



The Husserl Dictionary

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To cite this article: Sebastian Luft (2012) The Husserl Dictionary, International Journal of Philosophical Studies, 20:5, 766-772, DOI: [10.1080/09672559.2012.741821](https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2012.741821)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2012.741821>



Published online: 29 Nov 2012.



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have striven for greater diversity here, limiting discussion of a Hollywood film to a single chapter and including works from, say, the American or European avant-garde and non-Western cinema traditions. Discussion of a non-narrative or non-representation work might have been especially interesting.

Some of the questions I had about Part IV (and the few I had about other sections) might have been answered in a more substantive introduction by the editors. In particular, I think, an essay describing the state of the sub-field – with a particular focus upon the various conceptions of ‘philosophy and film’ in currency – would have been helpful. Needless to say, however, contributing an introduction of this nature in addition to editing a volume of this size would be no easy feat, and this book is still a significant achievement. Most of the quibbles I have raised are truly minor and are likely results of the fact that the book is close to 700 pages and more material simply could not be included. In fact, the most obvious complaint might have once been the book’s price, but a more affordable paperback edition has just been released. Overall, *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* is a major accomplishment – a crisply written, well-organized, and thorough volume that will be an invaluable resource to the burgeoning sub-field of philosophy and film.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2012.741824>

The Husserl Dictionary

By Dermot Moran and Joseph Cohen

Continuum, 2012. Pp. vi + 376. ISBN 978-1-8470-6463-9. £18.99 (pbk).

Dermot Moran and Joseph Cohen, both from University College Dublin, have co-written a dictionary of key terms with respect to the philosopher Edmund Husserl, who is widely known as the founder of phenomenology. Hereby a new volume is added to the ‘Continuum Philosophy Dictionaries’ series, which – up to now – features volumes on Gadamer, Hegel, Marx, and Sartre. *The Husserl Dictionary* is a handy volume in a handsome layout and with an attractive price, which, given the notorious costliness of Husserl texts (both primary and secondary), makes for a welcome accessibility to one of the most important figures of twentieth-century philosophy.

In the first part, I will assess the *Husserl Dictionary* itself, discussing its strengths, weaknesses, and merits. In the second part, I will offer some general reflections on the usefulness of dictionaries of this sort in general, and *The Husserl Dictionary* in particular.

I

The dictionary is extremely comprehensive in every respect. To list some of the 'offerings', it starts out with a helpful short introduction on Husserl's life and works; it features entries on *all* relevant terms in Husserl's philosophy, including authors of influence for Husserl as well as those influenced by the founder of phenomenology; a wide range of entries that give an excellent overview of his vast oeuvre; and finally, a preliminary bibliography, which will give the novice, who has been impressed enough to want to continue, some pointers to gain entry into the intricacies of Husserl studies. The system of cross-referencing is extensive and sophisticated. To counter Husserl's often shifting terminology, English translations are supplied with the original German terms, with a sensitivity in the different entries as to when, why, and how Husserl's word choice has changed. The entries are for the most part written at an introductory level, which upper-division undergraduate, graduate students and interested scholars uninitiated in Husserl's work will appreciate. The presentations of the respective terms take into account Husserl's changing philosophical standpoints, without succumbing to a jargonized exegesis or purely historical narrative. In general, then, the dictionary resists the typical pitfalls, the most obvious ones being jargon, orthodoxy, and hermetic immanentism.

The entries on the philosophical figures who were influential for Husserl as well as whom Husserl influenced, are an original aspect of this dictionary. They assess both the type and gravity of influence and list the loci in Husserl's oeuvre where these figures are discussed. One may at times wonder about the judiciousness of some choices: Is, e.g., Binswanger really that relevant? Or Schlick? On the other hand, Cohen, the founder of the Marburg School of Neo-Kantianism, is absent, as is Windelband, one of the heads of the Southwest school, and, finally, Husserl's son, Gerhart, who wrote well-received works on juridical phenomenology following his father's methodological paradigm. Admittedly, however, it would be hard to be comprehensive here, so critical comments about who is and is not included are mere quibbles.

The substantial entries are reliable in their presentation and assessment of Husserl's philosophy. They point primarily to the main works of Husserl (most prominently the *Logical Investigations*, which is still the main point of access, especially for philosophers coming from an analytic background), but at all times include references to the complete range

of Husserl's work in the *Husserliana*. Moran's and Cohen's cumulative knowledge of Husserl's oeuvre is vast and impressive. They do not, as far as this reviewer can tell, fall into the different philosophical 'camps' that have claimed Husserl as one of their own, such as realists, empiricists, idealists, or Kantians and Brentanians (the list could go on). Instead, as is appropriate for this sort of literature, Moran and Cohen stay above the fray of these battles while briefly and even-handedly discussing points of disagreement in the scholarly literature.

Quite helpful are also the articles that discuss, by way of summary, the most important of Husserl's own works, including those that were not published by Husserl but belong to the canon of must-reads, such as *The Idea of Phenomenology* or *Ideas*, Book II. The dictionary, thus, does more than one would expect and serves several needs. In this sense, it does a very good job of promoting Husserl as an original philosopher and of explaining his relation to great thinkers before and after him, as well as his enmeshment in contemporary philosophy writ large.

While the articles are, in general, rather short and minimally informative (and never verbose or redundant), some entries are longer, as they indicate key terms in Husserl's thought. Of course, the selection of which articles should be longer than others cannot but betray a certain bias on the part of the authors. But here, too, the choice is measured and should satisfy most, if not all, knowledgeable readers of Husserl.

For instance, one of the longer articles is devoted to idealism. Now it is clear that Husserl's labeling his own philosophy as idealism has been extremely contested. Yet it is equally obvious that these self-ascriptions are undeniable. But what Husserl means with this loaded term is also much more sophisticated than most critics acknowledge. Hence, the entry in question goes through a historical narrative, which touches upon Descartes, Berkeley, and Kant, before launching into the discussion of Husserl's version. Whatever one may make of the latter's idealism, then, this entry makes it plain that Husserl's version is quite original and sophisticated. Here, as elsewhere, clear explanations never become trivial or superficial.

The same measured presentation is to be found in the entry 'intentionality', which discusses the term's origin in Brentano (and the Scholastics, to which the latter is indebted), while not downplaying Husserl's original achievements.

Next, while one may miss a separate entry on 'method', methodological entries on 'epoché', 'reduction', 'eidos', 'eidetic intuition', and 'eidetics', etc. abound. The entry on 'life-world' is extremely helpful in making the case that it is to be understood as a key term uniting several approaches within the Phenomenological Movement beyond Husserl himself.

Finally, the entry ‘phenomenology’ (pp. 244–51) is probably the best place to start in terms of finding appropriate access to Husserlian phenomenology in general. It is a comprehensive *tour de force* that begins with the concept’s history starting from eighteenth-century philosophy, and then discusses the specifics of Husserl’s understanding of the term as it developed throughout his career, ending in his late conception, which includes genetic phenomenology and Husserl’s conception of phenomenology as ‘first philosophy’. This entry, as most others that discuss historically salient concepts, is a solid exercise in *Begriffsgeschichte* without losing itself in history.

Now on to some shortcomings this reviewer noticed.

If there is one thing missing in the articles themselves, it is a reference to scholarly literature right there, at the end of each lemma. Maybe the format of the series made this impossible (which would extend this critique to all volumes), but a quick reference to one or two main studies on the topic in question would have been easy to add and highly welcome. To make things worse, the bibliography in the back of the book is rather a list of ‘best of’ writings on Husserl, which omits, as far as I can see, none of the classics, but also lists some surprising outliers that could have been omitted without loss of coverage. Instead, a master bibliography could have been broken up in favor of separate lists of some more detailed studies (including articles, not just book-length texts), grouped together under key headings, such as ‘method’, ‘perception’ or ‘lifeworld’ (or the like). In these separate sections, what I call ‘outliers’ could have found their systematic place and be of much greater benefit. If a reader interested in more detailed discussions of some aspects of Husserl’s work would like to follow up on them, it is rather hard to do so from the present bibliography. The presumed typical reader of this dictionary – a novice without a deeper knowledge of Husserl, sufficiently poised to continue his or her study of this philosopher – would not know where to look beyond the (rather daunting) Husserlian texts themselves, even though some secondary sources – for instance, Brough’s excellent articles on the problem of time in Husserl – are far more helpful, at least for a preliminary overview, than Husserl’s own writings.

Next, the dictionary could have benefited from better proofreading. There are some typos as well as factual errors that any reader would find annoying and unnecessary, while others will be noticed only by experts. Both sorts contribute to potential misunderstandings. This is not the place to list a set of *errata*, and it should also be emphasized that none of the mistakes are of the grave substantial sort that steer beginners in an entirely wrong direction. Nevertheless, if there is one genre of writing where complete accuracy is expected, it is the dictionary.

Finally, where does this dictionary stand with respect to other existing dictionaries on Husserl? There exist altogether *four* dictionaries; one

other in English (by John Drummond), one in German (edited by Hans-Helmuth Gander), one in French (by Jacques English), and, finally, Dorion Cairns' much-used (by translators especially) *Guide for Translating Husserl*. Given the marketing of the present dictionary, it is obvious that the dictionaries not written in English do not compete, as German and French writings are clearly too far removed from the purview of the typical undergraduate student, especially in North America. That leaves Drummond and Cairns. The latter, who studied with the master himself, compiled a glossary that he used for his own translations of Husserl. This glossary is helpful for understanding some of the original Husserlian terms because Cairns adumbrates them with several English concepts. This gives a sense of the richness of the original German terms, which mostly do not allow for a neat one-to-one rendering in the target language. This glossary, then, is really more for the reader who is already attuned to Husserl's language of choice, and it will not be of help to the typical Anglophone philosophical beginner. This leaves Drummond's dictionary. Here, too, the Moran and Cohen book does not present a real competition, because Drummond's dictionary caters to readers with established philosophical skills and training. This 'method of exclusion', then, brings to the fore the target readership: these are beginning readers of Husserl who are simply puzzled by the words he is using, be it that they have never seen these terms used before or, even more confusingly, have encountered them in other contexts – for instance, in Kant or contemporary philosophy – where these very words, such as 'reduction' or 'transcendental idealism', can mean quite different things. In terms of addressing *these* readers, *The Husserl Dictionary* should be a highly welcome tool.

But let me use this very topic of this dictionary's putative readership to inaugurate a final reflection on the advantage and disadvantage of dictionaries of this sort, especially when it comes to a philosopher such as Husserl.

II

How valuable is such a dictionary as an *introduction* to a thinker such as Husserl? My concern here is that it encourages a reading that caters to the short attention span one witnesses in today's students, who are too distracted by social media to plow through Husserl's lengthy tomes. The worry that readers of this sort will choose the shortcut through a dictionary which explains the key terms in handy definitions is real. Such a worry is especially relevant in philosophy, since philosophers do not generally define and use terms like scientists. The very thought process and its meandering path *are* the aspects that make philosophy the sort of intellectual enterprise it is. Philosophers of whom this is particularly true

are, I would argue, Hegel and Husserl. Husserl's often criticized method of 'intuiting', for example, is anything but a passive gaping; it is a difficult and sophisticated process that involves, among other things, imagination, original insight and precision. There *is* no shortcut to this manner of doing philosophy. Any account that gives the reader the results ready-made, and not as a result of careful reflection, violates the very manner of this philosophy's activity, where the path is, in a certain sense, the goal.

More specifically, one may wonder about the usefulness of dictionaries, focused on *terms*, for Husserl's thinking in particular. Husserl was a notoriously un-terminological thinker. By this I mean that he, for reasons not to be discussed here, rarely worried about 'terminological fixations'. Instead, he is oriented toward *phenomena*, which he attempts to capture with the language available to him: his native German, but also the language of the sciences of his day, most notably psychology. Some readers have used this adoption of psychological vocabulary to pin him down to certain commitments, but nothing could be further from Husserl's method of description. Husserl points out repeatedly the counter-natural nature of phenomenological seeing and the phenomena seen, for which words are simply lacking. For Husserl, words are just that – *Schall und Rauch*; they are mere transitory devices to capture what is being described.

Thus (to use perhaps the most important example), in describing the phenomenon of consciousness, Husserl uses many different terms for essentially the same 'thing': subject(-ivity), *ego*, person, *cogito*, self(-hood), I, monad, etc. To separate these out may well be possible, but for the most part Husserl is wrestling with language and perhaps articulates a certain aspect of *the same phenomenon* in highlighting it over another. To distinguish them in the form of different entries in a dictionary, then, can be quite misleading and can contribute more to a scattered confusion than to an advance in one's understanding of phenomenology. Such an understanding is only seemingly achieved by separating out individual terms. What makes Husserlian phenomenology unique must be understood, rather, in a holistic and organic way: the peculiar style of seeing and its peculiar objects, which are precisely not objects in the world but phenomena of consciousness, which elude the sort of separation required by a dictionary. An understanding of Husserl gained primarily through a dictionary, and not at the same time through the Husserlian analyses themselves, risks being superficial and, ultimately, reductive.

Having said that, it is clear that the authors of this meritorious dictionary cannot be made responsible for the way in which their product is used. The dangers pointed out come only from an exclusive reading of the dictionary at the expense of working through the primary

texts, as painful and difficult as they may be. Hence, the advice that one should give readers of this book is that it should be consulted in tandem with the original texts. Used in this way, *The Husserl Dictionary* can be a helpful tool and handy companion when one loses one's bearings in the jungle of the original text and its movement of thought.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09672559.2012.741821>

Irigaray (Key Contemporary Thinkers)

By Rachel Jones

Polity, 2011. Pp. xii + 277. ISBN 978-0-7456-5104-0. £55.00 (€66.00)

(hbk); ISBN 978-0-7456-5105-7. £16.99 (€20.40) (pbk).

Is feminist philosophy of interest only to those members of the human species who happen to be interested in matters female, just as some philosophers are interested in quantum physics, intentionality or logic? Where acknowledgement of the prejudices of 'canonical philosophers' is afforded, is it sufficient to explain away pejorative remarks about race or gender in terms of context and culture, rendering them peripheral to the central tenets of an author's work? Whilst Aristotle and Kant's descriptions of women or Hegel's comments on race are commonly acknowledged to have revealed unfortunate blindspots in the writings of these great philosophers, does this affect the substance of their writings? Can philosophers' concepts be understood without reference to the images upon which they draw? *Irigaray* makes a compelling case for the importance of Luce Irigaray's contribution to philosophical thought. In this book, Rachel Jones argues that philosophy, and philosophers, ought to take seriously the critical and creative reading of the Western philosophical canon offered to us by Irigaray. She outlines the challenges posed by her conception of sexuate difference to key concepts in ontology, ethics and political philosophy.

By positioning Irigaray as a feminist *philosopher*, Jones aims to situate Irigaray's writing within the tradition of Western philosophical thought. The intended readership thus includes those interested in feminist philosophy, others from disciplines and practices who have already found resources for thought in Irigaray's work, alongside those within the broader philosophical community who may not have felt that Irigaray speaks to them, or who may have found it difficult to locate her as a