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# HUSSERL'S THEORY OF INTENTIONALITY

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This essay is a critical examination of how Edmund Husserl, in his appropriation of Franz Brentano's concept of intentionality into his phenomenology, deals with the very issues that shaped Brentano's theory of intentionality. These issues concern the proper criterion for distinguishing mental from physical phenomena and the right explanation for the independence of the intentionality of mental phenomena from the existence or non-existence of their objects. Husserl disagrees with Brentano's views that intentionality is the distinguishing feature of all mental phenomena and that the mental status of intentional objects is what explains the said independence. The crucial concept in Husserl's theory of intentionality is the *noema* of consciousness, which functions in the same way as Gottlob Frege's *sense* in the latter's theory of semantics. This essay argues that Husserl's alternative solutions to the problems of Brentano run into conflict either with the desired rigor of his phenomenology or with the actual workings of language.

## Introduction

As a discipline, Edmund Husserl generally defines phenomenology as the science of *pure phenomena* or *essences,* whose primary goal is to make philosophy worthy of the title "the most rigorous science." As a philosophical method, Husserl describes it as a process whereby presuppositions are put aside or are said to be "bracketed." Once this is done, one is supposed to arrive at knowledge that is absolutely necessary or, as Husserl puts it, *apodictically certain.* This process of bracketing presuppositions is carried out within the framework of the relationship between consciousness and the objects towards which it is directed. This essential feature of consciousness that directs or relates it to its objects is what

is called "intentionality." Husserl describes this feature as the phenomenon whereby "consciousness is always a consciousness of something." Thus, being the framework within which the bracketing of presuppositions is to be carried out, analysis of the nature of <24> intentionality is an integral part of Husserl's phenomenological investigations. The theory of intentionality that Husserl eventually developed, however, was influenced by the views of Franz Brentano and Gottlob Frege. It was from Brentano that Husserl took the concept of intentionality; while it was from Frege that Husserl derived the conceptual distinctions that he needed to resolve the theoretical difficulties of Brentano's own theory of intentionality.

This essay is a critical examination of how Husserl, in his appropriation of Brentano's concept of intentionality into his phenomenology, deals with the very issues that shaped Brentano's theory of intentionality. This essay is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the goals and method of Husserl's phenomenology and the significant role that intentionality plays in it. It also discusses the development of Husserl's theory of intentionality from its early version in the *Logical investigations* (1982a) to its mature version in the *Ideas* (1982b). The second section discusses the theoretical motivations and difficulties of Brentano's theory of intentionality, and examines Husserl's alternative solutions to these theoretical difficulties. The third section discusses Frege's influences on Husserl's theory of intentionality. Specifically, it explores the similarities and differences between Husserl's concept of *noema* and Frege's concept of *sense,* and determines the implications of such differences on the plausibility of Husserl's alternative solutions to the theoretical difficulties of Brentano's theory.

**Phenomenology and Intentionality**

In his *Phenomenology and the crisis of philosophy* (1965), Husserl observes that the course that philosophy has taken during his time makes it impossible for philosophy to realize what it is meant to be, that is, to become the "most rigorous science." He (1965: 72) writes:

> Thus philosophy, according to its historical purpose the loftiest and most rigorous of all sciences, representing as it does humanity's imperishable demand for pure and absolute knowledge...is incapable of assuming the form of rigorous science.

In Husserl's analysis, this is basically due to the mistaken belief that philosophy, to be a legitimate and respectable discipline, should strive for scientific objectivity by adopting the methods of the natural sciences. This belief is what Husserl (1965: 82) calls *naturalism*:

> Since naturalism, which wanted to establish philosophy both on a basis of strict science and as a strict science, appears completely discredited, now the aim of its method seems to be discredited too, and all the more so because among non-naturalists, too, there is a widespread tendency to look upon positive science <25> as the only strict science and to recognize as scientific philosophy only one that is based on this sort of science.

Husserl strongly believes that naturalism is not the proper route to take to raise the status of philosophy to that of a rigorous science. Philosophy, in following the methods of the natural sciences, is instead heading towards its doom. And according to Husserl, this is because the natural sciences themselves are not yet rigorous. As Husserl (1965: 85) explains: "All natural science is naive in regard to its point of departure. The nature that it will investigate is for it simply there." Accordingly, the natural sciences are not critical of their assumptions, for they accept without prior investigation the reality of nature or the physical world, which is their object of investigation. The point here is not that the belief in the reality of nature is highly questionable, or that it is false, but that a rigorous science should first put such a belief in a firm or secure ground. Among the human sciences, Husserl (1965: 91), however, considers *empirical* or *scientific psychology* as the one that is in the right direction in its study of consciousness. In this regard, Husserl is basically following the view Descartes that consciousness is the proper starting point of philosophizing. But since empirical psychology also uses or tries to adopt the methods of the natural sciences, such discipline also falls short of being rigorous.

Since he cannot use the methods of the natural sciences for his phenomenological project, Husserl then devices his own method that will make the study of consciousness rigorous. He calls his method the "phenomenological reduction," which is generally a process that suspends beliefs about the contingent features of phenomena (or the objects of phenomenological investigation, which include consciousness and its objects) so that analysis will be focused on the necessary features of phenomena. Husserl called this process by various names: *"epoche,"* "bracketing of presuppositions," "suspension of judgments," and "putting judgments in abeyance." This method is basically a development from the Cartesian

methodical doubting. As already mentioned, Husserl follows Descartes in making consciousness as the starting point of philosophizing; only that Descartes's investigations were not rigorous enough. For one, Descartes's methodical doubting basically leads to a negation of the reality of the physical world, which is already a judgment in itself. For Husserl, a really rigorous approach is one that neither affirms nor denies such reality, but that merely suspends judgment on such reality. In addition, Descartes, in negating the reality of the physical world, runs into an inconsistency. For while he doubts the reality of the physical world, Descartes's framework in analyzing the nature of consciousness still assumes such reality. This is manifested in Descartes's view that aside from the attribute of thought, consciousness is defined by the attribute of non-extensionality, which is the defining attribute of the physical world. In the following passages from the *Ideas* (1982b: 58-60), Husserl explains the difference between his phenomenological reduction and Descartes's methodical doubting: <26>

> One procedure, possible at any time, is the *attempt to doubt universally* which *Descartes* carried out for an entirely different purpose with a view toward bringing out a sphere of absolutely indubitable being. We start from here, but at the same time emphasize that the attempt to doubt universally shall serve us only as a *methodic expedient*.... one can say that his attempt to doubt universally is properly an attempt to negate universally. Here we disregard this part... *We single out only the phenomenon of "parenthesizing" or "excluding".... a certain refraining from judgment [24] which is compatible with the unshaken conviction of truth, even with the unshakable conviction of evident truth.*

Husserl's phenomenological reduction, according to the reading of scholars like Smith and McIntyre (1984: 93-104), comes in three stages: first, the *psychological reduction*; second, the *transcendental reduction*; and third, the *eidetic reduction*. The goal of the psychological reduction is to limit the analysis of phenomena to their immanence (or "appearance") in consciousness, without regard to their possible forms or relations outside of consciousness. This is done by suspending or bracketing judgments about the world seen from the *natural standpoint.* This world refers to the pre-given, pre-philosophical world, and it includes all our common-sense beliefs about the world around us. For instance, when we perceive other persons, there is a constellation of assumptions that go with this perception. We believe that they exist independently of our perception of them, that they are of certain kinds, like being our enemies or friends, being of a certain nationality, and many others. But

all these assumptions have not gone philosophical scrutiny, we just assume them as a matter of course. At the heart of this pre-philosophical world, according to Husserl, is the *General Thesis* that the objects of consciousness exist independently of consciousness. As previously discussed, the natural sciences assume the general thesis as a matter of course, and this is why they are not yet rigorous.

Transcendental reduction, on the other hand, does the reduction on the subject of consciousness, suspending commonsensical or pre-philosophical beliefs about this subject, like its personality, historical identity, its status of being a metaphysical substance and as something connected to a body. Husserl calls the residue of transcendental reduction the "transcendental ego." Stripped of the contingent features of consciousness, the transcendental ego is pure consciousness, without personality and identity. In this light, Husserl's transcendental ego is not the same as the Cartesian ego, but, as it were, its rigorous form. Lastly, the eidetic reduction further carries out the reduction done on both the objects and subject of consciousness until one arrives at the point where there is a direct knowledge, or in the language of Husserl, a *direct seeing,* of the essences. This kind of knowledge is thus the final goal of the phenomenological reductions; and accordingly, it is the attainment of such knowledge that will raise the status of philosophy to a rigorous science. And this explains why Husserl sometimes defines phenomenology as the science of essences. <27>

Thus we can see that the reductions are done on the two polarities of consciousness: the subject and the object of consciousness. The structure that governs the relationship between the subject and the object of consciousness is referred to as "intentionality." Intentionality, as a necessary structure of consciousness, is thus a "phenomenological residue"; meaning, it is not something that can be suspended or be included in the bracketing, for it is the very framework within which the reductions are carried out. This, in general, is the sense in which the analysis of the nature of intentionality constitutes an integral part of Husserl's phenomenological investigations. And this also explains why in the *Ideas* Husserl (1982b: 199-210) refers to "intentionality" as "the principal theme of phenomenology." As Husserl (1982: 202) writes:

> The concept of intentionality, apprehended in its undetermined range, as we have apprehended it, is a wholly indispensable fundamental concept which is the starting point... of phenomenology.

Husserl's early investigations on the nature of intentionality are contained in his analysis of the nature and structure of "act" in *Logical investigations* (1982a). "Act" is Husserl's preferred term for an intentional mental state. To avoid possible ambiguities, we shall instead use the term "mental act" to refer to Husserl's *act.* In the same work, Husserl analyzes mental acts in terms of the following distinctions: between *real content* and *ideal content*, and between *quality* and *matter* (see Sajama and Kamppinen 1987: 64-69). The real content of a mental act refers to the immanent content of a mental act and is, therefore, a part of the mental act itself, while the *ideal content* refers to the transcendental content of a mental act and is, therefore, not a part of the mental act. The ideal content, on the one hand, is what directs a mental act towards an actual object outside the mental act. The real content, on the other hand, is merely the instantiation of the ideal content in a mental act. Thus, it is the ideal content, not the real content, which makes a mental act intentional.

With regard to the second distinction, the quality of a mental act refers to the mental act's type or psychological mode, while the matter of a mental act refers to the content or what the mental act is about. In the following passages in the *Logical investigations* (quoted in Sajama and Kamppinnen 1987: 68), examples are given that show this distinction:

> The two assertions '2 x 2 = 4' and 'Ibsen is the principal founder of modern dramatic realism' are both, *qua* assertions, of one kind; each is qualified as an assertion, and their common feature is their *judgment-quality.* The one, however judges one content and the other another content. To distinguish such 'contents' from other notions of 'content' we shall speak here of the matter of judgments. We shall draw similar distinctions between *quality* and *matter* in the case of all acts. <28>

This distinction can be further clarified by the following examples. The *belief that P* and the *belief that Q* have the same quality for they are both beliefs, but they have different matters in that the first belief is about P while the second belief is about Q. Or: the *belief that P* and the *wish that P* have different qualities in that the former is a belief while the latter is a wish, but they have the same matter in that both are about P. Husserl believes that the first distinction also applies to the second distinction, such that, on the one hand, there are real quality and real matter and, on the other hand, there are ideal quality and ideal matter. In this light, the ideal quality and ideal matter are what, in the final analysis, comprise the ideal content of a mental act. Husserl later on became dissatisfied with these distinctions and eventually rejected

them (see Sajama and Kamppinnen 1987: 68). One obvious reason is that they result in equivocations.

In the *Ideas* (1982b), Husserl adopts a more simplified analysis. Mental acts comprise two components: the *hyletic data* (Husserl's term for the data of sensations—akin to Russell's *sense-data*) and the *noesis*. The noesis is like the real content while the hyletic data is like matter in the previous quality-matter distinction. The counterpart of the ideal content, in this new version, is the *noema.* And just like the ideal content, the noema is transcendent to the mental act and is what makes the mental act intentional. The noesis is immanent in the mental act, just like the real content, and is merely the instantiation of the noema in the mental act. The noema, however, is the crucial concept in this mature version of Husserl's theory of intentionality. We shall explain this concept further in the following sections.

**Brentano and Husserl**

Husserl, as we have previously indicated, is not original in his concept of intentionality. By his own admission, he took it from his former mentor, Franz Brentano, who, incidentally, was also the one who lured Husserl into philosophy after being preoccupied for some time with mathematics. Brentano's theory of intentionality is, in general, a consequence of his efforts to deal with the issues engendered by his project to raise the status of psychology to that of a science. These issues concern the following: first, the appropriate criterion for distinguishing mental from physical phenomena; and second, the appropriate explanation for the independence of the intentionality of mental phenomena from the existence or non-existence of their intentional objects (or for why the intentionality of mental phenomena is not affected by the possible non-existence of their objects).

In his classic book, *Psychology from an empirical standpoint,* Brentano embarks on the project of making psychology scientific. Brentano believes that once psychology achieves the status of science, it shall be the rightful bearer of the label "the ultimate science." He (1973: 3) says:

> The other sciences are, in fact, only the foundation; psychology is, as it were, the crowning pinnacle. All the other sciences are a <29> preparation for psychology; it is dependent on all of them. But it is said to exert a most powerful reciprocal influence upon them. It is supposed to renew man's entire life and hasten and assure progress. And if, on the one hand, it appears to be the pinnacle of the towering structure of

> science, on the other hand, it is destined to become the basis of society and of its noblest possessions, and, by this very fact, to become the basis of all scientific endeavors as well.

Brentano believes that the main reason why psychology, during his time, has not yet achieved a scientific status is the fact that the boundaries of its subject matter have not yet been properly clarified. It is either that the kind of phenomena that psychology studies already belongs to a natural science, say to biology, in which case psychology is dispensable or negligible, or that it belongs to metaphysics, in which case psychology can never be a science. Brentano observes that it all started with the definition which Aristotle gave to *psychology* that had become standard for philosophers for a long time; namely, *Psychology is the science of the soul.* The word *soul* here generally refers to a metaphysical substance responsible for giving life to an organism. In Aristotle's own words, *the soul is the principle of life*; and, given his substance-accident dichotomy, he regarded the soul as the substance that bears the accidental features of an organism. Under this definition, psychology had a very broad subject matter, for it included all the activities (or in Aristotle's phraseology, *potentialities*) of the different kinds of soul identified by Aristotle, namely: the *vegetative souls* of plants (whose activities include nutrition, growth, and reproduction), the *sensitive souls* of animals (whose activities include all the activities of vegetative souls plus sensations and locomotion), and the *rational souls* of humans (whose activities include all the activities of the sensitive souls plus reason and will).

Later on, the scope of the field was substantially narrowed down to the activities of the human soul, and *psychology* was thus defined as *the science of the human soul.* This development was brought about by two reasons: the first was that psychologists no longer found it plausible to attribute consciousness, or soul, to plants; and the second was that *physiology* took over the investigation of the activities of animals. One advantage of this new definition was that it somehow clarified the distinction between psychology and the other natural sciences. Accordingly, psychology was to study the properties and laws of the human soul, while the natural sciences were to study the properties and laws of physical bodies. However, this definition still contains the assumption of the previous one—that the human soul is a metaphysical substance—which makes it still unscientific.

Brentano next considers a modern definition given to *psychology*; namely: *Psychology is the science of mental phenomena.* Brentano thinks that this definition is better than the previous ones primarily because it is free of the metaphysical assumption of the two. Mental phenomena need not assume the existence of metaphysical substance and, while the existence of a <30> metaphysical substance is controversial, the existence of mental phenomena is not. However, though this definition is in the right direction, what is still lacking is a criterion that clearly demarcates the realm of mental phenomena from the realm of physical phenomena. The criterion given by some philosophers (e.g., Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant) in this regard was the concept of *extensionality,* according to which, physical phenomena are extended (meaning, they are spatial, perceivable, and quantifiable) whereas mental phenomena are not. But this criterion does not satisfy Brentano, for extensionality is not an exclusive property of mental phenomena and such criterion defines the mental in a negative way (see Brentano 1973: 86-87).[1] The criterion that satisfies Brentano is the one contained in the writings of the Scholastics, wherein mental phenomena are described as *intentional*; meaning, as directed at some object. Brentano (1973: 88) writes:

> Every mental phenomen[on] is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomen[on] includes something as object within itself, although [these phenomena] do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on.

Thus, with the criterion provided by the Scholastics for the realm of mental phenomena, Brentano eventually regards the scientific status of psychology as finally guaranteed. Following the Scholastics, what distinguishes mental phenomena from the physical ones for Brentano, is, therefore, the intentionality of mental phenomena. Accordingly, mental phenomena are intentional in that they are directed at some objects, while physical phenomena are not. For instance, beliefs, hopes, and desires are necessarily about some objects; while tables, chairs, mountains, and rocks are not.

In the passages just quoted, Brentano lays down the two important theses that constitute his theory of intentionality: the *psychological thesis* which takes intentionality as

the necessary and sufficient mark of the mental, and the *ontological thesis* which holds that the status of intentional objects is mental or that intentional objects are mental entities (or entities that are *immanent in consciousness*) (see Harney 1984: 15-16). Let us begin our examination with Brentano's psychological thesis. The critical issue in this thesis is whether it is correct in claiming that intentionality is the distinguishing mark of all mental phenomena. There is no doubt that intentionality is a necessary mental feature, but is it also a sufficient criterion for distinguishing the mental from the physical? Most contemporary philosophers of mind do not think so. For instance, John Searle, in his *Intentionality: An essay in the philosophy of mind* (1983: 1) <31> claims that while it is true that some mental states, like beliefs, hopes, fears, and desires are always about some objects, it is also obvious that some mental states, like some forms of nervousness and elation, and undirected anxiety are not (see also Dennett 1969). The point of Searle is that while intentionality is a necessary feature of mentality, it is not, however, a sufficient criterion for the same. Searle believes that there are other criteria for mentality, such as subjectivity and quality.

Brentano, however, was aware of the possible counter-examples to his psychological thesis (examples of mental states that are not intentional), and he attempted to show that some of these counter-examples are not really what they purport to be. Foremost of these counter-examples is the sensation of pain, which many believe to be non-intentional. The following shows how Brentano (1973: 82-83) tries to save his psychological thesis by arguing that the sensation of pain is also intentional:

> Yet it may still be the case that with respect to some kinds of sensory pleasure and pain feelings, someone may really be of the opinion that there are no presentations involved, even in our sense. At least we cannot deny that there is a certain temptation to do this. This is true, for example, with regard to the feelings present when one is cut or burned. When someone is cut he has no presentation of touch, and someone who is burned has no feeling of warmth, but in both cases there is only the feeling of pain. Nevertheless there is no doubt that even here the feeling is based upon a presentation. In cases such as this we always have a presentation of a definite spatial location which we usually characterize in relation to some visible and touchable part of our body. We say that our foot or our hand hurts, that this or that part of the body is in pain.

Brentano, at this point, uses the term "presentations" to refer to intentional objects. He argues that it is not true that the sensation of pain is not intentional, for the presentation of such sensation is its spatial location in the body, like the head, hand, or foot. In other words,

pain is intentional in that it is directed at the particular part of the body in which it is spatially located. For instance, the sensation of pain in a headache is directed at the head. It is not difficult to discern that Brentano is equivocating here. That pain points to a particular part of the body is not the same sense in which mental states are said to be intentional or directed at some objects. That a belief is intentional has nothing to do with its spatial location, like that it occurs in the brain, or that it is a belief of some particular person. This is most probably the reason why this argument of Brentano has not been taken seriously—it is simply dismissed as a desperate attempt to save his psychological thesis.

Let us now examine Husserl's position on Brentano's psychological thesis. The question in order is: *Does Husserl agree with Brentano's* <32> *psychological thesis?* If we will simply base our judgment on Husserl's famous expression for the intentionality of consciousness, i.e., "consciousness is always a consciousness of something," I think it is likely that we will be tempted to think that Husserl agrees with the psychological thesis of Brentano. And this is what I think precisely happens in the case of Tim Crane in his essay "Intentionality as the mark of the mental" (1998). In this essay, Crane claims that Sartre and Husserl subscribe to the psychological thesis of Brentano. Thus (1998: 229):

> 'It is the very nature of consciousness to be intentional' said Jean-Paul Sartre, and 'consciousness that ceases to be consciousness of something would *ipso facto* cease to exist.' Sartre here endorses the central doctrine of Husserl's phenomenology, itself inspired by a famous idea of Brentano's: that intentionality, the mind's 'direction upon its objects', is what is distinctive of mental phenomena.

It is true that there are occasions where Husserl seems to mean by this expression that all forms of consciousness or mental phenomena exhibit intentionality. Observe, for instance, the following remark he makes in *Phenomenology and the crisis of philosophy* (1965: 90): "To the extent, however, that every consciousness is 'consciousness-of,' the essential study of consciousness includes also that of consciousness-meaning and consciousness-objectivity as such."

However, there are also instances when Husserl qualifies that not all mental phenomena are intentional. Consider now his remarks by Husserl in his *Ideas* (1982b: 199):

> Intentionality is an essential peculiarity of the sphere of mental process taken universally in so far as all mental processes in some manner or other share in it; nevertheless, we cannot say of *each* mental process that it has intentionality in the

> same sense as when we say, e. g., of each mental process...that it is a temporal [mental process].

One may well accuse Husserl of inconsistency or, at the very least, ambivalence. But according to some scholars, the passage above contains the definitive position of Husserl. Seppo Sajama and Matti Kamppinen (1987: 118-19), for instance, explain that Husserl, in this passage, is saying that though there are non-intentional mental phenomena, these phenomena are somehow connected to mental phenomena that are intentional (see also Ingarden 1972: 102). Sajama and Kamppinen cite sensations as examples of those mental phenomena that Husserl considers as non-intentional but which are, nevertheless, connected to intentional mental phenomena. The following passages from the *Logical investigations* (1982a: 573) lends support to the interpretation of Sajama and Kamppinen: <33>

> And though this reference is realized in intentional experiences, no one would think of calling the referred sensations intentional. It is rather the case that our sensations are here functioning as presentative contents in perceptual acts, or (to use a possibly misleading phrase) that our sensations here receive an objective 'interpretation' or 'taking-up'. They themselves are not acts, but acts are constituted through them, wherever, that is, intentional characters like a perceptual interpretation lay hold of them, and as it were, animate them.

David W. Smith and Ronald McIntyre (1984: 2), in their lucid book *Husserl and intentionality: A study of mind, meaning, and language*, also share this interpretation:

> Unlike Brentano, Husserl does not insist that every mental occurrence be characterized as intentional. In particular, he takes pure sensations (what he calls the "sensory material", or "hyle", of perception) to be non-intentional, though he suggests that they occur only as constituents of complex intentional phenomena, specifically perceptions (cf. *LI,* V, § 15; *Ideas,* § 36, 85). And he suggests that feelings and moods, of the sort mentioned above, are sometimes better classified with sensations than with the intentional (*LI,* V, § 15)

In the light of these considerations, it is therefore more plausible to believe that Husserl's famous remark that "consciousness is always a consciousness of something" does not cover all mental phenomena. It only applies to what he calls "acts," which refer to intentional mental states. This leads to the conclusion that Husserl does not accept the psychological thesis of Brentano. Now Husserl may have been right in his disagreement with

Brentano's psychological thesis, as this position is a mainstream position in contemporary philosophy of mind. But the question is: *How does Husserl's disagreement with Brentano's psychological thesis relate to his over-all phenomenological project?* I believe that it is a big blow to the desired rigor and universality of his phenomenology. For how can phenomenology be rigorous and universal when it has a limited application—when it does not include the non-intentional mental phenomena in its scope? Smith and McIntyre (1984: 2-3) explain that it is the hope of Husserl that by studying the intentional mental phenomena he will also be able to deal with the non-intentional ones, since non-intentional mental phenomena, anyway, are connected to intentional mental phenomena. Smith and McIntyre (1984: 2-3) go on:

> … it is not Husserl's aim to impose intentionality on every mental event. His concern is rather to provide a general theory of intentionality for clearly intentional phenomena and, within the framework of such a theory, to develop an account of the role <34> played by sensations and any other non-intentional mental phenomena in more complex events of consciousness, such as perceptions, that are intentional. In this way Husserl includes even these non-intentional phenomena in the study of intentionality.

But what Smith and McIntyre are saying about how Husserl intends to deal with the non-intentional phenomena was not really done by Husserl. After the passage, Smith and McIntyre never dealt with the subject again. And this obviously is due to the fact that Husserl himself did not explain what exactly is the relationship between the intentional and the non-intentional mental phenomena. Sajama and Kamppinen (1987: 118-19) attest to this:

> But how could depression be connected with intentional mental phenomena? Unlike sensation, depression typically occurs alone. In other words, if depression is not part of any more comprehensive intentional mental state, how can it be connected with intentional phenomena? We could not find an answer to this question in Husserl's writings.

I come now to the ontological thesis of Brentano's theory of intentionality, according to which, the objects of intentional phenomena are immanent in consciousness. That is to say, these objects do not exist outside or are transcendent to consciousness; hence, they are neither physical nor abstract entities. These objects, to be more precise, are mental entities. Brentano was led to this position by his particular way of accounting for a peculiar feature of intentionality, which refers to the possibility of mental phenomena to be directed at objects

that do not actually exist. Brentano lucidly explains this peculiarity in the following passage from his *Psychology: From an empirical standpoint* (1973: 271-72):

> What is characteristic of every mental activity is, as I believe I have shown, the reference to something as an object. In this respect, every mental activity seems to be something relational.... If I take something relative...from among the broad class of comparative relations, something larger or smaller for example, then, if the larger thing exists, the smaller one must exist too.... Something like what is true of relations of similarity and difference holds true of relations of cause and effect. For there to be such relation, both the thing that causes and the thing that is caused must exist.... It is entirely different with mental reference. If someone thinks of something, the one who is thinking must certainly exist, but the object of his thinking need not exist at all.

In this passage, Brentano makes a distinction between ordinary relations, such as comparative relations (similarity and difference), causal relations, and <35> intentional relations (such as the relation between the subject of thinking and its object). If we conceive of relations as involving two terms, say X and Y, then in the case of ordinary relations, for such relations to obtain requires the existence of both X and Y. But in the case of intentional relations, for such relations to obtain only the subject of thinking needs to exist, the object of thinking need not exist. For instance, it is utterly impossible for the relation "is sitting next to" to obtain between Nap and Cathy if both persons do not exist. But it is very much possible for the relation "believes in" between the subject Daniela and the object Santa Claus even if only Daniela exists. Various scholars have christened this peculiarity of the intentional relation with different names. For instance, John Perry (n.d.) calls it the "no-reference problem" while Smith and McIntyre (1984: 11) calls it the property of "existence-independence." For our purposes I shall adopt Perry's name for it. The *no-reference problem*, along with the *co-reference problem,* constitutes an acid test for any theory of intentionality. A good theory of intentionality must be able to consistently account for these two problems. The problem with Brentano and Husserl is that they only directly deal with the no-reference problem. This, however, does not prevent us from also investigating how their respective theories would resolve the co-reference problem.

To begin with, Brentano sees the solution to the no-reference problem by analyzing the status of the intentional objects. He believes that this peculiarity of the intentional relations is brought about by a peculiarity in the nature of the intentional objects. Thus, the relevant question for Brentano has become: *What must the nature of the intentional objects be*

*such that intentional relations are indifferent to the existence and non-existence of things in the actual world?* And the answer of Brentano is that these intentional objects are mental entities, which exist only within consciousness. In this way, the intentional phenomena are assured of having objects even if their counterparts in the actual world do not exist. If one, for example, believes in Santa Claus, the object of belief is not, for Brentano, something that exists in the actual world for there is no such entity, but the mental entity *Santa Claus*. In his book *The true and the evident* (1966: 27), Brentano explains this in the following way:

> In contrasting the A which is contemplated or thought about with the A which is actual, are we saying that the *contemplated A* is itself nothing actual or true? By no means! The *contemplated A* can be something actual and true *without* being an actual A. It is an actual contemplated A....

What Brentano is saying here is that the *contemplated A* and the *actual A* have separate existence. It is not the case that if the *actual A* ceases to exist, so does the *contemplated A.* For the *contemplated A* is as actual as the *actual A.* Thus, the mental phenomenon about the *contemplated A* is not affected by the existence or non-existence of the *actual A.* This means that if the *actual A* does not exist, the mental phenomenon about the *contemplated A* remains intentional <36> precisely because the object—the *contemplated A*—towards which it is directed remains actual or existing. Brentano's explanation works, perhaps, for our beliefs about centaurs, Pegasus, and the like, which do not have counterparts in the actual world. His explanation, however, is counter-intuitive when applied to our beliefs, or to any other mental acts, about things that exist in the actual world. For instance, if I hate a person and this person exists in the actual world, that I really hate is not my concept of this person or, as Brentano puts it, my contemplated person, but a particular person existing in the actual world.[2] Or, if *person A* desires to marry *person B,* what *person A* desires to marry is not his/her concept of *person B,* but an actual person.

In his reaction to Brentano on this issue, Husserl categorically disagrees with Brentano's contention that the status of intentional objects is mental. In *Logical investigations* (1982a: 558-59), Husserl criticizes Brentano's idea of immanent or mental objects as the objects of all intentional phenomena:

> If I have an idea of the god Jupiter, this god is my presented object, he is 'immanently present' in my act, he has 'mental inexistence' in the latter, or whatever expression we may use to disguise our true meaning. I have an idea of the god Jupiter: This means

> that I have a certain presentative experience, the presentation-of-the-god-Jupiter is realized in my consciousness. This intentional experience may be dismembered as one chooses in descriptive analysis, but the god Jupiter naturally will not be found in it. The 'immanent', 'mental object' is not therefore part of the descriptive or real make-up (*deskriptiven reellen Bestand*) of the experience, it is in truth not really immanent or mental. But it also does not exist extramentally, it does not exist at all. This does not prevent our-idea-of-the-god-Jupiter from being actual, a particular sort of experience or particular mode of mindedness (*Zumutesein*), such that he who experiences it may rightly say that the mythical king of the gods is present to him, concerning whom there are such and such stories. If, however, the intended object exists, nothing becomes phenomenologically different. It makes no essential difference to an object presented and given to consciousness whether it exists, or it is fictitious, or is perhaps completely absurd. I think of Jupiter as I think of Bismarck, of the tower of Babel as I think of Cologne Cathedral, of a regular thousand-sided polygon as of a regular thousand-faced solid.

On Husserl's account, the objects of intentional phenomena have no singular or uniform status, for the intentional object, whatever it is, is not really part of the intentional phenomena or experience. Thus, if one is thinking of ideas, such as the idea of god Jupiter, then one's object of thinking is something mental or immanent. But if one is thinking of Bismarck, tower of Babel, Cologne Cathedral, or a polygon, then one is thinking of objects that <37> exist outside one's consciousness. More specifically, if one is thinking of Bismarck, then one is thinking of an actual person. If one is thinking of Cologne Cathedral, one is thinking of an actual place. And if one is thinking of a polygon, then one is thinking of an abstract entity. Furthermore, if the object of one's thinking happens not to exist, Husserl claims that that does not change the fact that one is still thinking of that object—" It makes no essential difference to an object presented and given to consciousness whether it exists, or it is fictitious, or is perhaps completely absurd," as Husserl (1982a: 559) explains. But how is this last statement possible in Husserl's theory? This is the same question as: *How does Husserl deal with the no-reference problem?*

Husserl takes a route different from the one taken by Brentano in dealing with the no-reference problem. Brentano, if we will recall, sees the solution in clarifying the status of the intentional objects. Husserl, however, sees the solution in clarifying the way intentional phenomena relate to their objects. We explained earlier that for Husserl the intentional objects are not really part of the intentional phenomena. This conclusion leads him to believe that it is not the objects of intentional phenomena that make these phenomena intentional, but what

relates them to their objects. And according to Husserl, this something— which relates phenomena to their objects and is, thus, responsible for making such phenomena intentional— is their *content, meaning,* or *sense*, or that which Husserl technically refers to as the *noema.* The concept of noema is, therefore, Husserl's answer to the no-reference problem. The *noemata* (plural of *noema*) of mental acts are the ones that preserve the intentionality of these acts in cases where their objects happen not to exist.

Two caveats are in order. First, the noema should not be understood to be the same as the intentional object (see Smith and McIntyre 1984: 87). One may be led into this thinking if one equates the expression "consciousness is consciousness of something" with the expression "every *noesis* has its noema." The *noesis* generally refers to the instantiation of the noema in the mental act. Thus, the difference between the two is that the *noema* is an abstract entity that is transcendent to the mental act, while the noesis is immanent in the mental act and is, therefore, a mental entity. The noema, however, can be an object of consciousness when consciousness is directed at it, just like in the *indirect speech* of Frege, when the reference is the sense itself. Second, "noemata" should not be confused with *essences,* though Husserl regards both the noemata and essences as abstract entities that form part of his ontology (see Smith and McIntyre 1984: 167-68). Husserl himself warns of this possible confusion in *Ideas* (1982b: 85):

> Noema (correlate) and essence are not to be confused. Even the noema of a clear thing-intuition, or of a continuous harmonious connection of intuition directed upon one and the same thing, is not and also does not contain the essence of the thing. The grasping of the one is not that of the other, although here a change of attitude and direction of grasp is essentially possible, through which the <38> grasping of the noema can at any given time change into that of the corresponding ontic essence. But we have a different kind of intuition in the latter case than in the former.

Let us now deal with how the theories of Brentano and Husserl would resolve the co-reference problem. If, on the one hand, the no-reference problem arises from the *existence-independence property* of intentional states, the co-reference problem, on the other hand, arises from the *conception-dependence property* of intentional states. The latter property refers to the fact that the objects of intentional states are always identified according to the particular manner by which these objects were conceived. This means, therefore, that different intentional states may be about the same object. For instance, the belief about "the author of

*Noli me tangere"* and the belief about "the Philippines' national hero" are two different beliefs despite the fact that both beliefs are about the same person—"Jose Rizal." What accounts for the difference between these two beliefs is their particular ways of conceiving of the person named "Jose Rizal". But what is problematic about this property? The problem concerns the fact that even if two different intentional states, say beliefs, are about the same object, still one cannot infer the truth or falsity of one belief from the truth or falsity of the other. On the level of language, we say that intentional statements are *logically independent.* For instance, from the truth of the belief that "Lois Lane wants to marry Clark Kent," we simply cannot infer the truth of the belief that "Lois Lane wants to marry Superman," even though "Clark Kent" and "Superman" refer to the same person. And the reason for this is that, precisely, Lois Lane simply does not want to marry a person, but a person who she conceives in a certain way.

In Brentano's system, the co-reference problem cannot be stated at all. Since, for Brentano, intentional objects are mental entities and not actual objects existing outside the mind, the so-called "particular way by which one identifies the object of one's intentional state" is already part of what constitutes the intentional objects themselves. Thus, for Brentano, different intentional states would always be directed at different objects. For instance, the belief about the evening star and the belief about the morning star, for Brentano, are not about the same object—the planet *Venus,* but about two different mental entities—the concept *evening star* and the concept *morning star*. In the Husserl's system, however, the phenomenon of co-reference is easily explicable by the noema of mental acts. Two different intentional states can be about the same object if their respective noemata direct them to same object. The particular way by which the object of an intentional state is identified is explained by the noema of that intentional state.

**Frege and Husserl**

Contemporary Husserlian scholars like Dagfinn Fǿllesdal, Dreyfus, Harney, Sajama and Kamppinen, and Smith and McIntyre believe that Husserl's <39> concept of noema and its role in his theory of intentionality parallels Frege's concept of *sense* and the role in the

latter's theory of semantics. This view was first put forward by Fφllesdal who (1984a: 35) claims:

> While Brentano had tried to characterize directedness by talking about the object towards which the act is directed, Husserl instead characterizes the directedness by the introduction of this entity, the noema. This notion is closely parallel to Frege's notion of sense.

Since then, a number of scholars followed the interpretation of Fφllesdal. These scholars include Smith and McIntyre (1984: 176) (see also Harrison Hall 1993: 122), who make a similar claim as Fφllesdal's:

> Husserl's view of the role of meanings in mediating the reference of expressions is basically Fregean.... Husserl shares with Frege several key theses about the relation between an expression's meaning and referent.... And these theses exactly parallel key thesis in Husserl's theory of intentionality.

And since Frege's style of writing is more accessible than Husserl's, scholars have been explaining Husserl's concept of noema using Frege's notion of sense as a guide.

It is important to note that Husserl, who, like Frege, was a mathematician by training, when he was writing *Philosophie der Arithmetik* (published in 1891), subscribed to *psychologism*—the view that reduces mathematics to thought processes—but later on turned anti-psychologistic when this same work was criticized by Frege himself, who, like Russell, subscribes to *logical realism*—the view that reduces mathematics to logic. Frege basically argues that Husserl transforms everything into the subjective by "blurring the boundaries between the subjective and objective" (see Harney 1984: 157). But unlike Frege, Husserl did not turn to language; instead he, following the lead of Descartes in making consciousness as the starting point of philosophizing, began to develop a method for analyzing consciousness that does not lead to the problem of subjectivity—the phenomenological method. In addition, it was also through Frege's criticisms of Husserl's former psychologism that Husserl came across the two important distinctions made by Frege, namely, the distinctions between *sense* and *reference*, and between *sense* and *idea* (see Dreyfuss 1984, Fφllesdal 1984, Harney 1984, and Smith and McIntyre 1984 for further discussion of this topic.).

Let us now look more closely into Frege's theory of semantics. In his classic "On sense and reference" (1960c), Frege begins by arguing that the meaning of a sign or any

referring expression (proper name, definite expression) cannot simply consist of its reference; for otherwise one cannot explain the difference between the following two forms of identity statements: "a = a" and "a = b," where "a" and "b" refer to the same object. Following the examples of <40> Frege himself, consider, for instance, the statements "The evening star is the evening star" and "The evening star is the morning star." Both are identity statements where the terms "evening star" and "morning star" have the same reference or refer to the same object—the planet *Venus*. The crux of the matter is that if the meaning of each of these two terms ("morning star" and "evening star") consists solely of their reference (the planet *Venus*), then the two identity statements ("the evening star is the evening star" and "the evening star is the morning star") would have the same meaning. But this is not the case. We know that there is a difference between the two. And Frege explains that this difference is a difference in their *cognitive significance*, in that the statement "The evening star is the evening star" is an analytic statement (or a *tautology*), which does not increase our knowledge; whereas the statement "The evening star is the morning star" is a synthetic statement, which increases our knowledge. *Increase of knowledge* can be understood to mean the fact that the predicate adds something to the subject. But what is it about the meaning of those terms that make them different though they have the same reference? This is where Frege introduces the concept of *sense.* Accordingly, the sense of a sign is the sign's *mode of presentation,* or the sign's mode of presenting or identifying its reference. In this light, the terms "evening star" and "morning star," though referring to the same object and, thus, having the same reference, are nonetheless different for they have different senses—meaning to say, their reference, though the same, is presented or is identified differently.[3]

Frege then clarifies the various ways in which sense can be related to reference. We shall see that it is also through these ways that Frege deals with the puzzles of no-reference and co-reference. First, a single sense can only identify a single reference, but a single reference can be identified by many senses. For instance, "the author of *Noli me tangere*" can identify one and only one person, but this same person can be identified in so many ways, such as "the Philippines' national hero" and "the lover of Josephine Bracken." That the same reference can be identified by various senses is what accounts for the co-reference problem. Second, a sign that has a reference necessarily has a sense, but a sign that has a sense need not have a reference. As Frege (1960c: 58) explains:

> It may perhaps be granted that every grammatically well-formed expression representing a proper name always has a sense. But this is not to say that to the sense there also corresponds a reference. The words 'celestial body most distant from the Earth' have a sense, but it is very doubtful if they have a reference. The expression 'the least rapidly convergent series' has a sense but demonstrably has no reference, since for every given convergent series, another convergent, but less rapidly convergent, series can be found. In grasping a sense, one is not certainly assured of a reference.

On the one hand, the necessity for a sign that has a reference to have a sense is a logical entailment of the idea that one cannot identify the reference <41> of a sign if one does not know the sense of that sign. On the other hand, the non-necessity of a sign that has a sense to have a reference is a consequence of the fact that what a sense does is simply to identify a reference and not to guarantee the existence of a reference. Meaning to say, if one knows the sense of a sign, one can identify its reference, regardless of whether the reference exists or not. Take, for instance, the term "unicorn." At present, we say that this term does not have a reference in reality but, since we know its sense, we will be able to identify its reference if, in the future, such creature pops into existence or simply shows itself before us. This is how Frege deals with the no-reference problem.

Let us now discuss the following features of the Fregean *sense*: its objectivity, abstract status, and contextual nature.

First, the Fregean sense is objective in that two or more people can share the same sense. Frege clarifies this feature of sense in his discussion of the difference between *sense* and *idea*. Accordingly, an *idea* is a mental image of a physical object that is subjective and private to the individual who has the idea. Take, for instance, our idea of a mother. It is "subjective" in the sense that our personal experiences of and beliefs about our own mother inevitably color our idea of a mother. And it is "private" in that only its bearer has direct access to it. In contrast, *sense* is objective and public for two or more people can have direct access to the same sense. For instance, if we identify the same person for the expression "the present President of the Philippines," it only means that we attribute the same sense to this expression. Simply, if we identified the same reference for the same sign, it only means that we share the same sense of this sign.

Second, the abstract status[4] of the Fregean sense refers to the view of Frege that senses (modes of presentation and thoughts—the senses of propositions) are timeless entities residing in some metaphysical realm. In his essay "The thought: A logical inquiry," Frege (1994: 527) considers a *third realm,* obviously referring to the metaphysical realm, in addition to the mental and the physical realms in which his senses reside:

> So the result seems to be: thoughts are neither things of the outer world nor ideas. A third realm must be recognized. What belongs to this corresponds with ideas, in that it cannot be perceived by the senses, but with things, in that it needs no bearer to the contexts of whose consciousness to belong. Thus the thought, for example, which we expressed in the Pythagorean Theorem is timelessly true, true independently of whether anyone takes it to be true. It needs no bearer. It is not true for the first time when it is discovered, but is like a planet which, already before anyone has seen it, has been in interaction with other planets.

The Fregean senses are, therefore, Platonic entities. As Frege explains in the foregoing passage, they are not physical objects, for like ideas, they <42> cannot be perceived using the senses; but they are also not ideas, for like physical objects, they need no bearer. And most especially, they are *timeless*, meaning to say, their truth is independent of the circumstances in which they are grasped.

And third, the contextual nature of the Fregean sense refers to the fact that sense cannot exist in isolation. There are two features of this contextual nature of the Fregean sense, namely: its propositional nature, and its dependence on the background of a linguistic system. The propositional nature of the Fregean sense refers to the view that the basic unit of sense is the *propositional sense.* The senses of the words comprising a statement cannot exist on their own and are merely derivative from the sense of the whole statement. Frege's famous remark to this effect is the following (quoted in Ishiguro 1969: 22): "Only in a proposition have words really a reference..... It is enough if the proposition taken as a whole has sense; it is this that confers on its parts also their contents." The propositional nature of the Fregean sense has been referred to by most scholars as the Fregean *contextual principle*.[5] In the following passage, however, Barry Smith (1994: 167) prefers to call it as Frege's "context principle":

> Here Frege, familiarly, awards a special role to the sentence, and affirms his 'context principle,' a principle to the effect that the senses of sub-sentential expressions are determined by the role they play in the context of the sentence as a whole.

Now, if the sense of a sign is the sign's *mode of presentation*, on the one hand, the sense of a proposition, on the other hand, is the proposition's *thought.* The thought of a proposition, for Frege, basically refers to the proposition's *truth-conditions,* which in turn refer to the circumstances under which the proposition can be true and false.[6] Aside from its propositional context, the Fregean sense also requires the background of a linguistic system. This means that propositional sense can only be grasped given the background of a linguistic system. As Frege (1960: 57-58) himself explains: "The sense of a proper name is grasped by everybody who is sufficiently familiar with the language or totality of designations to which it belongs."[7] For purposes of convenience, we can also adopt the expression "Fregean contextual principle" to refer to the two contextual features of the Fregean sense—its propositional context and its dependence on the background of a linguistic system. One can think of these two features in the following way: the basic unit of sense is the propositional sense, but this propositional sense can only be grasped given the background of a linguistic system.

If we now correlate Husserl's concepts with Frege's, it is thus: Husserl's *mental act* corresponds to Frege's *sign*; Husserl's *object of intentionality* corresponds to Frege's reference; and Husserl's *noema* corresponds to Frege's *sense*. Likewise, the various relationships that Frege speaks of between sense and reference also hold between Husserl's noema and the intentional object. Thus, an intentional object can be identified by various noemata but a single noema <43> can only identify a single intentional object. Another is that a mental act necessarily has a noema, but its intentional object need not exist.

Given the parallelisms, it is not surprising that Husserl's explanation for the no-reference and the co-reference problems is the same as Frege's. In the case of Frege, a sign or a referring expression does not cease to be a sign or a referring expression if the reference identified by its sense happens not to exist, for its being a sign or a referring expression is not due to the existence of the reference of the sign but to the sense of the sign. In the same way, for Husserl, a mental act does not cease to be intentional once the object towards which the mental act is directed happens not to exist, for its being intentional is not due to the existence of its intentional object (for as we have already shown, the intentional object is not really part of the mental act), but is due to its noema. Also, Husserl regards his noema as objective and as having an abstract status in the same way that Frege regards his sense. However, the

parallelisms between the Husserlian noema and the Fregean sense end with the contextual nature of the Fregean sense. Unlike the Fregean sense, the Husserlian noema does not have contextual features. This difference between Husserl and Frege is more pronounced in Husserl's theory of language. For this reason, we shall now examine Husserl's theory of language.

Husserl's theory of language is fundamentally just an extension of his theory of consciousness. Thus, given that Husserl explains the intentionality of mental acts using Fregean conceptual distinctions, it is not surprising that Husserl also employs the same Fregean conceptual distinctions in explaining the intentionality of linguistic expressions. As Hubert Dreyfus (1984: 99-100) observes:

> Husserl's analysis of linguistic expressions...exactly parallels the distinctions of idea, sense, and reference in Frege's article "On Sense and Reference." ...Husserl simply accepted and applied Frege's distinctions. ...The only changes Husserl made in Frege's analysis were terminological.

Accordingly, what Frege calls *"Sinn,"* (the Fregean sense) Husserl calls *"Bedeutung"* (the Husserlian linguistic sense) and what Frege calls *"Bedeutung"* (the Fregean reference), Husserl calls *"Gegenstand"* (the Husserlian linguistic reference) (see Mohanty, J. N. 1982: 43). Now, if Husserl's noema is the sense of a mental act, which plays the same role as Frege's sense in explaining the meaning of *referring expressions*, how then does Husserl see the relationship of his *noematic sense* (the sense of a mental act) with *linguistic* sense (the sense of a referring expression)? Husserl's answer is that linguistic sense is but a linguistic expression of noematic sense. As Smith and McIntyre (1984: 182) write:

> Husserl's general view is that words used in speech acts, of whatever kind, express as *their* meanings the noematic Sinne of acts of consciousness: the meanings (Bedeutungen) expressed <44> in words are themselves the meanings of acts, i.e., noematic Sinne.

Even before *Ideas* (1982b), where Husserl introduces the concept of noema, such view was already contained in *Logical investigations* (1982a), where Husserl (quoted in Harney 1984: 583) likens noematic sense and linguistic sense to the spiritual and bodily sides, respectively, of one and the same sense:

> What make the expression an expression are, we know, the acts attaching to it. These are not outside of it or beside it, or merely simultaneous in consciousness; they are one

> with it, and so one, that we can scarce avoid regarding them all as making up a *unitary total act*.... A statement, an assertion, e.g., we should at once say, is a strictly unitary experience, which belongs to the genus Judgment. We do not find in ourselves a mere sum of acts, but a single act in which, as it were, a bodily and spiritual side are distinct.

The upshot of this consideration is that, for Husserl, linguistic sense is solely constituted by noematic sense: linguistic sense, as it were, is simply the physical side of noematic sense. Generally, Husserl's concept of noema covers both the noema of mental acts (the noematic sense) and the noema of linguistic acts (the linguistic sense). But more than this, Husserl believes that signs acquire sense only when they express mental acts. In this light, the noema of mental acts is the same noema that gives meaning to signs. Another way of saying this is that linguistic sense is noematic sense seen from the point of view of language. Or, better still, while the noesis is the instantiation of the noema in mental acts, linguistic sense is the instantiation of the noema in linguistic signs. What is controversial in this claim is that Husserl neglects or fails to consider the contextual features of linguistic sense, which account for how language, for the most part, works in its natural or ordinary setting. Such neglect is a logical result of Husserl's phenomenological method, which brackets the contingent features of its objects of investigations. Including the contextual features of language in explaining the possibility of linguistic sense would simply mean that phenomenological reduction is not the proper method to use in investigating the essential features of language. At this point, the parallelisms between the Fregean sense and the Husserlian noema end. For while the Fregean sense is contextual in nature (it requires the context of a proposition and the background of a linguistic system), the Husserlian noema, whether in the form of noesis (its instantiation in consciousness) or of linguistic sense (its instantiation in language), is not.

Given Husserl's account of linguistic sense, the question in order is whether one can meaningfully account for the actual workings of language without considering the contingent factors surrounding language. The answer obviously is in the negative, and the investigations of philosophers like Frege, Ludwig Wittgenstein, John L. Austin, and John Searle on the nature of <45> language have already shown us the reasons.[8] Wittgenstein and Searle, for instance, hold that language is governed by rules that are based not on some abstract reality

(which is independent of the contingencies of human existence) but on human conditions and agreement. For Wittgenstein, these rules are the rules of our *language-games,* which vary according to our *forms of life* (see Wittgenstein 1962). While for Searle, these rules are what he classifies as *constitutive rules,* which govern forms of behavior that are created by these very rules (in contrast to *regulative rules,* which govern antecedently existing forms of behavior or forms of behavior that are not created by these rules), and which vary according to our *background* (which includes our biological capacities and cultural practices) (see Searle 1977, 1983, 1999).

**Conclusion**

Husserl appropriates Brentano's concept of intentionality in his phenomenology for it serves as the necessary framework for his phenomenological reductions. Husserl, however, disagrees with Brentano's two fundamental theses: the *psychological thesis,* which claims that intentionality is the essential feature of all mental phenomena and the *ontological thesis,* which claims that the objects of intentional phenomena are mental entities.

Our analysis shows that Husserl, in arguing against Brentano's theses, falls into some form of inconsistency. First, in arguing against Brentano's psychological thesis, Husserl runs in conflict with the desired rigor of his phenomenology, for, as a result, Husserl limits the scope of his investigations to the intentional mental phenomena or mental acts and leaves the non-intentional ones unaccounted for. Second, in arguing against Brentano's ontological thesis, Husserl runs into conflict with the actual workings of language. For, as a result of his phenomenological method, which brackets the contingent features of phenomena, Husserl neglects the contribution of context to the constitution of linguistic sense. On Husserl's account, linguistic sense is nothing but the linguistic instantiation of the noema. This is where the parallelisms between the Husserlian noema and the Fregean sense end; for, while the Fregean sense requires the context of a proposition and the background of a linguistic system, the Husserlian noema does not.

**NOTES:**

1. Brentano fails to consider the positive criterion that Descartes uses to distinguish mental from physical phenomena, that is, the mental attribute of thought or consciousness.

2. Brentano later on tries to revise his views to accommodate this consideration. The revised version of Brentano's theory of intentionality, however, shall not form part of our analysis. The reason is that it is to the original version of this theory that Husserl reacts. See McIntyre and Smith (1984: 53) for an elaborate discussion of this revision. <46>

3. A good illustration of the difference in the cognitive significance of the two identity statements is the hypothetical story that Frege narrates in a correspondence [see Dummett (1973: 97)].

4. Frege's ontology includes more features. One important feature is Frege's distinction between saturated/complete and unsaturated/incomplete entities. *Saturated entities* include objects, senses, thoughts, and truth-values. *Unsaturated entities* include functions and concepts.

5. Dummett (1973: 192) considers the Fregean contextual principle as an integral part of Frege's theory of semantics, which was assimilated by Wittgenstein in his *picture theory of propositions* in the *Tractatus* (1974, 3.3): "Only propositions have sense; only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have meaning.", and in his *use-theory of meaning* in the *Philosophical investigations* (1953). Incidentally, some Wittgenstenian scholars [see Hide Ishiguro (1969), for instance] have capitalized on Wittgenstein's adherence to this principle in both *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical investigations* to argue against the orthodox interpretation that the Later Wittgenstein turns the Early Wittgenstein upside down.

6. Frege also includes in his analysis the senses of truth-functional compound propositions, which forms the basis of quantification in symbolic logic.

7. Frege's *proper name* refers to any complete expression, such as a proper noun, a definite description, or a statement.

8. The abstract nature of the Fregean senses, however, is rejected by Wittgenstein and Searle.

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