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Logical Investigations, Vol. 1 (International Library Of Philosophy)



Synopsis

Edmund Husserl is the founder of phenomenology and the *Logical Investigations* is his most famous work. It had a decisive impact on twentieth century philosophy and is one of few works to have influenced both continental and analytic philosophy. This is the first time both volumes have been available in paperback. They include a new introduction by Dermot Moran, placing the *Investigations* in historical context and bringing out their contemporary philosophical importance. These editions include a new preface by Sir Michael Dummett.

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Customer Reviews

This book is the founding document of phenomenology and the book (along with the works of Frege) which ultimately led to the analytic/Continental divide in philosophy. It is, therefore, a very important work not only in terms of understanding Husserl's own philosophy and the development of phenomenology but for anyone who is interested in the history of philosophy in the twentieth-century. It is a challenging work. Husserl's style is dense and somewhat dry and technical. You have to read very slowly and be prepared to re-read sections over and over but the result, if you have the patience, is very rewarding. It is important to realize that Husserl's road to phenomenology began with the goal of grounding the objectivity of logic against the doctrines of psychologism (the doctrine that the laws of logic are based on empirical facts of psychology and are, therefore, relative to the species *homo sapiens*). The first section of this book is a really devastating critique of psychologism. This is important because phenomenology is often criticized

for its subjectivism and its supposed lack of objectivity. Husserl's goal in this work is to ground the objectivity of logic against all forms of relativism (especially species relativism and the relativism that Husserl believes is inherent to Kant's philosophy). Psychologism views logic as a technology of thinking, judging, proving, etc. and, therefore, believes it needs to investigate these phenomena, which are psychological phenomena, in order to work out a correct technology which would insure that we make correct or true judgements. Husserl writes, "Theoretically regarded, Logic therefore is related to psychology as part to whole.

In *Logical Investigations* (vol.1), Husserl's initial impulse was to distance himself from what he saw as the illogic of psychologism. One of the problems that he faced was the widespread belief that at bottom phenomenology was relativistic and thus useless as a philosophical tool. It became crucial for Husserl to ground phenomenology in the equally widespread notion of the objectivity of the natural sciences. Husserl viewed logic as a helpmate to psychology in a mereological (the relationship of part to whole) context such that specific subcomponents of intellectualized activities would interact with other specific subcomponents in strictly predetermined ways. The function of logic would have little to do with the physicality of action such as gauging or asserting but everything to do with fixing the underlying and optimal conceptual guidelines such as falsehood and interiority. Husserl had little use for relativistic truth. If one were to use "truth" as it is commonly used, then one must also refrain from setting up contrarian situations in which truth becomes infinitely elastic. One of the reasons that Husserl distanced himself from his earlier support of psychologism was his new belief concerning mathematics. A mathematician would certainly be busy with adding, subtracting, and the like but would have no reason to consider how one might involve psychology in these computations. Similarly, a logician would be equally busy confronting the most profound of logical conundrums but as with the mathematician would see no reason to infuse psychology into these conundrums. A key element in this book is Husserl's "eidetic phenomenology" which states that the *eidos* (forms/essences) are what a phenomenologist uncovers after bracketing objects from the natural world.

Along with Freud's **The Interpretation of Dreams**, Edmund Husserl's 1900 **Logical Investigations** started the intellectual 20th century off with a bang. Husserl originally trained as a mathematician under Karl Weierstrass; in 1891 he had published **Philosophy of Arithmetic**, which one G. Frege found fault with for not respecting the ideal validity of the laws of logic and mathematics. Husserl whole-heartedly embraced Frege's criticism, and the *"Prolegomena to Pure Logic"* which open this

massive work are an excellent introduction to the position in the philosophy of logic known as "anti-psychologism", which asserts that psychology as a natural science has nothing to say to the logician ("The laws of logic are the laws of the laws of nature", according to Frege). Husserl's broad yet solid argumentation in this part of the book is a great place for young philosophers to cut their teeth on grasping reality and being able to explain it at the same time. The six monographs that compose the rest of the book are by turns antediluvian and futuristic. Although he dismissed the "economy of thought" experimental psychologists sought to ground conceptual thinking in, Husserl firmly believed that a sort of descriptive psychology of the mind's ability to think about both concrete and abstract objects -- it would become utterly famous as the "phenomenology" Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and even Pope John Paul II claimed (partial) allegiance to -- was a necessary 'grounding' for philosophy.

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