

## Husserl's Transcendental Social Ontology

**From:** [Frederick Wertz Sr.](#)

Hello.

I read this morning an interesting writing by Timo Miettinen on Husserl's ideas concerning the intrinsic social dimensions of human life. It is quite lucid, I think, in correcting common misunderstandings of Husserl's philosophy as individualistic and shows how Husserl anticipated such work as that of Foucault, Habermas, and critical theory in general, with greater sophistication than those traditions afford. It nicely clarifies Husserl's complex ideas about intersubjectivity, community, culture, "social construction," empathy, ethical responsibility, and collective constitution of meaning with reference to the lifeworld. It is also quite sharp in comparing Husserl's philosophy to those of Hegel and Marx and in correcting some questionable characterizations of Husserl's views found in the work of such phenomenologists as Schutz and Ricoeur. I think this piece is quite accessible and can help us understand the importance of the transcendental perspective in the human sciences as we grapple with the issues of the person and peoples in the context of the complex social-historical problems of our time.

[Miettinen\(2014\) Husserl's Transcendental Social Ontology.pdf](#)

Fred

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*Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis...*[2011]: <http://www.guilford.com/p/wertz>

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**From:** [Frederick Wertz Sr.](#)

**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2020 4:23 PM

Yes--down your alley, Olga.

In case you are interested, here is my own pretty recent but very brief sketch of the (close!) relationship between the transcendental and the psychological--part of the large effort to reform psychology phenomenologically.

[Transcendental-Psychological \(2016\) in Schutzian Research vol. 8.pdf](#)

Hope you are well!

Warmly,  
Fred

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**From:** [Olga Louchakova-Schwartz](#)  
**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2020 4:53 PM

Dear Fred,

This is very timely. At the online webinar (SOPHERE), we are reading Mike Barber's Religion and Humor as Emancipating Provinces of Meaning - both papers you sent will be of good use. Perhaps at some point we can put up your talk for the group--, when you have a free moment (hehe).

You may be also interested to know about our Berkeley Social Ontology group, with John Searle and Jennifer Hudin - John was compared to Husserl on many occasions, but the only book by Husserl he read is Logical Investigations, and he wasn't impressed. He wrote a critique of Husserl's phenomenology (attached here), and I think he misunderstood Husserl's eidetics. I am attaching it here - I would be interested to know your thoughts in this.

[Searle. PhenomenologicalIllusion.pdf](#)

Fondly

Olga

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V.1 and 2 (Springer, 2019)

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**From:** [Frederick Wertz Sr.](#)  
**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2020 7:03 PM

Thanks, Olga.

The webinar sounds great--I love Michael Barber's work, and he is a dear person (a Jesuit!).

I'll check out the Searles critique. Strange that he would criticize phenomenology if he only read *Logical Investigations*, which was written in 1900-1, whereas phenomenology (including its two interrelated methods--phenomenological and eidetic) was originally introduced in 1907 (*The Idea of Phenomenology*), articulated more explicitly in 1912-3 (*Ideas I*), and developed into the 1930s including 50,000 pages of unpublished manuscripts that have been flowing forth and shattering previous misunderstandings especially in recent years.

Husserl is so difficult, and his ideas of the "intuition of essence" and "eidetic analysis" are terribly misunderstood. I spent a long time reading Husserl and secondary sources on these topics, learned a lot, and tried my best to make it clear in the paper I'm attaching. It might be of interest to the IP group because it emphasizes the huge difference between Husserl's ideas and "essentialism," which is so insensitive to culture and could not be further from Husserl's thought. I tried to dispel the many misunderstandings of Husserl's eidetic method and to highlight its great importance for psychology, including the idea of culture-bound essences. I'd be interested in any response you have to these two companion papers I've sent around since they focus on the two most important methods developed by Husserl--the phenomenological and the eidetic.

Honestly, I am worried that phenomenology soon no longer have any place in psychology because there are so few educational institutions left teaching it.

I hope you are well and stay safe in these strange times!

[Eidetic Analysis for Psychology \(2010\).pdf](#)

Warmly,

Fred

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**From:** [Olga Louchakova-Schwartz](#)

**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2020 8:08 PM

I can ask him, but I am sure he read 1913 LI second edition, which already has the idea of reduction. This is Findlay translation which is available in English. I think Searle confuses phenomenal- sensory and phenomenological eidetics, but he will not be the only person who reads "phenomenology" as "phenomenality" of sensory kind. Gallagher makes a clear distinction, I saw in online in some blog, if I find it again I will send it along. Besides this, there are debates whether phenomenology should be only sensory phenomenology, or whether there is cog phenomenology, both sides dismissing the transcendental aspects of phenomenology and instead arguing simply how experience is given. But since it is all first person, go figure: some sense eidetics, some do not. Searle doesn't, for him if one reduces out sensorium and mental objects, ideality doesn't have a phenomenal quality.

I appreciate your comments and that you write on the importance of transcendental phenomenology in psychological research. I agree it is very difficult to teach trans phen being the outcome of decades of Husserl's own thinking-- even for the mind of his stature. Then, without reading Husserl's early works, it is really not clear where transcendental phenomenology come from; then, one needs basic Kant; then, if one reads just Ideas I, it feels all subjectivistic. Then, there are accusations in idealism. So, it is really difficult to get through all these misconceptions if one is in training in psychology, not enough time.

But enough of my lamente . Here is a good article by Ameriks on Husserl's realism. I think it complements your papers, and his treatment of translations is indeed enjoyable.

[Husserl's realism.pdf](#)

Warmest

Olga

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**From:** [Thomas Teo](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 11:33 AM

Fred,

thanks for the article. A few short thoughts: It helps to challenge misunderstandings one might have about phenomenological approaches regarding subjectivity, but, at least from my perspective, it also points to shortcomings of these traditions.

I would begin with the following question: Is it sufficient to learn about epistemology from a 1781 book (Kant's CPR); about political economy from a 1867 book (Marx's Capital); or about inner life from a 1917 book (Freud's Intro)? As a historical thinker I would say they are important but not sufficient for current purposes. We always have to stand on the shoulders of important thinkers, but we need to move with these thinkers beyond them, because of changing realities, may they be natural, social, or psychological.

What I learned from this article is that phenomenology has indeed a more complex theory of subjectivity and intersubjectivity than critics think. But I also learned that dimensions of subjectivity, that are important in many critical traditions are actually not accounted for and that we still need a theory that accounts not only of intra-subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, but also socio-subjectivity. These dimensions are entangled in the conduct of real life but require separate analytical attention.

Socio-subjectivity pertains to the distinction between the SOCIAL and the SOCIETAL, not made in this article but used in many critical traditions. The social would refer to what has been labelled as we-subjectivity in the article, to interactions, communications, personal relations, associations, communities, shared practices, institutions, etc. The societal refers to structures, systems, and dimensions that are discussed by sociologists such as Bourdieu, historical processes of e.g. subjectification (Foucault) or performativity (Butler), postcolonial theorists ("I live in privilege without knowing what this does to the colonized or without personal colonial activities), etc. (the article mentions Foucault but does not address his "positive" theory of subjectivity, just his critique in a few sentences). Although it is linguistically possible to reduce socio-subjectivity to intersubjectivity or we-subjectivity (which is a standard academic practice), I believe that this does a disservice by not addressing the problem directly. Socio-subjectivity needs its own analytic focus, understanding its entanglement with and to inter- and intra-subjectivity. The contributions and impact of society, culture, and history on subjectivity "cannot" be reduced to we-subjectivity. This does not lead to a determinism or that humans are just passive, on the contrary, the societal nature of human beings (Holzkamp) means to include the idea that humans have the agency or conditions for the possibility of changing existing realities.

Thomas

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**From:** [Dr. Louise Sundararajan](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 2:55 PM

Good point, Thomas. But I would like to point out that reductionism can go the other way also, namely that personal subjectivity is reduced to the social/political forces as subjectification (Foucault). Instead of reducing one to the other, a dialogue between different levels of analysis, for instance between phenomenology and social/political analysis would be fruitful. Integration of multiple levels of analysis would be most suitable for IP scholars.

BTW, I am calling attention to all for deleting the old emails in the chain, when you send a reply to the IP list, otherwise the message gets unnecessarily bulky.

Thanks,  
Louise

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**From:** [Frederick Wertz Sr.](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 3:48 PM

Hi Thomas.

Thanks for engaging with the Miettinen writing and for sharing your thoughts. It is so important to put seminal scholarship in perspective!

I agree with you that writings from long ago, such as those of Husserl, are not sufficient for our contemporary purposes, which are thankfully take up new phenomena and goals in fresh, original, and vitally important ways. It's good that history continues to march on! In uncertain times like these, we can only hope it does so! There has been such great scholarship in more recent years that is necessary now--we would be foolish not to take advantage of it. Bordieu, Foucault, Butler, and post-colonial theorists offer crucial, original resources for us. I hope I did not imply that we should view old texts as sufficient and restrict ourselves to them.

You suggest that we need a general distinction between the social and the societal, and you don't find the latter, "socio-subjectivity," in Husserl's thought. I find in Husserl many different kinds of "transcendental intersubjectivity" with varied lifeworld (objective) correlates. Transcendental intersubjectivity is a very broad concept that includes empathy, communications, interactions, personal relations, shared practices and so on. However, Husserl does distinguish from these, still within the very broad notion of transcendental intersubjectivity, "personal unities of a higher order," which have lives of their own and march on despite the coming and going of individuals. This latter seems consistent with if not inclusive of what you call "socio-subjectivity," which Husserl does not reduce to such social phenomena as empathy, communication, and shared practices as I listed above. I understand this higher order transcendental intersubjectivity as involving the structures, systems, and

dimensions of society that are discussed by sociologists. What Husserl gains by emphasizing the transcendental character of such intersubjectivity is first to contrast it with individual subjectivity and second to open up an analysis of its constitutive function in such lifeworld objectivities/institutions as colonialism and privilege in language, religion, science, law, politics, relations of production, and so on. This most fundamental level of transcendental intersubjectivity is a passively (pre)given horizon, anonymous, involuntary, pre-predicative (lacking in self-consciousness) and as you say entangled in (and yet distinct from) both social interactions and individual performances. Husserl's aim in emphasizing the transcendental intersubjective character of society is precisely to open the space for analyzing that dimension of society that affords and demands ethical responsibility and empowerment--positive collective action, not only in critique but in transformation and renewal, at individual but more importantly at higher collective and intercultural levels. I view the main point of Husserl's philosophy of transcendence as supporting your suggestion that humans have the agency or conditions for the possibility of changing collective realities.

I was not claiming that Husserl's philosophy is sufficient for contemporary purposes, or is the last word in social theory, but only that it is not fundamentally at odds with it, as scholars have too often tended to believe. I view Husserl and other original writers like Bordieu, Foucault, Butler, and post-colonial theorists as a unified historical movement with both noteworthy continuities and important original advances.

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**From:** [Olga Louchakova-Schwartz](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 5:13 PM

Interesting post.

I think that phenomenology has quite a variety of frameworks for researching social, political and economic phenomena, not just the idea of intersubjectivity.

Intersubjectivity emerges as a result of the so called bodily -transfer (in Husserl's Cartesian Meditations) as a counterpart to ego sphere of ownness. Hence, it presupposes a) a strong analytic emphasis on the individual ego, and b) embodiment. Because of this, psychological analyses, and the analyses of empathy, emotion, or we-intentionality work well within this framework. But when it gets to societal level or politics, the concepts of life-world(s), the idea of generativity, unity of motivation, or the idea of symbolic forms (Cassirer) are more promising. These will be level of reflection and constitution above the bodily constitution,

feeding into theories of normativity, judgement, deontic logic, will, morality, etc. - e.g. see "responsive interculturalism" of Waldenfels (a phenomenologist) . Schutz deals with ego agency in these higher order domains by introducing the concept of pragmatic and emancipatory relevances , i.e. processes of active constitution. Cf. also Lester Embree (ed.) on political phenomenology. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319->

Very large group processes in phenomenology were addressed by Alain Badiou, Michel Henry ( e.g. La Barbarie) - both phenomenologists. Derrida of course ( language), Levinas (argument against the dominance of philosophies of subjectivity).

Olga

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**From:** [Thomas Teo](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 5:37 PM

Louise, I completely agree with that and I reject a sociologism as a psychologist. My point is to consider socio-subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, and intra-subjectivity together.

Thomas

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**From:** [Olga Louchakova-Schwartz](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 5:51 PM

I am sorry, but all these levels of analysis within different disciplines can be done by means of phenomenological method.

It's different methods, not different levels or domains of analysis, which need to be contrasted.

Olga

On Tue, Mar 31, 2020 at 2:37 PM Thomas Teo <[tteo@yorku.ca](mailto:tteo@yorku.ca)> wrote:

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**From:** [Frederick Wertz Sr.](#)



**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 5:58 PM

Yes, what I love about phenomenology is that it can move (and has moved) in so many directions.

[Frederick Wertz Sr.](#)

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**From:** [Thomas Teo](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 6:14 PM

Let me try a different angle: I am not saying that Husserl has nothing to say about society (that would be naïve or arrogant; the opposite of epistemic modesty). I am not saying that phenomenologists have nothing interesting to say about society (that would show ignorance) (I am well aware of Schuetz). I am saying that should we consider giving priority to the “things” (pun intended), and if we start with “things” we should look at people who have made significant contributions to those “things”. I used to work with Piagetians, and surely Piaget was a great psychologist. If you pointed out that Piaget might have shown deficits in his ideas about emotions or affects or in sociology, although he published and worked in both areas, the answer would be that there is no need to move beyond Piaget. I have heard similar arguments when it comes to Marx, Vygotsky, and, of course, Freud (and maybe Husserl). Freud has important things to say about civilization, but his strength is not that of a social theorist. Of course, academic work in the humanities and social sciences provides extensive knowledge about sources, linkages, forgotten ideas, assumptions, of those great thinkers, and it remains an important part of scholarship. An “identifying reading” and “assimilative reading” of text remains an important tool for education and academic identity. Any framework opens possibilities for reflection - but my question is at what point is a perspective limiting, and not considering traditions that have more to say about the “thing”. This is not a postmodern suggestion, maybe a post-postmodern one, in reclaiming giving objects a priority. It is a move away from persons or the cult of great thinkers or research programs to studying “objects” such as society or subjectivity. Clearly, this is not an easy task, when objects are entangled with theories, methods, language, and the history, culture, and politics of science.

Thomas

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**From:** [Olga Louchakova-Schwartz](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 6:30 PM

But then you are contrasting speculative theoretical knowledge with a founded, justified knowledge - it's a valid comparison, but this is what is of issue, not whether Husserl this or that.

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**From:** [Thomas Teo](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 6:46 PM

Olga, I think it is about moving a discussion to a meta-theoretical level. What constitutes “justified knowledge” was extensively discussed by positivists (e.g., Reichenbach) and quasi-positivists such as Popper (maybe that label is unfair). Yet, what to do if you have various and differing and even contradictory claims about justified knowledge? You can dig in – that is happening in the discipline of psychology with a rhetoric of psychological science – or you can move to meta-theory. I have attached an example that may be helpful. I do not believe that one single methodological approach can do justice to every object or problem – this is based on historical evidence (that can be dismissed of course).

[Teo2019Modest.pdf](#)

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**From:** [Dr. Louise Sundararajan](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 6:59 PM

Very good point, Thomas. Let me pursue your vision one step further. The “thing” could be identified with a discipline: Each discipline is preoccupied with its own “thing.” Your vision suggests that it would be very productive if each discipline looks beyond its own preoccupation to want to see a novel formulation of and solution to the current world situation. Let’s say there are some adventurous souls who want to do that and submit a paper to a journal. My question is how do we find suitable reviewers. If this adventurous paper tries to integrate 2 different sub-fields, two experts from each discipline may be invited to review the MS. Chances are that the reviewers would give unfavorable evaluations, because the experts may want to

point out some details not addressed by the paper (regardless of whether these details are needed or not), and the experts may not see any need to go beyond their sub-fields to begin with. If your vision is to be realized, we need to start building, and maybe training, a pool of reviewers who are interested in going beyond the “thing” of their own fields.

Cheers,  
Louise

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**From:** [Thomas Teo](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 7:13 PM

This is my experience as well as an editor and as an author.

Thomas

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**From:** [Olga Louchakova-Schwartz](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 7:17 PM

There are two positions, foundationism (i.e, justification of knowledge by explicating the relationships between claims made and the actual status of things in real life, i.e., some form of description), and non-foundationism, that is, claiming truths (i.e., theory) directly. Since we are rational beings, positivism adheres to the latter ; since we are both rational and experiencing/ alive beings, phenomenology adheres to the former. Justification goes back as far as Aristotle's interest in experience and his Organon; absence of justificaion - to Aristotle's Metaphysics with its Categories. So, this is not meta-theory, but foundational theory of knowledge. From here comes a problem of what kind of knowledge we rely upon, in clinical practice etc. I think this is a very practical matter.

I am not sure how to link to this your reference to rhetoric of science.

Thanks for the paper, I will read time permitting

Olga

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**From:** [Thomas Teo](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 7:37 PM

The way you set up the problem is different the way I set up the problem. My problem (and I think it is our problem) that we encounter different truth claims from traditional psychology, phenomenology, critical psychology, psychoanalysis, neuroscience, etc., all of which claim evidence as justification, and even imply or argue for the superiority of one’s own research program, with reference to truth, objectivity, facts, data, etc. I understand that we are all working within horizons and those horizons enable and limit what we can know. My point is to be modest in one’s knowledge claims.

I should mention that accusation of speculation as negative is a late 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> “phenomenon”. Speculation has a history as I have shown in a 2008 article. It is often used to suggest that someone else is not scientific enough. Wundt characterized Herbart’s psychology, which had dominated the first half of the 19th century, as speculative. J.B. Watson challenged Wundt’s psychology as being caught in speculative questions. Skinner (1953) criticized human-scientific psychology for speculation. Skinner himself, particularly his theory of language development, was criticized by Chomsky (1959/1967) for its speculative character. Chomsky’s concept of an innate language acquisition device would also be accused of speculation ...

Thomas

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**From:** [Liu, James](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 7:46 PM

Dear Thomas & Louise and all,

I am currently editing the interdisciplinary journal Political Psychology, a hybrid journal at the interface between the disciplines of Psychology (more micro-) and Political Science (more macro-). Submissions come about 50/50 between PolySci departments (which admittedly, have been infiltrated by social psychology) and Psych departments. This journal has been really successful. I remember publishing in it way back around 1998 and its IF was in the 1s, in the 2000s it rose to the 2s and in 2020 it is 3.1. It is now ranked above most of the journals in social psychology which were ranked above it in the 1990s and 2000s, like PSPR, JESP, Social Cognition etc. I do not know what to attribute this to, except for interdisciplinarity, doing less of their own “things” but things that are of interest to two groups (at least) that then turn out to be of greater relevance overall.

Going beyond this, as an Editor-in-Chief, I need to maintain this core relationship while expanding the content of the journal beyond its current center of quantitative/experimental/survey data from the USA and Europe to more innovative approaches from the Global South, and from people in the Global South doing innovative things that leverage knowledge about how political psychology operates in their home grounds. My Co-Editor-in-Chief Orla Muldoon and I will write our introductory editorial in a month or two, and I think it will go beyond most dry pieces to articulate a way forward in this enterprise. I’ll share it with this group for comment when we have a good draft, because this is a group we (ISPP) would like to connect to; but it will take time to build up that trust and those relationships that can be sustained.

My colleagues and I at Massey University believe that to enact such an enterprise, we have to center it in relational ethics. And a fully relational ethics requires human-heartedness (a non-analytical concept including benevolent, responsibility, respect, etc, that is keyed differently to different relationships but has a core of various forms of moral character). It requires an articulation of ethics beyond do no harm, into more proactive forms of human development and human engagement.

As I read the debate between Thomas and Olga, I am reminded of how Confucianism collapsed as a doctrine the first time (it became official philosophy for the Han dynasty in 179BC, and fell into disfavour as it contributed to the Han dynasty’s collapse around 220AD). It became to scholastic, arguing about

pedantic details (like Catholicism arguing about how many angels dance on the head of a pin) and becoming divorced from improving everyday lives. (I don't mean this as criticism of this debate, so please don't take it that way, this is just how I am subjectively engaging with your discourses)

We (Stuart Carr, Darrin Hodgetts and I) think that relational ethics (rather than epistemology) are what is crucial to preventing social phenomena like the ossification of ruling ideologies (like Confucianism of Catholicism) or falling into endless debates about epistemology that have kept the social sciences divided and impotent for so long.

Kudos to Louis for bringing us all together and maintaining such a stimulating forum for connecting with both ideas and feelings. Thanks Olga and Thomas for sharing your thoughts and engaging in such a passionate debate.

Sincerely  
James

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**From:** [Olga Louchakova-Schwartz](#)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 31, 2020 8:15 PM

But I do not mean "speculative" as negative.

I am just contrasting two different ways towards the knowledge of individual human mind (ruffly assuming this is what we are talking about when we say "psychology"). One way would be to create an insightful theory, perhaps, based on some empirical observations (Freud, Piage etc.), but essentially, just a theoretical model. Other way would be to make a theory with much more precision and attention to how exactly things happen in the human mind, out of these things, and to subject the process of making theory to similar scrutiny, so that there are no mistakes in theorizing.

To your present note: yes, the analysis of evidence can be included in justification. However, none of areas you mention, except for phenomenology ( and I do not even know if we mean the same thing when we say "phenomenology) offers a systematic analysis of evidence, or a systematic justification. They can claim whatever superiority they feel comfortable of claiming , as a matter of ethical stance, but the question of how reliable their knowledge for one's purposes is different.

Further, I did not suggest phenomenology as a "research program". I spoke about phenomenology as a method. As a research program, phenomenology deals not with the matters of human psyche, but with transcendental problematic, i.e., the questions of possibility of knowledge as such. It is an open question whether transcendental phenomenology may be applied to psychological tasks. Otherwise, we are talking just about clarifications of the psychological forms of experience.

Olga

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**From:** [sayyedmohsen fatemi](#)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 01, 2020 8:15 AM

Dear Thomas, Louise, James, Fred, Frank, Olga and every one in the group,

Greetings!

It may be worth reflecting on the psychological and experiential mind that may contribute to the formative process of intersubjectivity, the epistemic certainty, and the reductionism.

The underlying affective components of accessing the truth from a dialogical relationship may occur in the perfunctory sense as long as it is operated from the analytical framework of core meanings without an attention to the marginal, affective and associative meanings.

This may also take us back to the vitality of an ontological question on the nature of humanness.

Even in political psychology, one may see the manifold manifestations of the interconnectedness of rational mind and the experiential mind more vividly as it comes to a real encounter of the inner parts of the ontological assumptions.

Johnson et al. (2002, p.12) indicate that  
Deterrence, like all coercion, occurs in the mind of the adversary. Reality matters in deterrence only insofar as it affects the perceptions of those who will choose whether or not to be deterred. ..  
[Thus] assessments of the adversary's capabilities are of only limited predictive values unless accompanied by sound understanding of what the enemy values, how it perceives the conflict, how it makes decisions—to name but a few of the critical variables.

I have also argued in *Critical Mindfulness*, Published by Springer that not questioning the questionability of the perspective of the observer in psychology ( and I argue that in other disciplines too) may deprive us of touching up the lived reality of "things", "people", etc. That questionability may require addressing significant questions on relational ethics, ontological certainty, epistemic incarceration, sociobiological views, etc. Being ready for that may also require an intentional preparation and flexibility no merely in the rational mind but also in the experiential mind.

I wish you all an opulent wealth of wellness in these trying times,

Mohsen

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**Sent:** Friday, April 03, 2020 1:21 PM  
**To:** [iptaskforce@simplelists.com](mailto:iptaskforce@simplelists.com)  
**Subject:** IP--Habermas Critiques of Husserl

**From:** Frederick Wertz Sr.

Hi Louise.

This morning I read an article by Mathison Russell on the Habermas-Husserl (critical theory vs phenomenology) relationship--just to better educate myself about it. I am not interested in entering a debate on these topics, but if you think the IP listserv would be interested in a relevant philosophical analysis for edification, please feel free to share it. I leave that judgment to you!

This paper is not easy--it's highly philosophical, but it is an open-minded and thoughtful scholarly attempt to clarify the issues that have divided critical theory and phenomenology, at least as those following Habermas's famous (but not always well understood) critique(s) of Husserl. I also provides one response (of phenomenology) to the critique(s). I found Russell's clarification of Habermas's critiques helpful because they are complex, have changed over the years, and occur in various publications. Russell also helps by providing many relevant scholarly references in the debate. Happily from my own standpoint, although I don't necessarily agree with all Russell's conclusions, his careful analysis leads him to the conclusion that Habermas and Husserl need not be viewed as so opposed to each other, that their differences can be resolved, and that Husserl's original phenomenological methods and many of his analyses are compatible with if not needed by critical theory.

So, I attach it for whatever it might be worth.

Warmly,  
Fred

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*Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis...*[2011]): <http://www.guilford.com/p/wertz>

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