Abstract. This study is a commentary on Carl Stumpf’s evaluation of Husserl’s phenomenology as presented in the Logical Investigations and the first book of Ideas. I first examine Stumpf’s reception of the version of phenomenology that Husserl presented in the Logical Investigations and then look at §§ 85-86 of Ideas I, in which Husserl seeks to demarcate his “pure” phenomenology from that of Stumpf. In the third section, I analyze the criticism that Stumpf, in § 13 of his book Erkenntnislehre, directs toward the new version of phenomenology that Husserl develops in Ideas I, and in the fourth, I summarize the Spinozist interpretation of the noetico-noematic correlations that Stumpf proposes in his two studies on Spinoza. The last section addresses Husserl’s self-criticism regarding the Cartesian approach to the reduction in Ideas I and the parallelism that the late Husserl establishes between intentional psychology and transcendental phenomenology. I try to show that the version of phenomenology that Husserl develops during the Freiburg period anticipates in many respects Stumpf’s criticism and partly confirms the latter’s diagnosis of the version of phenomenology advocated in Ideas I.

One hundred years after the publication of the first book of Husserl’s Ideas, we are still far from having reached a consensus regarding the philosophical implications of this work and its contribution to the philosophical program of the founder of contemporary phenomenology. Soon after its publication in 1913, this book received a mitigated reception (to say the least) from Husserl’s first students (the Munich phenomenologists); it gave rise to many controversies on the ins and outs of Husserl’s phenomenology and on the book’s central theme, that is, intentionality. It is in this book that Husserl introduced the concept of noema, which represents the heart of his theory of intentionality, and we know that since the 1960s the reception of Ideas I has been the subject of a vigorous debate which still arouses a great deal of interest from Husserl’s commentators even today. But the
main issue in this debate is not merely exgetical, it concerns the relevance and value of Husserl’s phenomenology and his theory of intentionality in the domain of philosophy of mind and cognitive science.

It is in light of these debates that Stumpf’s critical evaluation of his student Husserl’s work acquires its full significance. Stumpf’s evaluation is of particular interest in Husserl studies given that these two students of Brentano maintained a close relationship for over fifty years and that Stumpf followed with great interest the evolution of Husserl’s thought from the Halle period (1886-1901) to that of Göttingen (1901-1916). The latter period is characterized by the transcendental turn to which Husserl subjected his phenomenology in the first book of Ideas. That said, Stumpf’s evaluation of the two versions of phenomenology that correspond to these two periods is significantly different. Indeed, as shown by Stumpf’s scattered remarks on the Logical Investigations in his two important articles published in 1906 (Stumpf 2006a, 2006b), Husserl’s phenomenology constitutes a major contribution not only to descriptive psychology, but also to the theory of knowledge, ontology and logic. However, in his book Erkenntnislehre, published posthumously, Stumpf takes a very critical attitude towards the new version of phenomenology that Husserl develops in the first book of Ideas and offers an insightful and enlightening analysis of the philosophical program that Husserl develops in this book. Stumpf’s diagnosis covers the main aspects of Husserl’s project in this book, including the idea of a “pure” phenomenology, his conception of formal and regional ontologies, the doctrine of the noetico-noematical correlations, and the method of the reduction. Stumpf raises the question whether this new version of phenomenology, which claims to overcome the program of the Logical Investigations, merely relapses into the prejudices of a tradition that Stumpf and all the other students of Brentano, including the young Husserl, had forcefully criticized. In this regard, it is clear from Stumpf’s remarks on Ideas I that what is at stake is the value of the philosophical program that constitutes the common starting point of these two students of Brentano.

In this study, I propose to examine, first, Stumpf’s reception of Husserl’s phenomenology in the Logical Investigations. I will then turn to §§ 85-86 of the first book of Ideas in which Husserl compares his “pure” phenomenology with Stumpf’s. In the third section, I analyze Stumpf’s criticism of the account of phenomenology offered in