Husserl, Phenomenology, and Foundationalism

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Abstract:

Husserl is often taken, and not without reason, to endorse the view that phenomenology’s task is to provide the “absolute foundation” of human knowledge. In this paper, I will argue that the most natural interpretation of this view, namely that all human knowledge depends for its justification, at least in part, on phenomenological knowledge, is philosophically untenable. I will also present evidence that Husserl himself held no such view, and will argue that Dan Zahavi and John Drummond, though reaching the same conclusion, reach it for the wrong reasons. In the process, I will also defend a brand of epistemological externalism according to which knowledge does not depend upon knowing the epistemic principles under which one’s knowledge falls, and argue that Husserl himself held such a view. I conclude with a discussion of a few of the ways in which phenomenology positively contributes to human knowledge.

The most basic task of phenomenology is to acquire a certain body of knowledge – knowledge about the essential characteristics of consciousness, intentionality, and, perhaps principally, knowledge itself. Acquiring knowledge is also one of the central tasks of the positive, naïve, non-phenomenological sciences. It is also something that seems to happen from time to time in ordinary, naïve, pre-scientific thought and experience. The purpose of this essay is to shed some light on the question: what bearing does phenomenological knowledge have on non-
phenomenological knowledge (or putative knowledge), both scientific and pre-scientific? More specifically, is phenomenology supposed to provide the epistemological foundations for non-phenomenological knowledge?

In what follows, I will (a) argue that such a view is philosophically indefensible, and (b) present some evidence that Husserl himself did not hold any such view. Though there are several Husserl commentators who have come to the same conclusions, I will argue that, for the most part, their reasons for thinking so are the wrong ones. I will also defend a brand of epistemological externalism according to which knowledge does not depend upon knowing the epistemic principles under which one’s knowledge falls, and argue that Husserl himself held such a view.

I.

That Husserl held that part of phenomenology’s task consists in providing the foundations of knowledge has a ring of orthodoxy to it, especially in light of Husserl’s deep sympathies with the purpose, if not the execution, of Descartes’s philosophical project, and many of Husserl’s commentators, both sympathizers and critics alike, attribute, or seem to attribute, such a view to him. “Husserlian phenomenology,” says J.N. Mohanty, “aims at an absolute, i.e. non-relative, grounding of human knowledge.”¹ Smith and McIntyre write,

The basic task of philosophy, he [Husserl] believes, is to discover the ultimate foundations of our beliefs about the world and our place in it, and to justify — or at least effect an understanding of — the framework within which all our thinking about the world takes place, both our everyday, common-sense thinking and our theoretical, scientific reasoning. Like Descartes, Husserl thinks these foundations lie with an understanding of the nature of the experiencing subject and his consciousness.²
Such interpretations are not without direct support. As early as his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl claims that the sciences stand in need of “theoretical completion” by metaphysics and the theory of science (*Wissenschaftslehre*), or “logic” in Husserl’s sense of the term, and that logic and metaphysics themselves require lengthy and difficult preliminary phenomenological investigations, which the subsequent six investigations were to partially provide.\(^3\) In *Ideas I*, Husserl claims that all non-phenomenological sciences are “dogmatic” and stand in need of “criticism,” and that this criticism must come from phenomenology.\(^4\) In the *Cartesian Meditations*, phenomenology is summoned to provide an “absolute grounding” of human knowledge.\(^5\) And in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Husserl writes approvingly of the Cartesian and “old Platonic” idea of a “genuine science… grounded on absolute foundations.”\(^6\) He adds that the transcendental phenomenologist, in her attempt to “justify” the existing positive sciences, is to regard them as “clues to guide transcendental researches, the aim of which is to create sciences for the very first time as genuine.” (*FTL*, p. 14)

What could Husserl have in mind? The most natural reading, perhaps, is that Husserl endorses what I will call Epistemological-Phenomenological Foundationalism, according to which:

**EPF-1**: Every piece of knowledge in a proper noetic structure is either:

(i) epistemically basic or immediately warranted, or

(ii) warranted, directly or indirectly, on the basis of epistemically basic pieces of knowledge.

**EPF-2**: Every piece of knowledge that is not itself phenomenological knowledge is epistemically founded, at least in part, on the basis of phenomenological knowledge.
EPF-1 is simply Epistemological Foundationalism, which is a thesis concerning all properly formed noetic structures. It is not, in the first instance, a psychological thesis; it does not maintain that any actual noetic structures do in fact satisfy the conditions it sets forth as constitutive of a proper noetic structure—though of course if Epistemological Foundationalism is correct, and if we have knowledge, then we must actually satisfy those conditions. And although most classical versions of Epistemological Foundationalism have historically been wielded against the specter of skepticism, and have therefore maintained that the epistemically basic beliefs must be certain, incorrigible, or infallible, this is not an essential component of Epistemological Foundationalism. The Epistemological Foundationalist is not, qua foundationalist, committed to any claims concerning (a) the content of the foundational mental states, (b) the precise epistemic status of those states, or (c) the nature of the relations in virtue of which the foundational mental states confer warrant on the non-foundational ones. And while EPF-2 does specify the contents of the foundational mental states, it remains silent on (b) and (c).

Several commentators, however, have questioned whether Husserl is committed to any sort of foundationalism, as well as the philosophical viability of such a position generally. Dan Zahavi presents three considerations in support of his claim that “there is … something very misleading about calling Husserl a foundationalist, at least if the term is used in its traditional epistemological sense.” First, Husserl explicitly remarks that any attempt to “establish a science which is based exclusively on absolutely certain truths” involves a misunderstanding of science. Secondly, Husserl regards the “transcendental analysis” carried out by phenomenology to be necessarily incomplete, capable of further refinement and improvement ad infinitum. Third, Husserl rejects the idea, associated with “rationalistic Foundationalism,” that
the propositions of phenomenology serve as axioms from which all other knowledge is to be
deduced.\textsuperscript{12}

This is all very good evidence that Husserl rejects some varieties of foundationalism,
including, perhaps, most traditional versions of it. Zahavi’s arguments do not, however, entail
that Husserl rejects all versions of foundationalism, nor the one explicitly under consideration
here. With respect to Zahavi’s first point, EPF does not require that the foundational pieces of
knowledge be “absolutely certain.” For all we know, Husserl might have held a more modest
form of foundationalism, allowing epistemically basic pieces of knowledge to have a degree of
warrant that falls short of certainty. With respect to the second point, EPF does not require that
the science of phenomenology be completed in order to serve as an epistemological foundation
for other, non-phenomenological bodies of knowledge; it does not say that all of the propositions
of phenomenology are epistemically prior to scientific propositions. It says, rather, that every
piece of non-phenomenological knowledge depends, for its warrant, on at least some
phenomenological propositions, perhaps only a select subset. With respect to Zahavi’s third
point, EPF is silent on the issue of whether foundational beliefs logically entail the non-
foundational ones, or bear some other warrant-conferring relation to them.

II.

John Drummond provides by far the most thorough discussions of both Husserl’s commitment to
foundationalism, and the philosophical merits of such a view from a phenomenological
perspective.\textsuperscript{13} According to Drummond, Husserl does not endorse the empiricist brand of
foundationalism, according to which our knowledge of physical objects is “reducible” to
incorrigible immediate sense experiences, since Husserl consistently maintains that empirical
sense perception is never incorrigible. (Drummond, 1990, 239) This is surely right. However, the empiricist brand of foundationalism is not what’s under consideration here: it plainly is not entailed by EPF.

Drummond’s also argues that Husserl does not endorse a rationalist brand of foundationalism, according to which “some non-empirical, certain knowledge is said to be prior to our knowledge of worldly realities.” (Drummond, 1990, p. 240) As evidence for this, Drummond points out that despite his strong affinities with Descartes, Husserl rejects the view that the discovery of the transcendental ego should serve as a “little tag end of the world” from which the rest should be deduced. (See Drummond, 1990, p. 241 and CM, sec. 10, p. 24) This does, I agree, provide some evidence that Husserl did not endorse EPF, but it is not conclusive. The reason has already been pointed out: EPF does not specify that the relation between foundational and non-foundational pieces of knowledge must be deductive, or even inferential.

Of greater interest are Drummond’s own reasons, proceeding from a broadly Husserlian framework, for rejecting Epistemological Foundationalism generally. While Drummond’s arguments do not constitute any direct evidence that Husserl himself rejected such a view, they might at least indicate that Husserl’s considered views on knowledge are incompatible with it, and such a fact, if it is a fact, would be of considerable philosophical interest.

Drummond distinguishes between (a) strong and moderate and (b) internalist and externalist varieties of epistemological or justificatory foundationalism. Strong foundationalism holds that the basic cognitions making up a noetic structure must be certain or infallible. Since the version of Epistemological Foundationalism under consideration here has no such commitment, I will focus on Drummond’s argument against moderate foundationalism. If it is sound, all varieties of Epistemological Foundationalism, whether strong or moderate, are false.
Drummond’s argument against Epistemological Foundationalism, which he defines as the view that “there exist some foundational cognitions or beliefs (1) which are either self-evident or self-justifying or, at the least, not evident or justified by reference to any other cognitions or beliefs and (2) upon which all other cognitions or beliefs are founded insofar as they can be derived therefrom by an acceptable method,” begins with a famous argument due to Laurence Bonjour:

(1) Suppose that there are basic empirical beliefs, that is, empirical beliefs (a) which are epistemically justified, and (b) whose justification does not depend on that of any further empirical beliefs.

(2) For a belief to be epistemically justified requires that there be a reason why it is likely to be true.

(3) For a belief to be epistemically justified for a particular person requires that this person be himself in cognitive possession of such a reason.

(4) The only way to be in cognitive possession of such a reason is to believe with justification the premises from which it follows that the belief is likely to be true.

(5) The Premises of such a justifying argument for an empirical belief cannot be entirely a priori; at least one such premise must be empirical.

Therefore, the justification of a suppose basic empirical belief must depend on the justification of at least one other empirical belief, contradicting (1); it follows that there can be no basic empirical beliefs.¹⁵

To get a better handle on the argument we turn to Drummond’s discussion of the possible responses to it. One, the “internalist” option, is to reject premise (4). The most promising option for the internalist is to maintain that there are cognitive states, such as experiences, whose contents are non-propositional, and so cannot serve as premises, but do immediately justify beliefs. To this Drummond responds that “it is difficult to see how non-propositional content would logically justify a propositional content.” (Drummond, 1991, p. 57) Indeed it is. And
Drummond appears to believe that, if Epistemological Foundationalism is true, then the justificatory relations between basic and non-basic mental states must be logical. Drummond is surely right that, historically, most foundationalists, and the majority of coherentists, have construed epistemic justification as parasitical upon logical relations among the contents of the mental states involved. But that is not something to which the Epistemological Foundationalist must be committed, nor does it follow from Drummond’s own definition.

Drummond, unlike many advocates and critics of Epistemological Foundationalism, including Bonjour, is perfectly willing to admit “evidential presentations” into his account of empirical knowledge. (Drummond, 1991, p. 64) He holds that perceptual states stand in “founding” relations with judgments, (Drummond, 1991, p. 62) and also says, quite rightly in my opinion, that most discussions of foundationalism “misconceive evidence as applying exclusively to the content and its logical justification. Evidence is instead the evidencing of objects; the experiencing of objects in their actual, sensuously based presence. But this presence is the presence of the objectivity itself and not merely the presence of a psychic or logical content.” (Drummond, 1991, p. 63) Drummond here is in perfect agreement, and self-consciously so, with Husserl, whose account of fulfillment describes just how the intuitive contents of experiences contribute to knowledge. In fulfillment, an object is not merely thought of or meant, but is intuitively given to one, and present as (more or less) one means it. Adequate fulfillment, in which an object is given precisely as it’s meant, is just what knowing, at its best, is.16 And what distinguishes a case of fulfillment, whether adequate or partial, from a case of merely or emptily thinking about something is the intuitive content of the act. But this content is not just another proposition, even in the case of categorical intuitions. Any proposition can be the content of acts which differ from one another in their intuitive fullness, and therefore differ in
their “epistemic essence.” Since intuition is not another proposition, and yet plays an extremely important role in the justification of some beliefs, it follows that something besides propositions can serve as justifiers of belief, and, therefore, that logical justification is not the only species of justification.

This, one would think, is exactly the sort of response the Epistemological Foundationalist ought to make to premise (4) of Bonjour’s argument. Drummond argues, however, that this does not commit Husserl (or himself) to Epistemological Foundationalism, not only because Drummond thinks the foundationalist is committed to the existence of a logical connection between epistemically basic and non-basic mental states, but also because our perceptions are “associationally informed” by previous judgments and knowledge. (Drummond, 1991, p. 62) Perceptions stand in founding relations with judgments, but those same judgments stand in founding relations with perceptions. “Hence,” he writes, “foundations present themselves in the form of a hermeneutic circle.” (Drummond, 1991, p. 62) This is Drummond’s strongest argument against foundationalism, but is not quite convincing. The reason is that Drummond does not adequately distinguish between epistemic and ontological founding relations. A mental state might depend on another for either its justification or its existence. And it is perfectly consistent to hold that a given mental state is both ontologically founded on other pieces of knowledge, but that it does not depend upon them for its justification. For instance, it requires a great deal of knowledge to perceive a computer as a computer, or even to see a red thing as red. In Husserlian terms, someone who lacks the concept ‘computer’ might be able to see something that happens to be a computer, but cannot have meaning-intentions about computers fulfilled—he cannot verify the thought “this is a computer” on a perceptual basis, for instance, since he cannot think that thought. But the knowledge that such experiences are
ontologically founded upon need not serve as premises or justifying reasons for believing what is presented in experience, and so need not serve as epistemic grounds for belief.\(^{19}\) What Drummond would need to establish to refute Epistemological Foundationalism is that every candidate for epistemic basicality is not only “associationally informed” by a wider body of beliefs, and in that (ontological) sense founded on them, but that each depends for its justification on other beliefs.

In light of these considerations, I find Drummond’s argument against the internalist response to Bonjour’s argument strong but inconclusive. Drummond’s evaluation of the externalist response to the argument is inconclusive as well, and examining why this is so will shed light on Husserl’s own views about knowledge. Internalism, according to Drummond, requires that “the justifying reasons be known by” the person whose beliefs they justify, (Drummond, 1991, p. 55) and underlies premise (3) of Bonjour’s argument. In order to block Bonjour’s argument, the externalist will deny this, holding instead that

- a justifying reason for a non-inferential belief is present (a) whenever a nomological relation exists between the believer and the world such that the satisfaction of that relation yields a true belief that \(p\) and justifies \(S\) in believing that \(p\), even though \(S\) has no awareness of this (nomological) reason or (b) whenever \(S\) follows a reliable process in coming to believe that \(p\), even though \(S\) might be unaware of the reliability of this process. (Drummond, 1991, p. 56)

Drummond rejects externalism about epistemic justification on the ground that, if true, one could be justified in believing something without being aware that one is justified, and rejects externalism about knowledge—a form of externalism that dispenses with the requirement that knowledge be justified—on the grounds that it cannot distinguish between the subjective state of “merely believing” something and knowing “without awareness of” the reason one knows.
Whatever picture of epistemic justification we adopt, it must be internalist.

In order to assess this argument, let us distinguish (a) the justifying reasons supporting what I believe and (b) the reasons why my belief—which, as a psychological state belonging exclusively to me, arising and passing away in time, and only capable of being made thematic to me in reflective acts, differs from what I believe—is warranted or likely to be true. My justifying reasons are those things I would appeal to as evidence supporting what I believe or know. For instance, my justifying reasons for believing it has recently rained might be (a) that the pavement is wet and (b) that rain is the only feasible thing that could have made it wet. Drummond’s defense of internalism rests on the solid insight that in order for my belief to be justified, I must be aware of my own justifying reasons (if any) that support what I believe, and his criticism of externalism concerning one’s justifying reasons strikes me as right on.

But while, for any mental state whatsoever, there is a reason why it possesses whatever epistemic status it does—as premise (2) says—it does not follow that every such reason must be among the justifying reasons supporting its content. For instance, among the reasons my belief is likely to be true or is warranted are that it exists, that it is the consciousness of something, that it has the precise content it has, that it is brought about by the consciousness of other things whose contents bear broadly reason-giving relations to its content, and so forth. More generally, my belief is likely to be true or is warranted, in part, in virtue of satisfying the antecedent of some true epistemic principle that specifies sufficient conditions for a belief to be warranted. But not all such reasons are among those that I would need to use as evidence in support of what I believe. Take, for instance, my belief that I am in pain. My evidence for believing that I am in pain is not that my belief satisfies the antecedent of some true epistemic principle. Rather, my
evidence is—or at least seems to be—that I am in pain, which manifests itself to me in an
evidential presentation.

That statements about one’s beliefs are not always among the justifying reasons
supporting what one believes is especially obvious in the case of necessary truths, as Husserl
realizes as clearly as anybody. I know that the law of noncontradiction is necessarily true. But
I could not possibly know this if I had to include patently contingent premises about my own
psychological condition among the justifying reasons for it. If some proposition \( p \) constitutes an
essential part of my evidence for another proposition \( q \), then I also have a reason (whether I
actually believe it or not) to believe the following conditional: If \( p \) were false, then \( q \) might be
false as well; not-\( q \) would then be consistent with everything I know. So, if my evidence for the
law of noncontradiction depended essentially upon some proposition \( p \) concerning myself, such
that I have a certain belief \( B \) with such-and-such properties, then I would now have a reason to
believe that if I had no such belief with such-and-such properties, then the law of
noncontradiction might be false. But this is absurd. There is no proposition known by me or
anyone else, least of all one about my psychological states, which is such that were it false, the
negation of the law of noncontradiction would be consistent with everything I or anyone else
would then know.

Having distinguished between the justifying reasons supporting what one believes and
the reasons why one’s beliefs are likely to be true, we can formulate a distinction between two
kinds of internalism. One, Weak Internalism, states that if S’s belief \( B \) is justified, then S must
justifiably believe whatever reasons S uses in support of B’s content (what S believes). Strong
Internalism shares this requirement, and adds that in order for S’s belief \( B \) to be warranted, S
must justifiably believe whatever other reasons there are, if any, in virtue of which B (S’s belief)
is warranted. And with this distinction in mind, we can formulate the following dilemma: if all that Bonjour’s argument requires is Weak Internalism, then premise (2) of the argument begs the question against foundationalism. And if Bonjour’s argument requires Strong Internalism, then, while premise (2) becomes trivially true, premise (3) becomes extremely implausible. Finally, if one fails to make the distinction between justifying reasons and non-justifying reasons—and it’s not at all clear that either Bonjour or Drummond do make the distinction—then one will either be subject to one of the horns of the dilemma, probably the second, or guilty of equivocation.

To begin with the second horn of the dilemma, suppose that Bonjour and Drummond endorse Strong Internalism. In that case, premise (2) is trivially true: of course there is a reason why any given mental state has whatever epistemic status it has. In particular, any mental state that is warranted is so, in part, because it satisfies the antecedent of some true epistemic principle. But on this reading, premise (3) becomes simply incredible. For it entails, among other things, that one must justifiably believe that one’s belief that one is in pain satisfies the antecedent of some epistemic principle in order to justifiably believe that one is in pain. Moreover, insofar as a great number of creatures, including animals, children, and many non-epistemologists, do not and cannot form justified beliefs about their own beliefs and the epistemic principles under which they fall, this view entails that they lack justified beliefs and, therefore, lack knowledge.

That one must form beliefs about one’s beliefs and epistemic principles in order to know also rings false phenomenologically. Consider what actually happens when one wishes to acquire knowledge of some subject matter. If I wish to know where my keys are, I will look around the house, searching and attending to my immediate domestic environment. If I wish to know what the latest discoveries of astronomy are, I will consult a recent and reputable source of
information. In such cases, what I am conscious of, what my relevant acts of looking, thinking, trying to make sense of, and so forth are about, do not include my own acts of thinking or any principles of epistemology. Suppose I find my keys, and subsequently reflect on my belief about their whereabouts. In this case, my reflection discovers the epistemic properties of my belief, but does not help create or constitute them. I find, upon reflection, that I formed my belief that the keys are on the table on the basis of attentive and sober experience. But I do not know anything more about the location of my keys in virtue of such reflections. I don’t now come to know where my keys are; I already knew where they were, and I now know that I know where they are. My belief possessed its warrant—perhaps even non-inferential warrant—prior to and independently of any reflection upon it. And the same goes for many other cases of warranted belief and knowledge, which perhaps explains why one does not, in all cases, have better warrant for one’s previous beliefs about biology, astronomy, or the familiar objects making up the Lebenswelt just in virtue of having learned something about the nature of knowledge or one’s own acts of knowing. One does not, after one’s first epistemology class, have a stronger reason for believing dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago or that PV=k. Indeed, one may be considerably more certain of some things than of any epistemic principles one learns in the course of studying epistemology. As Alvin Goldman points out, “Even many career-long epistemologists have failed to articulate and appreciate correct epistemic principles,”21 which is evidenced by the fact that epistemologists articulate and appreciate incompatible epistemic principles.

It seems to me that both Bonjour and Drummond adhere to Strong Internalism. According to Bonjour, a theory of justification is internalist “if and only if it requires that all of the factors needed for a belief to be epistemically justified for a given person be cognitively
accessible to that person, internal to his cognitive perspective; and externalist, if it allows that at least some of the justifying factors need not be thus accessible.”22 And satisfying the antecedent of a true epistemic principle is, trivially, one of the factors involved in any given belief’s being epistemically justified. Bonjour himself insists that in order for any empirical belief B to be justified, one must justifiably believe that (i) B has feature φ and (ii) beliefs having feature φ are highly likely to be true. (Bonjour, 1985, p. 31) In order to believe (i), one must be capable of forming beliefs about one’s own belief. And (ii) just is the form an epistemic principle would take.

It’s not entirely clear whether Drummond also endorses Strong Internalism, but it appears that he might. He writes:

We would, then, in order to claim that a particular belief or cognition is foundational have to assert at least (i) that beliefs or cognitions of the relevant class are true or likely to be true, (ii) that a particular belief or cognition is a member of that class, and (iii) that we presently hold that particular belief or cognition. But these claims constitute a logical justification of the belief thought to be foundational. (Drummond, 1991, p. 57)

And he presents this as an argument that the mental state in question could not be foundational. But this would not follow unless Drummond also endorsed Strong Internalism. What Drummond says is that one must justifiably believe (i)-(iii) in order to assert or know that a belief is foundational, which is of course correct. But this doesn’t entail that in order for a belief to be foundational, the subject of that belief must be able to assert or know that it is. It is perfectly consistent to maintain that (a) the belief B, whose content is “I am in pain,” is non-inferentially warranted for S, and (b) the belief B*, whose content is “B is non-inferentially warranted,” is not non-inferentially warranted, provided one does not hold that (c) B would not be justified for S unless B* were justified for S. In order for Drummond’s argument to work,
however, (c) must be the case, and this suggests that he, like Bonjour, endorses Strong Internalism.

The foregoing considerations, I think, strongly support a sort of externalism about epistemic principles and one’s own acts of believing of the sort endorsed by, for instance, James Van Cleve.\(^{23}\) Given some epistemic principle of the form “If S believes that \(p\) on the basis of method M, then S’s belief that \(p\) is warranted,” it is enough that S form his belief on the basis of M in order to be warranted. S need not also know the epistemic principle in question, nor know that its antecedent is the case, despite the fact that these are among the reasons why his belief is warranted. An externalism of this sort can, moreover, comfortably coexist with Weak Internalism.

Suppose, then, that Drummond endorses only Weak Internalism, and is an externalist about epistemic principles. In that case, we must read premise (3) as asserting that in order for S’s belief B to be justified, S must be in “cognitive possession” of the justifying reasons in virtue of which it is warranted (or “likely to be true”). That is extremely plausible. However, in that case, we would have to read premise (2) as asserting that for any empirical belief, there is a justifying reason in virtue of which it is warranted, since the phrase “a reason” in premise (3) refers to the same thing that it does in (2). But on that reading, premise (2) simply asserts the falsity of foundationalism. No foundationalist, on pain of inconsistency, would admit that every empirical belief is justified on the basis of justifying reasons. This reading of premise (2) renders the rest of the argument otiose; what it purports to establish at the end has already been asserted at the beginning.

Drummond provides a very good argument against externalism about one’s justifying reasons, but does not provide any argument against the sort of externalism advocated here. Such
a position, moreover, is consistent with Drummond’s own definition of Epistemological Foundationalism. And while Drummond’s argument that every putatively foundational mental state is founded upon others constitutes a serious challenge to even the most plausible versions of Epistemological Foundationalism, it is not entirely conclusive. In any case, what the previous considerations show is that, while EPF-1 might be problematic, what makes EPF highly implausible is EPF-2. For, like Strong Internalism, EPF-2 requires of every knower that he possess a body of concepts and knowledge that not all knowers possess. For example, EPF-2 entails, incredibly, that in the absence of possessing some phenomenological knowledge, scientists, mathematicians, logicians, and ordinary non-specialists would not possess knowledge of the subject matters with which they effectively deal. After all, what EPF-2 claims is that phenomenological claims are essential justifying reasons for everything else, and it is flatly inconsistent to hold that phenomenology provides the epistemological foundations of all other sciences, and that those sciences can produce knowledge independently of phenomenology. But this is, if not quite absurd, incredible: knowing is as natural for us as speaking and thinking, arguably coeval with and necessary for them, not something that can only occur once one has become as sophisticated as Husserl (or Drummond or Bonjour). We do not, in a great many instances, even have to try to be knowers; we’re fated, by the very nature of intentional consciousness, to be so. Not only does a statistically normal person know that she has hands, but she can’t help but know it.24

III.

Now we turn to the question whether Husserl himself endorsed something like EPF. Some of Husserl’s commentators expressly point out that Husserl held that bodies of knowledge exist independently of the results of phenomenology. Thus Dallas Willard writes,
Although [Husserl] held the sciences to be incomplete in various important respects, and in need of philosophical supplementation and clarification, that did not mean, for him, that they fail to provide us with genuine knowledge. In them we truly do understand the relevant subject matters; only, we often do not understand our understanding itself.25

And Elizabeth Ströker writes, “…[H]e started, and expressly so, from the pregiven systems of knowledge, and he appreciated well that they provide knowledge of the real world.”26 If Willard and Ströker are correct, then EPF must be false. I think they are correct, but before turning to the evidence in support of their claims, let us examine some evidence that Husserl did endorse EPF.

Certainly there are passages that suggest that he did. In the Logical Investigations, for instance, he claims that each science, including formal logic itself, is incomplete in virtue of what Husserl calls its “lack of inner clarity and rationality.”27 He characterizes the working scientist as a sort of “ingenious technician” concerned mainly with “practical results and mastery” rather than “essential insight.” (LI Prolegomena, sec. 71, pp. 244-5) In Ideas I, he claims that “it can be seen… that they and they alone [the dogmatic sciences] are the sciences which require ‘criticism’—and indeed, a criticism, which they themselves are essentially incapable of effecting; and, on the other hand, that the science having the unique function of effecting the criticism of all others and, at the same time, of itself is none other than phenomenology.” (Ideas I, sec. 62, pp. 141-2) In Formal and Transcendental Logic, he even claims that “only a science clarified and justified transcendentally (in the phenomenological sense) can be an ultimate science; only a transcendentally-phenomenologically clarified world can be an ultimately understood world.” (FTL, p. 16) And in the Crisis, he claims that all of the “great systems of German Idealism,” with which he clearly agrees on this matter, “share the basic conviction that the objective sciences… are not seriously sciences at all, not cognitions
ultimately grounded, i.e., not ultimately, theoretically responsible for themselves—and that they
are not, then, cognitions of what exists in ultimate truth.” (Cr, sec. 27, p. 99)

Despite appearances, none of these passages provides conclusive evidence that Husserl
held anything like EPF. For the claims that the positive or naïve sciences are not genuine, are
incomplete, require criticism, or lack self-understanding and self-justification are each
compatible with the claim that each such science produces knowledge and warranted belief about
the subject matters with which it thematically deals. Husserl does, it is true, routinely
characterizes naïve thought as one-sided (see FTL, sec. 9), and inevitably so: in naïve thinking
we are concerned straightforwardly and thematically with the objects of cognition rather than the
subjective processes by whose means those objects are, to use a troublesome term, “constituted”
for consciousness.28 But the fact that any complete, self-understanding and self-justifying
species of theoretical or cognitive activity would have to be two-sided does not by any means
entail that a one-sided cognitive activity does not produce knowledge. A type of thinking that
produces no knowledge or warranted belief would perhaps be better characterized as no-sided
than one-sided. Moreover, Husserl’s claim that only a transcendentally clarified science can be
ultimate, and can give us an ultimate understanding of the world, by no means entails that a
science that falls short of this ideal does not produce partial understanding. Plainly one need not
know everything in order to know something. And one need not know how one knows, say, that
2+2=4, what the noetic and noematic components of such an act of knowing are and how they fit
together, in order to know that 2+2=4. There is, rather, plenty of reason to think that we no more
need a theory of knowledge to know than we need a theory of perception to perceive or a theory
of thought to think.
There is considerable evidence, on the other hand, that Husserl did not adhere to EPF. First, there is direct textual evidence. In “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science,” Husserl writes, “No reasonable person will doubt the objective truth or the objectively grounded probability of the wonderful theories of mathematics and the natural sciences.” (PRS, 74) Of course he does not say explicitly that such sciences produce knowledge, but the fact that no reasonable person would doubt their objective truth clearly suggests that they at least possess warrant of some sort or another. In both the Logical Investigations and Ideas I, Husserl argues that it is not the business of philosophers to interfere with or impede the positive sciences.

_The right position to take in the dogmatic, in a good sense, prephilosophical sphere of inquiry, to which all empirical sciences (but not just these) belong, is that position which pushes aside all skepticism, together with all “natural philosophy” and “theory of knowledge,” and takes the kinds of objects of knowledge [Erkenntnisgegenständlichkeiten] where one actually finds them—whatever difficulties an epistemological reflection on the possibility of such kinds of objects may always point out afterwards._ (Ideas I, sec. 26, p. 47, translation modified.)

This passage clearly implies, among other things, that even in the “dogmatic” or prephilosophical sphere, there are “kinds of objects of knowledge” to be found.

In the Crisis, Husserl writes,

> It is naturally a ludicrous, though unfortunately common misunderstanding, to seek to attack transcendental phenomenology as “Cartesianism,” as if its _ego cogito_ were a premise or set of premises from which the rest of knowledge … was to be deduced, absolutely “secured.” The point is not to secure objectivity but to understand it. (Cr, section 55, p. 189)

This strongly suggests that for Husserl, the task of transcendental phenomenology is to come to an understanding of how “objectivity” or objective knowledge, which already exists, or at least might already exist, is possible. Here Drummond is quite helpful: a transcendental phenomenological critique of knowledge “clarifies the nature of our everyday experience of
objects and the world, and thereby clarifies both (1) the nature of those objects and that world precisely as objects of experience and (2) the nature of ourselves and of other subjects in and of the world.” (Drummond, 1990, p. 243) And this is an altogether different enterprise than the Cartesian one, on at least one historically prominent understanding of it, which consists not in explaining the how of knowledge, but in transforming true belief into objective knowledge by supplying justificatory premises to beliefs which, prior to such an investigation, hang in the air. Of course the task of phenomenology is to produce knowledge—knowledge, however, of intentional processes. But its task is not to produce non-phenomenological knowledge, even in part, but to understand the how of such knowledge. And an investigation into how some body of knowledge is possible is in fact incompatible with an investigation the point of which is to justify that body of knowledge, that is, partially to produce that body of knowledge. A precondition of a successful investigation of the first sort is that the body of knowledge in question is in fact known, or at least has its evidential status, independently of the investigation into its how, while a precondition of a successful, or at least non-redundant, investigation of the second sort is that it is or does not. The point of phenomenological investigations is not to provide, but to discover, the foundations (if any) of non-phenomenological knowledge.

Indirect evidence that Husserl held no such view is even stronger. Husserl devotes considerable energy to describing what knowledge, at its best, is. Briefly, it is the condition of adequate fulfillment, in which the object one means is intuitively presented, and presented precisely as one means it. But when one examines Husserl’s phenomenological descriptions of knowing, which populate at least a portion of virtually every one of his major works, one finds that the hypothetical subjects described are not doing phenomenology; what is thematic in the vast majority of the acts of knowing Husserl describes is the intuited object or state of affairs, not
the subjective processes in virtue of which it is intuited, nor any epistemic principles under
which those subjective processes fall. What Husserl describes, when he discusses cases of
fulfillment, is knowledge, not something that, together with the knowledge of Husserl’s theory of
fulfillment and/or psychological-phenomenological reflection on one’s own acts, would only
then amount to knowledge.

We can reach the same conclusion by examining Husserl’s most basic epistemic
principle, the famous “Principle of All Principles,” which reads: “every originary presentive
intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition… everything originarily… offered us in ‘intuition’
is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being…” (Ideas I, sec. 24, p. 44) This
epistemic principle amounts to the following: If an object is exhibited intuitively to a subject S as
S means it, then S is warranted in taking that object to exist and possess those properties which
are exhibited intuitively. If this is right, then having something exhibited intuitively is a
sufficient condition for warrant and, together with truth, knowledge. In particular, there is no
further necessary condition which must hold, such as knowing the Principle of All Principles
itself. The Principle is “not a principle I have to apply to in order to gain knowledge; I need only
fall under it.” (Van Cleve, 1979, p. 70)

A final reason for not attributing a view like EPF to Husserl is that it is at odds with his
basic conception of intentionality and thinking. For Husserl, all objectifying acts, acts which
posit the existence of some object, event, relation, or state of affairs, are teleologically oriented
towards a certain goal. This goal is, in the first instance, truth, and to “grasp” the meaning of a
thought is, minimally, to know its truth conditions. But the goal of thinking is not just truth, but
rather the consciousness of truth of the sort that occurs, preeminently, in acts of fulfillment.
Meanings are authentically grasped, not by grasping their truth conditions alone, but by grasping
how, if at all, those truth conditions (or their contradictories) would present themselves to consciousness in the flesh. Any meaningful objectifying act is such that its content or sense can, at least ideally, be evidently fulfilled or frustrated in corresponding intuitions (though of course the character of this evidence will depend upon the nature of the entities under consideration). Because of this, knowing is not something that must be added to thinking as a surplus or addition supplied by reflection upon it. Rather, knowing is just what thinking, at its best, is; it belongs to the nature of a thought that it could, under suitable circumstances, be transformed into knowledge of either what it asserts or its negation. Just as failures in the sphere of action ought to be treated as deficient modes of achieving, so non-evidential thinking ought to be treated as a deficient mode of knowing. Thus Husserl writes that “The concept of any intentionality whatsoever… and the concept of evidence, that intentionality that is the giving of something-itself, are essentially correlative.” (FTL, sec. 60, p. 160) Now insofar as acts of thinking, or intentional processes generally, do not depend for their existence or their whatness on reflective intentional acts directed upon them, but are, rather, presupposed by the latter, so knowing, which is just what all thinking potentially is and what good thinking actually is, does not depend upon such reflection either. Evidence or knowledge is a possibility intrinsic to all thinking, not something bestowed upon it by reflective acts.

Do the foregoing considerations show that Husserl was not an epistemological foundationalist, or that he endorsed some non-traditional sort of foundationalism? Some, including Zahavi and Smith and McIntyre (1982, p. 97), think so—they conclude, on the basis of their own discovery that Husserl did not endorse such a view, that Husserl was not a foundationalist or, if he was, that he was a fundamentally different sort of foundationalist than the traditional sort. They are, however, mistaken. For in order to conclude that, we would
require either some evidence that Husserl believes the only tenable version of foundationalism is something along the lines of EPF, or some reason for thinking that a phenomenologist of Husserl’s stripe is logically committed to EPF if he is committed to foundationalism at all. I am unaware of any evidence supporting the first claim, and Husserl is surely not logically committed to rejecting foundationalism just in virtue of rejecting EPF. It is perfectly consistent to hold that (i) the task of phenomenology is to discover the foundations of all (branches of) knowledge and (ii) phenomenology does not form part of the foundation of all (branches of) knowledge. Perhaps Husserl was not an Epistemological Foundationalist, but if he was not, it is not because a repudiation of EPF logically commits him to rejecting it.

IV.

It would be wrong-headed to suggest that Husserl was an externalist, or that his philosophy is consistent with externalism, if by that one means that the justifying reasons for what one believes might be reasons of which one is not conscious. But it is correct, I maintain, to claim that Husserl’s philosophy is consistent with an externalism about epistemic principles and the mental acts that fall under them: one need not know epistemic principles, or know that one’s own mental acts fall under them, in order to know. It is no part of the task of phenomenology to provide the justifying reasons for what we know, unless of course what we know is something pertaining to acts of consciousness.

Phenomenology does justify our non-phenomenological beliefs and knowledge, but only in the sense that it exhibits the properties of our conscious acts in virtue of which they have the evidential status they have. As Husserl puts it, “the critique of knowledge seeks to clarify, to bring to light, the essence of knowledge and the legitimacy of its claim to validity, a claim that
belongs to its essence.”\textsuperscript{31} The phenomenologist’s task, as this makes plain, is to “bring to light” the legitimacy of knowledge’s claim to validity, which is a quite different enterprise than producing or making that legitimacy. In that sense, phenomenology provides a justification of the sort the skeptic challenges us to produce: a justification that consists, not (just) in producing propositions supporting what we know, but in producing propositions about those acts of knowing and the epistemic principles under which they fall. But one need not know such things in order for one’s beliefs and acts of knowing to be acts of knowing, which is why when (or if) one defends one’s knowledge against a skeptical attack, one does not only then become a knower, but displays the nature of what was, all along, a case of knowing. Just as the reflective moral justification of a prior action does not make or contribute to its moral status, so the reflective or phenomenological justification of a belief does not make it into a piece of knowledge or contribute to its epistemic status but presupposes, as a condition of its very sense, that it has that status already.

Despite all of this, phenomenological investigations make, or at least can make, an important contribution to human knowledge. Recall Husserl’s claim that the sciences lack “inner clarity and rationality,” which, he says, “is a need independently of the expansion of science.” \textit{(LI Prolegomena, sec. 4, p. 58)} What they lack is knowledge of knowledge. The special sciences produce knowledge, without having anything to say about knowledge itself. And the need for such knowledge is a specifically philosophical one that has dominated Western philosophy since its inception. This need is the need not only to be justified in our beliefs, but to be able to understand why we are justified. It is the need not only to fall under epistemic principles, but to grasp those principles and determine whether or not we fall under them. It is, in short, the desire to know not only the world around us, but also our cognitive relationship to it.
“The philosopher,” writes Husserl, “is not content with the fact that we find our way about in the world… He wants to clarify the essence of a thing… as well as that wonderful affinity which this essence has with the essence of thought, which enables it to be thought, with the essence of knowledge, which makes it knowable, with meanings which make it capable of being meant etc.” (LI Prolegomena, sec. 71, p. 245) And knowing such things as that requires a reflective attitude that is extra-scientific, since the essences of the objects, properties, relations, and states of affairs that such reflection bears upon are not among those investigated by any other science – including empirical psychology, which does not investigate essences. Phenomenology, then, is not only a discipline with its own subject matter, but its subject matter is one that is of intrinsic and special philosophical concern.

Phenomenological investigations also serve to make explicit and preserve the sense of thoughts and assertions conducted in the natural attitude. According to Husserl, as soon as we engage in ordinary reflection on knowledge, we “fall into error and confusion. We get involved in patently untenable positions, even in contradictions. We are in constant danger of falling into skepticism…” (IdPh, p. 18) And in light of these philosophical interpretations of knowledge, we sometimes generate “fundamentally misleading … interpretations of being.” (ibid.) He continues: “Thus one and the same natural science is interpreted in materialistic, spiritualistic, dualistic, psychomonistic, positivistic, and many other ways, depending upon what interpretation is thought to be the necessary conclusion of such reflections.”

We can see that Husserl is on to something when we compare and contrast Husserl’s phenomenological analysis of perception with the familiar theories that confine perceptual awareness to appearances or mental representations. In phenomenological reflection we examine a thought and “ask it what it was aiming at and what it acquired.” (FTL, sec. 69, p. 177) What
my perception of a house aims at is a house which, unlike any mental act or experience, is something I can live in, buy, or burn down. And what it acquires is a house, even though the acquisition is invariably imperfect, incomplete, and remains at the mercy of future experience. Other familiar and historically prominent theories of perception, on the other hand, start from the assumption that perceptual acts must be infallible—they must have existing objects, and present those objects precisely as they are. Their advocates have decided in advance what such acts can acquire—infallibility—and have determined what they must be and could not be aiming at accordingly. They couldn’t have been aiming at physical objects, because then they wouldn’t be infallible; so, they must have been aiming elsewhere, at ideas or experiences or appearances. Here two different interpretations of being result from reflections upon knowledge. And these different interpretations, carried through to their consequences, will result in differing interpretations of the propositions of natural science.

Here the value of phenomenology consists in protecting the sense of ordinary and scientific assertions against philosophically motivated falsifications of them. And insofar as philosophical reflection on the possibility of knowledge is deeply rooted in our cultural tradition, this is plausibly a standing obligation on the part of philosophers. That the phenomenological method is uniquely suited to perform this role seems implausible to me. But that it is one way, in a wide range of cases, seems clear.

Phenomenology’s ability to ascertain and preserve the sense of scientific thoughts and assertions not only protects scientific theories from philosophically motivated falsifications, but protects them from a sort of meaning depletion that is intrinsic to advanced scientific investigation as such. The propositions making up the most theoretically advanced sciences are especially susceptible to sense depletion, as Husserl’s discussions in the Crisis make especially
clear. This stems from the fact that those sciences are the ones that have extended the furthest beyond the sphere of intuition. One can advance quite a distance in a scientific discipline having consulted, almost exclusively, the written and spoken words of others rather than the things that those words are about. And in many cases, the things in question have not ever been, and perhaps could not be, given to human intuition, given its natural limitations. The majority of statements that comprise the known sciences, Husserl claims, “behave meaningfully without any elucidation from intuition, and… only a vanishing section, even of the true and the proven, are and remain open to complete intuitive illustration.” (LI VI, sec. 41, p. 777) And yet we know such propositions to be true. Knowledge, then, often does extend beyond the sphere of intuition, and the methods of science are those that enable us to extend our knowledge as far beyond intuition as possible.

But while this enables us to know facts that lie far beyond our power to perceive, it brings with it the danger of inauthenticity. Inauthentic thinking is thinking that has lost sight of its relation to the things that it is about. And signitive or symbolic thinking constantly runs the danger of being inauthentic because it can proceed so well without corresponding intuitions, which bring us into contact with the things that signitive thinking is supposed to bear upon. At its worst, inauthentic thinking degenerates into mere calculation, the manipulation of a syntax according to formal rules, which is precisely what the bulk of mathematics and logic courses train us to do. If you are adept at the basic rules of arithmetic or formal logic, you can perform arithmetical and logical operations while thinking about what you had for dinner last night or who will win tonight’s game.32 (See Willard, 1984, pp. 138-40) This is no longer even thinking, according to Husserl; the value of a formal calculus consists, not in aiding thought, but in making genuine thinking dispensable. (Some might claim that because machines can do this, they can
think. Husserl’s response would be: because machines can do this, we are not thinking when we
do it.) But this value becomes a danger when we neglect to inquire into the sense of the
propositions expressed in a formal calculus, which means grounding them directly or indirectly
in the intuitions that provide their fulfilling sense.

So there are at least three contributions that phenomenology has to make to scientific
knowledge and its “inner clarity”: (1) providing us with knowledge about knowledge, a need that
we feel, or ought to feel, just in virtue of being rational beings, (2) protecting the sense of
assertions made in the natural attitude from philosophical falsifications of them, and (3)
recovering and preserving senses that have been lost, or run the risk of being lost, through
inauthentic thinking. Whether phenomenology can fulfill other ambitions Husserl set for it is
another question, but doing that, it seems to me, is plenty.
Notes


7 Such a justificatory conception of foundationalism remains prevalent in the recent epistemological literature, by both its advocates and opponents:


Alston: The “most sober and most neutral epistemological sense” of the term “foundationalism” “consists of viewing the overall epistemic structure of a particular subject’s beliefs in the following way. Some of the beliefs enjoy a PES [positive epistemic status] without being based on other beliefs, and hence

Steup: “According to foundationalists, knowledge is structured like a building. They hold that, without foundational knowledge on which non-foundational knowledge rests, there couldn’t be any knowledge at all.” [Matthias Steup, “Foundational Knowledge,” in Matthias Steup and Ernest Sosa (eds.), Contemporary Debates in Epistemology (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 123]

Klein: “…[A]ll foundationalists think of warrant as arising autonomously in so-called basic propositions and being transferred to other propositions through permissible forms of inference.” [Peter Klein, “Is Infinitism the Solution to the Regress Problem?”, in Steup and Sosa (eds.), 2005, p. 132]

Audi: Epistemological Foundationalism is the view that “if… one has any justified beliefs at all, then one has at least one non-inferentially justified beliefs; any other justified belief one has is adequately justified by, and would not be justified apart from its (positive) dependence on, at least one non-inferentially justified belief.” [Robert Audi, *The Architecture of Reason* (Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 30]

Howard-Snyder: “A particular belief of a person is basic just in case it is epistemically justified and it owes its justification to something other than her other justified beliefs or their interrelations; a person’s belief is nonbasic just in case it is epistemically justified but not basic. Foundationalists agree that if one has a nonbasic belief, then—at rock bottom—it owes its justification to at least one basic belief.” [Daniel Howard-Snyder, “Foundationalism and Arbitrariness,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 86 (2005), pp. 18-24, p. 18]

8 Audi defines psychological foundationalism as “the view that the structure of a person’s body of beliefs is foundational in the strong sense that some of his beliefs are not based on others, and any other beliefs he has are based on the former.” [Robert Audi, *The Structure of Justification* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 49] For more on the relation between epistemological and psychological foundationalism, see Audi, 1993, chapter 1.

9 Including Dagfinn Føllesdal, “Husserl on Evidence and Justification,” in *Edmund Husserl and the Phenomenological Tradition*, ed. Robert Sokolowski (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988). I don’t discuss his arguments here because he defines foundationalism as the view that “one
can reach absolute certainty, at least concerning some matters, and also that… it [is] a main task of
philosophy to attain such certainty.” (p. 107) Though Føllesdal presents a strong case that Husserl did not
endorse such a position, infallibilism of this sort is not necessary for foundationalism.


11 To “reduce[] evidence to an insight that is apodictic,” Husserl says, “is to bar oneself from an
understanding of any scientific production.” (*FTL* sec. 60, p. 161.)

12 “It is naturally a ludicrous, though unfortunately common misunderstanding, to seek to attack
transcendental phenomenology as “Cartesianism,” as if its *ego cogito* were a premise or set of premises
from which the rest of knowledge … was to be deduced, absolutely “secured.” The point is not to secure
objectivity but to understand it.” [Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental
Henceforth referred to as ‘Cr’.]

13 See John J. Drummond, *Husserlian Intentionality and Non-Foundational Realism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer
Academic Publishers, 1990), esp. Chapter 9, and “Phenomenology and the Foundationalism Debate,”
Reason Papers, 16 (Fall 1991), pp. 45-71.

14 Drummond, 1991, p. 52. This corresponds exactly to my conception of Epistemological
Foundationalism, and remains prominent in the contemporary literature (see n. 7). He also defines a view
that he calls “transcendental foundationalism” as follows: “Philosophical knowledge… is the knowledge of
(a) those criteria in terms of which we determine the legitimacy of various experiences or candidates for
knowledge and (b) those principles in terms of which we specify the proper relations between different
kinds of experiences and different kinds of knowledge. For this sort of foundationalism I shall use the
expression ‘transcendental foundationalism’. ” (Drummond, 1991, p. 48) This position, as interesting as it
is, is not recognizably foundationalist at all.

p. 32. See also Drummond, 1991, pp. 57–8. Bonjour has, of course, since abandoned his coherentist ways.

16 For two of the best of Husserl’s discussion of fulfillment, see LI, Investigation VI and *Analyses

17 “However the fullness of a presentation may vary within its possible gradients of fulfilment, its intentional object, intended as it is intended, remains the same: its ‘matter’, in other words, stays the same.” (LV VI, sec. 25, p. 738) What Husserl calls the “epistemic essence” of an act includes its intentional matter or sense, its quality, and its intuitive fullness. See LI VI, sec. 28, p. 745.

18 The ontological founding relation is a formal one. See LI III, sec. 21, p. 475: “A content of the species A is founded upon a content of the species B, if an A can by its essence… not exist, unless a B also exists.”

The ontological founding relation may be either one-sided or reciprocal.


20 Bonjour’s coherentist picture presented in The Structure of Empirical Knowledge pertains to empirical knowledge only. A priori knowledge, according to him, consists in “the intuitive grasp or apprehension of necessity,” (207), a view he develops at greater length in In Defense of Pure Reason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). The following argument, nevertheless, is worth considering, since it undermines the idea that facts about oneself must always figure among one’s justifying reasons for believing something.


24 Though perhaps she can help believing it. I would argue that this suggests that belief is not essential for knowledge. One cannot, it seems to me, cease to know that, say, consciousness exists just by believing that it does not.


27 *LI* Prolegomena 4, 58.

28 See, for instance, *FTL*, section 8, p. 34, where Husserl claims that an intentionality that makes something thematic is “for that very reason and as a matter of essential necessity, non-thematic.”

29 As Jocelyn Benoist puts it, “…to the extent that these types of acts [meaning-conferring acts] are defined as a kind of intending of objects, they nevertheless have an essential relation to the second type of act [meaning-fulfilling acts]… In this way, one can say that acts of the first kind (meaning acts) presuppose and anticipate the possibility of acts of the second kind (fulfillment acts)—even in the case where the latter prove eventually to be impossible or even absurd.” (“Husserl’s Theory of Meaning in the First Logical Investigation,” in *Husserl’s Logical Investigations*, Daniel O. Dahlstrom (ed.) (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), p. 22.

30 For a view that is similar in this respect see Timothy Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
