

Husserl's Phenomenology and two terms of Noema and Noesis

Fatemeh Rassi^{1,*}, Zeiae Shahabi²

¹Student of philosophy, Department of Philosophy, Science and Research branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, IRAN

²Department of Philosophy, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, IRAN

E-mail address: sophyrasi@yahoo.com

Keywords: Phenomenology; Husserl; Consciousness; Noesis; Noema; Intentionality

ABSTRACT. In Ideas, Husserl uses this pair of terms, "Noema" and "Noesis" to refer to correlated elements of the structure of any intentional act. In fact in Ideas, Husserl uses the term 'Noesis' to refer to intentional acts or "act-quality" and 'Noema' to refer to what, in the Logical Investigations had been referred to as "act-matter". He also says that every intentional act has noetic content. This noetic content is that mental act-process which becomes directed towards the intentionally held object. Every act also has a Noematic correlate that which is meant by it. In other words, every intentional act has an "I-pole and an "object-pole. According to Husserl, noesis is the real content, namely, noesis is real character, the part of the act that gives the character to a thing. Noema is the ideal essence of the character. Husserl says also about the noema as the Sinn or sense of the act. Husserl also, refers to full noema. According to Husserl the full noema is the object of the act as meant in the act, the perceived object as perceived, the judged object as judged, and so on. In fact the full noema is a complex structure comprised of at least a noematic sense and a noematic core.

1. INTRODUCTION

Preface

Husserl considers Noema as "meaning". As we know for Brentano consciousness is always awareness of something or about something. Now, the question is: How can one be conscious about things which do not exist like a winged horse or fantasy objects?. In "Logical investigations", Edmund Husserl distinguishes consciousness act from its intentional content. He maintains that intentionality is not a kind of relationship between the two sides of the relationship where the existence of both sides of the relationship is necessary. Rather intentionality per se specifies the quality of intentionality and its manners. Husserl in the book "Ideas" I, makes use of two concepts of Noesis and Noema instead of using intentional content and intentional act. Although Husserl in two books of Ideas and Logical investigations discusses these two concepts his view is not clear. In Ideas, Husserl considers Noema as per se an intentional thinking object, According to Husserl's view Noema is receivable and repeatable. However, Noema is not part of conscious subject intentional act. By using two terms of Noema and Noesis, Husserl illustrates any intentional act has a bipolar structure. Undoubtedly, research phenomenology is about the quality of appearance of creatures for the subject; however some interpreters and scholars consider Noema and Noesis as beyond this issue. This paper attempts to show the Husserl's view on Noema and Noesis.

Terminology of Noesis and Noema

The Noesis root is the Greek verb of Nosin and it means to comprehend, ascertain and ruminate. Husserl considers Noesis as meaning giving stratum of experience. Noema is taken from the Greek word of Nous. This term is applied for referring to mind and intellect. Noema is the meaning of an act where Noesis is considered to be a meaning giving part of an act. Noesis is the act of thinking and ruminating. Noema is considered as belonging to thinking and thoughts. Husserl argues that there will be no Noematic moment without a noematic moment to which it specifically belongs (Husserl, 2003). Husserl states any intentional act is based on two poles of Noema and

Noesis. Noesis gives meaning to intentional act and Noema is a meaning which is given to intentional act. In other words, any intentional act has an "I-pole" or Noesis and has an "object-pole" or Noema. Noesis and Noema of an act are not regarded as object of that act. In fact, Noesis and Noema are of content types, where Noema is an ideal and timeless component of phenomenological; content. Noesis is the act of thinking and ruminating and Noema belongs to thinking Husserl argues that there will be no Noematic moment without a noematic moment, which is to say Noema and Noesis are always in relation with each other. Although Husserl has not expressed his meaning about the concept of Noema clearly, Noema in the book *Ideas* is one of the fundamental concepts.

2. DISTINCTION BETWEEN NOESIS AND NOEMA

As stated distinction between Noema and Noesis is not like distinction between content and object. Noesis and Noema of an act are not considered as the object of that act. Husserl in clause 16 of *Logical investigations* distinguishes actual content and intentional or ideal content of consciousness from each other. Husserl in *Logical Investigations* states:

Content is an actual sense is the pure application of the concept of content in its broadest meaning which is valid in all grounds of intentional experiences. If we juxtapose the intentional content with the actual content, this indicates that today the character of experiences or intentional acts is up for discussion. However, here there is a variety of concepts which are all component upon the exact and definite nature of acts, concepts that might remain secret under the title of intentional acts by the same. We should at first distinguish three concepts of intentional content from each other. 1. Intentional object of an act, 2. Intentional matter of an act (against which stands the intentional quality of an act), and in the end, 3. intentional nature of an act (Husserl, 2001).

Any type of act, i.e. any living experience is per se is a temporal event which makes up the process of personal awareness. Such an experience is a complex event which is comprised of various living components. What Husserl calls an actual content of an act is a variety of components of a living which are added together so to make up a complex intentional experience. The actual content means some temporal parts which create an intentional living. Thus, we can state that actual content has a time-based structure content. Therefore, temporal components involve the actual quality of an act. An actual quality of an act specifies type of that experience. For instance, it is specified that an act of imagination is belief, doubt and the like. Actual matter of an act gives it a special intentional character. In other words, actual matter of an act offers an intentional object. McIntyre state that:

An actual content of an act is something which is necessarily dependent on it, i.e. exactly the same as acts are distinct events in terms of counting which occur on different occasions or in different process of consciousness, therefore there are constituting events which make these acts. Despite this, there is a meaning wherein one can say that two people or even one people in different times have a unified and same experience, which is to say experiences with similar and the same content. Therefore, we can say things about acts of one type, for instance two perceptions which have a united matter by the same, have united characters and acts with united intentional character (McIntyre & Smith, 1989).

Also, Husserl divides any content into two categories of "matter" and "quality". An actual matter of an act gives some special intentional character of that act to the living. While the quality of an act will determine the special type of that living. Of course, Husserl considers matter and quality as intentional content components not actual content components. Intentional content is the abstract and ideal structure of different acts. Regarding Jasmine when we say I remember Jasmine, this phrase indicates a moment which quality determines act which is truly the reminiscence. However, when we say that I remember Jasmine perfume, this implies the moment of act matter. A moment which gives meaning to the belonging of act. In fact, for the content of the mentioned phrase, two moments of quality and matter could be mentioned.

3. ACTUAL AND IDEAL CONTENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Husserl considers the phenomenological content of an act as an agent which causes that act to be proposed as a special experience. In other words, the phenomenological content is an agent which distinguishes that act from other subjective states and experiences. Husserl referred to phenomenological content as some mental or phenomenological characters of an act. He states any act has such content. But how an act is actually linked with the world which is beyond imagination? Husserl argues intentional character the world which is beyond imagination? Husserl argues intentional character is per se the phenomenological character of an act.

Husserl in the second part of Logical investigations, in the fifth investigation distinguishes intentional content and objects from each other and lays his view about content against that of people whose view are object is central. Attention to content arises from this belief that an act has an intentional character where this features independent from any relationship between act and external object. However, object centered theories about content emphasizes on the issue that this intentional character is per se in its own structure a communicational character. In other words, that which makes an act intentional it is related with an object; an object towards which act is directed or reveals it. Husserl maintains this is an act content which raises it as an intentional act. Husserl divides consciousness content into two categories: 1. An actual content which has a time based structure content. 2. Ideal content which is free from time and place. On the other hand, content is: 1. "quality" of an act which refers to impression, belief, doubt and the like, 2. "matter" of an act which offers an intentional object. Husserl maintains Noesis as an actual content of experience, i.e. intentional meaning is pointed at an object specially and definitely. For this, it is called actual Noetic content of an act. Whereas Noema is referred to the intentional content of experience, i.e. its concrete correlate.

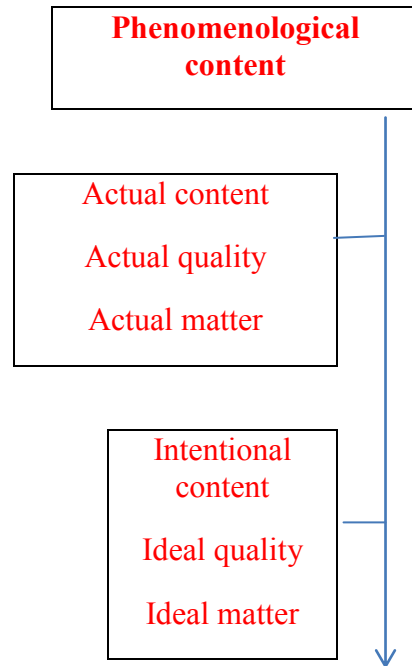
Noesis or wisdom is always considered in relation with Noema or a reasonable form. Thus, no Noetic moment is conceived of without Noematic moment. Therefore, for Husserl, object is not outside of consciousness. Object of consciousness is the original and constituting component of intentional experience. Hence, we are not only faced with Noesis but also with Noema, i.e. with object which is under rumination and thinking. Noesis is an actual component of an act and hence it is an actual Noetic content. Husserl calls object as Noema. Husserl maintains perception has its own Noema, i.e. evidence as evidence. Secondary recollection has its own Noema which is memory as memory while pleasure and pain have their won Noema.

In all these cases, we need to presuppose the correlates of Noema in its broad sense wherein it refers to "meaning". Meaning is exactly the same as that which is considered as perception, love and etc.... In other words, whenever we discuss this experience purely we then find it there ubiquitous (Husserl, 1967).

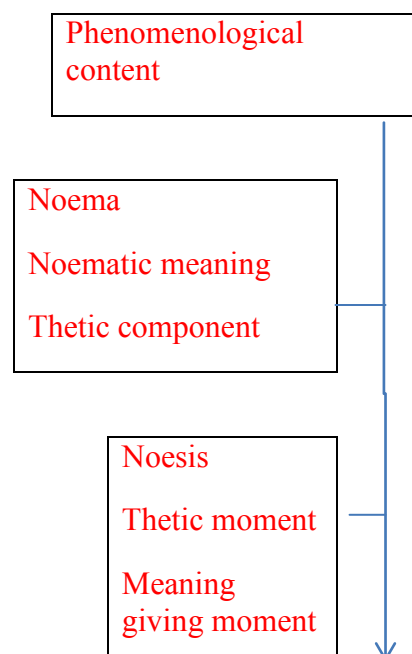
4. TYPES OF INTENTIONAL CONTENT OF AN ACT

Husserl divides the intentional content of an act into three parts: 1. Intentional object of an act; 2. Its intentional matter, 3. intentional nature of an act. Husserl by applying phenomenological reduction and in the light of transcendental perspective raises the issue of Noema and Noesis in another way. In other words, the result of a transcendental epoch is nothing but a "Noema". Noema and Noesis and all intentional living including perception, imagination, reminiscence and the like are transcendental creatures. In the phenomenological perspective actual content and ideal content are interlinked and we consider them in a Noematic-Noetic structure. (Ghorbani, 2011). Therefore, as Husserl states in the Logical Investigations, the actual and intentional content are composed of two fundamental components, i.e. actual matter and quality and intentional matter and quality. In Ideas, Husserl states that Noesis a Noema have also the same structure. Thus, Noesis based on an actual quality has a component which determines the type of act. Husserl calls thisthetic component or thetic character Noesis. There is also a correspondingthetic component

(intentional or idea) in noema (McIntyre & Smith, 1989). This issue can be depicted in the following diagram (1).



Therefore, Husserl in *Ideas* investigates the structure of consciousness and applies the concept of Noesis for the "actual content". Noesis is an actual and temporal component of a phenomenological content and has two moments of quality and matter. The qualitative moment is an actual content of "thetic moment" and its matter is "meaning giving moment". Consciousness is directed at an object due to a meaning giving moment. Of course, the thetic moment and meaning giving moment are both based on time. When we say that "I am listening to Violin by Homayoon Khoram", I'm hearing, the thetic moment and (Violin by Homayoon Khoram) is the Noetic moment of this act (Ghorbani, 2011). The same categorization we conducted for Noesis can be applied for Noema. Therefore, Noema benefits from two components of "matter" and "quality". The matter component of Noema is called Noematic sense and the quality component of Noema is called thetic component. This categorization can be illustrated as following:



According to diagrams, 1 and 2. Thetic moments in Noesis and thetic component are interlinked and correlated, the difference being that the thetic moment in Noesis is an actual and temporal moment. In other words, a moment of consciousness of an act lies in time. However, the thetic component in Noema is ideal and free from time and reality. The ideal component in Noema is directed at the act itself. In fact, Noema refers to perceived as perceived and pleased as pleased. It is noteworthy, only through some phenomenological reduction can one ascertain the relationship between Noema and Noesis. Through phenomenological reduction, Objects to Noema and propositional ruminations convert objects to meanings. Therefore, in the phenomenological perspective, contrary to our natural approach we do not focus on objects as special things, rather we consider them as an object under intention, i.e. as a Noema.

Husserl argues that all objects are made up due to their own Noema in the act of our consciousness. This does not mean that Husserl considers objects a combination of Noema or maintains that the acts of our consciousness produce objects and create them. In other words, making for Husserl does not mean creating, rather it is meant that the Noematic sense of an act gives the subject understanding of object, so that subject is laid in an intentional relationship with the object. Even where there is no such object, the meaning will also engender such act, such that as if there is its object. Therefore, the object is made with an appropriate Noematic structure. In other words, the Noematic meaning of an act gives credibility and meaning to the object of act. Thus, the relationship of consciousness with its object is the relationship between Noesis and the Noema itself with this object-pole. In any act of perceptions (like perception of Jasmine tree) we consider predicates which belong to its core nucleus. This core nucleus as stated will determine an object of consciousness and determine the way it is emerged and perceived through signs and formal relations. This core considered to be the place of various products is like essence in philosophy which is called by Husserl as generalizable (X). X is always constant, though its predicates change. For instance, the united Noema of "Napoleon" could be both considered as "victorious" or "defeated at Waterloo".

5. CONCLUSION

The Husserl's view about Noema and Noesis did not lead to adoption of an anti-realist idealism view. Husserl rejects explicitly the Berkeley's idealism. But he accepts the Kant's transcendental idealism. Kant maintained that our mind will put in order experience (objects) based on special rules and laws and we know objects, as we experience them. Thus, the transcendental philosophy states the mind sets laws based on its fundamental principles upon which we can recognize special objects. It appears that this type of transcendental idealism is completely compatible with any type of daily realism. Husserl distinguishes subjective acts from a Noematic meaning. When we say objects are created in the Noematic sense of experience it is no meant experience does give it meaning and sense rather as stated previously, experience gives it meaning and existence. Objects, be physical and mathematical and be aesthetical are made up in our consciousness based on laws matching with them, because objects are only experienced only through its Noematic meaning. A meaning by which experiences become meaningful and coherent.

References

- [1] Ghorbani, M. R. (2011). The theory of meaning in Husserl's phenomenology, Doctoral dissertation, Tehran University of Azad.
- [2] Husserl, Edmund. (2003). *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Translated by W. R. Boyce Gibson. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931. Copyright© Alex Scott
- [3] Husserl, Edmund. (2001). *Logical Investigation*, Translated by J.N. Findlay, From the second German edition of *Logische Untersuchungen*, Edited by Dermot Moran, Volume II, Published by Routledge 2001.
- [4] Husserl, Edmund. (1967). *IDEAS, General Introduction to pure phenomenology*, Translated By W.R.BOYCE GIBSON, Professor of philosophy in the university of Melbourne, London: George Allen & Unwin LTD New York: Humanities Press INC.
- [5] McIntyre, R., & Smith, D. W. (1989). *Theory of Intentionality*, in J. N. Mohanty and William R. McKenna, eds., *Husserl's Phenomenology: A Textbook* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America.)