object through perception (read as “an act of “seeing””) when we choose.”<sup>207</sup> The intentionality threshold deals with this exact issue of how often should we “carry through to a pure act of perception” (that is how often we are supposed to re-actualize the path toward cognitive union). It is important to notice that knowledge is independent of this re-actualization (and this independence alone makes HW more compatible with externalist theories than is normally thought).

However, it should be noted that if the threshold is set too high, resulting in us being second order intentional more often than we ought to be, this will result in our never actualizing the union in the first place (such was the case in our example with Jack and becoming a competent driver). Therefore no matter how reliable one might be if there is never a point where fulfillment is actually brought about in act of “seeing” then one does not have knowledge. So while HW would be compatible with certain externalist theories it would not be compatible with a strict reliabilism like Goldman’s. Setting the threshold correctly makes sure that the union is actualized in the first place (without going so far as to require re-actualization of the union in every case). Furthermore, how one holds that the threshold ought to be set in order to have knowledge will determine how internalist or externalist one is. The specific level of the threshold is not something that Husserl or Willard seem to address. HW then is compatible with different interpretations of how the threshold ought to be set.

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 152.

#### D. Conclusion

HW then is not strictly an internalist theory. It is open to certain externalist insights, such as Plantinga's *sensus divinitatis* and HW shows a marked difference between it and the current lingocentrism of contemporary theories. Furthermore, marginal intentions and the intentionality threshold allow for a range of externalist or internalist theories to be accommodated by HW.

## V. Closing

### A. Additional Insight Needed in Understanding Phenomenology

The full application of Husserl's theory and Willard's understanding and application of it to the current state of affairs in epistemology has not been considered. This has been more of an introduction to and explanation of their theory and an argument for its application to the current situation in epistemology. This thesis has also tried to address the concern that HW is only compatible with internalist theories. Such a view would make HW single sided to its application in the current discussion and it would, at minimal, make it less likely to provide insight going forward in the internalist-externalist discussion. HW, however, has a far broader application than that. Much more remains to be explored though in discussing HW and its application to current epistemology. The theory and implications of proximate and ultimate fulfillment has been largely untouched here in this paper. Also HW's emphasis on the importance of noetic structures (which opens it up to some coherentist insights) has not been addressed. Husserl's alignment with Aristotle in that knowledge is always of essences has been largely untouched. Much more can and needs to be explored on the phenomenological side of this discussion.

### B. Additional Insight Needed in Applying Phenomenology

Also much more needs to be said in applying phenomenology to current epistemology and reorienting the current discussion around phenomenology; nothing has been said here in this paper regarding Gettier problems or any other problem in current epistemology. However, a reorienting of epistemology around phenomenological insight does not require a total dismissal of all the work done thus far nor does it promise to assuage all of the current problems (it is helpful here to be reminded of Willard's pessimism concerning a full definition of knowledge).

Perhaps things like Gettier cases are reminders of this human limitation or perhaps Phenomenology will provide much needed insight here (please understand this “or” inclusively). The change in epistemology argued for here is meant to be like a blanket of snow falling over a vast landscape. Everything is changed but much remains fundamentally the same. The same deep valleys and peaks still remain and are recognizable. Perhaps some peaks will now be even harder to climb. And perhaps some lakes easier to traverse. I expect many of the same epistemic puzzles will remain. Gettier problems and many other familiar faces from the world of epistemic troubles (Hopefully Davidson’s Swampman is cordial) re-emerge albeit in a different context (a phenomenological one and one in which we are armed with the additional tools of evidenz, “seeing,” the reductions, and important distinctions between types of immanence and clarification and explanation). Husserl did not see himself as putting an end to all of the questions but of offering a way forward in exploring “beautiful” and underdeveloped theories where “deep-going analysis is needed everywhere.”<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Logical Investigations (Volume I)*,” 128.

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