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# The Idea Of Phenomenology



## Synopsis

This translation is included in our Readings in Twentieth-Century Philosophy, (N. Y. , The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc. , 1963). We owe thanks to Professors W. D. Falk and William Hughes for helping us with the translation. We also owe thanks to Professor Herbert Spiegelberg, Dr. Walter Biemel and the Husserl Archives at Louvain for checking it and we are especially indebted to Professor Dorion Cairns, many of whose suggestions we incorporated in the final draft. WILLIAM P. ALSTON GEORGE NAKHNIKIAN January 1964 CONTENTS V Preface Introduction IX The train of thoughts in the lectures I Lecture I 13 Lecture II 22 Lecture III 33 Lecture IV 43 Lecture V 52 INTRODUCTION From April 26 to May 2, 1907, Husserl delivered five lectures in Gottingen. They introduce the main ideas of his later phenomenology, the one that goes beyond the phenomenology of the *Logische Untersuchungen*. These lectures and Husserl's summary of them entitled "The Train of Thoughts in the Lectures" were edited by Dr. Walter Biemel and first published in 1950 under the title *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*. Husserl wrote the summary on the night of the last lecture, not for formal delivery but for his own use. This accounts for the fact that the summary contains incomplete sentences. There are some discrepancies between Lecture V and the corresponding passages in the summary. We may suppose that the passages in the summary are a closer approximation to what Husserl wanted to say.

## Book Information

Paperback: 60 pages

Publisher: Springer; 1990 edition (October 4, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9024701147

ISBN-13: 978-9024701148

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

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Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl (1859-1938) was a German philosopher who established the

school of phenomenology. He was born into a Jewish family (which later caused him to lose his academic position when the Nazis came to power in 1933), but was baptized as a Lutheran in 1886. He wrote many books, such as *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, *Cartesian Meditations*, etc. He says in the first lecture, "The METHOD of the critique of cognition is the phenomenological method, phenomenology as the general doctrine of essences, within which the science of the essence of cognition finds its place. What sort of method is this? How can a science of cognition be established if cognition in general, what cognizing means and can accomplish, is questioned? What method can here reach the goal?... Right away we become dubious whether such a science is at all possible. If it questions all cognition, every cognition chosen as a starting point is questioned. How then can it ever begin?" (Pg.

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