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Jesse Delaney, Student

Dr. Ronald Bruzina, Major Professor

Dr. David Bradshaw, Director of Graduate Studies

HUSSERL'S DYADIC SEMANTICS

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By Jesse Delaney

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Ronald Bruzina, Professor of Philosophy

Lexington, Kentucky

2014

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

HUSSERL'S DYADIC SEMANTICS

Husserl's *Logical Investigations* contain an apparent discrepancy in their account of meaning. They first present meanings, contra psychologism, as commonly available, reiterable, invariant, possibly valid, and independent of our "acts of meaning". They then present meaning, almost psychologically, as a kind of intentional experience on which all truths and other transcendent meanings depend. I offer a critical developmental study of this problem within Husserl's semantics. I argue (a) that Husserl had reason to adopt his dyadic account of signification, (b) that this "two-sided" account shaped, and was reciprocally informed by, the two-step phenomenological method, and (c) that Husserl's proposed resolution to the strain within his semantics, while driven by legitimate motivations, is precarious.

- (a) I begin with the *Logical Investigations* and their context. I represent their two sets of semantic claims, recalling how the discord between claims of those sets would have been especially conspicuous when the *Investigations* were published, amid much debate over psychologism, in 1900-01. I then show why Husserl embraced two discordant views of meaning. I survey the 19th century sources for these views, confirming Jocelyn Benoist's genealogical thesis that Husserl's semantics took its psychological and logical sides primarily from Franz Brentano and Bernard Bolzano, respectively. And I present the Bolzanian arguments and Brentanian descriptions that served as grounds for Husserl's semantics, showing how these pieces of reasoning were appropriated, and weighing their strength.
- (b) Next, I trace how Husserl's two-sided theory of meaning, and its apparent incoherence, both inspired and determined the transcendental and eidetic reductions. I then examine how Husserl subsequently used the phenomenological method to reinforce, to integrate, and to revise his theory of meaning. And I address a methodological criticism that this circular development prompts.

(c) Finally, I assess Husserl's attempt to explain the division within the phenomenon of meaning by reference to what he called "transcendental subjectivity". I consider two contrary objections to this explanation. I indicate how Husserl's explanation is responsive to the insight behind each objection, but contend that it is perhaps not adequately responsive to the insight behind either.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES: Edmund Husserl, signification, intentionality, logical psychologism, "truths in themselves".

Jesse Delaney

June 22, 2014

HUSSERL'S DYADIC SEMANTICS

By Jesse Delaney

Dr. Ronald Bruzina
Director of Dissertation

Dr. David Bradshaw
Director of Graduate Studies

July 22, 2014

To the one without whom Kohelet's first teaching would not be false

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Husserl's Dyadic Semantics

1: Introduction

1.1: Subject and scope

This dissertation addresses a division within the phenomenon of meaning.¹ On one side of the division, meaning has appeared to be a kind of experience. To mean is to engage in speech, or in writing, or in some other act of signification; we can intelligibly ask what a speaker or writer means for this reason. While meaning has thus appeared to be a sort of experience, however, it has also appeared to be an objective field of which we can have experience. This other side of meaning comes into view whenever we notice the “logical space” of reiterable, publicly available concepts and propositions. When we observe, for example, that some identical judgment has been expressed at several times, with different words, by multiple thinkers, the signification thus expressed does not appear to be one of our experiences. Such significations rather appear to have an endurance and universality that no passing experience can confine. How, then, can meaning appear to be both — a type of transient mental event and the sum of semantic items that transcend such events? That is the question at issue in this study.

My attempt to address that question is part of an ancient and ongoing line of research. Since Plato's time at least, for well over two millennia, thinkers in the Western

¹ The word “meaning” carries a wide range of connotations. It can designate everything from significance, when someone talks about “the meaning of life”, to signification, when someone talks about a word or a speaker's meaning. In this study, “meaning” functions relatively narrowly, as an equivalent for “signification”. I use “sense”, rather than “meaning”, as the general term that can designate any sort of experience or appearance; and I reserve “meaning” to denote the kind of sense that is specific to the level of active thought. In making this terminological choice, moreover, I am roughly following Husserl's practice. By no later than 1913, Husserl habitually distinguished the broader category of sense (*Sinn*) from the narrower category of meaning or signification (*Bedeutung*). His category of “acts of meaning” (*Akte des Bedeutens*) includes “expressive acts” (*ausdrückende Akte*), along with experiences of reading, listening and otherwise silently thinking, and excludes acts of mere “sense-perception”.

philosophical tradition have regarded the general topic of meaning as a distinctive and epistemologically important area of possible inquiry. Consider, for instance, the section of Plato's *Theaetetus* in which Socrates brings his young interlocutor to admit that we know more than we see and hear — that what is manifest in various experiences surpasses what is sensed.² Socrates there asks: Does not the experience that we have of a bit of foreign speech differ significantly from the experience that those who know the language have of the same sounds? And is there not, similarly, an essential difference between the reader's experience of a page of text and the experience that someone who is illiterate has of the same page? We, following Theaetetus, must reply that a difference is evident: When we hear or see some words, though we have not yet learned the language in which they are spoken or the letters in which they are written, "we know just so much of [those words] as we hear or see". When, in contrast, we encounter a piece of text in a language that we have learned to read, we experience more than the mere visual dimensions of the words that we see.³ When, likewise, we hear someone speak in a language that we also speak, we then experience more than so many sounds. What appears when we reflect on these latter cases includes not only sights and sounds, but also meanings; it includes not only sensory modalities such as seeing and hearing, but also another structure of experience that we tend to take for granted; it includes that apart

² Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. Harold N. Fowler, 163b. Socrates presents his several objections to Theaetetus' claim that "knowledge is nothing other than perception [*aisthesis*]" (160d) between 161c and 164e, within a still broader discussion (between 151e and 183c) of Protagoras' famous "dogma" (157d) that "man is the measure of all things" (152a). The "*metron anthropon*" epistemological dogma, which is on trial throughout most all of the *Theaetetus*, is one response to the question that motivated this study — the issue of whether there are "truths in themselves".

³ When we read the words of a newspaper, for example, we experience something more than we would if we attended only to the sensuous dimensions of the font in which those words are written. Notably, this "something more" need not consist in any confirmation, or even in any illustration, of the words' joint signification. We may understand those words without any images arising in our mind, and also without yet having any experience that either definitively confirms or discredits their report.

from which we could not speak and be understood, and apart from which we could not read and write. It is an interest in this persistent structure of our experience, without which our discourse would not be possible, which motivates this study.

For meaning, while so familiar from our experience and necessary for our science, is also philosophically problematic. We find when we consider meaning what Augustine famously noticed about time,⁴ and Plato earlier saw regarding being:⁵ we mention it easily and regularly, but stumble when we try to speak of it thematically; we seem to know what it is until we try to say what it is. We consistently “live in” meanings, naturally looking through signs and immersing ourselves in significations,⁶ yet philosophical inquiry concerning meaning has historically unfolded as a series of contested attempts to come to terms with a stubbornly difficult subject matter.⁷ It has so proceeded from the ancient discussion of the eidetic, through the medieval dispute regarding universals and the modern controversy over the origin of ideas, and to more contemporary debates about naturalism and psychologism.

This study does not provide an encyclopedic history of the many theories of signification contained in that long procession. Much less does it finally answer the

⁴ “What ... is time? Provided that no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know” (*Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, xi.xiv).

⁵ “Do tell us plainly what you wish to designate when you say ‘being’. For ... whereas we formerly thought we knew, [we] are now perplexed” (Plato, *Sophist*, trans. Harold Fowler, 244a). Compare also Merleau-Ponty’s parallel, less famous observation about the familiar but perplexing character of sensing: “We believed we knew what feeling, seeing, and hearing were, and now these words raise problems” (*Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2002) p. 12). Along these same lines, Husserl more generally claimed that “... it is precisely behind the obvious that the hardest problems lie hidden”. Philosophy’s “hardest problems” lurk “behind the obvious” so characteristically, according to Husserl, that “philosophy may be paradoxically, but not unprofoundly, called the science of the trivial” (*Logical Investigations*, trans. J. N. Findlay (New York: Routledge, 2001) Inv. IV, note 3, p. 76).

⁶ Husserl often speaks of our “living in” significations, to indicate how in writing, reading, speaking, etc., we tend to be attentively immersed in the meaning rather than in the look or sound of words.

⁷ In unison with the above comments about other philosophical basics, Husserl notes that while “what ‘meaning’ is, is a matter as immediately given to us as is the nature of color and sound”, “[t]his is of course not the last word in the phenomenology of meanings.” “[I]t is”, he says, “only its beginning” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, § 31, p. 287).

question of what meaning is. Its more limited task is to critically reconsider one of the more promising theories that have been presented within the history of meaning-investigation, namely the one that Edmund Husserl began publishing in the first year of the last century. I suspect that that theory of signification, to which the *Logical Investigations* were the “breakthrough”, remains broadly underappreciated, despite being variously appropriated, such that it can contribute importantly to our present understandings of signification.⁸

The present study accordingly approaches a fundamental philosophical issue by historical means. I hope, by engaging with one of the more compelling accounts of meaning in the history of philosophy, to acquire a privileged point of access to its field. Such a historically indebted approach, to be sure, stands somewhat at odds with a primary methodological scruple of the Enlightenment: like any current philosophical study that operates on the basis of a historical inheritance, it invites the objection that it is constrained from the first by certain prejudgments, and that it thus relinquishes without resistance the intellectual freedom to which inquiry should aspire. But I believe that this worry is wrong-headed, at least to the extent that it arises from a severely incomplete view of intellectual freedom as nothing but the (negative) freedom *from* heteronomous conditions.⁹ Apart from any such illusions regarding philosophy’s relation to history, it

⁸ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the (1913) second edition, p. 3. I hope to show that Husserl’s account in any case merits a more careful reading than we would be inclined to give it if we (a) regarded it as a merely regrettable step on the way to some later and greater phenomenology, or (b) if we dismissed terms like “phenomenology” and “transcendental” as too foreign or “spooky” to take the trouble to understand.

⁹ On such a view, the judgments that we inherit from others only limit our understanding (or worse): only when we are “quite alone”, in the way that Descartes supposes himself to be at the beginning of his *Meditations*, would we be intellectually free (*Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Collingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch, first meditation, first paragraph). My way of proceeding indicates my assent to the contrary view, convincingly articulated by Hans-Georg Gadamer, according to which inherited judgments, while functioning as epistemic limits and often needing replacement or revision, also function often enough as necessary conditions for our understanding. Inherited judgments would thus function both

remains true that a genuine inquiry, and likewise a genuinely Husserlian inquiry, cannot be dogmatically Husserlian.¹⁰ Yet for that reason, the task of this study is to provide a critical approach to a historical understanding — an approach that at once limits itself by following only Husserl’s leads “*zu den sachen selbst*” and also measures his claims against the things themselves.

By pursuing in this way only Husserl’s paths, one might still easily fall into a far more sprawling project than it is possible to undertake here. A few further limits accordingly circumscribe the scope of my study’s attempted contribution to our understanding of meaning. First, I exclude the majority of Husserl’s vast and largely unpublished philosophical output from the scope of this project. I confine my exegetical attention to Husserl’s primary logical works, which in their richness and density warrant such an exclusive focus.¹¹ Second, I also delimit my study of meaning by putting aside the related but enormous Husserlian topics of the living body, pre-significative sense, intersubjectivity, and temporalization, as topics that in their breadth and depth would require their own sustained treatments. Finally, and most important, this study is also defined, because propelled forward, by the particular question I mentioned at the outset

as limits and conditions, in much the same way that adherence to a particular language’s grammatical structure both limits what a person can say, and is a condition of the possibility of human linguistic expression. See Gadamer’s *Truth and Method*, especially the section titled “prejudices as conditions of understanding”, for his argument that “the fundamental [and self-defeating] prejudice of the Enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself” (trans. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1970) pp. 239-40).

¹⁰ I am here taking up the disparaging usage of “dogmatic”, to connote the idle, uninquisitive, and thus quickly belligerent possession of a belief. Of course, if “dogma” merely denotes a belief that one takes to be and perhaps is committed to holding as true, disparaging dogmatism would amount to an incoherent because dogmatic opposition to dogma as such. Given that less negative sense of “dogma”, being dogmatic appears to be a constant and ineradicable fact of human experience. Yet, without any desire to overcome the kind of dogmatism that is a necessary condition of human understanding, one can nonetheless hope to overcome the glib, insufficiently self-critical possession of beliefs.

¹¹ Husserl’s chief logical works are the *Investigations* of 1900-01 and *Formal and Transcendental Logic* of 1929. Also deserving of mention are *Ideas I* of 1913, because of its position as a turning point between the two chief logical works, and *Experience and Judgment*, published posthumously in 1939, because of its original connection with Husserl’s 1929 logical studies.

of this introduction. The theme of this project, broadly speaking, is one that it shares with all other semantic inquiry;¹² yet the present study's theme, more precisely, is a problematically dyadic structure of signification. Its theme is what Husserl once called "the essential ambiguity of meaning as an Idea".¹³

This ambiguity appears in the way that the meaning of our discourse and silent thought transcends our experiences of meaning. On the one hand, the signification of word and thought clearly seems to depend on the experience of speaking, thinking, or otherwise actively meaning: without such experience, which Husserl called "categorial", how could there be significations? Meanings do not sit around in the sensory world like mountains and trees do. On the other hand, objective meanings also appear to outstrip our experiences of meaning: they remain the same no thanks to our fleeting grasp of them, and seem to hold as true (or not) independently of our realizing that they do. That "the ten trillionth digit of pi is 7", e.g., means the same whenever it is said, and whoever says it; moreover, that "the ten trillionth digit of pi is 7" holds as either correct or not prior to, and so independently of, our realizing that it does. The meaning that we experience thus seems both to depend on, and to be independent of, the experience of meaning.

The purpose of my project is to critically follow Husserl's display of, and response to, this problematic ambiguity. If Husserl was correct, then we cannot

¹² Semantics derives its name from the Greek verb *seimaino* ("I show by a sign"). Despite trends in the philosophy of language, then, there is reason to take semantic inquiry to include the "pragmatics" that studies the active mental work of meaning, as well as the "semantics" that, disregarding the etymology behind its name, focuses exclusively on networks of word-meanings and sentence-meanings.

¹³ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the second edition, p. 7. If "meaning as an Idea" is ambiguous, then the capacity of various expressions to carry multiple and indeterminate *meanings* would not be the most fundamental ambiguity that the philosophy of meaning has to face. The basic term "meaning" would then be ambiguous too. And if the ambiguity of meaning is an "essential" ambiguity, then this ambiguity would not reside, relatively harmlessly, merely in the way that we happen to use "meaning", but in what meaning itself is.

adequately grasp the nature of knowledge or judicative experience in general unless we understand this paradoxical “two-sided” structure of meaning; and an understanding of this semantic structure is in any case necessary if we are to achieve an appreciative and methodologically informed understanding of Husserl’s phenomenology. For this ambiguity, which Husserl deciphered with difficulty through completing his “breakthrough” work, was then determinative of Husserl’s later philosophic trajectory, and lies at the heart of Husserl’s now peculiar but arguably fertile understanding of logic. It has, moreover, long been alluded to by phenomenologists,¹⁴ and has recently been pointed up as a “profound” and “productive duality” by Jocelyn Benoist.¹⁵ Because it is both “productive”, with respect to Husserl’s work and the subsequent phenomenological program, and “profound”, with respect to ancient and enduring philosophical questions, this purportedly essential ambiguity deserves a devoted study.

1.2: Overview of chapters 2 through 7

My study basically consists of three parts. Each part is focused primarily on a particular stage in the historical development that Husserl’s account of meaning underwent. The first part critically considers that account’s origins and “breakthrough”, the second its consolidation and mature formulation, and the third its aftermath.

¹⁴ The first judges of the *Logical Investigations*, including Husserl himself, were quick to note the very different descriptions of meaning evident in the Prolegomena, on the one hand, and in the 6th Investigation, e.g., on the other hand. Since then, many figures who are prominent in Husserl studies, including Martin Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Derrida, Jitendra Mohanty and Rudolf Bernet, have echoed that notice. Derrida’s quick mention, in “Genesis and Structure”, that Husserl attempted to walk a line “between the Scylla and Charbydis of logical structuralism and psychologistic geneticism”, is a characteristic example (*Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) p. 158).

¹⁵ “Husserl’s Theory of Meaning in the First Logical Investigation”, *Husserl’s Logical Investigations*, ed. Dan Dahlstrom (Boston: Kluwer, 2003) pp. 18 and 33.

Together, then, the three core parts of this study compose a developmental analysis and assessment of Husserl's semantics.

In the first and largest part of this study, I present Husserl's view that meaning is problematically ambiguous, and show why Husserl initially came to hold that view. In the second part, I indicate how Husserl's initial view of signification shaped his method, and how that method then reciprocally informed his later view of signification. In the third and smallest part, I weigh Husserl's attempted explanation of meaning's ambiguous character.

Each of these parts requires at least one chapter; the first task requires three. In chapter two, in order to begin the first major task of this study, I simply represent the dissonance within Husserl's early semantics. I highlight two apparently opposed sorts of semantic claims that Husserl made in the *Logical Investigations*; and I recall how those kinds of claims were perceived when Husserl first published the *Investigations*, in 1900-01, amid a controversy concerning the foundations of logic. In chapter three, I begin to clarify why Husserl held the two dissonant views of meaning that he expressed at the turn into the twentieth century. Through a kind of genealogy, I survey the many nineteenth century sources of Husserl's two views of meaning, and sort those lines of influence that were primary for Husserl from those that were secondary. Once I have identified the primary influence behind each of Husserl's dissonant accounts of meaning, I then turn, in chapter four, to the rational grounds that those primary influences offered in support of their views. I thus display the basis that Husserl's two views of meaning arguably have in the phenomenon of meaning itself. Chapters two through four thus show through largely historical means how Husserl's theory of meaning is of more than merely

historical interest. They culminate in a case for considering the dialectical tension within Husserl's dyadic semantics as a genuine and enduring philosophical problem.

Chapter five then takes up the second basic task of this study. In that chapter, I trace the process by which Husserl advanced his account of meaning, and consider whether that process is trustworthy. I examine how Husserl's initial, problematic theory of meaning shaped his method; I depict how Husserl then used that method to substantiate, to revise, and ultimately to integrate, his initial theory of meaning; and I ask whether there is a vicious circularity in this development. I ask if Husserl employed a warranted method, by which he was able to study structures that are evident within all human experience of meaning, or if his semantics was instead merely the result of an insufficiently critical inheritance.

After I have addressed these methodological questions, I then turn to the third and final basic task of this study in chapter six. I there evaluate Husserl's mature attempt to explain the dyadic appearance of meaning. Taking up two objections from within the two-sided approach to signification that Husserl advanced, I ask: Is Husserl's attempt to resolve the dissonance within his semantics too speculatively ambitious? Or is it not ontologically inquisitive enough?

Finally, after the three core tasks of this study are completed — the first in chapters two through four, the second in chapter five, and the third in chapter six — I close with a very brief summary chapter. I there offer a schematic account of the conclusions concerning Husserl's thought and concerning meaning itself that my study implies. And I identify the line of further inquiry that my conclusions motivate.

2: The *Logical Investigations*' discrepant accounts of meaning

2.1: An overlooked ambiguity

My aim in this chapter is to clarify the “ambiguity” that Husserl purported to detect in the nature of meaning.¹⁶ Ultimately, in this chapter and the two that follow, my task is to show how that two-sided structure is actually, as Husserl suggested, a philosophically significant “enigma”.¹⁷ As the first stage in that process, however, in this chapter I merely seek, through a return to a text and its historical context, to clarify how meaning might seem to be ambiguous. I recall the discrepancy within Husserl’s discussion of meaning in the *Logical Investigations*, and I recount why that often-noted discrepancy was especially conspicuous for the many German philosophers who were involved, at the time when the *Investigations* were published, in a controversy concerning logic’s relation to psychology. Once that is done, I can then, in the third chapter, confirm Jocelyn Benoist’s historical thesis that the discrepancy in Husserl’s 1900-01 take on meaning resulted from his appropriation of two conflicting 19th century views; I can indicate how those two threads woven through Husserl’s account of meaning are more basically constitutive of that account than are a number of other tributary strands. Finally, I can then also show, in the fourth chapter, how the discrepancy in the *Investigations* is not merely a historical curiosity. For we should by then be in a position to discern the still experientially evident basis of those two views from which Husserl drew the most, and to disentangle the complex opposition between them. By so returning to the particular intellectual context behind Husserl’s phenomenology, then, we should come to see the same enigmatic ambiguity that Husserl confronted in meaning.

¹⁶ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the second edition, p. 7.

¹⁷ *Logical Investigations*, introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions, § 5, p. 174.

2.2: Psychologism, logicism, and the *Investigations*' middle way

2.2.1: The early Husserl's conflicted context

At the beginning of the twentieth century, practitioners of many theoretical disciplines had staked competing claims to the field of meaning. The emergence of the newly independent discipline of psychology, and fundamental development in the older disciplines of logic and mathematics, awakened the question of ownership: Whose theoretical province is meaning? To whom does the subject matter belong? What discipline is best suited to unveil what meaning basically is? Then as now, different disciplines contributed to the discussion of what meaning is. The field of study was already an interdisciplinary one, where varied research programs met. But the field at that time was also the site of conflict, with advocates of different disciplines engaged in somewhat clannish behavior.

Though quite possibly no one side ever bears sole responsibility for initiating such conflicts, this particular turf war was arguably incited when certain psychologists began to contend that their group (alone) had primary ownership rights over the field in question. These psychologists, who wanted to contribute to logic themselves, would of course gladly allow logic to continue its study of judgments, inferences, and laws of reasoning. But they would require logic to rent its field out, so to speak, from psychology: the nature of meaning, and so of judgments and of the connections obtaining between judgments, would ultimately be determined by the psychologists.¹⁸ In defense of this apparently domineering stance, these psychologists could contend that meaning

¹⁸ Probably the most prominent psychologists advancing claims along these lines were J. S. Mill in England and Wilhelm Wundt in Germany. The first volume of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* provides an expansive survey of other literature expressing such views of logic.

plainly belongs to the realm for which psychology is to account — whether it is called the realm of the *psyche* or of experience. Psychologists who embraced reductive forms of naturalism, noting that meaning cannot be straightforwardly dealt with by physics, could argue that psychology is the science best suited to account for whatever semantic residue is left over once the more obviously physical entities have been explained; the study of meaning, including traditional logic, would then be one of psychology's offshoots, and psychology would be a branch of physiology, which in turn would stem from the trunk of physics. Short of such metaphysical premises, however, and even short of the supposition that meaning belongs entirely to the animal experiences that psychology is able to investigate, a psychologist seeking ownership of the field of meaning could argue that meaning is only *accessible for us*, at any rate, within that sphere that psychology is entitled and obligated by its name to study as its own.

Not surprisingly, many other thinkers were not at all pleased with the prospect of such venerable disciplines as logic and mathematics having to rent out their fields of study from this young upstart discipline of psychology.¹⁹ In defense of their chagrin at an empirical, inductive science's ambition to provide the ultimate explanation of what logical and mathematical objectivities basically are, these thinkers had their own arguments at their disposal. Echoing Leibniz, logicians could note that the principle of non-contradiction and other like principles cannot derive the necessity they have for valid thinking from mere inductive generalization. They could then note further that psychology is capable of no more than such generalization, in its establishment of

¹⁹ Psychology was young around 1900 in the sense that it was newly independent, though of course well over two millennia had then passed since importantly psychological investigations were presented already in Aristotle's *Peri Psyche (De Anima)*, various Platonic dialogues, and a multitude of non-Greek precedents.

principles that hold only probably or for the most part. Philosophers of mathematics could reason similarly that (a) the properties of cardinal numbers and of Euclidean shapes do not appear to be merely contingent features of these objects, and that (b) psychology is constrained to establish only contingent facts, such that (c) psychology in principle cannot account even for the nature of a triangle or the number three. Logicians and mathematicians could so argue that the elementary truths of their disciplines are incompatible with *psychological reductionism*. To combat that *psychological imperialism* — in which whatever is semantic, including logical truths, would receive its primary explanation in terms provided by the inductive study of contingent animal experiences — they gave it a slightly (if only slightly) more wieldy title: *psychologism*.²⁰

Among the opponents of the psychologistic tendency in logic were those who saw a complete about-face as the only appropriate alternative. These more reactionary opponents of psychologism sought to ensure that logic was fully autonomous with respect to any discipline so much as resembling psychology. On their view, all logical studies ought to acknowledge that their objects are independent of our thinking, and thereafter to more or less renounce any mention of subjectivity and subjective operations.²¹ After

²⁰ Although the term “psychologism” had been in use for many years before Husserl began his phenomenology, Husserl’s evolving thinking contributed to the determination of its sense. In the *Logical Investigations*, “psychologism” is first defined as the position that would make logic neither “formal” nor “demonstrative”, but instead a “technology dependent on psychology” (Prolegomena, § 3, p. 13); it is the position according to which “the essential theoretical grounds of the prescriptions of logic lie in psychology” (Prolegomena, § 21, p. 46). After 1900, Husserl went on consistently using the term “psychologism” to denote the belief that all logical objectivities (including significations and the valid forms of argument employed by the sciences) are dependent on and determined by psychological laws. His sense of the term nonetheless developed, but that development is a topic for further parts of this study.

²¹ In order to combat psychologism, logicians would need to distinguish the quickly passing subjective occurrences of judging from the repeatable judgment and its reference. Having drawn this distinction, however, resolutely anti-psychologistic logicians mostly avoided considering how what they so distinguished could be concretely related in our experience; i.e., they mostly avoided constitutional or transcendental questioning. How can our thinking constitute an invariant thought such that it resides, if only for a moment, in the flowing stream of our thinking? How is it possible that judgments transcend (are independent of) subjective events when it is subjects, in our judging, who achieve those stable, and perhaps

emphatically affirming *that* judgments, and their features and relations, are independent of our judging, logical research would then devote no attention to the question of *how*, say, the principle of non-contradiction, or a true judgment regarding some passing state of affairs, is independent of that experience in which it is articulated and in which its validity is realized. Moreover, logic would even exclude such epistemological questions, regarding how the objectivity of judgments is transcendent of an experience within which it is available. It would not only keep itself unfettered by nagging questions about how we as subjects reach objectivity, but would also censure those who consider such questions necessary. This orientation in logical study, toward a rigorous fixation on objectivity and exclusion of subjectivity, was essentially a thoroughgoing opposition to psychologism. The philosophy of logic that embraced its set of imperatives refused to grant any truth to psychologism, and was above all concerned to refute it on logical grounds. This logical revanchism, or anti-psychologism on logical grounds, might be more briefly designated as logicism.²²

Such were the most antagonistic tendencies (“-isms”) contesting the terrain within which Husserl ventured his *Logical Investigations*, at the time when he wrote and published them. Amid this contest between psychologism and logicism, for the rights to determine the essence of meaning, Husserl took an “intermediary” path.²³ While some

enduringly true, judgments? The most hostile opponents of psychologism tended to dismiss such questions, even as they were not always able to entirely neglect them.

²² I am thus using “logicism” to denote a position regarding logic’s relation to psychology, and not the view of logic’s relation to mathematics that often goes by the same name. There seems to be some overlap between the two logicisms: Gottlob Frege, e.g., was adamantly, even uncharitably, opposed to psychologism, and also thought that mathematics could be reduced to logic. Nonetheless I mean something different by “logicism” than historians of logic and mathematics often mean by the same term.

²³ Husserl himself characterizes the position he articulates in the *Logical Investigations* as an “intermediary” one, standing between psychologism and its thoroughgoing opposition. He asks: “Is this not again a case where the truth lies in the middle?” (Prolegomena, § 20, p. 44; for Husserl’s characterization of his path as a middle way, see also Prolegomena, § 41).

sought to establish the invariant and regulative nature of logical objectivity, and others sought to trace out the subjective origin of the same, Husserl acted as though this *what* and *whence* could peacefully cohere in a harmonious theory. But this attempt to cut an irenic route in the *Investigations*, which would pass through those whom Husserl regarded as proponents of one and the other agenda, was hardly enough to stave off an acrimonious reception. The *Investigations* were attacked from several angles, and primarily on the two fronts that we would expect.²⁴ First, many who were not logicians themselves berated the work, and especially its first volume, the “Prolegomena to Pure Logic”, for assaulting psychologism in what they said was a dogmatic and reactionary manner. Second, the *Investigations* were also charged with being problematically two-faced — with mounting innumerable objections against Husserl’s old psychologistic tendency,²⁵ in one sweep, only to embrace the same tendency again in the next. But was Husserl in fact both a champion of logicism and a “relapsed” advocate of psychologism in 1900-01?

Neither of these assessments is correct, and yet neither is wholly without basis in Husserl’s *Investigations*. Broadly speaking, a paradoxical posture may indeed be seen in a contrast between the opening and concluding portions of the 1900-01 “breakthrough”. Husserl begins that work by arguing at length that the logical sphere of meaning cannot be sufficiently explained in psychological terms. He then operates at later stages of the same work as though a discipline that he there calls “descriptive psychology” is the one

²⁴ For a topical summary of a wide range of these criticisms, see the fourth chapter of Martin Kusch’s *Psychologism*, “The Criticism of Husserl’s Arguments Against Psychologism in German Philosophy 1901-20”. The chapter actually presents a broader group of criticisms than its title indicates, by mentioning the numerous critics (Kusch points to no fewer than 19) who accused Husserl of a “relapse into psychologism”.

²⁵ According to his own retrospective account, Husserl had harbored a psychologistic streak in his *Philosophy of Arithmetic*; though this tendency was far from determinative of the whole work, as Claire Ortiz Hill has argued (see “Frege’s Attack on Husserl and Cantor”, chapter 6 of *Husserl or Frege? Meaning, Objectivity, and Mathematics*), it was nonetheless operative in parts.

best able to determine what meaning basically is, and is one well-suited for fundamental investigations that he calls “logical”.²⁶ These discrepant responses to the question of whether logic is importantly independent of psychology, when considered in some detail, should show us the breakthrough of the winding route that Husserl cut between logicism and psychologism. They should thereby also provide us with an initial glimpse of the structural ambiguity — the “enigmatic double sense” — that Husserl discerned in meaning.²⁷

2.2.2: Logicist leanings: Husserl’s defense of “pure logic” and its ideal domain

We may look first at the textual basis underlying the suspicion that Husserl was a logicist. Consider, to begin with, one of what Husserl calls “the most fundamental of epistemological distinctions”, and how it implies that logic is partly independent from (or, as Husserl sometimes puts it, “pure” of) psychology.²⁸ In the *Prolegomena*, Husserl repeatedly distinguishes propositions and their parts, which he calls ideal, from our experiences, which he calls real. He characterizes our real experiences — including our experiences of ideal units of meaning — as “facts” for psychology.²⁹ They are “mental

²⁶ Though Husserl would later regret using “descriptive psychology” as a label for his method, and with good reason (when speaking of “descriptive psychology”, he meant something quite different by “psychology” than most mean by the term), it was not entirely inaccurate: In the 1st, 2nd, 5th, and 6th *Investigations*, Husserl employs a descriptive, reflective approach to the experience of meaning and truth that resembles, in important respects to be mentioned later, a psychology of the Brentanian breed.

²⁷ *Logical Investigations*, introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions, § 5, p. 174. The “enigmatic double sense” of meaning and the “essential ambiguity of meaning as an idea” (*Logical Investigations*, foreword to the second edition, p. 7) are, on my reading, two of Husserl’s names for the same dyadic structure that is the subject of this study.

²⁸ *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, § 51, p. 119.

²⁹ *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, § 46. Husserl gives somewhat different senses, in the *Investigations*, to the German terms “real” and “reell”. I am here articulating his sense of the “real” (which designates, roughly, the spatio-temporal; see *Inv. II*, § 8), rather than of the “reell” (which designates, roughly, the experientially immanent).

acts proceeding in time”,³⁰ marked by their “transience”,³¹ and thus “determinate with respect to time”.³² They are “contingent” events,³³ “having causes and effects”.³⁴ Whenever, for instance, I judge that this or that is “thus or so”, with more or less insight, my experience of judging is a fact for psychology: each such quickly passing experience appears to emerge from, and dissolve into, other such experiences, in “the tangled web of mental phenomena” that is psychology’s province.³⁵ Over against these transient and contingent events, which seem so amenable to psychological study, Husserl characterizes ideal units of meaning as self-same and unchanging. Ideal judgments would thus be distinct from our real acts of judging in much the same way that mathematical objects are distinct from the real acts that we perform in doing mathematics. Much as “[n]umbers, sums and products and so forth are not such casual acts of counting, adding and multiplying etc., as proceed here and there”,³⁶ so the singular judgment that “there are dragons” (to repeat Husserl’s example) would not be identical with any “one of the ... acts” of judging that there are dragons.³⁷ Different thinkers, in different times and places, could consider *the same* mathematical objects, and could regard *the same* judgment as either true or false. It is this self-sameness that, according to Husserl, differentiates ideal entities from real experiences. If each ideal unit of meaning is the same whenever, wherever, and by whomever, it is thought, then in this self-sameness it is invariant, distinct from the varying experiences in which it is thought. Propositions and their parts

³⁰ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 46, p. 109.

³¹ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 46, p. 110.

³² *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 24, p. 55.

³³ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 39, p. 90. The content of my thoughts might have been different, and I might not have existed or thought at all.

³⁴ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 22, p. 49.

³⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 21, p. 48.

³⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 46, p. 109.

³⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 47, p. 113.

would thus be removed from the web within which transient and contingent mental events arise out of and fade into other such events. “Judgment” would not designate only the real acts of judging that are facts for psychology, and “meaning” more broadly would not refer only to transient phenomena.³⁸ There would also be unchanging, reiterable significations that go by these names.

Now, if there is a class of judgments that is distinct from our experiences of judging, and psychology is the study of experience, then it would follow that there ought to be a discipline other than psychology to investigate that distinct class of judgments. On Husserl’s view, that discipline is “pure logic”. To be sure, insofar as logic is a “technology of science”,³⁹ which gives directives for any human thinking that seeks to craft scientific products, Husserl grants that it would need to prescribe (among other things) specifically “human devices for acquiring ... truth”, and as such would involve a (psychological) investigation of “the peculiarities of human nature in general”.⁴⁰ Husserl grants, i.e., that such a “technology of science” would need to consider the “methods, and ... forms of exposition, [that] are adapted to the human constitution as it at present normally is”.⁴¹ But insofar as logic considers, with a theoretical interest, what is required in order for any judgment to be well formed and non-contradictory, it would not need to direct its attention to any such contingent constitution as that which is presently normal for human beings,⁴² its attention would then be directed instead to the class of ideal

³⁸ Husserl states that all “logical terms”, i.e. all titles for subcategories within the broader category of meaning, “such as ‘presentation’, ‘concept’, ‘judgment’, ‘syllogism’, ... ‘truth’, etc. ... must be *equivocal*” (*Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 46, p. 111).

³⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 11, p. 26.

⁴⁰ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 42, p. 105.

⁴¹ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 42, p. 105.

⁴² For Husserl’s description in the Prolegomena of the “three tasks” that he thinks belong to pure logic, see §§ 67-70. Along with the formal grammar and theory of inference I allude to above, Husserl also includes the “theory of possible forms of theory”, a logical (or “apophantic”) correlate to the theory of possible

entities that Husserl differentiated from our real experiences. Husserl thus contends, in what he himself construes as a reactionary assault on psychologism,⁴³ that the most basic element of logic is fully independent of psychology, and that this pure part of logic derives its right to independence from its orientation toward meanings that, as invariant, are essentially distinct from the experiences that fall within psychology's scope. On a superficial or partial reading of the *Investigations*, this conception of pure logic and concomitant conception of meaning might easily seem to constitute a decidedly logicist contribution to the psychologism-debate.⁴⁴

For what might appear to be further evidences of a logicist agenda, consider the following claims, from Husserl's *Prolegomena*, concerning the normative force of logical laws. Consider, as the first among these claims, Husserl's repeated suggestion that logic is the "theory of science", tasked with investigating "whatever makes sciences into sciences", and obligated as such to articulate the formal laws that constrain every science.⁴⁵ To say that compliance with such formal principles is necessary for every science — that "each science is only a science in virtue of its harmony with logical rules" and so "presupposes those rules" — is not to say that proceeding logically suffices, within any given discipline, for enacting a genuinely scientific practice of that

manifolds or multiplicities that Husserl considered the highest goal of mathematics (or "formal ontology"). In all of these tasks, as also in the "logic of truth" that he would later (in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*) include alongside the theory of inference, Husserl believed that no reference to the contingent regularities of the human psyche was needed or permitted.

⁴³ "As regards my frank critique of the psychologistic logic and epistemology, I have but to recall Goethe's saying: There is nothing to which one is more severe than the errors that one has recently abandoned" (*Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition, p. 3).

⁴⁴ One such "cursory reading", according to Husserl, was given by Melchior Palágyi, one of the critics who accused Husserl of what I have called logicism (i.e., in Palágyi's words, of wanting to "split the blanket between logic and psychology", and of taking up "the warcry—'Away from psychology!'"). Palágyi said "not a word", according to Husserl, "of volume two" of the *Investigations* ("A reply to a critic of my refutation of logical psychologism", trans. Dallas Willard, *Husserl: Shorter Works*, ed. Peter McCormick and Frederick Elliston (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press), pp. 152-153).

⁴⁵ *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, § 5, p. 16.

discipline.⁴⁶ It is to say, however, that each science is “theoretically incomplete” apart from logic, i.e. that each attempt to give an account of the psyche, or of life, or of human being, or of whatever, is regulated not only by its subject matter, but also by formal laws to which every real account is subject.⁴⁷ In virtue of presupposing that certain combinations of concepts result in nonsense, that certain judgments necessarily exclude others, that certain moves in thinking preserve truth due to their conformity with valid forms of inferences, etc., each science would be regulated by logic. And insofar as psychology functionally presupposes all this, with every other science, it too would rely for its justification on principles that belong to the domain of logic.

Consider, next, Husserl’s claim that many of these logical principles derive their normative force solely from a theoretical branch of logic, and not from psychology. To the suggestion that psychology’s operation and justification depend on logic, the psychologistic retort was that the prescriptions of logic, while heeded by psychology as by the other sciences, have their sole theoretical basis in psychology. (The normative force of logical principles might then derive solely from how naturally these principles are observed. Proceeding logically might then amount to thinking in accord with a natural, psychological norm, with “custom, tradition, inclination and aversion” perhaps making up so many forces that lead to deviations from that norm.⁴⁸) Against this retort, Husserl suggests that psychology can only so claim to provide a complete foundation for

⁴⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 19, pp. 43-44. A psychologist, e.g., must do much more than comply with logical laws in order to contribute to his or her discipline; but a psychologist can do no less, if the account that he or she produces is to be scientific.

⁴⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, §§ 4-5.

⁴⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 19, p. 42. Husserl presents John Stuart Mill and Theodor Lipps as advocates of roughly this psychologistic retort.

the logical principles that supply its own grounds on pain of a vicious circularity.⁴⁹ He claims, moreover, that there is another theoretical basis for the normative assertions of logic in connections that obtain among basic logical concepts and among ideal judgments. The normative truth that “one ought not to affirm both ‘p’ and ‘not p’”, e.g., could thus derive its normative force from the theoretical proposition that “it is not the case that both ‘p’ and ‘not p’”; and many similar truths regarding how one ought to think could similarly have their basis in a sphere of pre-normative truths that belongs not to psychology, but to logic. Husserl so presents ideal judgments not only as crucially distinct from our real experiences of judging, but also as in some cases carrying regulative implications for the judging that we do — as founding those directives that logic issues to the sciences and to all thinking that seeks to proceed logically. In this postulate of an ideal realm of truths — a regulative “Idea of Science”, by means of which one might “measure the empirically given sciences” — and in the consequent liberation of logic from psychology, we may once again see strong indications of sympathy with logicism.⁵⁰

Husserl’s reputation as a champion of the logicians was strengthened still more, and perhaps most of all, by his contention that psychologism is essentially a self-defeating relativism. Psychologism, under Husserl’s definition, may take different forms.

⁴⁹ The psychologistic thinker would say, in effect: “my discipline is justified by its compliance with the principles of logic, and those principles in turn are justified by their foundation in conclusions arrived at by my discipline, which arrived at those principles by proceeding according to those principles, etc.” Husserl contends that this line of thinking involves a vicious circularity in the third paragraph of § 43. He suggests the same in the concluding paragraphs of § 19, and in the following statement from § 42, p. 103: “If ... a logical technology is to be of real help in our scientific endeavors, it must not presuppose that full knowledge of the complete sciences which we hope to achieve by its means”. For Husserl’s argument that the circularity involved in logic’s self-regulation is not similarly vicious, see the third paragraph of § 42.

⁵⁰ In § 11 of the Prolegomena, Husserl claims that “logic seeks to search into what pertains to genuine, valid science as such, what constitutes the Idea of Science, so as to be able to use the latter to measure the empirically given sciences as to their agreement with their idea” (p. 25).

It may take an “empiricist” shape, by attempting to base logic on empirical psychology; or it may take the “apriorist” shape of a “formal idealism”, by attempting to base logic on a “transcendental psychology” — an account of “consciousness as such”, in which “consciousness as such” is “conceived as generic (human) reason”.⁵¹ But, in either case, psychologism construes the truths that are logic’s interest as founded on the species whose passing experiences make up the subject matter of psychology. It thus implies the “species relativistic” thesis of “anthropologism”, according to which “what we call truth, depends on the constitution of the species *homo* and the laws which govern this species”.⁵² And this thesis, according to Husserl, is “self-destroying”: “it goes against the evident conditions for the possibility of a theory in general”.⁵³

While Husserl presents several arguments to this effect, in section 36 of the *Prolegomena*, a look at one of them should suffice to show a final reason why Husserl has often been perceived as a logicist. The first among those arguments may be reconstructed as follows:

- Suppose, with anthropologism, that the truth of propositions depends on the factual existence and particular constitution of that species for which they are true.
- It follows that “the same proposition or content of judgment may be true for a subject of the species *homo*, but may be false for another subject of a differently

⁵¹ *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, § 38, p. 83.

⁵² *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, § 36, p. 81.

⁵³ *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, § 32, pp. 75-76. A theory destroys itself, according to Husserl, if and only if “the content of [its] assertions rejects what is part of the sense or content of every assertion” (*Prolegomena*, § 35, p. 78). Husserl contends that a theory may so destroy itself either by explicitly denying that there is (a) “truth” or (b) “knowledge” (or “justification of knowledge”), or by “analytically implying” the negation of (a) the “laws [of truth] without which theory as such can have ... no coherent sense”, or (b) the “ideal conditions [of knowledge] that lie in the form of subjectivity as such” (*Prolegomena*, § 32, pp. 75-76).

constituted species”.⁵⁴ Anthropologism, then, does not merely carry the innocuous implication that the members of different species could have differently limited epistemic capacities; it carries also the stronger implication that the truth of propositions depends on those different cognitive constitutions, such that the truth value of a particular proposition might be differently (and, in each case, rightly) determined by differently constituted species.

- But this latter implication conflicts with the principle of non-contradiction: by allowing that any ideal judgment might be true “for us” but false “for another species”, this implication allows that the same state of affairs, understood in the same respect, may be truly said both to have obtained and not to have obtained. In other words, it allows the possibility that truth and falsity are not mutually exclusive features of a proposition.
- The principle of non-contradiction is a condition without which there can be no theory, i.e., without which “theory” can have “no coherent sense”.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 36, p. 79.

⁵⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 32, p. 76. Here are two lines of reasoning, partly based on Husserl’s claims in § 32 (pp. 75-76), that one might run in defense of this premise: (a) Suppose we determine that the principle of non-contradiction is false. It should follow from our determination that the same principle, while purportedly false for us, might then be true for another species. (For, if the principle of non-contradiction is false, there would no longer be any principle to prevent its *also* being true.) But it turns out that this possibility is inconceivable. For if the principle of non-contradiction were true for another species, then it would follow that the principle of non-contradiction itself could not be both true and not true, for that species (the principle of non-contradiction, if true, applies to itself). Yet the same principle would then be both true and false, “for that species”, insofar as that species could truly recognize the principle as true “for them” but false “for us”. This appears to be a reduction to absurdity: it shows that, once we negate the principle of non-contradiction, the same principle *could not possibly be true* — despite that it also follows from the negation of the principle of non-contradiction that the same principle *could be true* as well as false. (b) Every theory *qua* theory, according to Husserl, aims and purports to surpass “arbitrary, unwarranted assertion”. Thus, if a theory “destroys the very thing that distinguishes it from arbitrary, unwarranted assertion”, it also denies the possibility of its implicit aim. But the truth (non-falsity) of a theory’s claims seems to be among the features that distinguish a theory from “arbitrary, unwarranted assertion”. Thus, if a particular theory, by “the content of its assertions”, denies that truth and falsity are mutually exclusive features of a proposition, it would appear in so doing to negate “the very thing that distinguishes it from arbitrary, unwarranted assertion”. One might so argue that a theory that negates the principle of non-contradiction thereby negates theory’s conditions.

- So, by supposing anthropologism, we are forced to negate what is necessary for all theory, and thereby to defeat the very theory that we are supposing.

All of the arguments presented in section 36 are structurally like this first argument, in that they purport to derive an absurdity from anthropologism. Each argument allegedly shows, i.e., how supposing that all truth essentially depends on “what very well might not have been the case” or “might have been different” (viz., that human beings exist and are constituted as they are) inevitably leads to a contradiction.⁵⁶ By reducing the anthropologicistic supposition to absurdity, moreover, these arguments would thereby demonstrate the truth of its contrary. (If it is not the case that the truth of all propositions depends on our particular constitution, then the truth of some ideal judgments does not depend on that constitution.) Husserl thus contends, by *reductio ad absurdum*, that the truth of at least some ideal judgments is independent of all that is contingent, including our real experiences of judging. Having argued elsewhere, then, that the logical space of meaning is crucially distinct from our real experiences of meaning, and that this logical space consists partly of laws (and other truths) that have regulative implications for our real judgments, Husserl here argues that logic’s regulative ideal is not only distinct from, but also independent of, our real constitution and experiences.

In a cumulative case for reading Husserl’s “Prolegomena to Pure Logic” as a logicist work, the vehemently anti-psychologicistic arguments of section 36 could provide a crowning piece of interpretive evidence. By their conclusions, these arguments profess to offer another reason, in supplement to Husserl’s conceit that logical objectivities are ideal and therefore non-psychological, for granting the logicists that logic is at least partly “pure” of psychology: if logical objectivities are not only an invariant and regulative

⁵⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 37, p. 82.

aspect of our real experiences, but are also independent of those psychological items, that would be all the more reason for the discipline that investigates those objectivities to be independent of psychology. Further, by their consistently severe tone, Husserl's remarks about psychologism in and around section 36 seem to betray an almost logicist aggression — or at least would be likely to carry that acerbic ring in a psychologistic reader's ears. Psychologism is pronounced to be “logically absurd”;⁵⁷ it allegedly stands “in conflict with its own sense”,⁵⁸ which is to say that it is “self-cancelling”,⁵⁹ which is to say that it “suffer[s] from the grossest absurdities conceivable in a theory”, etc.⁶⁰ In both style and substance, Husserl's lengthy castigation of psychologism as a self-defeating relativism reads almost like a logicist polemic.

Without exhaustively compiling the textual case for charging Husserl with such a hostile, dogmatic, and uncharitable reaction against psychologism, we have now seen some key facets of that case. We have seen how Husserl, in his “Prolegomena to Pure Logic”, presents logic's field of ideal meanings as distinct from our real experiences of meaning. We have seen, moreover, his claims that the field of ideal meanings (a) contains normative laws by which our experiences of judging ought themselves to be judged, (b) circumscribes the theoretical foundations from which we can derive the force of those normative laws, and (c) contains laws and other truths that are independent of our experiences. Despite Husserl's defense of pure logic's ideal realm, however, and despite how Husserl's very talk of “pure logic” and the “pure laws of logic” might connote a correlated view of psychology as corrupt, the suspicion that Husserl was a

⁵⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 37, p. 82.

⁵⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 36, p. 79.

⁵⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 37, p. 82.

⁶⁰ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 36, p. 78.

logician is ultimately incorrect. “Pure logic” is in fact a title that Husserl utilized in order to articulate his “intermediary” view of logic’s independence, according to which part of logic *does and should* (contra the logicians) depend on psychology, even to the extent that the part in question is a kind of mixture of two disciplines, rather than strictly (or “purely”) logical.⁶¹ Still, with respect to the spectrum of views that one might take regarding the autonomy of logic and of the significations that it investigates, we have seen how certain defining features of Husserl’s *Prolegomena* put them much closer to the logicist extreme. This first volume of the *Logical Investigations* consists almost entirely of an ardent and extended critique of psychologism; it consistently deploys, if in many guises, a widely questioned but supposedly self-evident distinction between the real and the ideal (or facts and truths, natural “laws” and logical laws, contingency and necessity, etc.) in order to clear a realm that would belong exclusively to logic; and it proceeds by reflecting primarily on logical objectivity, rather than on the experience of such objectivity. In all of these ways, Husserl’s *Prolegomena* are much more logicist than they are psychologistic. They thereby stand conspicuously at odds with much of the second part of the *Logical Investigations*.⁶²

⁶¹ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 43, p. 106.

⁶² When I speak of “the second part”, I am referring to the second part of the original edition, first published in 1901 and containing the six Investigations that follow the Prolegomena, rather than to the second volume of the 1970 and 2001 English editions, which contain only Investigations IV-VI.

2.2.3: Psychologistic regress? “Descriptive psychology” and the source of signification

It is true that the second volume of the *Investigations* displays abundant evidence of a persisting resistance to psychologism. In the first Investigation, Husserl again distinguishes ideal meanings from real experiences of meaning.⁶³ He then, throughout much of the second Investigation, explicitly opposes the psychologistic view of universal concepts.⁶⁴ He contends also, and more openly in the second volume than in the first, that there is an “ideally closed set” of “meanings in themselves”, which encompasses and surpasses all of the meanings that we have ever “thought” or “expressed”, and which as such is independent of our experiences.⁶⁵ He claims, further, that this set of meanings contains a likewise independent subset of “truths in themselves”, which is partly reached, but also partly unreached, and perhaps partly unreachable, by the human scientific effort that essentially aims to disclose those truths.⁶⁶ Husserl even goes so far, at one point in the first Investigation, as to set “the essence of meaning” over against the experience of meaning.⁶⁷ He may well have included this last contrast among the “defect[s]” that he

⁶³ Whereas meanings that are self-identical in reiterations are said to “neither arise nor pass away” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 11, p. 195), the passing experiences in which “one and the same word”, or proposition, or syllogism, are reiterated are said to differ “greatly from one individual to the next, and for the same individual from one moment to another” (Inv. I, § 30, p. 228).

⁶⁴ Throughout the second Investigation, Husserl opposes the thesis that universal concepts are merely arbitrary devices that we have invented for handily “bundling” real individuals together (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, § 24, p. 277). He claims that such a thesis psychologistically overlooks the ideal character of such concepts. He suggests that those who take the signification of “the note C”, or of “the number four”, or of “the color red”, e.g., to be no more than our vague associations of so many real individuals (such as tones or groups or colors), thereby “misread the essence” of universal concepts and their universal referents (Inv. II, § 14a, p. 260, and introduction, p. 238). For Husserl’s argument that this is so, see section 4.2.1 of the present work.

⁶⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 35, p. 233. For Husserl’s argument in support of this contention, see section 4.2.2.

⁶⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 28, p. 223. Though Husserl indicates certain reservations regarding talk of an “in itself”, by placing his first uses of “in itself” and “in themselves” in brackets, he nonetheless utilizes these expressions in order to say that there are many truths that we do not, and might never, know. Husserl attempts to illustrate that there are such truths by reasoning that I reconstruct in section 4.2.3.

⁶⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 30, p. 228: “The essence of meaning is seen by us not in the meaning-conferring experience...”. Looking back from his 1913 vantage point, Husserl instructs his readers to be wary of the “many important passages” in the first Investigation in which “the noematic concept [of

saw in the first Investigation by 1913, at which time he had long since decided that meaning is instead “essentially ambiguous”.⁶⁸ Yet volume two of the *Logical Investigations* in any case, and in every edition, offers recurring defenses of an independent sphere of significations that psychologism rejects. Any resurgence of the psychologism that Husserl had once displayed in his 1891 *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, within volume two of the *Investigations*, would thus appear as a “relapse”, even by Husserl’s own lights: psychologism has been and remains excluded, so that there is no possibility of its returning triumphantly.

While the author of the *Logical Investigations* thus remains opposed to psychologism throughout that text, four of the six Investigations that follow the Prolegomena nonetheless also display a crucial shift in Husserl’s orientation. Whereas the Prolegomena are devoted to showing how psychologism errs, and for that reason focus primarily on logical objects that belong beyond psychology’s borders, the subsequent Investigations focus more on the *experience of logical objectivity*. In the first Investigation, Husserl’s focus is on the experience of “expression and meaning”; it is through descriptive analysis of such experience that Husserl gains the “foothold” insight that an expression only “*means something*” — and thus “relates to what is objective” and “is more than the merely sounded word” —⁶⁹ thanks to “certain acts of mind” in which we *intend* (i.e., refer to) something that is more or less present to us.⁷⁰ In the second

meaning] is principally [and one-sidedly] dealt with” because the “distinction and parallelism between the ‘noetic’ and ‘noematic’” is not yet recognized (*Logical Investigations*, foreword to the second edition, p. 7). Any passage in which Husserl would exclude all reference to experience from the essence of meaning at least piques this awareness.

⁶⁸ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the second edition, p. 7.

⁶⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 9, p. 192.

⁷⁰ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 7, p. 189. Those acts in which “a speaker produces [an expression] with the intention of ‘expressing himself about something’ through its means”, and in which “the articulate sound-complex, the written sign etc., first becomes a spoken word or bit of communicative speech” (ibid.),

Investigation, Husserl's focus is again on logical experiences, as he contends that essences can and regularly do become the objects of our thought and knowledge, in mental acts of abstraction that we perform on the basis of some sensuously or imaginatively given thing(s).⁷¹ The third and fourth Investigations stand as exceptions to the general thrust of volume two: their studies of part-relations and meaning-combinations, contributing respectively to objectively focused projects in formal ontology and formal logic, contain by themselves little cause of offence for the logicist, or at least little that would strike the logicist as a fall back into psychologism. But, in the fifth and sixth Investigations, Husserl then returns his attention to experience, further elucidating the structure of thinking and knowing, and thereby identifying what he presents as subjective conditions for ideal meaning and truth. Husserl's focus thus drifts discreetly, in the *Investigations* of the second volume, away from logical objects and toward logical experience. When considered with respect to the question of logic's independence, moreover, this subtle shift amounts to a leap along the spectrum of possible responses. For what place do descriptions of experience have within investigations that call themselves logical? What reason could there be for the inclusion of such quasi-psychological researches within logic? Already by their results, Husserl's

Husserl calls "*meaning-conferring acts*" or "*meaning-intentions*". The intentional experience in which we express ourselves about something may or may not include "*meaning-fulfilling acts*", which are "not essential to the expression as such", but "which stand to it in the logically basic relation of fulfilling (confirming, illustrating) it more or less adequately, and thus [of] actualizing its relation to its object" (Inv. I, § 9, p. 192). Moreover, though the speech-acts whose intentionality Husserl is here considering essentially involve an act of reference, and indeed have a kind of intentionality that appears to be equivalent with reference, it is important to note that many of the experiences that Husserl eventually classes as intentional involve no such act: intentionality is not equivalent to linguistic reference, for reasons I indicate below.

⁷¹ Abstraction, for Husserl, is an intentional experience in which what we intend is an essence. Abstraction builds upon founding acts in which sensuous or imaginary objects are intended. It does so not by further attention to some aspect of a particular sensuously given or imagined content, but by a new kind of act directed toward an essence, of which a particular content may be an instance. Starting from this piece of paper's sensuously given shape, e.g., we may direct our attention to rectangularity in general, and consider what features any rectangle whatsoever must possess.

1901 studies of experience intimate that they were conducted in order to provide a foundation for (all of) logic. For they purport to concretely clarify the concepts that are basic to pure logic, such as meaning and truth; and they inquire, through asking how our experience of logical objects is possible, into pure logic's epistemological grounds.⁷² To a brief survey, then, the almost-logicist tact of the *Prolegomena* appears to be replaced by a more nearly psychologistic approach, with Husserl working as though logic depends on subjectively oriented studies.

On a closer look, too, certain chief claims from the later *Investigations* might seem to constitute a textual case for charging Husserl with “backsliding” into the psychologistic view that he rejected. Consider, as the first among these claims, Husserl's repeated assertion that expressions derive their signification from acts of meaning. This is to say that uttered sounds, e.g., only become carriers of signification — more than mere sounds like “bar-bar-bar” (to use the sounds that Plato alludes to by his mention of “barbarian” languages that we do not understand) and more than mere “parrot-talk” (to use the term that Husserl often invokes) — thanks to a conscious being meaning something by those expressions. The term “dog”, e.g., would thus take its signification because we refer to some (perhaps non-existent) dog or dogs, with that expression. To be sure, this does not imply that we, on a regular basis, arbitrarily create the significations of particular uttered sounds and written marks. Husserl of course recognizes that we, for the most part, “confer” that signification on each particular term that the term has already been established as having within a linguistic community. Yet to say that acts of meaning “confer” or “give” meaning to expressions might nonetheless suggest that

⁷² Compare Husserl's remarks regarding pure logic's basic concepts, and an “epistemological critique” of pure logic, in § 1 of his introduction to volume two.

signification, in general, has its origin in such mental acts.⁷³ For it implies at least that there could be no signs at all — no marks that signify some object(s) by way of the significations they carry — if there were no acts of meaning.⁷⁴ Still, there is more telling evidence that Husserl, by the end of the Investigations, took signification to depend on acts of meaning. We may begin to discern this evidence by coming to terms with the character that Husserl ascribes to our acts of meaning.

Consider, next, then, the claim that our experience of meaning is invariably “intentional”. As already mentioned, Husserl initially discusses intentions in the context of a study focused on the signification of expressions (the first Investigation). He there almost makes intentionality appear to be an exclusively linguistic phenomenon, i.e. a peculiar feature of speech acts. For the “acts of mind” he there discusses are those in which one intends objects of thinking with signs that carry significations (as one would, e.g., in saying aloud, “there is a city on the other side of those mountains”), and those in which such intentions are frustrated or fulfilled (as the signification in question would be if the speaker made it through the mountains and found a city there). At first, then,

⁷³ Even if I have only ever given those terms that I use the same significations that others have already assigned to them, it seems that reflection on my experience of giving certain terms signification, while leaving other sounds and sights as being without signification, nonetheless shows that there could not be signification if there were not acts of meaning. For reflection on this experience shows that expressions could have no signification for me if I had experienced them all merely as so many sounds and marks; and it at least suggests that there could be no expressions with signification at all (i.e., for anyone) were there not acts of meaning.

⁷⁴ Of course, if signification could *be*, in whatever way signification *is*, without any signs, then the dependence of signs on acts of meaning would not entail the dependence of signification on acts of meaning. In postulating “meanings in themselves”, Husserl claims that not all significations are expressed significations. “There is”, he writes, “no intrinsic connection between the ideal unities which in fact operate as significations, and the signs to which they are tied, i.e. through which they become real in human mental life” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 35, p. 233). Even if not all particular significations are expressed, however, and even though particular significations seem to be expressible in various formulations (in various languages, e.g.), such that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between significations and expressions, this does not exclude the possibility that signification as such requires that there be some expression by some conscious being. We need not here broach, however, the difficult question of whether signification could still be, in some sense, apart from any system of signs.

“intentionality” might seem to merely designate the fact that, because there are authors behind expressions, we may decipher an expression’s signification by determining its author’s original intent.

Later, however, Husserl circumscribes a much more expansive range of experiences within his “intentional” category, and thereby clarifies how much more fundamental to experience he takes intentionality to be. At this later point, not only are those acts “intentional” in which I intend something by speaking or hearing or seeing or silently thinking certain words (and in which some part of a particular system of signifiers is thus “actually present” to my mind), but so also are all of the “wordless” acts in which I am conscious of something.⁷⁵ So also, i.e., is any act in which I expect or experience whatever it is that I am conscious of without the mediation of definite terms and their congealed significations.⁷⁶ Moreover, the range of experiences that are “intentional”, in the later *Investigations*, extends also without regard for the “qualities” that partly constitute our living engagement with all that of which we are conscious. Intentional experiences, i.e., can be “merely presentative, judgmental, emotional, desiderative”, optative, interrogative, etc.,⁷⁷ and whether an “act of mind” is one “of

⁷⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, § 15, p. 223. Husserl notes, in §§ 14-15, how “in the whole of [the] investigations up to [that] point” he had not yet distinguished “acts of meaning, sense-giving factors attached to expressions” (or “significative acts”), from a broader and more inclusive class of experiences in which we intend what is not yet present (which Husserl calls “signitive acts”). Husserl’s view is that both significative and “wordless” signitive intentions can be fulfilled in “intuitive intentions” of their respective kinds, moreover, such that all experiences of meaning (i.e., of signification, whether empty or fulfilled) make up only part of a larger class of conscious experiences that Husserl uniformly labels experiences of “sense”.

⁷⁶ Husserl finds one example of such an act in the experience of a tool that we recognize even though “its name will not come back to us” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, § 15, p. 223). For another example of such acts, he refers to “the perceptual or imaginative course of a melody, or of some other familiar type of event,” and specifically to “the definite or indefinite intentions and fulfillments which arise in such a course” (Inv. VI, § 15, p. 224). Examples like these begin to betray just how ubiquitous pre-articulate “acts of mind” are within the flow of our conscious experience.

⁷⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 20, p. 119.

judgment, joy, grief, love, hatred, desire ... loathing”, or whatever, it is intentional.⁷⁸ But what is common to experiences of such diverse sorts? And what definition of intentionality allows the set of our intentional experiences to extend beyond the set of experiences in which we *intend* something via the signification of expressions (i.e., beyond the set of our “acts of meaning” — the set of our “significant acts”)? The simple feature that Husserl identifies across all of the multifarious kinds of our conscious experiences is that in all of them we are conscious *of* something: “in perception something is perceived, in imagination, something imagined, in a statement something stated, in love something loved, in hate hated, in desire desired etc.”⁷⁹ “Wordless” experiences are thus intentional too, no less than the acts of meaning in which we intend something with an expression, because they likewise involve a consciousness *of* something. In short, then, Husserl presents *being of* as the essential feature of all conscious experience — claiming that to be conscious is to be conscious of — and uses the term “intentionality” to denote precisely this feature.

Husserl’s so describing intentionality, and so describing conscious experience, has important implications for his view of signification. First, this description makes *being of* into a *differentiating* feature of being conscious. It identifies intentionality, i.e., as a distinctive feature of conscious beings, in virtue of which they must be distinguished from all beings that are not oriented toward an experiential field — from a table, e.g., which is not *of* anything.⁸⁰ But, insofar as meanings too are essentially oriented toward objectivity — like our conscious experiences, and unlike trees, hills, and all other such

⁷⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 9, p. 95.

⁷⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 10, p. 95. However indeterminate the object of our desire, expectation, or other kind of conscious experience may be, our conscious experience is nonetheless intentional, in being *of* something indeterminate.

⁸⁰ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 9.

beings — this description hints that signification essentially bears the intentional signature of consciousness; for what it presents as the differentiating feature of consciousness is also, strikingly, a feature of signification.⁸¹ Further, Husserl’s description makes *being of* into the *universal* feature of being conscious. It thereby implies that we as conscious beings are regularly and constitutively open to a given field of experience, indeed so regularly and constitutively that it might scarcely occur to us to notice and inquire into this openness, or to identify what in fact belongs to the intentional network of conscious experience as such. It suggests, i.e., that we tend to overlook the intentional character of our experience, and that we are thereby inclined to see as fully “mind-independent” what actually could not be apart from an intentional setting. But might not the logicist assertion that ideal meaning is independent of all subjectivity thus be just another manifestation of our tendency to neglect what is most constant to our experience? The mere suggestion of this possibility would be enough to place Husserl’s later Investigations at a far cry from the anti-psychologistic ardor of the Prolegomena.

Husserl does not only hint or suggest that signification depends on conscious experience, though; through the course of his own inquiries into the intentional character of consciousness, he also comes to quite explicitly present ideal meaning as a dependent aspect of his inquiry’s independent subject matter. Consider, e.g., his claim that intentional experiences “alone ... furnish concrete bases for abstracting the fundamental notions that function systematically in logic ... and that enter into [its] ideal laws”.⁸² The logician could thus only arrive at the notions of concept and of proposition, of inference

⁸¹ An argument along these lines appears to be the rational root of Husserl’s more psychological view of meaning. I attempt a detailed statement of that argument, which Husserl leaves largely inexplicit, in section 4.3.

⁸² *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 9, p. 95.

and of truth, by finding what those notions refer to in the subjective events of conceiving, inferring, etc. Logical laws could only be accessed through studies that abstract the forms of various concrete arguments, and our notion of ideal meaning more generally could only have been abstracted from the experience of meaning. Crucially, moreover, Husserl's assertion that ideal logical objects are abstract and that logical experiences are concrete is not meant to pertain only to how we happen to arrive at ideal meanings; it pertains also to what meaning is. This becomes clearer when we read that it is in intentional experiences that "the supreme Genus meaning has its originative source",⁸³ or when we read that such experiences are "the "sources" from which the basic concepts and ideal laws of pure logic "flow" (*entspringen*)".⁸⁴ The experience of meaning is thus presented as the concrete *origin* of ideal meanings, and so as a condition necessary (at least at one point) for their being. That Husserl so regards ideal meaning as essentially (and even always) dependent on the experience of meaning becomes clearer still when we read that reiterable significations are "nothing but ideally apprehended aspects" of "acts of meaning".⁸⁵ It is evident, then, that Husserl in the later *Investigations* presents

⁸³ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, Introduction, p. 79.

⁸⁴ *Logical Investigations*, Introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions, § 1, p. 166. The use of quotation marks in this text indicates that Husserl does not take acts of meaning to be the *cause* that has *forced* signification to spring forth in the same way that certain conditions of subterranean water are the cause that force a hot spring to flow.

⁸⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, Introduction, p. 80. Husserl is *not* claiming that acts of meaning are productive "activities", from which all ideal meanings at some point in history first sprung into being; though he refers to our intentional experiences as "acts", he expressly denies that he intends to thereby construe them as "activities" of an efficient-causal kind (Inv. V, § 13). He likewise rejects the view that consciousness is a "doing" of each conscious agent, or "doer" (Inv. V, § 13, note 15). Husserl instead recognizes relations of dependence that are not relations of cause and effect. He recognizes, i.e., certain "founding relations" that obtain because of the essences of the founding and founded elements, such as the relation between color and extension, or between figure and extension (cf. Inv. III, § 4). In all such cases, at least one term of the relation could not be, in whatever way it *is*, apart from the other. And Husserl claims that the relation of signification to intentionality is just such a founding relation: while conscious experiences can be "intentional" without yet being articulate, "significative acts", Husserl suggests that there could not be signification apart from the concrete intentional experience that he has begun to examine. He contends that the specific essence of signification demands significative acts — that

acts of meaning not only as our sole mode of access to logical objects, but also as the concrete basis without which such objects could not be.⁸⁶

Here we find what appears to be an expression of a relapse into the psychologistic view that Husserl has repeatedly rejected. We are offered the counterfactual claim that, if there were no intentional experience, there would be no signification. At first glance, at least, this assertion appears to be incompatible with the earlier claim that ideal meanings are independent of our real experiences of meaning. It appears to imply that there are no “meanings in themselves”. But it thus also verges on psychologism. For, insofar as Husserl’s later claim is that ideal meanings are dependent on the psyche, he thereby holds that the domain of logic is entirely constricted within that of psychology.

For another, clearer, indication of the discrepancy between signification as presented in (a) the *Prolegomena* and (b) the later *Investigations*, consider also how the truth of significations is characterized in the two cases. Recall that Husserl in the *Prolegomena* presented truth as a property of significations that is independent of all real experiences. By the sixth *Investigation*, in contrast, truth appears as inseparably linked to (perhaps as residing within, perhaps as equivalent to) the experience of thought’s fulfillment in intuition, i.e. in the evident giving of something (*Evidenz*). If it is true that it is raining, e.g., then Husserl in the sixth *Investigation* sees this truth to require both an act wherein one is intentionally directed to this state of affairs, and a further act in which

signification is only an aspect of, and is “unthinkable” without, intentionality. For the descriptive grounds of this contention, see section 4.3 of the present work.

⁸⁶ Husserl’s view that acts of meaning are necessary for signification follows from his characterization of “acts” of meaning, wherein they appear not as efficient causes, but as concrete intentional experiences. If (a) intentionality is in fact uniquely characteristic of concrete conscious experiences (and of their constitutive aspects) and (b) signification is essentially *of* objects, then it appears on that basis that (c) ideal meaning is an aspect of the concrete experience of meaning. Thus, though we might speak and think of meanings without reference to any experience, we could only do so abstractly, because there can be no signification apart from some act(s) of meaning. I present this line of reasoning in greater detail in section 4.3.3.

this state of affairs is then fulfillingly given (perhaps in a “static unity” of the experience in which one is first directed to the rain and the intuitive experience “in which the things appear”, or perhaps in a temporally disjointed “dynamic identity” of a first empty significative act and a later confirming act).⁸⁷ After this reflective insight into the structure of knowing, Husserl can speak of truth as the “ideal relationship ... among the ... essences of [these] coinciding acts”, and as “the rightness of [one’s] intention”, but he no longer speaks of truth or validity as a feature of certain ideal objects that pertains to them independently of all intentional experience.⁸⁸ The truth or validity of significations is rather regarded as depending on the intentional experience of intuition.⁸⁹ This might seem to count as yet another sign of a “backslide” into psychologism.

Yet the strongest suggestion that Husserl, in volume two of the *Investigations*, reverted to a psychologistic view of logic, may be found in his original, 1901 introduction to that volume. Husserl there identifies his program of subjectivity-research as a type of psychology (“Phenomenology is descriptive psychology”) and, admitting his presumption that his studies of experience provide a foundation for pure logic, concludes, “pure logic therefore ... rests on psychology”.⁹⁰ Reading this, we must ask, as Husserl

⁸⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, §§ 6, 8.

⁸⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, § 39, p. 264. Husserl does refer to a sense of truth as “the objective item corresponding to the act of *Evidenz*”, but he prefers to consider this as one sense of “Being”, and, more important, even this “objective item” or “state of affairs” is defined in the sixth Investigation as the “correlate of an identifying act” (Inv. VI, § 39, pp. 263-264).

⁸⁹ Cf. the following claim from the 1913 version of Husserl’s introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions of the *Investigations*: “Logical concepts, as valid thought-unities, must have their origin (*Ursprung*) in intuition; they must arise out of an ideational abstraction (*ideierende Abstraktion*) founded on certain experiences” (§ 2, p. 168).

⁹⁰ In Findlay’s translation, this and the subsequently quoted portions of the 1901 introduction to the second German volume are attached to § 6 of that introduction under the heading, “Translator’s Additional Note 4”. Despite trying to introduce his new research program of phenomenology by tying it to Brentano’s existing program of descriptive psychology, Husserl already in this 1901 introduction is quick to qualify any identification of the two: “it will be good if we rather speak of ‘phenomenology’ than of descriptive psychology”.

himself does, “what then is the point of the whole battle against psychologism?”⁹¹ In other words, why argue at length that pure logic is fully independent of psychology, if only to then presume that pure logic “rests on psychology”? Are the *Investigations* in fact guilty of a constitutive incoherence? Are they guilty, i.e., of first assailing and then operatively assuming a psychologistic view of logic?

The key to Husserl’s defense against such a charge, and the key to his middle way between logicism and psychologism, lies in his distinction of (a) the type of “psychological” research that he believes is needed for logic’s foundation from (b) psychology as it is generally practiced and understood; it is the latter that, according to Husserl, could only purport to provide foundations for pure logic on pain of psychologism. But what is the difference? Husserl claims that his own “psychological” research consists in “the purely descriptive examination of the knowledge experience, disembarassed of all theoretical psychological interests” (such as the interests in the “genetic connections” between elements of animal experiences).⁹² But does any genuinely revealing theory not describe? And is it possible to perform any description without some theoretical interests? Given the stakes that ride on Husserl’s distinction between his own type of “psychology” and psychology as generally understood, he perhaps does not yet, in 1901, articulate that distinction crisply enough.

Indeed, Husserl by 1913 would regret labeling his study of experience as “descriptive psychology”, and would discard that label as misleading. In the 1913 introduction to volume two, Husserl instead exclusively refers to the research program that he enacts in that volume as “phenomenology”. He thereby designates his program as

⁹¹ *Logical Investigations*, 1901 introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions.

⁹² *Logical Investigations*, 1901 introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions.

an attempt to describe the essence of appearance. For “phenomenology” names the attempt to say what appearance, of any sort, of anything, always is. Phenomenology asks: How does anything appear, in any way? What is essential to consciousness, and what kinds of consciousness (and, correlatively, appearance) are there? Now, our practice of such a program would certainly be concerned with the experiences of a particular being in the world, and so with the same psyche that is at issue for empirical psychology — but only insofar as the latter serves as a “dative of appearance”.⁹³

Husserl’s research program, then, is not one of inductive generalization, seeking to reach regularities that hold, more or less, throughout the experiences of some real species. It is instead one of describing what meaning, knowing, etc., essentially are, which considers the experiences of some real species only insofar as they are instances of what meaning and knowing are in essence (and so would be for any species). It follows that Husserl’s research program could indeed differ from psychology in precisely the way that the *Prolegomena* prescribe: it could exclude the inductive study of real experiences from the foundation of pure logic (recognizing that such study cannot access the ideal field of pure logic), even while holding that subjective studies are necessary in order to fundamentally clarify pure logic; and it could deny that contingent human experiences are necessary for ideal signification (and its truth), even while it treats some *act(s) of meaning* as necessary for such signification (and truth). Husserl could accordingly regard the accusation of a

⁹³ In his 1913 introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions of the *Investigations*, Husserl uses “psychology” with “its old meaning” (§ 6, p. 175); that is, he uses it to name an empirical discipline that considers “the experiences of presentation, judgment, and knowledge” only as “classes of real events in the natural context of zoological reality” (§ 1, p. 166). Psychology thus would be “the empirical science of the mental attributes and experiences of animal realities” (*ibid.*, § 2, p. 169). Within such a discipline, “All general statements have . . . a character of empirical generality: they hold for *this* nature” (*ibid.*, § 6, p. 176). Husserl’s program, in contrast, does not aim to “discuss states of animal organisms”, but to describe “perceptions, judgments, feelings *as such*” (*ibid.*). It is thus concerned precisely with what Robert Sokolowski (and, echoing him, many others such as Dan Zahavi and Evan Thompson) has called the “dative of manifestation”.

fall back into psychologism as a “grotesque reproach”, i.e. as a misreading or non-reading that fails to come to terms with the specificity of his project.⁹⁴

Even after Husserl realizes the dangers of associating his program with psychology, however, what comes to be called the phenomenological project remains strikingly similar to the psychologistic project. The resemblance is not a mere accident of the insufficient methodological self-awareness, or insufficient caution, that led Husserl to depict phenomenology as a kind of psychology in 1901. That resemblance rather if anything becomes more explicit in sections of the *Investigations* that Husserl “radically revised” in 1913.⁹⁵ Husserl there contends again, as in 1901, that a study of intentional experiences is needed in order to clarify “the origin” of “concepts”, “laws”, and “valid thought-unities” that comprise logic’s field.⁹⁶ But he also goes further in 1913 by suggesting that such researches are “especially needed” for pure logic because psychologism, while erroneous, has justified motives: the “temptation ... to turn the logically objective into the psychological”, we are told, is “by no means chance”, but rather “rooted in grounds of essence”.⁹⁷ Husserl thus continues to assert that signification and truth are essentially grounded in intentional experience, but also comes to recognize these “grounds of essence” as a rational motive underlying the psychologistic orientation. Whether in 1901 or 1913, then, Husserl advocates — contra logicism and in keeping with psychologism — that those who would clarify the entities of pure logic for that reason turn to human experiences that psychology also examines.

⁹⁴ *Logical Investigations*, 1920 foreword to the second edition of volume II, part 2 of the German editions, p. 178.

⁹⁵ The sections in question, from which the following quotations are taken, make up the introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions of the *Investigations*. Husserl notes that they were “radically revised” in his 1913 foreword to the second edition (p. 6).

⁹⁶ *Logical Investigations*, introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions, §§ 1, 2, pp. 166, 168.

⁹⁷ *Logical Investigations*, introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions, § 2, p. 169.

2.2.4: A Sisyphian or Socratic “zigzag”

Were the *Investigations* then in some sense “guilty” as charged, of both psychologism and logicism? We have now seen the discrepancy in their presentation of logic, a discrepancy that would have been especially glaring in the context of a raging psychologism-controversy: The *Investigations* appear to offer alternatively affirmative and negative responses to the question of whether logic is fully independent of psychology. More exactly, they incongruously assert that pure logic (a) is independent of psychology but (b) depends on investigations that might (however misleadingly, still with reason) be construed as psychological. We have seen also how Husserl’s discrepant stance with respect to logic’s independence manifests the deeper discrepancy in his view of meaning. First, the *Prolegomena*, in their quasi-logicist reflection, present a basically binary situation in which invariant truths are realized in so many quickly passing acts. Within that reflection, “meaning” designates the “ideal” semantic items that hold (self-same and perhaps true) throughout and beyond our passing (“real”) experiences of those items. The field of meaning then consists of propositions and concepts, i.e. of the *logoi*, or logical *objects*, upon which the logician reflects. Later, the different kind of reflection that emerges through Husserl’s “investigations into phenomenology and the theory of knowledge” (i.e., volume two) presents instead a basically unitary intentional situation, whose many dependent aspects include signification. “Meaning” then refers primarily to the kind of experience that Husserl calls an “act of meaning”, and appears confined within the field of psychology.⁹⁸ Though the *Investigations* cannot be justly charged with

⁹⁸ There appear to be at least two reasons why Husserl, despite maintaining certain reservations about referring to intentional experiences as “acts”, nonetheless adopts this terminology. The first is that this

either psychologism or logicism, then, these charges do highlight the dual view of meaning that emerged through that 1900-01 work: On the one hand, Husserl looks out on meaning from a height also occupied by the logicians, far above psychologistic occlusions of the ideal character of conceptual and propositional constellations. On the other hand, Husserl also takes an almost psychologistic perspective, contending that one can only clarify what meaning originally is by returning to intentional experiences.

Given this oscillation between more logicist and more psychologistic views of meaning, it is no surprise that Husserl would be received on both sides as a Sisyphean character. He attempts to ascend to a point where he can establish that there is a realm of significations and truths independent of our experience, i.e. a realm of meanings and of truths “in themselves”; and he then descends to clarify a subjective origin of all meaning and truth, from which he claims no signification or case of validity is independent, by returning his attention to human experience. For logicians, it is Husserl’s backsliding from recognizably logical insights into subjectively oriented studies of logic that is pitiable. For psychologistic philosophers of logic, it is the vainglory of his attempted ascent, i.e. his presumption to be capable of showing that there are “meanings in

usage conforms to the then-prevailing psychological practice. But the second, and more important, reason can be discerned from Paul Natorp’s suggestion, approvingly cited by Husserl, that our conscious experiences are act-like in the respect that they all appear to be “conative” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 13, note 15, pp. 353-354). Our experiences of meaning would thus be called “acts” not because they are productive “activities”, producing signification like a tree produces leaves, but because such acts are intrinsically oriented toward certain fulfillments. Admittedly, our “acts of meaning” may appear almost like productive activities in that we are constantly choosing to center our attention on some thereby focal whole. But we do not cause ourselves to be experientially open to a world within which we may attend to this or that. Further, Husserl refers even to our experiences of backgrounds as “acts” or “intentional experiences” (at least in what he in §13 calls the “wider sense of intention”), though they do not involve even the minimal sense of activity that is involved in focusing one’s attention: “an intentional object need not ... always be noticed or attended to” (*ibid.*, §13, pp. 101-102). So, our intentional “consciousness of” is of objects of both thematic and background varieties. Non-focal or background-experiences — such as the experience one has of the ground beneath one’s feet, or of the sound of traffic passing outside on the street, while having one’s attention directed to some other focus — are nonetheless called acts because they too have content.

themselves”. Husserl, not surprisingly, would come to portray his path somewhat differently: he envisages the double movement of his theory of meaning under a more Socratic figure, as a “zigzag” that is demanded by philosophical responsibility.⁹⁹ According to this Socratic self-portrait, the complete defeat of psychologism required not only an ascent to disclose a realm of ideas that is eclipsed by psychologistic “misconstructions and misunderstandings of the objects of logic”; it required also a returning descent to a more sympathetic encounter with those misunderstandings, which even appropriates the rational motives underlying psychologism as its own.¹⁰⁰

But is the discrepancy in Husserl’s view of meaning of more than merely historical interest? Or is that discrepancy’s heated reception (along with Husserl’s more charitable, defensive self-portrait) instead merely another case of clannish behavior by the adherents of different research programs? Is it a case, i.e., that is interesting now perhaps for antiquarians and sociologists of science, but not of any further philosophical interest?¹⁰¹ We have seen enough of Husserl’s claims regarding meaning to tell that he did in fact espouse two discordant views, and we have seen how that discord would have

⁹⁹ Cf. *Logical Investigations*, introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions, § 6, note 2, p. 175.

¹⁰⁰ *Logical Investigations*, introduction to volume II, part I of the German editions, § 2, p. 169. Because Husserl sees phenomenology as the only research program that operates out of the rational motives at the root of psychologism, while managing to avoid psychologistic “misconstructions and misinterpretations of the objects of logic”, he concludes that “psychologism can only be radically overcome by a pure phenomenology” (ibid.).

¹⁰¹ Husserl’s work is often taken today as a relic of an odd and bygone era, rather than as perhaps true. For example, one of the more widely cited recent discussions of Husserl’s view of meaning and logic is Martin Kusch’s *Psychologism*, in which a “reconstruction of the psychologism debate in Germany [roughly 1866-1930]”, focused largely on the controversy surrounding Husserl’s *Investigations*, is offered as “a case study in the sociology of philosophical knowledge” (pp. 14-15). Kusch finds much of sociological interest in the psychologism debate. Most interesting, for Kusch, is how the debate over the theoretical question of logic’s independence, between more psychologistic and more logicist elements, overlapped with a less ethereal conflict, between psychologists (who did not yet have departments of their own) and neo-Kantian philosophers, for posts in German philosophy departments. What is noteworthy is that Kusch’s approach consists in principle (though not always in practice) of presenting views and their defenses, without evaluating either. The interest that Kusch takes in Husserl’s view of meaning (and opposition to psychologism) thus appears not to indicate any interest in that view’s possible truth.

been especially resonant in an era when philosophers were intensely concerned with the legitimacy of the psychologistic enterprise. But why did Husserl hold and espouse such discordant views of meaning? This critical question remains to be answered.

3: 19th century sources behind the 1900-01 semantics

3.1: A network of influences

In order to see why Husserl would endorse the discordant views of meaning that he held in 1900-01, we may begin by considering how he came to be persuaded of those views. That is, we may begin to uncover the reason that Husserl had for holding his paradoxical pair of views by turning to the sources from which he derived them. Of course, Husserl's "breakthrough" work was not merely the effect of so many intellectual "impulses" that had been conducted to him through lectures that he attended or books that he read. It is not a mere aggregate of so many thoughts transmitted from others; it is a piece of original thinking. Yet the originality of Husserl's 1900-01 work does not diminish its historicity. The *Investigations* originated within a dense network of historical influences, and many of its original claims may be best understood in light of that historical origination.

What principal influences, then, do we have to thank — or to blame — for Husserl being able to arrive at the discordant accounts of meaning offered in his *Investigations*? We have seen how, in his *Prolegomena*, Husserl moved away from certain psychologistic beliefs that he had earlier espoused, in an almost logicist reaction. We have seen also how Husserl's 1901 work involves a seemingly contrary move back

toward a more nearly psychologistic position. What influences helped to inspire this oscillation, with its two turns?

If we are to discern the thinkers who most influenced Husserl's 1900-01 conception of meaning, we must pick them out from the complicated web of intellectual exchange that stands behind his "breakthrough" work.¹⁰² Like most writing that is done today, that work of 1900-01 is indirectly a product of its author's teachers, critics, and colleagues, and of other writers whose texts its author had read. Unlike most writing that is done today, it is also a product of Husserl's distinctively wide-ranging academic training as a student of mathematics, of logic, and of psychology; it is a product of an age in which sciences that are now severed from one another existed in a dynamic interplay. Many were then seeking new foundations for mathematics and logic. At the same time, psychology was in the turmoil of defining itself as a separate science, and consequently had significantly more fluid boundaries than it does at present — boundaries so fluid that they could even be taken to include the foundations of logic and mathematics. In the context of such inquiry into disciplinary foundations and limits, Husserl's developing thinking was cultivated within multiple disciplines, and often by thinkers who themselves were working or had worked in multiple disciplines.

¹⁰² It is important to note that the following map of influences, disparate as its members are, comes nowhere near to encompassing the still-wider web of figures who importantly influenced Husserl's view of meaning by the end of his life. My list here importantly excludes, for example, Wilhelm Dilthey; all of the neo-Kantians with whom Husserl corresponded; Eugen Fink, Heidegger, and others who once served as Husserl's assistants; and more historically removed antecedents, such as Plato, Augustine, Leibniz, Hume and Kant. Already by 1900, in fact, Husserl's thinking about meaning had probably been influenced by a great many philosophers; though he apparently considered himself "ein krasser Anfänger in der Philosophie" when he began his habilitation in 1886, he no doubt had amassed considerable exposure to the Western philosophical tradition by 1900, after adding over ten years of teaching (including classes on the history of philosophy and seminars concerning works of Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Mill, and Schopenhauer) to the courses in philosophy he took as a graduate student between 1884 and 1887 (Karl Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik: Denk- und Lebensweg Edmund Husserls* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), pp. 17, 32-59). The following list is only intended to include the most historically proximate of those major influences on Husserl's thinking in 1900 who also had a broad enough impact on the history of ideas to still be widely remembered today.

One set of Husserl's pre-1900 influences worked largely in psychology, in one or another of the forms that science had prior to its split from philosophy. Early in his life, e.g., Husserl attended lectures by Wilhelm Wundt, who famously fathered the more exclusively experimental approach that prevails within psychology today and, in addition to his pioneering experimental work, also wrote extensively on the subject of logic. Wundt did not prompt Husserl, who was then in his first two years of university study (1876-78) at Leipzig, to pursue psychology as a primary subject; the influence appears to have been largely negative, inspiring more reaction than continuation. But neither did Wundt keep Husserl away from psychology. Instead, Husserl later, in 1884, began what would be two hugely formative years of study under the psychologically oriented philosopher Franz Brentano.¹⁰³ Brentano had by then long been reconsidering the prospects for an Aristotelian science of the psyche, and was working on his own particular brand of psychology, viz. the attempt to account for "intentional phenomena". And Husserl entered into that work himself. He attended lecture courses that Brentano offered on an array of topics, notably including one extended course on "psychological questions" (mainly regarding perception and imagination), and another on "elementary logic and its need for reform", which "treated fields [within logic] systematically linked to a descriptive psychology of the intellect".¹⁰⁴ Then, because Brentano's professional situation would not allow him to direct the final stage of Husserl's education, Husserl followed his mentor's advice to move from Vienna to Halle, so that he could complete his habilitation there with another, older one of Brentano's students. Husserl thus

¹⁰³ Husserl began his devoted study of philosophy only months after his father died. Husserl said regarding these years, "me totum abdidit in studia philosopha duce Francisco Brentano" (K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 13).

¹⁰⁴ K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 14-16.

became a “listener and friend” to Carl Stumpf, under whose guidance Husserl completed his habilitation dissertation in 1887.¹⁰⁵ Stumpf, who helped to launch Gestalt psychology by creating the Berlin Institute of Psychology and by working to show (against reductively mechanistic approaches within psychology) how perception involves more than so many discrete impressions, taught courses that Husserl took on logic and on psychology.¹⁰⁶ Thus, three prominent figures in the history of 19th century psychology appear to have played important roles in the early Husserl’s intellectual development, and possibly in the conception of meaning that Husserl reached at the turn into the 20th century. On the one hand, Stumpf and Brentano each exercised a significant and positive influence on the younger Husserl’s thinking: Husserl dedicated his first book to Brentano, and his second book to Stumpf, and even named his first child (Elisabeth *Franziska Carola* Husserl) after each of them. On the other hand, Husserl was also, if somewhat less gratefully, influenced by Wundt: Husserl’s first lecture, to the faculty at Halle, concerned the viability of Wundt’s psychological method; and Husserl criticized Wundt’s view of logic, in 1900, as a popular instance of the psychologism that he claimed we ought to avoid.¹⁰⁷

A second set of Husserl’s nineteenth century influences were responsible for significant developments that were taking place in mathematics during that century. One of those influences was Karl Weierstrass, whose attempts to clarify certain fundamental mathematical concepts and to more solidly establish existing results in calculus made him

¹⁰⁵ K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁰⁷ According to K. Schuhmann, the lecture that Husserl gave in order to obtain his teaching license posed the question of whether a Wundtian method of experimentally controlled “self-observation”, or instead a more physiological method of “psychophysical experiment”, should serve as the ground of psychology (*Husserl-Chronik*, p. 20). It is noteworthy that Husserl’s attentions were thus focused on questions regarding Wundt’s method at the beginning of his philosophical career. For Husserl’s opposition to Wundt’s psychologism in the *Prolegomena*, see § 23, p. 51 and § 38, p. 83.

the “founder of modern analysis” and a “model of rigor” in his time.¹⁰⁸ Husserl studied under Weierstrass in Berlin for three years (from 1878 through 1880), completed his dissertation under one of Weierstrass’ students, Leo Königsberger (in 1882), and finally briefly served as Weierstrass’ assistant (in 1883). After leaving Berlin and his primary concentration on mathematics, Husserl was later also influenced by Georg Cantor, whose discoveries opened up the field of set theory.¹⁰⁹ Cantor served on the committee for Husserl’s habilitation dissertation in 1887, and was then one of Husserl’s colleagues and closer friends at Halle for over ten years.¹¹⁰ Finally, and in part through Weierstrass and Cantor, Husserl was also influenced by the mathematical work of Bernard Bolzano (1781-1848), a Bohemian polymath who, despite laboring in relative obscurity, anticipated or initiated significant advances both in mathematics and in logic, including discoveries of Weierstrass and of Cantor.¹¹¹

Bolzano was also a dominant influence, and perhaps the chief influence, behind Husserl’s 1900-01 view of logic. In an appendix to chapter 10 of the *Prolegomena*,

¹⁰⁸ Mirja Hartimo, “Mathematical roots of phenomenology: Husserl and the concept of number”, *History and Philosophy of Logic*, 27.4 (2006) pp. 319-24. According to Felix Klein, Weierstrass’ work quickly made “Weierstrassian rigor” into a “catch-phrase for mathematical deduction”, and led to Weierstrass being “regarded throughout the scientific world as an incomparable authority” (*Development of Mathematics in the 19th Century*, trans. M. Ackerman (Brookline, MA: Math Sci Press, 1979), pp. 266-267). At the least, Weierstrass was clearly one of the main reasons that Berlin was a center of mathematical study in the late 19th century and attracted students like Husserl.

¹⁰⁹ Though Cantor was hardly the first to think about sets, his researches did demonstrate the value of such thinking. By showing, e.g., that an infinite set can have greater cardinality than other infinite sets, and that the power set of a set is always greater than that set, and that (for these reasons among others) there even appear to be an infinity of greater and lesser infinities, Cantor effectively refuted the notion that truths regarding sets cannot comprise a field broad enough for study.

¹¹⁰ Malvine Husserl, Edmund’s wife, wrote that “in Halle Husserl is friends with Carl Stumpf, Hans von Arnim, Georg Cantor and Hermann Grassmann” (K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 22).

¹¹¹ In *The Search for Mathematical Roots, 1870-1940*, Ivor Grattan-Guinness notes how Bolzano was a “co-pioneer of mathematical analysis” (and thus helped to disclose a conceptual horizon that Weierstrass would profitably pursue), how Bolzano’s *Paradoxes of the Infinite* comes “to the edge” of Cantor’s discoveries, and how Bolzano’s logic too was prescient in its relatively extensive use of symbolism, its concern with mereology, and its discussion of the difference between the psychological data of judgments and the logical data of propositions “in themselves” ((Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) pp. 73-74).

Husserl acknowledges this significant debt to Bolzano. Husserl even goes so far, in that appendix, as to claim that Bolzano’s large logical-epistemological work, the *Theory of Science*, “far surpasses everything that world literature has to offer in the way of a systematic sketch of logic”, and to grant that his own Prolegomena ultimately aim at no more than expressing the boundaries of a territory that Bolzano’s work had already delimited in a less explicit way.¹¹² Husserl first encountered Bolzano’s writings no later than during his time with Weierstrass,¹¹³ then engaged in an extensive study of Bolzano’s *Paradoxes of the Infinite* while studying logic with Brentano, and later, in 1896, also gave a series of lectures on Bolzano’s *Theory of Science* that would eventually become an important component of the Prolegomena.¹¹⁴ But Bolzano was not the only influence behind Husserl’s conception of logic. Husserl once wrote, to the contrary, that he was only able to come to terms with Bolzano’s *Theory of Science*, and to appreciate its insights, through the influence of another philosopher’s logic. That philosopher was Hermann Lotze, a major figure on the 19th century German intellectual scene, who was a sort of academic grandfather to Husserl in the sense that he directed the graduate study of

¹¹² *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, appendix following § 61, p. 142. Husserl would later stress just how gushing this tribute was meant to be, writing that his recognition of Bolzano’s precedent in that appendix is unlike anything “either in earlier times or contemporary”, both with respect to the “detail” and the “emphasis” of its praise (“Reply to a Critic”, p. 154).

¹¹³ Dermot Moran, *Edmund Husserl: Founder of Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), p. 87, and *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 70. While Moran suggests that Husserl first encountered Bolzano’s work through Weierstrass, Robin Rollinger has noted that Husserl, along with others who attended “gymnasia throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire”, was “initiated in philosophy” by a textbook, Robert Zimmerman’s *Philosophische Propädeutik*, that effectively promulgated “Bolzanian doctrines” (*Husserl’s Position in the School of Brentano* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), p. 69); accordingly, Zimmerman’s textbook may have provided Husserl’s first exposure to Bolzano’s work.

¹¹⁴ The lectures in question are now published as Husserl’s *Logic: Vorlesung 1896*, ed. Elisabeth Schuhmann. There is some question as to whether, per Husserl’s retrospective account, “the Prolegomena in all arguments, even down to the crucial formulations, are actually just a cleaner elaboration” of these lectures (K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 46). But the lectures in any case appear to have been an important step in the construction of the Prolegomena, especially given that they stand between a prior summer of lectures on Mill’s logic and a subsequent year of work on “a larger writing, which [was] directed against the subjectivist-psychologizing logic of [the] time” (K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 49).

Husserl's teacher, Stumpf. In 1902, Husserl attributed to Lotze items of no less import for his philosophy of logic than his use of the adjective "ideal", and even his "concept of 'ideal' signification" itself. He wrote that "Lotze's reflections about the interpretation of Plato's theory of forms" had a "profound effect" on him, and acknowledged that he could not have grasped "the treasures of [Bolzano's] *Wissenschaftslehre*" without the influence of Lotze's logic.¹¹⁵ Husserl thus credits Lotze, along with Bolzano, as a logician by whom his *Investigations* had been "crucially stimulated".¹¹⁶ Finally, Husserl's understanding of logic in 1900 had also been shaped by an exchange with Gottlob Frege, the famous forefather of contemporary symbolic logic and analytic philosophy who was additionally, although less famously, another student of Lotze. Husserl corresponded with Frege via private writings and published works, most notably through a public exchange of criticisms: Husserl criticized aspects of Frege's *Foundations of Arithmetic* in his 1891 *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, and Frege then in 1894 produced a review of the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* in which he attacked the tint of psychologism in Husserl's earliest published work. Some of the key figures behind 19th century advances in logic thus directly contributed, along with several central innovators in 19th century psychology and mathematics, to Husserl's intellectual development in the years leading up to 1900.

But which of these figures were most responsible for the discrepancy in Husserl's 1900-01 view of meaning? Who persuaded Husserl to make a middle way in the late-19th century turf-war between psychology and logic? Would we be correct to suspect that the influence of a particular mathematician or logician lurks behind the almost-logicist view of meaning contained in the *Prolegomena*, and that a certain one of Husserl's

¹¹⁵ "A Reply to a Critic", p. 154.

¹¹⁶ *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, appendix to chapter 10, p. 142.

psychologically oriented teachers inspired the more nearly psychologicistic account of meaning offered in the six subsequent studies?

3.2: A genealogical thesis

Jocelyn Benoist has recently suggested that the “duality” in the *Investigations*’ theory of meaning is in fact a “synthesis” of two such earlier views, viz. one from Bolzano’s logic and another from Brentano’s psychology.¹¹⁷ It is these views that, according to Benoist, together served as the driving influences behind Husserl’s theory of meaning, despite standing in “a number of tensions”.¹¹⁸ On the one hand, Husserl’s persistent investigations of “acts of meaning” would thus be due to his being “a psychologist who issues from the school of Brentano and who thinks in terms of intentionality”.¹¹⁹ The thematic emphasis that Husserl places upon the subjective dimensions of meaning, together with his understanding of meaning as an enacted orientation toward an object, would be traceable to the thesis of Brentano, fundamental for his particular brand of psychology, that the mental differs from the physical precisely in virtue of its being directed, or open, to an experienced world. On the other hand, Husserl’s less verbal and more nominative understanding of meaning, according to which

¹¹⁷ “Husserl’s Theory of Meaning in the First Logical Investigation”, p. 18. Though I attribute this suggestion to Benoist, it is worth noting that various others have expressed much the same opinion. Heidegger, for example, acknowledging the tie between “Bolzano’s theory of the proposition” and Husserl’s Prolegomena, contrasted the semantics contained in those “critical prolegomena” with Husserl’s “positive phenomenological interpretations” of meaning and truth, and added that the “positive phenomenological” descriptions of meaning “are quite different from Bolzano’s theory” (*Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), p. 407, footnote 34). More recently, Denis Fiset edited a series of essays, collected under the title *Husserl’s Logical Investigations Reconsidered*, which are premised partly on the notion that Brentano and Bolzano were the primary influences upon Husserl’s *Investigations*. And, more broadly, there is a consensus within Husserl studies that (a) volumes I and II of the *Logical Investigations* express markedly different orientations and that (b) Brentano and Bolzano are among the influences most important for Husserl’s thought in general and for the *Investigations* in particular.

¹¹⁸ Benoist, “Husserl’s Theory of Meaning”, p. 18.

¹¹⁹ Benoist, “Husserl’s Theory of Meaning”, p. 18.

there are ideal and potentially valid significations that we can reiterate or have “in mind” in different instances, would be primarily due to the influence of Bolzano’s logic. All Husserl’s talk of “meanings in themselves” and “truths in themselves” would historically derive primarily from Bolzano’s contentions, that there are propositions distinct from our various acts of speaking and thinking, and that some of these propositions are truths that we may never express or realize. Indeed, on this picture, Husserl in 1900 was to Bolzano almost what Zeno was to Parmenides: the whole anti-psychologistic thrust of the *Prolegomena* would have been an attempt to destroy the contraries of the position for which Bolzano had already presented a more straightforward and positive, less dialectical, case. Thus, according to Benoist, the “duality” we find in Husserl’s work is the product of his understanding meaning as a transcendent object, with Bolzano, and his taking meaning as a kind of intentional “act”, following Brentano. The *Investigations*’ theory of meaning would amount to “the ideality of meaning plus intentionality”, where Bolzano’s logic had provided the content of “ideality”, and Brentano’s psychology had shown the significance of “intentionality”, such that it was left to Husserl’s phenomenology to work out their sum.¹²⁰

Does this equation stand up to scrutiny? It is plain at least that Husserl’s conception of ideal meanings resembles Bolzano’s notion of presentations and propositions “in themselves”. Ideal meanings, like Bolzano’s propositions “in themselves”, are logical objects, distinct from their varying sensuous expressions and confirmations, commonly available and reiterable, invariant, subject to grammatical and logical laws, and incompatible with the treatment foisted on them by psychologism. On the other side, Husserl quite explicitly derives from Brentano his understanding of

¹²⁰ Benoist, “Husserl’s Theory of Meaning”, p. 18.

meaning as an intentional experience. Husserl's depiction of acts of meaning as the concrete origin of ideal meanings, and as reflectively accessible parts of a whole stream of experience, rings with echoes of Brentano's psychology.

We may find some further confirmation for Benoist's equation in the broad outlines of the intellectual struggle that Husserl underwent in the years leading up to 1900. It is apparent, historically, that Husserl's study of intentionality under Brentano left him dissatisfied with any proposals he encountered for founding mathematics solely on the basis of another calculative, if non-quantitative, discipline. Deriving the foundational objects of mathematics, such as numbers, from the notions of an objective logic, did not yet address the question regarding the grounds of mathematics and logic alike that arises in Brentano's "psychology":¹²¹ no one of the deductive systems that Husserl encountered in logic or mathematics could tell him how their objectivities are available to us, i.e. how we can understand such objectivities. It is clear, too, that when Husserl alternatively sought origins for all "formal, deductive systems" through psychology, and again found his road blocked, it was blocked by a distinction that Bolzano had stressed, between the "psychological connections of thinking" and the "logical unity of the thought-content".¹²² Thus Husserl was led, thanks to insights inherited from Brentano and Bolzano, to a position on logic and meaning that could seem at once psychologistic and logicist. Thanks to Brentano, Husserl refused to leave the sphere of significations that logicians analyze without any explanation; he had developed too great a sensitivity to what he called epistemological concerns. But, thanks to

¹²¹ On this point, compare Husserl's 1900 statement that "logic left me in the lurch whenever I hoped that it would give me definite answers to the definite questions that I put to it" (*Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition, p. 2).

¹²² *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition, p. 2.

Bolzano, Husserl also rejected the opinion that the valid connections between propositions have their only ground in “psychological connections of thinking”; he had become too sensitive to the ways in which the principles of valid inference differ from the contingent patterns that empirical psychology detects in the mental processes of a species. Understood through this history, Benoist’s equation neatly captures the motives behind Husserl’s theory of meaning.

We might object, though, that what I have called “Benoist’s equation” appears perhaps *too* neat — too tidy an account of what is actually an exceedingly messy intellectual inheritance. Can such a binary and broad-brushstrokes picture begin to capture all of the complexity behind the theory of meaning that Husserl propounded in 1900-01? Should we not see Lotze or Frege, or Weierstrass or Cantor, or Stumpf, as exerting an influence on that theory no less decisive than that of Brentano or Bolzano? Does not Husserl himself refer or allude to such a broader variety of influences?

There is some basis for this objection, which we would do well to consider if we are to clarify how Husserl came to his 1900-01 understanding of meaning. Consider first Lotze’s most major contribution to that understanding. We have already noted that Husserl cites Lotze’s work as the means by which he came to appreciate Bolzano’s insights, and even as the source behind the *Investigations*’ talk of “ideality” and “ideal” meaning. Now, to be more precise, what Husserl gained from Lotze’s logic in particular was the realization that accepting ideality requires no more metaphysical speculation than does accepting specificity. Lotze helped Husserl to see that, while the term “ideal” may carry various metaphysical resonances, it is clear apart from any very controversial speculations that various acts of speaking or thinking may share the same meaning: there

is some meaning held in common, e.g., by any two people who understand what each other are saying, or in any two temporally separated experiences of a single individual realizing the truth of the same proposition. Husserl thus took from Lotze (as well as from one of Lotze's predecessors, Johann Herbart) the view that each ideal meaning is a specific semantic content, which differentiates a number of real experiences (e.g., of saying or hearing the same statement) from all other real experiences.

In this way, Lotze not only contributed a positive view about the nature of meaning to the *Investigations*, but also altered Husserl's relation to Bolzano. Upon first encountering Bolzano's logic, Husserl had been unable to come to terms with the notion that there are propositions "in themselves", which propositions do not exist. Perhaps Husserl had been concerned that this thesis of Bolzano's was self-contradictory; perhaps he had been worried that its apparent incoherence was only a cover for a "Platonic" ultra-realism regarding meanings. But in the Lotzean understanding of each ideal meaning as a *species* of so many actual and possible experiences of that meaning, Husserl found some intuitive support for Bolzano's theory. For if an ideal "meaning is related to varied acts of meaning ... just as Redness in specie is [related] to" so many existing or imagined things that "all 'have' the same redness", one could intuitively say that there are "propositions in themselves" even though such propositions do not exist — no less than one could say that there is a certain kind of redness, even though it does not exist in the way that patches of color having that kind of redness do, and even if nothing that "has" that specific type of redness had ever physically existed.¹²³ An ideal proposition, Husserl came to see, need not be a supposedly real existent, dreamed up by metaphysical speculation, and famously vulnerable to third-man arguments. It could simply be that

¹²³ Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Investigation I, § 31, p. 230.

which is common to the various, otherwise different experiences of stating or silently thinking *the same* proposition. Lotze's understanding of the ideal as the specific was thus crucial for Husserl: besides giving Husserl a way to conceive of ideal entities, this understanding also enabled Husserl to accept key elements of Bolzano's conceptual vocabulary (above all the concepts of pure logic and of truths in themselves). Lotze's explanation of ideal meanings as species must accordingly be counted as a historically important condition for the view of ideal meanings defended in the *Prolegomena* and into the later *Investigations*.¹²⁴

However, despite that Lotze thus truly was a "crucial stimulus" for the *Prolegomena*, Husserl from the beginning had deep reservations regarding the understanding of being and of knowledge that permeates Lotze's logic. Various indications of these reservations add up to show that Lotze's influence was less primary than Bolzano's. Here is a first indication: when acknowledging later in his life how Lotze's "Platonism" had attracted him and spurred on the development of his own thinking, Husserl immediately adds that nonetheless Lotze's "theory of knowledge and metaphysics always repelled me".¹²⁵ Whereas Husserl's training under Brentano had left him in a position to appreciate the critical distance from Kant and outright opposition to Hegel that he found in Bolzano's work, it had left him equally ill-disposed toward Lotze's attempt at extending the German idealist tradition. Husserl did not appropriate Lotze's metaphysical idealism, according to which what is consists ultimately of persons

¹²⁴ Indeed, although by speaking of "Benoist's equation" I have suggested that Benoist views Husserl's inspiration as two-pronged, with only one thinker on either side, Benoist has in fact, along with others, recognized the influence that Lotze's view of ideal meanings as species had on Husserl's view of meaning. (See the 8th paragraph of his short article, "Husserl and Bolzano", *Phenomenology World-Wide*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002) p. 98.)

¹²⁵ K. Schuhmann, , *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 26.

and of teleological mechanisms; nor could Husserl go along with Lotze's epistemological separation of appearances from the things themselves. Two further indications of the limits of Lotze's influence lie (a) in the fact Husserl had once planned to attach a full appendix to the *Prolegomena* criticizing Lotze's epistemology, and (b) in the assertion most critical of Lotze that Husserl did include in the *Prolegomena*, viz. that Lotze's logic is "a jarring mixture of psychologism and pure logic".¹²⁶ Finally, and perhaps most tellingly, Husserl soon after 1900 also scrapped the species component of his view of meaning that he inherited from Lotze, even as he retained the determinations of meaning that Bolzano had reached before him. So, cumulatively, it appears that Husserl quickly left behind the foremost of his doctrines regarding meaning for which Lotze, and not Bolzano, had been particularly responsible, and that Husserl's enduring debt to Lotze is due most of all to the latter's help in establishing Bolzano's influence.

We may safely conclude, then, that while Lotze's influence was important especially for helping Husserl to appreciate Bolzano's insights, it was less basically constitutive of Husserl's theory of meaning than Bolzano and Brentano's influences were. Yet while Lotze's work has been widely forgotten, and there has been little attempt to show that Husserl depended heavily on Lotze's direct influence, Lotze's student Frege has had a lasting and broadly appreciated effect on the contemporary philosophical scene, and several contemporary thinkers have been quick to suspect that Frege was chiefly responsible for whatever is valuable in Husserl's understanding of logic. These philosophers, who often enough are indebted for their own philosophical method to Frege's insights, and who greatly appreciate the symbolic turn that Frege helped to achieve in logic, cannot help but to be struck by extensive similarities between

¹²⁶ *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, § 59, p. 138.

the groundbreaking account of logic and meaning that Frege began publishing in 1879, on the one hand, and the anti-psychologistic view of meaning that Husserl advocated in 1900, on the other hand.¹²⁷ If they witness, e.g., Husserl’s attack on John Stuart Mill’s attempts to undercut the *a priori*, these philosophers are likely to be reminded of Frege’s similar opposition to the same Empiricist philosopher in the *Foundations of Arithmetic*;¹²⁸ or, if they see Husserl’s anti-psychologistic pronouncement that “the number Five is not my own or anyone else’s counting of five”,¹²⁹ it will likely call to their minds Frege’s similar assertion that “number is no whit more an object of psychology or a product of mental processes than, let us say, the North Sea is”,¹³⁰ or, upon observing that Husserl affirms a “homogeneity” between logical “theories of inference”, “on the one side”, and number-theory, set-theory, and other divisions of mathematics, “on the other side”, they may detect certain similarities with Frege’s thesis that arithmetic can be reduced to logic; and so on.¹³¹ But it is not only a resemblance among theories that is striking. Frege’s admirers are struck also by the order of events within the contemporaneous developments of Husserl and Frege’s theories of meaning. For Husserl had, by his own account, in some respects belonged to the psychologistic

¹²⁷ Most striking are the similarities of Husserl’s work to *The Foundations of Arithmetic* (*Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik*) of 1884, the article often translated as “Sense and Reference” (“*Sinn und Bedeutung*”), from 1892, and the two-volume *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic* (*Die Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*) that Frege published in 1893 and 1903. Husserl no doubt would also have appreciated the Leibnizian motives behind Frege’s *Concept-Script* of 1879, although Husserl is not supposed to have appropriated as slavishly from that work as from the others mentioned.

¹²⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 13, p. 29, and §§25-26; *Foundations of Arithmetic*, §§ 7-9, 25.

¹²⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 46, p. 109.

¹³⁰ Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic*, trans. J. L. Austin (Evanston: Northwestern, 1974) § 26, p. 34.

¹³¹ Husserl’s suggestion that pure mathematics and logic are two “homogenous” sides of formal science – one focused on “formal objective categories” such as those of “unity, plurality, number, relation, etc.” and the other focused on “formal meaning categories” such as “concept, proposition, truth, etc.” – is contained in §§ 67 and 68 of the Prolegomena. Most all of Husserl’s comments regarding the relation between mathematics and logic in the *Investigations*, including his defense of “mathematical theories of inference” (presumably including the one which Frege formulated in his *Concept-Script*), may be found in chapter 11 of the Prolegomena; see especially §§ 67-71.

movement at the time when he wrote his first book and therein criticized Frege's *Foundations of Arithmetic*. Yet by the time of writing his second book, after being chided in Frege's "Review of Dr. E. Husserl's *Philosophy of Arithmetic*", Husserl's defense of pure logic was no less fiercely opposed to psychologism than Frege had been.¹³² Moreover, Husserl in his *Prolegomena* admits the influence of Frege's *Basic Laws of Arithmetic*, acknowledges that his reading of Frege's *Foundations of Arithmetic* had been "stimulating", and renounces his earlier opposition to Frege's anti-psychologism.¹³³ This admission of influence, together with the extensive similarities between Husserl and Frege's views of logic, and the fact that Husserl published his more logicist account of meaning after being chastised by Frege's criticisms, has led many Frege scholars to believe that none other than Frege must have been the party primarily responsible for prompting Husserl to turn away from psychologism in a logicist direction. On their view, the chief merit of Husserl's account of logic would be that its author heeded Frege's rebuke, and its fatal flaw would be that Husserl refused to heed that rebuke consistently enough, instead allowing subjective investigations within logic and giving rise to that strange alternative to analytic philosophy that is called phenomenology.¹³⁴

¹³² Frege's used his review of Husserl's work as an opportunity to "gauge the devastation caused by the influx of psychology into logic" and to attack that "widespread philosophical disease" (*Review of Dr. E. Husserl's Philosophy of Arithmetic*, trans. E. W. Kluge, *Mind*, 81 (1972) [1894], p. 337). He there mocked Husserl for believing that we abstract number from collections, joking that, for Husserl, our sense of number seems to be merely the result of "cleansing" away so many irrelevant features of collections "in the psychological wash-tub" (ibid, pp. 323, 332).

¹³³ *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, note 6, on p. 318, to § 45, p. 109.

¹³⁴ Guillermo Rosado Haddock helpfully lists several of the more prominent statements of this "historiographical myth", including those of Dagfinn Føllesdal and Michael Dummett ("To Be A Fregean or To Be A Husserlian?", *Husserl or Frege?: Meaning, Objectivity, and Mathematics* (Open Court: Chicago, 2000), p. 191). The myth, in Rosado Haddock's telling, is basically that "Husserl was [once] a very naïve philosopher who ... propounded an extreme form of psychologism", that "Frege's 'devastating critique' then led to 'Husserl's abandonment of psychologism in the first volume of his *Logische Untersuchungen* of 1900/01", and that Husserl then "fell once more out of grace and into psychologism in

However, putting aside for the moment any questions regarding the viability of Husserl's view of logic, we may easily dispel the narrative that Husserl's theory of meaning was a poor parasite that leached all of its value from Frege's and then turned upon its host; for the extent to which Husserl developed his almost-logicist view of ideal meaning independently of Frege is readily apparent. We may begin with the clue that Husserl barely mentions Frege in the *Investigations*, and does so once in order to voice his disapproval of Frege's concept of *Bedeutung*.¹³⁵ When Husserl does mention the claim that mathematics is a wing of logic, moreover, he consistently attributes it to Lotze rather than to Frege, despite that it was one of Frege's central contentions.¹³⁶ Husserl thus appears to regard Frege's work, if "stimulating", as less "crucially stimulating" than that of Frege's teacher (and Husserl in any case regarded pure mathematics and logic as formal sciences "parallel" to one another, rather than regarding arithmetic, with Frege and Lotze, as a dependent discipline that extends pure logic). Yet more persuasive than these clues is the body of evidence that has been assembled within recent scholarship showing how Husserl's quasi-logicist streak was developing prior to Frege's biting review.¹³⁷ It suffices to consider only a few pieces of the evidence that Guillermo Rosado Haddock has gathered in order to demonstrate that Husserl was in fact already opposed to psychologism before Frege's review. Consider, first, that the psychologistic

the second volume of *Logische Untersuchungen* and never again freed himself from such a pernicious addiction" (ibid).

¹³⁵ In § 15 of Inv. I (pp. 201-02), Husserl argues that Frege is wrong to construe *Bedeutung* as reference rather than as signification.

¹³⁶ See *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 21 (p. 47) and § 45 (p. 108).

¹³⁷ Guillermo E. Rosado Haddock appears to have been the first to have made this case, in a 1973 dissertation, part of which was then published as "Remarks on Sense and Reference in Frege and Husserl" in *Kant-Studien* in 1982 (*Kant-Studien* 73.4 (1982): pp. 425-439, reprinted as chapter 2 of *Husserl or Frege?*), the same year that Mohanty's *Husserl and Frege* advanced the same case. Since then, various scholars who have devoted attention to Husserl's early works (e.g., Dallas Willard, Claire Ortiz Hill, and Ivor Grattan-Guinness) have arrived at similar conclusions.

elements of the book that Husserl published in 1891 may be attributed to his reiterating most all of his 1887 habilitation thesis there, so that the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* not surprisingly “contains mostly Husserl’s conceptions before 1890”; consider, next, that Husserl attributed a major turn in his thinking to “his reading of Bolzano, Lotze, and Hume in the years 1890 and 1891”; consider, also, that there are “manuscripts by Husserl on the philosophy of mathematics written before 1894 ... which contain essentially the same conceptions on these matters that will be presented much later in the *Logische Untersuchungen*”; and consider, finally, that Husserl had already made the distinction between “ideal” signification and reference, the same distinction that Fregeans have said Husserl took from their master, in a paper that Husserl published and sent to Frege in 1891 (which was, incidentally, the same year in which Frege published “the first work ... in which he [himself] explicitly establishes the distinction between sense and reference”).¹³⁸ While Husserl no doubt was one of the closer early readers of Frege’s *Foundations of Arithmetic*,¹³⁹ then, and was surely “stimulated” by Frege’s work, per his own testimony, we do not have reason to think that Frege was the primary inspiration behind Husserl’s turn against psychologism. On the contrary, there is overwhelming reason to believe instead that Husserl and Frege, in their perhaps somewhat mutually informative work on shared subjects, were alike influenced by certain elder statesmen in their fields such as Lotze and Weierstrass, as well as by earlier thinkers including Bolzano, Kant and Leibniz. The thesis that Frege’s “review quite transformed poor

¹³⁸ Rosado Haddock, “Remarks on Sense and Reference in Frege and Husserl”, *Husserl or Frege?*, pp. 30-32.

¹³⁹ Claire Ortiz Hill notes that Husserl’s *Philosophy of Arithmetic* “cites Frege more often than any other author”, and that “[i]n a letter Frege himself once acknowledged ... that Husserl’s study [of the *Foundations of Arithmetic*] was perhaps the most thorough one that had been done up to that time” (“Husserl and Frege on Substitutivity”, *Husserl or Frege?*, p. 4).

Husserl's philosophy", then, as Ivor Grattan-Guinness has said, "refers far more to the false than to the true".¹⁴⁰

There is much better reason to suspect that Weierstrass was Husserl's primary inspiration in logic and mathematics. At Husserl's 70th birthday party, in 1929, it was Weierstrass whom, along with Brentano, Husserl singled out and thanked among his teachers.¹⁴¹ It was Weierstrass to whom Husserl attributed "the ethos of [his] academic efforts".¹⁴² And it was Weierstrass who Husserl said "aroused" his "interest for a radical foundation of mathematics",¹⁴³ the very interest that Husserl credited with placing him on the path to the *Prolegomena*.¹⁴⁴ Thus one might argue, as Mirja Hartimo has, that it was Weierstrass's "ethos" of scientific responsibility — his attempt to attain clarity regarding the basic concepts of his discipline, and to then take justified steps on their basis — that "motivated ... Husserl's search for intuitively evident foundations for mathematics".¹⁴⁵ One might argue that Weierstrass thus also prompted Husserl's broader concern with the "insight" at work in the formal sciences, and so prompted Husserl's inclusion of seemingly psychological researches within logic.¹⁴⁶ One might even infer, following

¹⁴⁰ *The Search for Mathematical Roots, 1870-1940*, p. 204.

¹⁴¹ K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 345.

¹⁴² That Edmund Husserl thus attributed his ethos is according to Malvine Husserl (K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 7). By the end of his life, according to Claire Ortiz Hill, Husserl "would say that he had sought to do for philosophy what Weierstrass had done for mathematics" ("Did Georg Cantor Influence Edmund Husserl?", *Husserl or Frege?*, p. 139).

¹⁴³ K. Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁴ In the foreword to the *Logical Investigations*, first edition, pp. 1-2, Husserl recalls that it was his search for "a philosophical clarification of pure mathematics", in *On the Concept of Number* and *The Philosophy of Arithmetic*, that confronted him with the problems of the *Logical Investigations*: his study of the "expositions of the traditional logic, so often reformulated", which "should have succeeded in providing us with an intelligible and perspicuous account of the rational essence of deductive science", instead "left all of these things problematic and obscure".

¹⁴⁵ "The Development of Mathematics and the Birth of Phenomenology", *Phenomenology and Mathematics*, ed. Mirja Hartimo (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010) p. 119.

¹⁴⁶ "The Development of Mathematics", p. 120. It is because of Husserl's Weierstrassian concern with clarifying fundamental concepts, and his "demand for justification" (p. 108), according to Hartimo, that "the investigation of evidences has to be included", for Husserl "into the domain of logic" (p. 119).

Hartimo, that Weierstrass was then in some measure responsible for both sides of Husserl's theory of meaning. On one side, the "model of rigor" made Husserl susceptible to Brentano's approach, by inspiring Husserl's desire to clarify the origins of formal deductive systems, of meaning, and of truth.¹⁴⁷ On the other side, Weierstrass through two years of instruction naturally made Husserl as his student familiar with a multitude of theorems that do not admit of psychologistic interpretations.¹⁴⁸ Of course, Weierstrass was not concerned with devising a philosophical theory of meaning himself. However much his intellectual ethos led Husserl to appreciate the motives behind psychologism, and however many contents of the science he practiced cannot be sufficiently explained by psychologism, Weierstrass did not produce the arguments by which Husserl became persuaded that logicist and psychologistic accounts of meaning are inadequate. Thus, if we are to find the pieces of reasoning that might substantiate Husserl's dual view of meaning, we must look elsewhere. Still, Hartimo has made a cogent case that Weierstrass was a crucial contributor to both of the streams of influence behind that dual view.

Weierstrass' student Cantor was another arguably vital force behind Husserl's theory of meaning. He was also a mathematician who, unlike his teacher, made regular

¹⁴⁷ In "Mathematical Roots of Phenomenology", Hartimo suggests that Husserl's "Weierstrassian inheritance" prepared him to appreciate Brentano's program because "Brentano attacked philosophical problems with the same spirit [with which] Weierstrass attacked ... mathematical problems" (p. 325); both of the teachers whom Husserl remembered most gratefully were seeking reform of formal disciplines through the clarification of fundamental concepts (a desideratum that can also be seen beneath the psychologistic impulse).

¹⁴⁸ According to Hartimo's "The Development of Mathematics and the Birth of Phenomenology", Husserl "does not postulate the realm of abstract entities", but "rather describes what mathematicians show us there to be" (p. 119). Hartimo thus traces Husserl's almost logicist tendency back to his encounter with mathematical objectivity. Moreover, Husserl would have encountered such objectivity under Weierstrass. Although Hartimo notes that Husserl gave up Weierstrass' program of seeking a solid foundation for mathematics through "arithmetization", and opted instead for "axiomatization", i.e. the "more abstract approach" of David Hilbert, the same non-psychologically-reducible field of objectivities or "structures" is evident given both approaches to mathematics.

forays into philosophy. Cantor's mathematics by itself was philosophically provocative: his novel work on a domain of transfinite numbers put him in the dock for thinkers who maintained the old philosophical opposition to the notion of actual infinity, and additionally made him a target for mathematicians who were suspicious of new number ranges (above all a target for Leopold Kronecker, who was then arguing against Cantor that the positive integers are the only numbers that exist). But Cantor was also, despite being a mathematician by trade, quite eager to advocate specifically philosophical contentions. If he was compelled to think philosophically by external attacks, he appears to have been autonomously driven too, by his own intellectual disposition, to engage with metaphysical and epistemological questions;¹⁴⁹ for he engaged with such questions to the point of inciting more skepticism toward his strictly mathematical ideas than they might have otherwise received.¹⁵⁰ And Husserl was among those who found Cantor's work to be charged with philosophical problems and possibilities. Did Cantor then supply any of the arguments that persuaded Husserl to adopt the *Investigations*' two-pronged theory of meaning?

Claire Ortiz Hill has delineated three crucial aspects of Husserl's theory of meaning that appear to carry traces of Cantor's influence.¹⁵¹ One is Husserl's concept of

¹⁴⁹ In *Georg Cantor: His Mathematics and Philosophy of the Infinite* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), Joseph Dauben has documented how Cantor's upbringing encouraged an unusual depth and breadth of research interests. Citing certain letters to Georg Cantor from his father that display his father's intense religious devotion and strenuous work-ethic, Dauben shows how Georg's father spurred his son toward studying diverse fields of inquiry at some length, and perhaps encouraged his readiness to discuss topics such as the relation of numbers to "the Divine Intellect" (e.g., in a letter cited in "Did Georg", p. 149).

¹⁵⁰ At least one mathematician communicated to Cantor that his mixing philosophy with mathematics might prove rhetorically problematic: Claire Ortiz Hill refers to an 1885 letter to Cantor from Gösta Mittag-Leffler, in which Mittag-Leffler "warn[ed] Cantor that his new terminology and philosophical way of expressing himself might be so frightening to mathematicians as to seriously damage his reputation among them" ("Abstraction and Idealization in Husserl and Cantor", *Husserl or Frege*, p. 116).

¹⁵¹ Hill's focus is not on the topic of meaning. However, her attempts to show how "Cantor's work embodied many of the very problems Husserl found so distressing" in the 1890s, and how

empty, symbolic meanings. Hill has shown that Cantor's theory of transfinite numbers, particularly in its reliance on the notion that there are sets whose members we can never (in principle) "collect all ... together one by one", precipitated or strengthened Husserl's concern to differentiate symbolic meanings, which we could never find evidently confirmed, from meanings that can be intuitively fulfilled.¹⁵² Cantor's conceptual framework faced Husserl with a body of symbolic meanings that were used "for scientific purposes, and with scientific success", even though they were bereft of the kind of intuitive fullness that is possible when dealing with smaller countable numbers.¹⁵³ A second aspect of Husserl's theory of meaning in which we might see Cantor's influence is in the former's understanding of a particular kind of abstraction. Hill has established that Husserl's view of how we abstract number concepts, in particular, was close to Cantor's: both men contended that we arrive at the concept of a number, say at the concept of five, on the basis of a given collection, such as that of "all the fingers of my right hand"; they both contended that we do so by abstracting away from the features and order of the collection's members, and focusing our attention on the specific type of multiplicity that the collection has — the specific type of multiplicity that the collection of fingers on my right hand, e.g., has in common with other collections of five things,¹⁵⁴ and they both thus elicited Frege's scorn, and were charged by that logicist with psychologically attempting to link the concept of number to acts of meaning.¹⁵⁵ Finally, Hill has also suggested that Husserl's attempt to understand "how the human

"phenomenology, while not being Cantorian, distinctly bears Cantor's imprint", carries several implications for Husserl's phenomenology of meaning ("Abstraction and Idealization", p. 132).

¹⁵² "Did Georg", pp. 146-47, 149.

¹⁵³ "Abstraction and Idealization", p. 127.

¹⁵⁴ "Did Georg", pp. 141-43.

¹⁵⁵ "Abstraction and Idealization", p. 114.

mind interacts with the world of numbers” —¹⁵⁶ and, more specifically, how our experiences of meaning relate to the signification of number-terms — was partly motivated by inadequacies that Husserl saw in Cantor’s effort to account for the same. Cantor repeatedly attempted to explain how our acts of abstraction are related to ideal meanings by alluding to the famous notion of recollection; he claimed, e.g., that in such acts, “the concept number which was slumbering within us first comes into existence”; and it is likely that Husserl would have seen a glaring deficiency in such attempts at epistemology. Thus, given that Husserl came to be troubled, during the years of his close contact with Cantor, by questions regarding the relation between acts of meaning and their contents, such allusions to recollection may well have pushed Husserl to find a more sufficient explanation of the fact that ideal meanings are available to us. However pivotal in Husserl’s intellectual development Cantor’s account of abstraction and theory of transfinite numbers were, then, we may see, following Hill, that their influence consisted at least partly in the fact that they contained problems that Husserl felt pushed to solve. Further, however positive or negative Cantor’s overall influence was, in inspiring the Husserlian account of our access to ideal meanings, it in any case built onto a quasi-psychological concern with acts of meaning that had been imparted to Husserl by his principal influence(s) in psychology.

But was Brentano the only such principal influence? We have seen, now, how Cantor and Weierstrass and Frege and Lotze were so many secondary influences on Husserl’s theory of meaning; yet we still have not excluded Stumpf from the role of a principal influence. That Husserl dedicated the *Investigations* to Stumpf is surely some reason to suspect, instead, that Stumpf may have played a primary role in its account of

¹⁵⁶ “Did Georg”, p. 148.

meaning; and there is a further case to be made in defense of that suspicion. Above all, we must consider the possibility that Stumpf, through his somewhat philosophical and somewhat psychological endeavors, was importantly responsible for the *Investigations*' distinctive account of how we know — and thereby for its view of meaning.

First, consider the distinctiveness of that account of knowledge. Note that Husserl did not, following “Empiricism”, trace all ideas that accurately represent the world back to sensory experience and to reflection on our own mental operations; nor did he opt for the “Rationalist” contention that an important plurality of such ideas are innate. Like Kant, Husserl rejected the notion that our valid judgments accurately represent a world in itself, and do so either by resulting from impressions or by arising from a dormant state in a mind that natively corresponds with that separate world. Husserl instead recognized with Kant that all of our valid judgments must have been actively formed according to categories of judgment. But Husserl also, unlike Kant, took the experience that we have of such judgments being confirmed to show that intuition can be categorial — that intuition is not exclusively sensuous.¹⁵⁷ How should we understand this thesis, which differentiates Husserl's interpretation of knowing from Kant's?

When Husserl first carefully describes categorial acts in the later *Investigations*, he presents them as acts that are founded on simpler, purely sensuous acts. According to this account, there are at bottom the “straightforward” experiences of mere “sense-perception”, “in which sensuous concreta and their sensuous constituents are presented as

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Husserl's comment from the end of the section in which he first presents categorial intuition, provocatively entitled “Sensibility and Understanding”: “In Kant's thought categorial (logical) functions play a great role, but he fails to achieve our fundamental extension of the concepts of perception and intuition over the categorial realm...” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, § 66, p. 318).

given”.¹⁵⁸ We sensuously intuit, e.g., this white paper; we see these aligned, curved, black marks; we see as a dog might see. There are then acts of understanding, “built upon [this] sensibility”, in which we categorially form wholes that are not merely sensuous.¹⁵⁹ On the basis of our sensation of this page and its parts, e.g., we might constitute several complex objectivities. We may differentiate the parts of this page from the whole page and then articulate their relations, judging e.g. that this page *has* a white border *and* a central body of black marks; we may regard each of these parts as a whole and consider its relation to its own aspects, judging e.g. that the group of marks on a page *is* aligned *and* black; we may constitute any number of collections, mentally holding assorted pages and parts of pages together as members of a group; &c.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, we can confirm such judgments. It is possible, e.g., for us to form the judgment, “these marks *are* black *and* aligned”, and to have that judgment confirmed by the (constituted) state of affairs that these marks are black and aligned.¹⁶¹ In this sense, then, we have

¹⁵⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, § 47, p. 283. On this lowest level, we are told, “the ‘external’ thing appears ‘in one blow’, as soon as our glance falls upon it” (ibid). Of course, Husserl in his analyses of pre-predicative perception will differentiate several aspects of such “simple” sense perceptions; such perception is here depicted as simple and direct only by contrast with categorial perception.

¹⁵⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, § 48, pp. 287-89.

¹⁶⁰ One distinction of the categorial level is the greater flexibility (or “spontaneity”) that we experience in our constitution of objectivities there. For there we can constitute different syntactic arrangements on the basis of a single sensuous intuition, while we do not have the same freedom to vary our sensation of an individual: whereas we can only sense this same page when we direct our gaze to it (albeit from different sides, under different lights, etc.), we can constitute innumerable categorial objectivities on the basis of what we thus sense. To take Husserl’s example, even the categorial act in which we judge that “A ... has α ” and the very closely correlated act in which we judge that “ α is in A” constitute different categorial objectivities upon the same underlying sensuous material (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, § 48, pp. 287-89).

¹⁶¹ “In the case of a perceptual statement”, such as ours regarding the marks, as Husserl says, it is “not only the inwrought nominal presentations that are fulfilled”, i.e. not only marks and black and alignment that are seen. Instead, “the whole sense of the statement finds fulfillment through our underlying percept” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, § 40, p. 271). This is more clearly seen in an example that Rosado Haddock has raised. Take the two expressions he offers to demonstrate that intuition is not exclusively sensuous: “‘John and Peter are in the park’ and ‘John or Peter is in the park’”. These statements cannot be confirmed through merely sensuous perception, because “the formal constituents of [those] statements”, including “‘is’, ‘and’, [and] ‘or’”, “do not have any direct counterpart in sensible perception”. Yet statements with various formal constituents (such as ‘and’ and ‘or’ in our present pair) can clearly have “different truth

intuition not only of sensuous individuals and their features, but also of complex objectivities involving copulative, conjunctive, and other formal relations. We are intuitively given syntactically formed wholes that could not be apart from categorial acts; our “categorially structured meanings”, and not only our pre-predicative sensuous anticipations, “find fulfillment”.¹⁶² Now, this thesis that we have categorial intuition, which for Kant would have amounted to a contradiction in terms,¹⁶³ Husserl presents as the result of a successful description of what “no previous critique of knowledge has made tolerably clear”.¹⁶⁴ And the many phenomenologists who have since revered it as a crowning achievement of the *Investigations*, whether or not they and Husserl are correct in their assessment, at least indicate thereby how distinctive the thesis is supposed to be. Yet a very similar thesis can be found in Stumpf’s work.

Before Husserl produced the *Investigations*, Stumpf had already forged their not quite Kantian path between Empiricist and Rationalist understandings of knowledge.¹⁶⁵ In particular, as Dallas Willard has highlighted, Stumpf had already affirmed the possibility “that out of two presentations a third and new one should arise, which in no

conditions” (as our pair do), and can clearly be confirmed or refuted. There thus must be some “fulfillment of the meanings of such formal constituents of statements” (“Husserl’s Epistemology of Mathematics”, *Husserl or Frege?*, pp. 222-223).

¹⁶² *Logical Investigations*, Investigation VI, § 45, p. 280.

¹⁶³ When Husserl introduces “universal intuition”, one type of categorial intuition, in the sixth Investigation, he similarly notes that this “expression ... no doubt will not seem better to many than ‘wooden iron’” (§ 52, p. 292).

¹⁶⁴ *Logical Investigations*, VI, § 53, p. 295.

¹⁶⁵ One initial clue of this lies in Husserl’s attribution (to Stumpf) of his third Investigation’s basic distinction, viz. the distinction between dependent and independent parts. (Husserl recognizes his debt for this distinction on the opening page of the third Investigation; for the original, see Stumpf’s *Über den Psychologischen Ursprung der Raumvorstellung*, §§ 5-6 of chapter 1.) Husserl’s recognition of the formal relations that obtain between certain parts, which he calls “moments”, pushes him to posit objectivities that are themselves categorial or ideal; and such objectivities would be capable of fulfilling categorial — as opposed to pre-syntactic, purely sensual — intentions. Husserl’s inheritance of a mereological thesis thus leads to his inheritance of a thesis regarding knowledge.

wise is the mere sum of the earlier ones”.¹⁶⁶ That is, Stumpf had noticed that certain conscious acts (or “functions”, to use his preferred term) emerge on the basis of sensations to which they nonetheless cannot be reduced; and he had suggested that complex objects emerge with these complex acts, and can be *presented* within such acts. Stumpf had thereby anticipated three of Husserl’s crucial contentions: he had, before Husserl, appropriated Brentano’s thesis that all conscious experience is intentional, and more specifically the contention that every presentation is constitutively a presentation of something to someone;¹⁶⁷ he had argued that there are various, increasingly complex types of presentations, distinguishing sensations from judgments and abstractions;¹⁶⁸ and he had beat Husserl to the punch by thus suggesting that increasingly complex types of objects must be presented within our increasingly complex types of presentations.

By thus preparing the way for Husserl’s distinctive account of knowledge, Stumpf also functioned as a necessary condition in the development of Husserl’s theory of meaning. For the two sides of that theory of meaning are each intimately related to the thesis that some intuition is categorial. On one side, the thesis of categorial intuition

¹⁶⁶ Stumpf, *Über den Psychologischen Ursprung der Raumvorstellung* (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1873), p. 5, quoted by Dallas Willard on p. 34 of *Logic and the Objectivity of Knowledge* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1984). I slightly modify Willard’s translation, with “presentation” rather than “representation” for “Vorstellung”.

¹⁶⁷ This is obvious already in *Über den Psychologischen Ursprung der Raumvorstellung*. See also Stumpf’s 1906 essay titled “Erscheinungen und psychische Funktionen”.

¹⁶⁸ More precisely, Stumpf makes three distinctions among types of presentations, on pp. 3-4 of *Über den Psychologischen Ursprung der Raumvorstellung*. He first distinguishes “sensations”, such as I would have if someone “played [me] a tone”, from “phantasy-“ and “memory-presentations”, in which I imagine or remember a tone “without it being played”. He then distinguishes “concrete presentations”, such as those that occur in sensing and imagining, from “abstract presentations”, such as I might have if, having “heard many sounds”, I “speak generally of a tone”. And he finally distinguishes the “simple presentation” of sensed, imagined, or abstract individuals, from “complex presentation”. It is this last distinction (which, along with the others, so formed the fabric of Husserl’s thinking that he adopted them into his writing almost without explanation) that provides the chief prelude to Husserl’s claim that some intuition is categorial. It tellingly occurs in a section in which Stumpf, defining his fundamental terms, invokes the term “presentation” as a means of avoiding a false choice between Kantian and Empiricist epistemological frameworks.

serves to define what Husserl considers the space of the ideal, i.e. the domain of meaning. Roughly that kind of sense is ideal, according to Husserl, which arises from categorial acts.¹⁶⁹ Signification proper is distinguished from pre-syntactic sense by belonging exclusively to the sphere of acts and objects that are categorial: an act of meaning is nothing more nor less than a categorial act, and categorial objects are those that require acts of meaning for their constitution. Insofar as Stumpf was responsible for the differentiation of categorial acts from other acts, then, he was thereby also responsible for providing Husserl with an initial specification of the *nature* of meaning: he helped Husserl to specify the sphere of the ideal. On the other side, and more important, Stumpf's division of "complex" acts and objects also functioned as an inspiration behind Husserl's search for the *origin* of objective signification. When Husserl writes of such an "origin", we should notice, he is referring to the acts that are structurally necessary for that which is originated on their basis: he is referring to (a) whatever kinds of (complex) acts are necessary for the meanings that are originated (which acts cannot in their turn be reduced to their simpler constituents), as well as to (b) the kinds of simple acts on which those complex acts are based. Thus, as Willard has indicated, Husserl's sustained search for the origins of meanings (whether, early on, for the "psychological origin" of the concept of number, or, later, for the "phenomenological origin", of signification more broadly) appears to have taken its shape from Stumpf's prior discussions of "psychological origins".¹⁷⁰ For Husserl does not follow the empiricist program of

¹⁶⁹ See *Logical Investigations*, Inv. 6, § 46, p. 282. Husserl there begins to use "categorial" and "ideal" as roughly equivalent terms. The terms may remain only approximately equivalent insofar as certain acts of pre-syntactic "simple recognition" already involve ideal concepts but are not yet categorial.

¹⁷⁰ *Logic and the Objectivity of Knowledge*, pp. 31-33. Early on, when Husserl was attempting to present a "psychological origin" of meaning, he was careful to specify that in so doing he was nonetheless engaged in a "descriptive" rather than a "genetic" psychological project. Later, when Husserl had established a greater distance between the character of psychology and that of his own research, and chose to apply the

seeking an efficient cause when he seeks an origin; he does not, e.g., attempt a psychophysiological reduction of mental phenomena to stimulations of the nervous system. Instead, Husserl's inquiry into origins has the same style as Stumpf's: "the question of the origin of a presentation leads [him] to the several act-parts of which that presentation is composed and teaches [him] ... about precisely their contents".¹⁷¹ It is for this reason that, when Husserl seeks the source of significations, he arrives at intentional experiences, and specifically at acts that cannot be reduced to mere sense-perceptions: seeking the origin of meanings leads Husserl to acts the contents of which cannot be reduced to the contents of sense-perceptions. Thus Husserl shows by Stumpfian means that sense-perceptions alone cannot serve as the source of meaning; and he also concludes by these means that other intentional experiences, irreducible to sense-perceptions, are necessary for signification and for its fulfillment. It is by following in Stumpf's footsteps, then, that Husserl arrives at his crucial and seemingly psychologistic claim that signification has its source in certain kinds of intentional experiences.

That Husserl so adopted Stumpf's not quite Kantian or Empiricist approach to the origin of ideas is hugely important for the former's theory of meaning. Yet, despite that Stumpf was such a vital source for Husserl's claims about the source of signification, we still would be mistaken to portray Stumpf as the primary influence behind Husserl's more nearly psychologistic view of meaning.¹⁷² For, to the extent that Husserl did inherit an almost psychologistic direction from Stumpf, Stumpf in turn had appropriated that

"genetic" title to certain investigations of his own, the genesis that he sought to trace again was not of an efficient-causal kind.

¹⁷¹ *Über den Psychologischen Ursprung der Raumvorstellung*, foreword, p. 5.

¹⁷² We would be mistaken in part because Stumpf in fact took an intermediate stance on the question of what psychology can contribute to logic, like Husserl would after him, rather than simply pushing his student toward psychologism and away from logicism. Cf. Stumpf's 1891 essay "Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie".

tendency from Brentano. Stumpf arrived at his seemingly psychologistic insight that certain mental functions are necessary for complex objectivities thanks to the descriptive type of “psychology”, with its analysis of intentional experiences, which he inherited from Brentano. While a *sine qua non*, his influence on Husserl’s work was secondary. We are led back once more to find that Brentano was the primary source behind Husserl’s almost psychologistic tendency, much as Bolzano was the primary source behind Husserl’s more logicist tendency.

We must face but one more lingering challenge to the view that Brentano and Bolzano, alone, were the primary sources behind the *Investigations*’ theory of meaning. It is presented by a brief depiction that Husserl offered of that work’s many influences. In the foreword to the first edition of the *Prolegomena*, Husserl writes the following:

“The course of my development has led to my drawing apart, as regards basic logical convictions, from men and writings to whom I owe most of my philosophical education, and to my drawing rather closer to a group of thinkers whose writings I was not able to estimate rightly ... ”.¹⁷³

Reading this, we should be struck by the categories in terms of which Husserl acted out and understood his own history. First, it is notable that Husserl presents himself as having oscillated between *two* modes of understanding logic. Having begun with “the assumption that psychology was the science from which logic ... had to hope for philosophical clarification”, Husserl then “became more and more disquieted by doubts of principle, as to how to reconcile the objectivity of ... all science in general, with a psychological foundation for logic”.¹⁷⁴ Husserl thus moved, by his own lights, from the

¹⁷³ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition, pp. 2-3.

¹⁷⁴ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition, p. 2.

more psychologistic view of logic that he appears to attribute to Brentano, Stumpf, and others “to whom [Husserl] owe[d] most of [his] philosophical education”, into the more logicist understanding conveyed by writings, such as those of Bolzano and Frege, that he did not at first “estimate rightly”. Second, it is striking that Husserl depicts himself as having moved between two *groups* that are divided by their understanding of the meanings at issue in logic: he refers to multiple influences behind both his more psychologistic and his more logicist trajectories, and he does so without naming any singular thinker(s) as especially influential. Should we not take this as a warning against overstating the importance of any two such figures?

While Husserl’s terse intellectual autobiography should preclude all attempts to conceive of any two individuals as solely responsible for his theory of meaning’s zig and zag, we by now have a basis for according Brentano and Bolzano first or primary status among Husserl’s many non-equal influences. For we have seen how the network of influences behind Husserl’s 1900-01 theory of meaning, while complicated, is nonetheless binary: we have confirmed the two-pronged explanation of that theory that Benoist, among others, has sketched, while adding some finer details to its broader brushstrokes. Indeed, whereas Husserl laments, in his brief account of his development, that he “unfortunately [had] to abstain from any ... insertion of comprehensive literary and critical references”, the most major of those connections that Husserl left cryptic we can now see.¹⁷⁵

According to Husserl’s account, it was first of all “questions regarding the origin of the basic concepts and insights of mathematics”, along with “difficult questions of mathematical theory and method”, which set him on the path toward the *Logical*

¹⁷⁵ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition, p. 3.

Investigations.¹⁷⁶ Having seen something of Husserl's history, we may now safely surmise that Husserl took over these questions from Weierstrass, before receiving any very direct exposure to either Brentano or Bolzano. For, with the academic "ethos" that Husserl inherited from Weierstrass, he thereby also received the beginnings of a double orientation toward logic and meaning: he was motivated toward recognizing the irreducibility of ideal formations and, at the same time, toward clarifying their origins. He was "pushed", i.e., "toward general reflections on the essence of logic, and on the relationship, in particular, between the subjectivity of knowing and the objectivity of the content known" — toward reflections on the relationship that is at issue in the *Investigations*.¹⁷⁷

In order to consider whether our experience of meaning founds the objectivity of meaning, however, Husserl was forced to move beyond the scope of Weierstrass' work. Husserl thus became, per his own record, chiefly indebted to several thinkers who belonged either to one more logicist group or to another more psychologistic group.¹⁷⁸ Beyond noting Weierstrass' contribution, we have now identified many of these other influences to whom Husserl alludes (in his brief account of the path by which he arrived at the *Investigations*), and have sorted their contributions as more logicist or more psychologistic. We have seen, moreover, how these multiple influences' varied contributions to Husserl's 1900-01 theory of meaning built onto or buttressed a framework that was inherited primarily from two thinkers. On one side, we have seen how Bolzano was chiefly responsible for Husserl's view of meanings and truths "in themselves": Lotze enabled Husserl to accept Bolzano's view of independent logical

¹⁷⁶ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition, pp. 2-3.

objects, by arguing that such meanings could be understood as the species of so many actual and possible acts of meaning, but Husserl regarded Lotze's own logic much less highly than he did Bolzano's. Frege's criticisms of Husserl's more psychologistic early views regarding the objects and truths of mathematics functioned as defenses for Bolzano's view, and may have sharpened or served to further substantiate Husserl's already burgeoning anti-psychologism, but Frege's criticisms did not create Husserl's opposition to the relativizing fallout of psychological reductionism. Lotze and Frege thus served primarily to make the Bolzanian view of ideal significations that Husserl accepted more palatable and more defensible (respectively). On the other side, we have seen how Brentano's psychology was primarily responsible for Husserl's view that a kind of intentional experience is necessary for objective significations: Stumpf precipitated Husserl's understanding of categorial intuition, and thus specified a kind of intentional experience by which we have epistemic access to categorial objectivities, but this specification was a development within Brentano's mode of reflection on acts of meaning. Cantor helped Husserl to develop and refine his understanding of how we abstract mathematical concepts, yet Husserl's whole view of abstraction was but one component built into his view of categorial acts, which was in turn a component built into his view of intentional experience. It is quite possible, then, that, without Stumpf and Cantor, Husserl would not have been as able to recognize several tiers of intentional experiences, nor to reach clarity about the types of sense that are correlated with those tiers: Stumpf assisted Husserl in distinguishing mere sensations from categorially formed significations, and Cantor contributed to Husserl's distinction between those categorially formed significations that refer partly to sensuous materials and those that (like the

concepts of numbers) require no such reference. Yet these distinctions were achieved within a framework provided by Brentano's descriptive psychology, and they acquired their significance for Husserl's theory of meaning from Brentano's suggestion that signification essentially belongs within the context of certain kinds of intentional experiences.

What I have called "Benoist's thesis" regarding Husserl's development is thus confirmed. That thesis, according to which the *Investigations'* two-sided theory of meaning is a "synthesis" of two earlier thinkers' treatments of meaning, prompts numerous objections; but I have now considered and largely deflected the most prominent of those possible objections. To wit: I have granted that Husserl's oscillation between conflicting views of meaning was inspired by multiple influences on both sides; I have granted too that some of those influences contributed to both of the opposed orientations present within Husserl's logical studies; and yet Bolzano and Brentano, respectively, still appear to have been the two primary sources behind Husserl's more logicist and more psychologistic views of meaning. Of course, I can readily grant also that the historical reality of philosophical influence behind Husserl's theory of meaning is much more complicated than the picture that I have constructed: I expect, e.g., that Bolzano's logic and Brentano's psychology had their own historical roots, and that it would be possible to follow the two streams in Husserl's theory of meaning back to partial sources in the logic of Leibniz and the psychology of Hume, and back much further still to the logic and psychology of Aristotle. Yet the history so far uncovered allows us to see this much: Husserl in 1900-01 understood meaning as an act primarily

because of Brentano, and at the same time viewed meaning as a set of transcendent objects chiefly because of Bolzano.

We can now proceed with a sense of the important components within Husserl's theory of meaning that were built onto that partly Brentanian, partly Bolzanian base, and with an awareness of the sources behind those important secondary components. But, most important, we can now sensibly narrow our focus onto the reasons that Brentano and Bolzano offered in support of their views, in order to understand *why* Husserl came to hold his own, discordant account of meaning. We can turn to those arguments that Bolzano devised within his account of logic, and to those descriptions that Brentano articulated within his psychology, and expect to find the grounds by which Husserl became convinced of his two conflicting views of meaning.

4: The evidentiary basis of Husserl's dyadic semantics

4.1: Two opposing persuasions

In this chapter, I present the Bolzanian and Brentanian lines of reasoning that constitute the grounds for Husserl's two-sided theory of meaning. Beginning with Bolzano's work before turning to Brentano's, I distill the relevant arguments and descriptions, weigh their strength, and indicate the way in which Husserl adopted these pieces of reasoning within his own theory of meaning. I thus seek to show how Husserl was compelled toward a synthesis of logical and psychological accounts of meaning by the things themselves. Finally, I highlight the problems inherent in any effort to reconcile Bolzano's well-founded conclusions about objective meanings with Brentano's insights concerning acts of meaning.

4.2: Meaning as transcendent object: arguments from Bolzano's logic

4.2.1: A meta-scientific logical persuasion

Like Husserl would after him, Bolzano affirmed that certain semantic formations are independent of our passing experiences. Also like Husserl, Bolzano included the conceptual parts of propositions among these formations, along with all whole propositions in general and “truths” (i.e., true propositions) in particular. In what follows I reconstruct some of the better arguments that Bolzano offered in defense of his claims that there are “ideas in themselves”, “propositions in themselves” and “truths in themselves”, and show how Husserl appropriated these arguments in the *Logical Investigations*. I aim to thus clarify why, and in what sense, Husserl was convinced that such meanings are “objects” that transcend “being thought” and “being expressed”.¹⁷⁹

4.2.2: Concepts as objects

For a point of departure, we may turn our attention to a few terms and their significations — apart from the propositional contexts in which those terms may occur. To take a few of Husserl's favorite examples, consider the noun phrases “the color red”, “the note C”, “the number four”, and “triangle”. On the view that Bolzano proposes in his *Theory of Science*, “what is designated” by these and all significant terms is “objective ideas” (*objektiven Vorstellungen*), or, as Bolzano also calls them, “ideas in

¹⁷⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 35, p. 233.

themselves”.¹⁸⁰ On this view, there are objective unities of sense that we call to mind by the particular linguistic signs we choose to employ: There is an idea of the color red, which idea may itself become the object of our thought, and which is distinct from the several individual presentations, or “subjective ideas”, that we each may have of red. There is an idea of the note C that cannot be localized to a particular time, as the several soundings and our several lived experiences of the note C can. There is likewise an idea of four that cannot be reduced to any individual’s passing notions of four. Bolzano does not contend, then, that we all have the same mental experience when we understand the word “four”, or that each individual always has the same subjective idea in mind when speaking of the color red or the note C. Nor is it Bolzano’s view that we all always have the same idea, psychologically speaking, when thinking of a triangle. Perhaps a first person has in mind a clear image of an equilateral triangle, a second person an image of a right triangle, and most others no image at all; and, in any case, each of our thoughts occurs at a particular moment within the stream of a particular psyche, belongs to an individual history with its patterns of association, recognition, and so on, and in this way is somewhat different from the other thoughts that someone might have of a triangle. Bolzano’s contention, instead, is that each of these “subjective idea[s] is the occurrence in the mind of an objective one”, such that there is, for example, an objective idea of a triangle shared by our different “subjective ideas”, through which shared and objective idea we can jointly arrive at certain intersubjectively available truths.¹⁸¹ His view is that there is, in the case of each of our “subjective ideas”, and in the case of each “subjective

¹⁸⁰ Bolzano, *Theory of Science: Attempt at a detailed and in the main novel exposition of logic with constant attention to earlier authors*, trans. Rolf Georg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), § 48, p. 61.

¹⁸¹ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 52, p. 66.

idea” that someone might have but we do not, a “certain something which constitutes the immediate matter (*Stoff*) of [that] subjective idea, and which is not to be found in the realm of the real” — an objective idea that remains the same even though there may be various “corresponding subjective idea[s]” in our different instances of thinking.¹⁸² Bolzano emphatically denies that these objective ideas exist; thus, none of his objective ideas is a literal “something”; he is adamant that such ideas do not have a spatially definite and temporally unfolding (i.e., thing-like) being. Yet he affirms that each objective idea “subsists”, in some sense — “even though no thinking being may have it”.¹⁸³ In short, then, Bolzano articulates the following schema: for each objective idea, there *may be* a word or words that we use to express that idea; there *may be* some subjective idea(s), i.e. some occurrence(s) in one or more minds of that objective idea; there *is* the objective idea; and there *may be* one or more objects (whether “existing” individuals or non-existing ideal objects) to which we can refer by way of the objective idea.¹⁸⁴ Bolzano knew in advance that “many philosophers” would reject his “concept of an idea in itself” — he anticipated being “told how curious or even nonsensical it is to speak of ideas which nobody has” — yet he was convinced, for several reasons, that he was “justified in asserting that this concept has reference”.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 48, p. 62. The word “something” here is somewhat deceptive: although Bolzano affirms that each objective idea “subsists ... as a certain something even though no thinking being may have it”, he emphatically denies that such ideas exist, i.e. that they have a spatially definite and temporally unfolding being.

¹⁸³ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 48, p. 62.

¹⁸⁴ As an example of this schema, Bolzano bids his readers to consider the expression, “Greek philosopher”. In this case, there is of course the written or sounded set of letter signs — “a physical object” that “exists at a certain time and in a certain location”; there is then my present understanding of the term, “Greek philosopher”, and the somewhat different understandings of that term which other thinkers have had and do have; there is then a shared but single (however complex and vaguely delimited) objective idea of a Greek philosopher, which idea does not exist in space and time, and does not pass as our developing understandings do; and there is, finally, “Socrates, Plato, and others”, the (in this case, now or once existing) objects of the idea (*Theory of Science*, § 49, pp. 62-63).

¹⁸⁵ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 50, p. 64.

Husserl became largely persuaded by these reasons while involved in a similar dispute. Husserl saw his contemporaries, like those before them, asking what status to accord to the significations of terms such as “red”, “the note C”, “four” and “triangle”. Are such significations objective, and even no less transcendent of our passing thoughts than things such as seas and stars are, or are they instead merely functions of our passing mental acts? Husserl framed this dispute as one between “idealism” and “psychologism”. The position that Husserl in this context calls “idealism” consists in “defending the intrinsic right of specific (or ideal) objects to be granted objective status alongside of individual (or real) objects”.¹⁸⁶ This idealism, then, is “not a metaphysical doctrine”; at any rate, it is not the metaphysical doctrine often connoted by “idealism”, according to which everything is mind-dependent.¹⁸⁷ For it is psychologism, instead, that regards all significations (and all other ideal objects) as essentially dependent on the passing processes of our minds. It is the psychologistic thinker who regards the idea of a triangle as a human invention, which was created and is presently sustained only by contingent mental processes. Now Husserl, like Bolzano, opposes this latter view. He characterizes the psychologistic viewpoint as one that “altogether fails to grasp what is specific”, i.e. as one that is not able to recognize that some possible objects of our thought are not individuals, and that further portrays its “inability to do so ... as a virtue”.¹⁸⁸ Husserl opts instead for an idealist view of ideas that approximates Bolzano’s, according to which

¹⁸⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, Introduction. Husserl offers an alternative, more epistemological, definition in the same place: one is an “idealist” if and only if one “recognizes the ‘ideal’ as a condition for the possibility of objective knowledge in general, and does not ‘interpret it away’ in psychologistic fashion” (ibid.).

¹⁸⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, Introduction.

¹⁸⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, Introduction.

the meanings of “four”, “triangle”, “red”, and the like, can be objects of our thinking and are independent of our thinking.¹⁸⁹

What basis for this view did Bolzano give to Husserl? What reasons did Bolzano provide in support of the idealist position, and against the psychologistic position, regarding the meaning of terms? We may extract Bolzano’s reasoning, and the seeds it contains of an argument that Husserl would later make, from the beginning of the second book of Bolzano’s *Theory of Science*. In that second book, Bolzano attempts to clarify the “elements” out of which any science, or “aggregate of truths of a certain kind”, is composed.¹⁹⁰ He begins the book with the pieces of an argument that Husserl would later develop — a case that there are objective ideas distinct from our subjective ideas. What reasons did Bolzano thus provide for thinking that there are objective ideas?

Broadly speaking, the thrust of Bolzano’s argument consists in directing our attention to the smallest units within the enduring fabric of science, and in seeking to show that these logical units must be invariant through psychologically diverse reiterations. His focus, i.e., is on the ideas that the words in scientific literature call to mind — the ideas out of which science is built. His claim is that these ideas may be presented by several numerically different subjective ideas, and that each such “objective idea” remains identical throughout those several subjective presentations. Each “objective” idea, he contends, “is not multiplied when it is thought by one, two, three, or more beings, unlike the corresponding subjective idea, which is present many times”.¹⁹¹ In support of this assertion, he directs his readers to take “any word” as a test case: “unless it is ambiguous”, he writes, each word “designates only one objective idea” —

¹⁸⁹ See below for remarks on Husserl’s view of the concept-object relation.

¹⁹⁰ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, Introduction, § 1, p. 1.

¹⁹¹ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 48, p. 62.

while conversely “there are innumerable subjective ideas which [this same word] causes, and their number grows with every moment it is in use”.¹⁹² In order to follow Bolzano’s instructions, let us consider the term “dementia”. In contrast to ambiguous terms, which have multiple, plainly separate meanings, non-ambiguous words such as “dementia” have single (even if complex) meanings that we could begin to determine without first having to specify in which separate sense we are using the word.¹⁹³ That is, terms such as dementia each have a unified (though perhaps broad and somewhat contextually dependent) meaning. Indeed, our whole body of scientific literature, by which individuals have successfully passed on purported knowledge for generations, presupposes that we regularly understand one another’s uses of terms like “dementia” — that we successfully grasp the same meaning when the sign is used. For example, medical texts that discuss dementia, identifying its symptoms and differentiating the dementia associated with Alzheimer’s disease from other forms of dementia, presuppose that “dementia” can have the same general meaning for multiple readers. To be sure, this hardly entails that a word like “dementia” consistently conjures up the same connotations. On the contrary, the expansiveness of the word’s extension and the diversity of our experiences make certain that it will not. But the fact that we can and do achieve a shared understanding, in and through multiple different processes of thinking, seems to require a distinction: we thus seem required to distinguish between a kind of idea in virtue of which we may understand each other’s uses of a term, and a set of variable “subjective ideas” that each of us, while drawing from our variable experiences,

¹⁹² Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 48, p. 62.

¹⁹³ If we were composing a dictionary entry for dementia, we might need to distinguish subtypes, such as an Alzheimer’s disease type and a non-Alzheimer’s disease type, yet any broadness and vagueness would inhere in a single meaning; if we were composing an entry for “bear”, by contrast, we would presumably have to begin by separating the verb (as in “bear the weight”) and the noun (as in grizzly bear).

associate with that term. Numerous “subjective ideas ... occur in the minds of [Bolzano’s] readers when they see” any strictly non-ambiguous word from one of his writings — and yet the existence of the scientific enterprise presupposes that these readers can nonetheless reach a joint understanding.¹⁹⁴ On this basis, Bolzano concludes that there must be objective ideas, distinct from our subjective presentations insofar as they are invariant and commonly accessible across psychologically different presentations.

Husserl adapts this inferential move in the second of his *Logical Investigations*. There he, following Bolzano, appeals to the reiterability of invariant concepts in order to establish the objectivity of concepts. If the basic units of signification are “self-identical” across different acts of understanding, the reasoning runs, then they have no less claim to objectivity than subsisting material things.

Husserl’s deployment of this reasoning differs from Bolzano’s in its details and scope but is continuous with Bolzano’s in its general direction. It begins very much like Bolzano’s, with Husserl utilizing a direct and descriptive approach akin to that which Bolzano employs. More specifically, Husserl begins his straightforward support for the thesis of conceptual objectivity by focusing on our experience of understanding nouns. In our significant use and understanding of all nouns, Husserl contends, there is a conceptual dimension that must be distinguished from the physical elements of expression and the psychological aspects of our experience. For while our acts of speaking and silently understanding, with their psychological and physical parts, quickly pass by — like all else in “the domain of real [*realen*] being, the sphere of temporality”

¹⁹⁴ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 48, p. 62.

— the meanings of the nouns that we use cannot be similarly fixed to spatial and temporal locations.¹⁹⁵ Here is the case as Husserl makes it:

“If we understand a name — whether standing for what is individual or general, physical or psychic, existent or non-existent, possible or impossible — ... then what [that] expression says — the meaning which forms its logical content and which, in contexts of pure logic, is called either an idea or a concept — ... is nothing which could, in a real [*realen*] sense, count as part of our act of understanding”.¹⁹⁶

We are forced into “the distinction ... between the psychological and logical content of our expressions and expressive acts”, then, because the logical or conceptual dimension of our understanding of nouns cannot be a mere moment of a temporal (or *realen*) thought process.¹⁹⁷ For while “the psychic stuff ... involved” in our experience of understanding nouns “is well known to be vastly manifold, varying greatly from one individual to the next, and for the same individual from one moment to another”, this “multiplication of persons and acts does not multiply ... meanings”.¹⁹⁸ However many thinkers use a non-ambiguous term, in numerous instances and with varied associations, there stands out against this varied multiplicity a single and self-same meaning of that term. And while the same noun or other term may of course acquire novel meanings through our stipulative and playful uses of old terms, these meanings can only be novel with reference to the self-same meaning(s) previously attached to the same term. Our capacity to endlessly re-make language by ascribing new senses to old symbols and

¹⁹⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 31, p. 230.

¹⁹⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 30, p. 228.

¹⁹⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 31, p. 229.

¹⁹⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 31, p. 229.

sounds, far from exposing an essential variability of concepts themselves, rather only further exposes the distinction that Husserl seeks to draw: the endless variability of our associations, whether in associating different images and feelings with an unambiguous word or in annexing novel meanings to a consequently ambiguous word, stands out in relief from a stable conceptual background, viz. the invariant meaning that we once used (and may still use) the word to carry. We are able to discern the variability of the associations that we tie to an unambiguous word partly because, “over against this unbounded multiplicity of individual experiences, is the self-same element expressed in them all”; we are able to detect when a word becomes equivocal through the attachment of a novel meaning because the word’s old meaning remains the same.¹⁹⁹

In this direct stage of his support for conceptual objectivity, then, Husserl in effect simply prompts his readers to examine their own experience of understanding nouns to see if they do not find what he does. “I see”, he writes, “that in repeated acts of presentation ... I mean, or can mean, the same concept”.²⁰⁰ He points up several ways in which this appears to be so: he contends that each concept “can be compared with other meanings and distinguished from them”, that each “can be an identical subject for numerous predicates, an identical term in numerous relations”, that each “can be summed together with other meanings and counted as a unit”, and that each “can in its turn serve as the basis for many new meanings”.²⁰¹ And indeed, we appear to at least act as though concepts can be treated in these ways. Take, for instance, the concept of red. We invoke this concept, when we use the word “red”, as though we can share and repeat it; we speak as though we can group it with and distinguish it from other objects, such as the other

¹⁹⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 31, p. 229.

²⁰⁰ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 31, p. 230.

²⁰¹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 31, p. 230.

color concepts; we act as though we can make predications of it as a subject, as we might, for example, in stating that “the concept of red requires a material basis in a way that the concept of four does not”; and so on. Husserl’s contention is that we could not act in these ways, as though concepts were “self-identical”, if they were not: “A meaning can be treated as self-identical only because it is self-identical”.²⁰² This self-identity of concepts in their reiteration is the first reason Husserl offers for thinking that concepts are objective.

While Husserl argues, in this Bolzanian way, that concepts can serve as stable objects of thought, he is not satisfied with such straightforward support for conceptual objectivity. Though he appropriates Bolzano’s reason for thinking that there are objective ideas, in other words, he is not satisfied with the bare derivation of conceptual objectivity from conceptual reiterability. He also bolsters Bolzano’s argument in two indirect ways. First, he seeks to elucidate *how* concepts are objective, by taking efforts beyond those Bolzano had made toward describing the complex concept-object relation. Second, he also bolsters his conclusion by attacking the contrary view that individuals alone possess objective status, and by undermining prevalent arguments against the objectivity of concepts. In order to appreciate how Husserl appropriated Bolzano’s quasi-logicist view that concepts are objective, then, we should consider in turn these two indirect defenses for his Bolzanian view.

As a first indirect means of support, Husserl seeks to preemptively deflate objections that would arise from the failure to understand his conclusion. He is cautious to delimit what he takes himself to have shown — to clarify what it means to have concluded that concepts are objective. For, given certain approaches to concepts that

²⁰² *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, § 2, p. 241.

were prevalent within modern philosophy, we might expect the conclusion that concepts are objective to mean that the objects of our thinking are typically or even exclusively concepts — and Husserl emphatically denies this. Again and again, he opposes the conflation of meanings with the objects that we intend in acts of meaning, much as he opposes the conflation of sensations with a sensed object.²⁰³ Instead, he emphasizes how our encounter with the objects that we intend through significations has a tripartite structure. The structure of this encounter is such, according to Husserl, that significations first of all serve as the means whereby our categorial acts intend categorial objects, and only then can become objects of our thought, in second-order acts. It is almost a maxim for Husserl: we may speak of meanings, but at first we speak by way of meanings, and not of meanings.²⁰⁴ So, at what is the first level in this context, we direct our attention to states of affairs and abstracted objects, for which certain propositional meanings or concepts serve as presentations, i.e. as more or less adequately fulfilled intentions; only on that basis can we then turn our attention to concepts and propositions themselves. I might say to my wife, for example, that the door is locked, and thereby direct our focus, by way of my expression's meaning, to the state of affairs that the door is locked (or not). She might then, perhaps while wondering to which door I was referring, turn her attention to the meaning of my statement, taking that signification as the object of her thought —

²⁰³ Husserl regards the view that ideas are the typical objects of our sensation and thought as a slight but crucial error that infected much of modern philosophy: “even those who would refuse to say with Schopenhauer that ‘the world is my idea’,” he writes, “are accustomed to speak as if apparent things were compounded out of sense-contents”; and Husserl “often stressed” his contrary view that “it does not do to confuse a color-sensation with an apparent bodily coloring, the sensation of form with bodily form etc.” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, appendix 5, p. 343). With objects that are merely sensed and objects of categorial acts, for Husserl, we must distinguish our “intentional experience [from] the apparent object (the subject of the objective predicates)” (Inv. V, § 7, p. 90).

²⁰⁴ Take, as just one example, the following assertion from the end of *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I (§ 34, p. 232): “If we perform the act [of meaning] and live in it, as it were, we naturally refer to its object and not to its meaning. ... Logical reflection [then] sets in at later stages, and an identical propositional meaning is continuously meant in it, ... and thought of as one and the same.”

but we can only thus take a statement's meaning as an object in a secondary act. Or, in order to familiarize my young nephew with the number four, I might say, "one more than three", perhaps while counting the members of various collections. In so doing I would use a certain concept of four to direct his attention to the number four itself: employing the concept that I express by "one greater than three", I would turn his focus to a member of the number series that is not comprehensively presented by the concept that I have employed.²⁰⁵ I would turn his attention, i.e., not to the concept that I employ, but to a member of the number series that may be accurately presented by various other concepts and propositions.²⁰⁶ Still I could also, in secondary acts, reflect on the concept expressed by "one greater than three". I can reflect, e.g., on how that concept differs from other concepts with the same referent of four, such as those expressed by "second smallest even number" and "square root of sixteen". While concepts can serve as stable objects of our thought, then, we may so take concepts (and any other significations) as objects only on the basis of first-order acts in which concepts function as intermediaries, rather than end-points, of reference. Husserl takes pains to clarify precisely this complexity of the concept-object relation that Bolzano had left less clear.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ It is perhaps necessary to note here the breadth that Husserl attributes to the class of concepts. On his view, there are not only concepts expressed by common nouns such as "red" and "triangle"; there are also concepts expressed by the nominalizations of statements, such as "that red, triangular figure" (where the pre-nominalized, full statement would have been, "That figure is triangular and red"), as well as by all other phrases, such as "one greater than three".

²⁰⁶ In *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 33 (pp. 231-32), Husserl suggests that the general objects of mathematics, color theory, &c., would remain distinct from our concepts of those objects, even if our concepts were to exhaustively present their objects: "the meaning in which an [general] object is thought, and its object, the species itself, are not one and the same. ... The generality *that* we think of, does not ... resolve itself into the generality of the meanings *in which* we think of it" (editing Findley's translation to maintain "general" as a consistent equivalent for *allgemeinen*, while leaving "universal" as an equivalent for *universelle*, in light of Husserl's distinction between specificity and universality in Inv. II, § 2).

²⁰⁷ For Bolzano's intimations of the concept-object relation's complexity, see his brief discussion of objective ideas whose objects do not exist, in *Theory of Science*, § 48, on p. 62.

Beyond thus seeking to deflect potential misunderstandings of the claim that concepts are objective, Husserl further reinforces his conclusion by offering a lengthy attack on a widely held and contrary thesis. Husserl devotes a whole Investigation, in fact, to his assault on the contrary notion that there are no ideal objects at all. That is the task of the second Investigation, where Husserl goes about “defending the intrinsic right of specific (or ideal) objects to be granted objective status alongside of individual (or real) objects”.²⁰⁸ Now, the notion that there are no ideal objects at all is more comprehensive than the notion that there are no objects of a conceptual nature: if there are no ideal objects in Husserl’s sense, then there would not only be no objective concepts, but also no objective propositions, no states of affairs, and no specific objects of the sort that the number four, the color red, and the note C are. But while the defense of conceptual objectivity is not the sole reason for taking up the task of the second Investigation, Husserl’s strike at the denial of ideal objectivity is aimed, in part, to strike at a common presupposition behind the denial of conceptual objectivity.²⁰⁹ For it was, in Husserl’s time, and is now, a prominent belief that there are no specific objects, that the real things of the sensory world are all that is, and that talk about a dimension of the ideal is no better founded than talk about a region of ether.

²⁰⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, Introduction, p. 238. As noted in section 3.2 (pp. 50-53), Husserl was able to appreciate the force of Bolzano’s case for ideal objectivity in part thanks to Lotze’s suggestion that ideal meanings are species.

²⁰⁹ Husserl makes clear that this is among the purposes of the second Investigation when he explains why he is including so much regarding “the ideal unity of the species and modern theories of abstraction” in a work about logic and meaning. First, he acknowledges once again that the general objects, or “species”, constituted by abstraction are distinct from the significations on which the logician reflects. The opposition between the concepts expressed by proper and common nouns “corresponds to”, rather than being identical to, “the opposition between individual and general objects”. But then, having acknowledged this, he stresses that the class of meanings belongs within that class of general objects from which it is distinct, and that as such every denial of general objects includes the denial of semantic objectivity: “meanings as such, i.e. meanings in the sense of specific unities, constitute the domain of pure logic, so that to misread the essence of the Species must be in every case to strike at the very essence of logic” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, Introduction, pp. 237-38).

Against this belief Husserl presents a two-pronged attack. He begins with the contention that “we cannot at all help distinguishing between individual singulars, like empirical things, and specific singulars, like the numbers . . . of mathematics”.²¹⁰ Each of the numbers, for example, is surely a possible object of speech and thought. Yet numbers are not sensible individuals; “the number two” is “not any group of two individual objects”.²¹¹ Similarly, we may see that several red houses have redness in common, and that several gable roofs have triangularity in common. There is apparently that in virtue of which these sensible things — and, more narrowly, their individual, sensible properties, such as this and that red or this and that triangular shape — are alike.²¹² Thus it appears that what Husserl calls species, such as the species of triangularity and the species of redness, have a kind of objectivity, even though it is assuredly not the temporally and spatially located existence of sensible individuals and their parts. But this prompts the question of what basis there can then be for the contrary view that individuals alone are objects. For many philosophers who acknowledge that we speak about the color red, and who grant that red houses are (specifically) alike with respect to their redness, might nonetheless smirk at the notion that there is a species of redness, and would rush to deny that there are ideal objects.

Accordingly, the second prong that Husserl uses to prod those who deny the objectivity of the ideal is a demeaning assessment of that denial’s historical basis. Per this genealogy of nominalism, the primary reason for denying that there are ideal objects, historically speaking, has been one or another pervasive straw man of the claim denied.

²¹⁰ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, § 2, p. 240, modifying Findley’s translation of “empirischen Dinge” to more accurately render that original text.

²¹¹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, § 2, p. 240.

²¹² Husserl offers a more confident formulation of the same claim: “no interpretive skill in the world can in fact eliminate ideal objects from our speech and thought” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, § 8, p. 250).

For critics have often equated the affirmation of ideal objectivity with what Husserl calls “the metaphysical hypostatization” of the same — i.e. with the dogma that ideal objectivity “really exists *externally to* thought”, such that redness and other ideal objects would be individual entities existing in some ethereal space — and on that basis have concluded that the only sensible position is the rejection of ideal objectivity.²¹³ At other times, critics have identified the affirmation of ideal objectivity with “the psychological hypostatization” of the same — i.e., with the view that ideal objectivity “really exists in thought”, such that triangularity and other ideal objects would be individual, recurring pieces of our real experiences — and on that basis have again concluded that there cannot be ideal objects.²¹⁴ In essence, then, the mass of thinkers who deny that there are ideal objects has mocked those who affirm the same on the basis of a dichotomy: “you must either subscribe to a Platonism and suppose that there is an individual called redness floating in some unseen space”, the group scolds, “or follow Locke in thinking that there is an individual called redness floating in our minds — an individual object that is a real component (or what Locke called a “simple idea”) of every red thing (or “complex idea”) that we perceive”.²¹⁵ But this is a false dichotomy. As Plato had already indicated in his *Parmenides*, the view that there are ideal objects hardly entails the extreme realist stance that ideal objects possess a thing-like existence outside of the mind.²¹⁶ Just as little does it entail the Lockean doctrine that ideal objects exist as individuals in the mind. On the contrary, while metaphysical commitments to an extreme realism regarding universals or

²¹³ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, § 7, p. 248.

²¹⁴ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, § 7, p. 248.

²¹⁵ In *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, §§ 9-11, Husserl presents several persuasive objections to the idea of ideas that plays a central function in John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

²¹⁶ Via the character Parmenides in the dialogue of the same name, Plato suggests that there is a need to affirm that “there are” ideal objects and that they are “always the same” (135b-c) while fully understanding that these ideal objects do not have a thing-like existence that is subject to division into pieces (cf. 131c).

to a Lockean psychology may have driven some to believe that ideal objects are also real objects, Husserl begins his Bolzanian support for ideal objects by distinguishing them from real entities — both from those that exist “outside” and “inside” the mind.²¹⁷ To suppose that Husserl must have pictured ideal objects either as real “external” things or as pieces of real “internal” events, then, is to neglect what is his view from the beginning, and to build a false dichotomy on the basis of certain mistakes that were conspicuous in the course of medieval ontology and modern psychology; to equate the ideality that Husserl affirms with a strange kind of reality is to construct a straw man on the same basis.²¹⁸

Once Husserl dismisses the fallacies that have been recited by many who deny the objectivity of the ideal, and once he undermines the notion that all objects of thought are real individuals, he is then satisfied to let the evidence for conceptual objectivity stand on its own. Concepts are invariant and reiterable, and they serve as enduring objects of thought. Without grounds to the contrary, this is sufficient reason to conclude that concepts possess objectivity of the important, abstract (i.e., second-order) type that Husserl specifies. Of course, the conclusion that concepts possess such objectivity does not entail, on its own, the further conclusion that concepts are independent of our thought. In this subsection I have not yet sought to clarify why Bolzano and Husserl affirmed that there are “ideas in themselves”. To appreciate the full argument to that

²¹⁷ Husserl notably presents his clearest definition of the term “real” — which term occurs with great frequency and plays an important function across the *Logical Investigations* — in that part of the second Investigation where he begins his genealogy of nominalism (§ 8, pp. 249-50). At that point Husserl can no longer proceed without asserting that “what is real (*real*) is the individual with all of its constituents”, that “it is something here and now”, that “for us temporality is a sufficient mark of reality”, and that “for us what is ‘inside’ of consciousness counts as real (*real*) just as much as what is ‘outside’ of it”.

²¹⁸ Cf. Husserl’s overarching explanation of the reason why many adopt reductive nominalism: “The excesses of conceptual realism have led men to dispute, not merely the reality, but the objectivity of the Species. This is certainly quite wrong” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, § 2, p. 240).

effect, we must turn from a narrow focus on concepts to a broader view of truth. For the case that there are significations (including ideas and propositions) in themselves hinges mainly on the supposition that truth is independent of our thought.

4.2.3: Propositions as objects

As a next step toward clarifying the case that there are semantic objects *in themselves* — and, more immediately, in order to indicate the connection that Bolzano and Husserl draw between signification and truth — it is important to briefly survey the view of propositions, and the reasons for holding that view, which Bolzano passed on to Husserl. First, then, what is Bolzano’s account of propositions? In short, Bolzano holds that propositions are to acts of assertion what concepts are to the use of solitary terms. When we use some term that does not, by itself, assert anything, we convey by that word or those words a concept that could be conveyed at different times and by different signs; in much the same way, when we use an organized set of words to assert that something is the case, our “speech act” expresses a proposition that can be commonly realized by many “speech act[s]” and “act[s] of mind”.²¹⁹ Bolzano thus takes propositions to be ideal in the same way that he supposes concepts are. Further, he takes propositions to be composed out of concepts. The proposition that I express by saying, “those birds are chirping”, e.g., plainly appears to include as a constituent the concept of chirping. But it is not in virtue of this complexity that propositions differ from concepts. For there are complex concepts, i.e. concepts composed of other concepts, which retain a non-propositional nature; the complex concept of chirping birds, e.g., is no proposition. Propositions rather differ from concepts, according to Bolzano, in virtue of their

²¹⁹ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 19, p. 20.

assertoric character, i.e. their being “either true or false”.²²⁰ Whereas the concept of birds chirping, e.g., by itself contains no pretensions to truth, the proposition I would express by saying, “those birds are chirping” (about certain birds, at a certain time), essentially purports to state how things stand. Bolzano thus presents propositions as the kind of complex significations that can be true or false, i.e. as ideal bearers of truth and falsity that are commonly accessible, no less than their conceptual constituents are, to various acts of speech and thought.

It is no surprise, then, that Bolzano attributes to propositions the same degree of objectivity and independence of our thinking that he ascribes to concepts. He does not only opine that propositions are among the objects of logic, or aver that there are propositions that we might never articulate; he reaches the logicist extreme of claiming that propositions are independent of any thinking whatsoever, defining a proposition as “any assertion that something is or is not the case, *whether or not somebody has put it into words, and regardless even of whether it has been thought*”.²²¹ He not only distinguishes propositions from the “judgment[s]” that are “present in the consciousness of a thinking being”; he also denies that the etymologically apparent relation between propositions and some act(s) of proposing is anything more than a “figurative association”.²²² He suggests that we would be entirely mistaken to suspect that propositions “presuppose the existence of a being that does the proposing”.²²³

²²⁰ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 19, p. 20. As Bolzano notes, he thus follows the old Aristotelian practice in regarding the character of “being true or false” as the distinctive feature of propositions (ibid., § 23, p. 27), although he also, unlike Aristotle, regards *prima facie* non-assertoric statements such as questions and wishes as disguised assertions (ibid., § 22, pp. 24-25).

²²¹ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 19, pp. 20-21, my italics.

²²² Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 19, p. 21.

²²³ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 19, p. 21.

Husserl expresses a more measured edition of Bolzano's view. Like Bolzano, he portrays propositions as transcendent bearers of truth or falsity. Moreover, he even seems to echo Bolzano's claim that there are propositions in themselves: much as Bolzano proclaims that propositions need not be "put ... into words" or "thought", Husserl states toward the end of the first Investigation that "being thought or being expressed are alike contingent" features of propositions.²²⁴ Yet he only follows Bolzano to a point; the brackets that Husserl regularly places around his mentions of meanings "in themselves" imply an important distance between his own view and Bolzano's. This distance consists in the fact that, while both may sincerely say that *there are* objective propositions, they can do so just in case they interpret that "are" differently. For Husserl refrains from some of the ontological-metaphysical speculation underpinning Bolzano's view of propositions, and thereby tempers the logicist tendency of the view that he appropriates.

In this respect, it is above all important to notice how Husserl qualifies his seemingly logicist statement that propositions need not be "thought" or "expressed" by immediately amending the following explanation: "there are ... countless meanings which ... are never expressed, and [which] can, owing to the limits of man's cognitive powers, never be expressed".²²⁵ From this explanation, we can see how Husserl frames the transcendence that he ascribes to propositions in epistemological terms and, more exactly, with reference to our limited understanding: he takes talk of propositions in themselves to have an important reference just insofar as propositions have a being that is not restricted within the limits of our thought. While Husserl's talk of such

²²⁴ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 19, pp. 20-21, and Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 35, p. 233.

²²⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 35, p. 233.

transcendence may have metaphysical overtones and implications, then, and while it at points inevitably verges upon ontological issues, it belongs within the theory of knowledge. His claim is that propositions and their truth are transcendent precisely with respect to our powers of articulation and confirmation. The type of transcendence that Bolzano ascribes to propositions, in contrast, explicitly presupposes a particular ontology and metaphysics: Bolzano's theory of propositions includes a contentious ontology according to which we ought to affirm that propositions *are* but deny that they have any kind of being (whereas Husserl does not artificially differentiate his position that *there are* propositions from the view that propositions have a kind of being).²²⁶ And Bolzano makes the metaphysical claims that "every ... proposition ... is at least thought and represented by God" and that propositions are nonetheless independent of all thought, whereas Husserl does not pronounce his views, or presuppose any advance agreement from his readers, on such metaphysical issues.²²⁷ These important differences, however, only modify a more basic continuity. Despite his disagreements with his more metaphysically inclined mentor, Husserl still agrees that propositions transcend our thinking in crucial respects. He claims that propositions do not depend on our grasping them in thought or expression. Moreover, and most saliently in the context of the present subsection, Husserl can clearly follow Bolzano at least to the point of attributing to propositions the same abstract, second-order type of objectivity that we have seen he also attributes to concepts.

²²⁶ Bolzano denies not only that propositions have *Dasein*, *Existenz*, and *Wirklichkeit*, but also that they have *Sein* at all (*Theory of Science*, § 19, p. 21; Rolf George provides the German terms that Bolzano originally used to claim that propositions lack any kind of being, and not only existence and actuality, on p. xxx of his editor's introduction); Husserl is quick to clarify that propositions have only the ideal being of the specific, rather than real existence, but he can readily interpret the "are", in "there are propositions", as meaning that propositions have some kind of being.

²²⁷ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 19, p. 21.

Why, then, think that propositions have this objective character? Bolzano bypasses any explicit argument on this point and moves directly into the more contentious case that there are propositions in themselves. In order to see why Bolzano and Husserl ascribe objectivity to propositions, though, we need only revisit the considerations they offer in defense of conceptual objectivity. Taking the predications that Husserl and Bolzano make of concepts, and applying them to propositions, we can extrapolate that the reasoning in support of propositional objectivity runs as follows: First, propositions, like concepts, are reiterable. It is a commonplace occurrence that multiple individuals, in a variety of contexts, make *the same* assertion, often even with differently worded sentences. The same proposition that I express by saying, “The sky is blue”, e.g., others might express in a different context by saying only, “It is blue”, or “El cielo es azul”. Second, propositions, again like concepts, regularly serve as stable objects of reference within scientific discourse and everyday conversation. Our casual conversations often concern what other speakers have said, and our academic discourse often refers to this or that hypothesis; we ask whether some hearsay is true, or consider whether a purported corollary actually follows from a given thesis, and thereby direct our attention at least in part to those propositions.²²⁸ Surely propositions’ capacity to thus serve as objects of reference, taken together with their identity through reiterations, is enough to establish their possessing objectivity of the broad (i.e., not necessarily real) sort that Husserl clarifies.

²²⁸ Again, as Husserl emphasizes, this does not imply that meanings such as propositions are primarily objects of our speech and thought. For propositions serve in the first instance as our means of presenting categorial objects, and only on that basis then become objects of our attention in secondary acts. Still, they thereby serve as self-same objects no less than material things do.

Yet that line of reasoning almost reduces to a tautology. Of course it is not especially controversial to conclude that meanings are objective on the grounds that they (a) are reiterable and (b) can fill an objective role in our speech and thought, if we have stipulated that objectivity involves little more than (a) subsistence and (b) the capacity to function as a referent. To conclude that there are propositions which are independent of human thought is another matter. For propositions might be genuinely distinct from our individual acts of thinking, and occasionally serve as objects of thought, and have an enduring character, but nonetheless depend on the mental life of our species. In other words, we could both grant that propositions are objective and deny that there are propositions in themselves, without falling into incoherence. Why should we not suppose, then, that the objectivity of propositions is a function of the human community? Why not suppose that propositions derive their apparent endurance from the human species' intergenerational activity of thinking, and possess a seemingly timeless historical longevity only because the course of human intellectual activity, so far, has been left off by each elder generation only after it has been taken up by some younger one? Why not suppose that there are propositions because we exist, that there never would have been meanings of any sort if we did not exist, and that anyone claiming otherwise is engaged in groundless metaphysical speculation? Husserl found his response to these questions in reasoning that he garnered from Bolzano's discussions of truth.

4.2.4: Truth's independence

According to the definition(s) that Bolzano accepts, a truth is a proposition that “states something as it is”; truth is just that character, which distinguishes such propositions from all else; and “the truth” is a title we can use for collections of such propositions.²²⁹ “Truth” could thus be said, and said properly, in many ways, but the primary sense of “truth”, or what Bolzano calls the “concrete objective sense”, would be that which is in play when we speak of this or that truth.²³⁰ So, in the discussions of truth at the center of his *Theory of Science*, Bolzano focuses above all on particular true propositions. In one crucial example, he refers to a proposition that states, as it is, “the number of blossoms that were on a certain tree last spring”.²³¹ In another, he alludes to a proposition that states, again “as it is”, “the number of wineberries which grew in Italy last summer”.²³² Now, what Bolzano contends with respect to these two propositions that he mentions, and with respect to all other truths, is that they are independent of our discovery of the matters that they concern. Even if nobody has ever known, or even said or considered, the number of blossoms that were on a certain tree during a certain spring, there is a proposition that states this number as it is, which someone might express; and, though presumably nobody can say how many wineberries were grown in Italy last

²²⁹ Bolzano introduces these related definitions in a section on the “several senses of the words ‘true’ and ‘truth’” (*Theory of Science*, § 24, p. 31). The first primary source for Bolzano’s theory of truth is Book One of the *Theory of Science*, the “theory of fundamentals”, in which he argues, contra skepticism, that there are truths and that we are cognizant of some of them. The second is the “theory of elements” (Book Two of the *Theory of Science*), in which Bolzano seeks to clarify the nature of truths and of objective meanings more generally.

²³⁰ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 24, p. 31. Truth considered as a property of propositions would be secondary to the truths of which it is the differentiating feature (the abstract is secondary to the concrete) and truth as a name for groups of propositions would be secondary to the particular truths from which we might form many different collections.

²³¹ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 25, p. 32.

²³² Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 48, p. 62.

summer, there is a truth about this number.²³³ Indeed, there are countless truths beyond the horizon of insights that we as a species have historically achieved, which may remain permanently beyond that horizon: truths need not be discovered by us.

Such is Bolzano's view; but what is its warrant? If we grant that a truth is a proposition that "states something as it is", perhaps allowing this as a correct though less than comprehensive characterization of truth, still we might ask with some skepticism whether there are any truths beyond those that we have "recognized or thought".²³⁴ For we might hold that the statements that we have considered make up all of the propositions there are. And on that basis we might say, in Quine's language, that there are only as many truths as there are statements in our webs of belief facing sufficiently minimal resistance from the data that we encounter. Why, then, posit that there are any true propositions apart from those that we have realized are true? Why go still further and posit that there are some propositions that we have never even spoken or thought, much less confirmed with insight, which in spite of all this are true?

Before considering Bolzano's efforts toward justifying his view that truth is independent of our thought, it is important to note two points. The first is that Husserl, as we have already seen, endorses this same quasi-logicist view in the *Logical Investigations*.²³⁵ The second is that this view of truth carries implications regarding the status of propositions and their conceptual parts. If Bolzano is correct that truths need not even be articulated, much less grasped to be true, in any passing act of thinking, then this independence that he attributes to truths applies by extension to propositions and ideas.

²³³ In Bolzano's words, these numbers are "stateable, if unknown" (*Theory of Science*, § 25, p. 32). Putting aside issues of vagueness, there is nothing in principle to keep someone from articulating a sentence of the form, "There were x blossoms on that tree last spring", and inserting the correct number in place of the x.

²³⁴ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 25, p. 32.

²³⁵ See my discussion of Husserl's logicist leanings in 1.2.b, as well as the beginning of 1.2.c.

For, if there are truths that we have not expressed, then they comprise a group of propositions that are independent of actualization in our thought; and there are then also ideas that have not occurred to us, some that are the nominalizations of true propositions that we do not know,²³⁶ and most likely others too among the concepts that comprise those true propositions that we have not articulated.²³⁷ Moreover, it is not lost on Husserl that these consequences regarding signification follow from his Bolzanian view of truth. On the contrary, his defense of conceptual and propositional independence builds on a more basic case that truth is independent of our thought. What, then, is the case for such truths?

As Bolzano makes it, that case consists of three components. First, Bolzano offers what he calls a “proof that there is at least one truth in itself”.²³⁸ He purports to establish that there is some truth, by reducing the contradictory supposition (viz., “the proposition that no proposition has truth”) to absurdity.²³⁹ The core of the proof deserves to be quoted at length:

“That no proposition has truth disproves itself because it is itself a proposition and we should have to call it false in order to call it true. For, if all propositions were false, then this proposition itself, namely that all propositions are false, would be

²³⁶ For Bolzano as for Husserl, there are not only ideas expressed by nouns, such as “Napoleon” and “Moscow”; there are also ideas expressed by the nominalizations of statements, such as “Napoleon’s 1812 invasion of Moscow” (where the pre-nominalized, full statement would have been, “Napoleon invaded Moscow in 1812”). Bolzano admits this broader class of ideas in § 49.3 of his *Theory of Science* (p. 64).

²³⁷ Put differently: if there are true propositions that we have not articulated, then it is likely that some of them involve conceptual parts for which we have no words or notions. Before discovering the truth of the proposition that America does not belong to the Asian continent, e.g., European minds did not have the concept of America.

²³⁸ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, §§ 30-31, p. 39.

²³⁹ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 30, p. 39.

false. Thus, not all propositions are false, but there are also true propositions.

There are truths, at least one.”²⁴⁰

This little argument, which has recurred throughout the history of philosophy,²⁴¹ appears to be sound. No one can justly deny its starting point: if all propositions are false, then each is false, including the proposition that all are false. The most that someone might object to is the inference that carries us from that starting point to the argument’s conclusion. For, like every *reductio ad absurdum*, the proof presupposes that the contradiction of a false (or self-defeating) statement must be true. By virtue of its structure, then, the proof seemingly contains, as a hidden premise, the principle of excluded middle; it appears to presuppose, in other words, that each proposition must be either true or false. And contemporary readers might reject this presupposition, citing the possibility of multivalent logics that are ready to dispense with the principle of excluded middle by allowing for more than two truth values.²⁴² However, to deny a principle as basic as the law of excluded middle, along with a strategy of argument as indispensable as the *reductio*, is a heavy price to pay, especially when all that is purchased is a reason for rejecting an otherwise inevitable and initially plausible conclusion. Acknowledging the possibility of sane critics, then, rather than following Bolzano’s brash contention that

²⁴⁰ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 31, p. 39.

²⁴¹ As Bolzano notes, his own formulation closely imitates one that Aristotle articulated millennia before. Bolzano borrows heavily from *Metaphysics* IV.6.7-8, especially the argument that total skepticism “destroy[s]” itself, at 1012b5-23.

²⁴² Bolzano anticipates this objection to the logical principles operatively assumed by the process of the proof: “in order to be persuaded by the proof”, he recognizes, “the doubter must presuppose as true the principle of inference that is used in it” (*Theory of Science*, § 33, p. 41). Moreover, the same skeptic who doubts whether there are any truths is likely also to doubt whether even broadly legitimated principles of inference are actually valid.

only “imbeciles and mentally disturbed persons could doubt [his proof’s] validity”, it is nonetheless difficult to assess the argument as being less than very strong.²⁴³

Still, even if we provisionally accept the argument as sound, the scope of its implications is limited. For, whatever its force, the argument does not aim to establish that some truths are independent of our realization. If it succeeds, according to its own criteria of success, what the proof entails is only that there is at least one truth; it leaves the task of showing that there are truths unknown by us to further arguments. Granted, the proof may imply, effectively but accidentally, that truth is logically necessary. And perhaps the proof thus allows us to extrapolate that truth does not depend on human existence, thought, and knowledge. In particular, perhaps it allows us to reason as follows:

- While the claim that human beings do not exist is counterfactual, this claim is not incoherent. Our existence appears to be contingent, our non-existence “logically possible.”
- The claim that there are no truths is self-defeating, and thus incoherent, rather than merely counterfactual. To affirm that there is at least one truth is to commit oneself to a proposition that could not possibly be false.
- What is logically necessary cannot depend on what is contingent. What must be true cannot depend on what might not have been the case.
- Therefore, the truth of the proposition that there is at least one truth cannot depend on human existence. In simpler terms, then, truth does not depend on human existence.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 33, p. 41.

²⁴⁴ Cf. the fourth argument against “specific relativism” in § 36 of Husserl’s *Prolegomena* (p. 80).

In this way, one might draw inferences from suggestions that are arguably latent in Bolzano's proof to conclusions that it does not contain. Yet, taking the proof at face value, in terms of what it purports to show, we only arrive at the conclusion that there are some truths, and not at any further claims regarding the status truths have with respect to human cognition.

Thus, Bolzano's broad case that truths are independent of our experience only begins in earnest at its second stage. In the first, preliminary stage, as we have just seen, Bolzano merely establishes to his satisfaction that there is at least one truth. He only then offers reason for the further conclusion that some truths are unknown to us.

The second stage of Bolzano's broad case for truths in themselves, and the first in which he plainly contends that there are some truths that we do not know, consists of an appeal to examples. It consists of references to particular propositions like those I have cited above, concerning numbers of blossoms and berries, and is effectively a challenge to Bolzano's readers: How, it asks, could we deny that there are such propositions, or regard those propositions as anything but truths that we do not know? Take, for example, the proposition that states as it is the number of flowers that blossomed at a certain time on a certain tree. Clearly, this proposition satisfies Bolzano's definition of truth. Further, even if we have not expressed it, it seems we cannot deny that there is such a proposition, which could be expressed. For even if we are now incapable in practice of finding how many blossoms grew on a certain tree last spring, there is a number that someone might have discerned and stated. Moreover, it is clear that we have not, in fact, discovered all of these propositions, which might be expressed, and which "state something as it is". Consider all of the true propositions that someone might have expressed and confirmed

about the genetic structure of an extinct animal, or the precise path that a solitary insect followed in the course of a day, or the geological composition of a remote planet. Each of these examples appears to demonstrate that there are some truths that we have not realized. Indeed, the ease with which such examples come to mind appears to indicate that there are countless other truths, unknown to us, of which we have not even definitely realized our ignorance — of which we have not even thought.

But someone might object that this argument from examples begs the question. For if we need to be convinced that there are truths independent of our thought, we will not be satisfied by an argument that merely points to what appear to be truths in themselves from a Bolzanian standpoint. After all, the legitimacy of that position is at issue. Consider, for example, how Bolzano's argument from examples could seem to assume too much to those who lean toward a reductive naturalism. Critics of this type could respond to Bolzano's challenge, and provide grounds for their refusal to affirm that there are truths in themselves, by reasoning as follows:

- Truths that we do not know can only be postulated. By definition, they are not objects of our experience.²⁴⁵
- It is unnecessary to postulate such truths. A more minimal ontology will suffice. There are mental processes that certain animals undergo, and there are non-mental realities that can be known; no more is necessary in order to account for the phenomena of truth and knowledge, in which a particular mental process, which we call a judgment or belief, corresponds to the reality that it represents.

²⁴⁵ On this basis alone, Hume would counsel us to “consign” Bolzano's talk of truths in themselves “to the flames” (*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, section 12, part III).

- By Ockham's razor, we should not admit unnecessary categories or entities into our ontology.
- Therefore, we should not affirm that there are truths about a number of blossoms, or an extinct animal, or whatever, when we have no knowledge of that about which there are supposed to be truths.

This reply shows how the examples from which Bolzano argues may not constitute satisfactory reasons for holding that there are truths in themselves. It shows how Bolzano's purported examples of truths in themselves can lose their force. We need only define a truth as a statement that we know to be true, and say that all other uses of the term "truth" are unwarranted extensions, and we can cease to count many of Bolzano's "truths in themselves" as truths at all.

In this way, the crux of the dialectic between Bolzano and his critics rests in the second premise of the counterargument formulated above: while Bolzano holds that it is theoretically necessary to postulate truths in themselves, his critics deny that there is any need or warrant for such a postulate. And Bolzano must offer his critics something more than purported examples to demonstrate such a necessity. If he is to convince his critics that they need his postulate of truths in themselves, Bolzano must take for his starting point some enterprise or belief to which he and his critics are commonly committed, and show how that shared practice or theory presupposes that there are truths that we do not know.

While there is no such demonstration explicitly contained within Bolzano's *Theory of Science*, the whole work, in its general thrust, strongly suggests such an argument. For when we abstract from its intricacies and attend to its broader

brushstrokes, the *Theory of Science* is essentially, true to its title, an attempt to clarify the nature of science.²⁴⁶ It thus concerns, among other topics, the scientific pursuit of knowledge to which Bolzano and his critics are jointly committed. And one of its central contentions is that we cannot explain that scientific enterprise without reference to truths in themselves. By implication, then, Bolzano's critics would be bound, insofar as they engage in scientific efforts, to presuppose that there are objective networks of truths to be discovered. For they would thereby act as though many truths might remain hidden from us — as though there are truths that we would risk failing to uncover if we did not engage in inquiry.

This contention concerning the structure of our scientific striving constitutes the third stage and final culmination of Bolzano's case for truths in themselves. Again, there is no fully realized argument, within the *Theory of Science*, toward the conclusion that intellectual inquiry necessarily presupposes truths independent of the inquiring intellect. Bolzano's lengthy "exposition of logic" does not put that proof forward alongside the many others that it contains.²⁴⁷ Instead, the work offers only the partly developed seeds of an argument, by way of several suggestions that might be extracted and assembled into an attempt at persuasion.

²⁴⁶ I use "scientific" here in Bolzano's sense, to designate one elevated type of the attempt to know. Bolzano does not follow the present-day practice of conflating science (or *die Wissenschaft*) in general with the natural sciences (or *Naturwissenschaft*) in particular. He rather employs something like Robert Sokolowski's specification of science and the scientific, according to which "The scientific consciousness is one that takes a professional interest in ... the difference between what is and what is meant" (*Husserlian Meditations*, p. 279). To speak of scientific efforts, in this sense, denotes merely the professionalized actualizations of our desire to know — a broad and diverse range of disciplines that are nonetheless only part of the broader, largely non-professional, human pursuit of knowledge.

²⁴⁷ On Bolzano's view, logic and the theory of science are the same (§ 6, p. 7). One consequence of this view, which turns out to be pivotal for Husserl's conception of logic, is that an adequate "definition of 'logic' requires a prior definition of 'science'" (§ 4, p. 4).

This latent argument, if realized, would start from the question of what science is. To begin, it would pose these questions: What are the essential constituents of the objective, intersubjectively available bodies of knowledge that we call sciences? Correlatively, what conditions are necessary for any scientific endeavor? And it would reply, as Bolzano does near the outset of the *Theory of Science*, by defining science in terms of truth. A science, Bolzano says, is “any aggregate of truths of a certain kind”.²⁴⁸ Now, Bolzano’s critics would be hard-pressed to charitably contest that this definition is fine, as far as it goes. For it is plausible, and even uncontroversial, to the same degree that it is merely a schematic working definition. As such a preliminary definition, its primary function is simply to punt the controversial questions about what science is into an adjacent arena of controversies concerning truth.

Bolzano’s argument would proceed within that arena. It would raise the question of whether our existing sciences are comprehensive “aggregate[s]” of *all* the truths that there are about this and that kind of objects, or whether they instead circumscribe only part of broader, largely undiscovered fields of truths about those objects. And it would reply, as Bolzano does at the very opening of his *Theory of Science*, by proclaiming that there are far more truths than our existing intellectual enterprises have taken in. It would direct us to “suppose that all the truths that are now, or ever were, known to man, were somehow collected together”, in a “sum of all human knowledge”, and would declare that “this sum is very small” in comparison to “the immense domain of truths in themselves”.²⁴⁹ Now *that* claim is one that Bolzano’s critics could charitably contest,²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 1, p. 1.

²⁴⁹ Bolzano, *Theory of Science*, § 1, p. 1.

²⁵⁰ In particular, Bolzano’s critics could object that the theory of truth adumbrated at the outset of the *Theory of Science*, which pervasively preoccupies its subsequent pages, is precisely what Bolzano’s needs

it is clearly controversial. Yet, according to Bolzano, it is the only interpretation of the relationship between science and truth that is compatible with our scientific activity. For the business of science does not consist solely in what Bolzano calls the “division” and “representation” of already known truths; given that we could not represent and divide truths unless we had first discovered them, our scientific work plainly also includes ineliminable components of research and “discovery”.²⁵¹ Within the context of our scientific practice, then, truth cannot be treated solely as something that we possess. Instead, the practice of research, with its aim toward discovery, differs from the division and representation of truths by being oriented toward truths that we have not yet realized. Unlike the activities of division and representation, it at least appears to be a search for truths that do not, and that may never, belong to our existing knowledge. Indeed, it would be difficult to plausibly characterize what research is, with respect to truth, in any contrary way. Of course, we could engage in the work of inquiry while denying that there are such truths independent of our practice. But it appears that we would then be

to demonstrate. The most pivotal part of the argument that Bolzano suggests is therefore that which comes after, and in support of, this contentious point.

²⁵¹ Bolzano implies this line of reasoning by the way that he structures his *Theory of Science*. That work’s official aim is merely to answer two practical questions: Bolzano initially identifies the theory of science with “the aggregate of all rules which we must follow when we divide the total domain of truths [known to us] into individual sciences, and represent them in their respective treatises”, and so his work must ultimately say how we ought to divide truths and how we can “represent” them in a “comprehensible” and “convincing” manner (*Theory of Science*, § 1.4, pp. 2-3). But Bolzano only gets around to that final, practical task of his *Theory of Science* in the fifth of its five books. He differentiates “the theory of science proper” from the theory of science more broadly conceived, taking the latter as the discipline that must say what science and truth are, and he devotes the first four books to that more expansive, less practically oriented question (§ 15, pp. 16-17). Now, Bolzano’s primary reason for distinguishing “the theory of science proper” from the theory of science more broadly conceived is that “the theory of science proper should be preceded by a discussion of the rules to be followed in the discovery of truths: heurctic” (§ 15, pp. 16-17). And the reason that heurctic should precede what Bolzano calls the theory of science proper is, presumably, that our presentation and division of truths presupposes our discovery of truths. In much the same way, heurctic should in turn be preceded by a “discussion of the general conditions of human knowledge”, and notably by proofs that there are “ideas”, “propositions”, and “truths in themselves”, because our discoveries presuppose that there are such semantic objects independent of our inquiry (ibid.). The arrangement of projects and books within the *Theory of Science* thus expresses this argument that I am formulating on Bolzano’s behalf: our existing sciences presuppose discovery, and that in turn presupposes truths independent of our inquiry.

engaging in a performative contradiction: we would be rejecting the aim that constitutes our activity.

Such is Bolzano's case. To summarize, its three stages unfold as follows. First, Bolzano confronts the assertion that there are no truths, and dismisses it as a truth claim that destroys its own possibility of success. Next, once he has concluded that there is at least one truth, Bolzano infers from a survey of purported truths that there are indefinitely many truths that we have not yet discovered. Of course, many would regard the examples that Bolzano mentions differently, rather than taking them as truths in themselves. But, according to the final stage of Bolzano's case, the work of inquiry is predicated on the assumption that there are such truths. Far from lacking any warrant, then, the postulate of truths that we do not know would be an inescapable presupposition of the scientific enterprise to which Bolzano and his critics are commonly committed.

Husserl appropriates and builds on this case. Through his own reasoning in support of the contention that there are truths independent of our inquiring intellects, Husserl indicates an affirmative assessment of Bolzano's prior depiction of our scientific enterprise as a practice in which we search for, delimit, and finally convey, various clusters of truths that we might never have discovered. What is more, Husserl's reasoning also offers a response to those who would contend, contra Bolzano, that scientific work does not involve any process properly called the discovery of truths. That is, Husserl presents reason to think that inquiry essentially aims at the realization of truths that are whether we realize them or not, rather than at the invention of truths that otherwise would not be.

Consider first how Husserl effectively reiterates Bolzano's depiction of our scientific enterprise. On one hand, Husserl is quick to admit that our scientific projects are not primarily concerned with their own meanings. For every positive science, whether geology or history, is typically focused on certain objects and states of affairs rather than on the meanings of the expressions set down in its scientific publications and discourse: "if we perform the act [of meaning] and live in it, as it were, we naturally refer to its object and not to its meaning".²⁵² On the other hand, if we engage in the reflective theory of science that Bolzano passed on to Husserl, then the scientific achievements that we have made, as well as those that we strive to make, alike appear to belong to a field of truths: they appear to belong to a field of significations that disclose how things present themselves. For these achievements are not inextricably tied to a passing eureka moment of initial discovery, or to the particular signifiers by which they are expressed in a first publication; they are rather trans-historically and trans-linguistically available.²⁵³ An "ideal fabric of meanings" thus appears to be the "one homogenous stuff" that makes up the "objective content" of "all theoretical science".²⁵⁴ And the ongoing efforts of theoretical science, to the extent they aim at concepts and truths that have not yet been reached by such efforts, appear to aim at a field of significations that extends beyond the set of significations that we have thought or expressed. If our scientific efforts do pursue such a semantic sphere — one that is still only partly reached, but also partly unreached, and perhaps unreachable, by our efforts — then, Husserl suggests, we could on that basis

²⁵² *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 34.

²⁵³ In Husserl's words, "there is no intrinsic connection between our signs and significations" (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 35, p. 233). Translation is possible because we can employ different signs to call the same significations to mind.

²⁵⁴ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 29.

speak of meaning that is independent of our thinking and expressing.²⁵⁵ The nature of our inquiries would thus indicate that there are meanings — concepts and true propositions — independent of those inquiries.

But why think that inquiry is a process aimed at discovery rather than invention? Given that our existing sciences amass truths through research, why suppose that the truths thus aggregated were uncovered from an independent field of truths? This is a question that Bolzano does not squarely face. Why believe that our scientific efforts pursue and partly uncover a sphere of truths that we do not, and might never, know? On this point, Husserl contributes an argument that substantiates the Bolzanian depiction of science by way of illustrating what it is that research seeks. His argument may be recreated as follows:

- “Everything that is ... is a being definite in content”.²⁵⁶ This is merely to say that the principle of non-contradiction applies to that which is. Taken in a certain respect and at a certain time, every city, tree and cell possesses certain features and lacks others.
- “[W]hat is objectively quite definite, must permit objective determination”.²⁵⁷ That which is definite presents itself in an objective way that would consistently fulfill certain attributions and frustrate contrary predications. The structure of a certain tree, e.g., would render certain attributions about the number of its blossoms correct, and other attributions incorrect.

²⁵⁵ More exactly, Husserl claims on this basis that “there are ... countless meanings which ... are never expressed, and [which] ... can, owing to the limits of man’s cognitive powers, never be expressed” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 35).

²⁵⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 28, p. 223.

²⁵⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 28, p. 223.

- “[W]hat permits objective determination must, ideally speaking, permit expression through wholly determinate word-meanings”.²⁵⁸ Even if we are constitutionally incapable of adequately expressing an object’s structure, due to our own limitations, propositions that someone might express canvass each aspect of that object’s determinate character.
- Any “objective unity of meaning” that is “adequate to the objectivity which is evidently ‘given’, ... is whatever it is, whether anyone realizes [it] in thought or not”.²⁵⁹ The propositions that we might express divide into truths and falsehoods on the basis of their adequacy or inadequacy to their objects, rather than on the basis of our knowledge or ignorance of those objects. A flawed and limited intellect is not the measure of truth, but rather falls short, and has its limits and errors exposed as such, against the criterion of true propositions that someone might express.
- Given the four steps above, it follows that “everything that is ... is a being ... documented in such and such ‘truths in themselves’”.²⁶⁰ If “everything that is” is definite; and what is definite “permits objective determination”; and, for everything that permits determination, there is a meaning that someone might express, which adequately presents that thing; and, for every meaning that adequately presents something, that meaning is independent of its being realized by us; then, for “everything that is”, there is a meaning that adequately presents that thing, which we need not realize. Whether or not we want to call them “truths in themselves”, then, there are propositions that we might express, which we do

²⁵⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 28, p. 223.

²⁵⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 29, p. 226.

²⁶⁰ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, §§ 28, 29, pp. 223 and 226.

not necessarily realize, which present the objects of possible study as those objects are.

Now, critics could of course call this argument into question. Here as in other arguments, the notion that expressible meanings do not require our realization is vulnerable to assault. But Husserl does not labor under the illusion that every rational reader will grant him his premises, and so the argument's purported value does not lie in its potential to persuade all possible critics. On the contrary, what I have reconstructed as an argument is intended more exactly as a fairly detailed explication of what scientific research essentially presupposes. It attempts to articulate several enacted commitments of inquiry that, together, entail the supposition that truth is independent of the inquiring intellect. And, when we follow Husserl's illustration, it does appear that "the scientific investigator" must at least act as though truths have independence, i.e. as if truths are meanings that the investigator "*discovers*" rather than "*make[s]*".²⁶¹ In inquiry, we must act as though the object of our study possesses a determinate character; we must act as though there are propositions that someone might express which present that character as it is; we must act as though those propositions hold as valid whether we realize their validity or not; and so we must act as though those propositions are not mere functions of our thought, but instead are members of an independent field into which our studies may or may not advance. Indeed, the inquirer cannot always proceed "as if he were concerned with contingencies of his own or of the general human mind", because such a procedure would reduce every pursuit of intellectual goods to introspection or psychology.²⁶² The

²⁶¹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 29, p. 226.

²⁶² *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 29, p. 226.

practice of research thus presupposes the falsity of psychologism, which is to say that it presupposes the enacted affirmation of truth's independence from our thought.

This was enough to persuade Husserl. His appropriation and extension of Bolzanian reasoning left him unable to evade an almost logicist view of meaning. He saw that our research appears to be a pursuit of independent truths, and he surpassed Bolzano's argumentation by pre-emptively answering those who claim that inquiry may be an invention rather than a discovery of truths. He saw, moreover, that truths are propositions that state what is as it is, and that, as assertoric significations, they contain concepts (or non-assertoric significations) as constituents. He could not, then, avoid the conclusion that there is a logically interconnected domain of objective meanings, which domain is independent of any realization in our thought and knowledge.

4.3: Meaning as act: descriptions from Brentano's psychology

4.3.1: A descriptive psychological persuasion

While Bolzano's *Theory of Science* persuaded Husserl that objective meanings transcend our passing experiences, Brentano presented his student with a persuasive case in an apparently contrary direction. Specifically, Brentano articulated grounds for understanding meaning primarily as a kind of mental "act" — and he thereby gave Husserl reason to regard reiterable logical objects not as fully "mind-independent" entities, but rather as dependent aspects of a certain concrete experience. The aim of this section is to represent those reasons, which Husserl found in his teacher's work, for adopting a psychological sort of semantics.

These reasons emerge from Brentano's descriptive psychology.²⁶³ Accordingly, if we are to fairly assess Husserl's reasons for embracing the more psychological side of his own theory of meaning, it is important that we briefly survey the method at work in Brentano's descriptive psychology. How does that method relate to psychology as it is practiced today? How could description supplant or supplement experiment, explanation, and discursive demonstration as that which provides support for certain psychological conclusions? Once we address these questions, we should then be in a position to appreciate the basis of Husserl's more Brentanian perspective on meaning.

4.3.2: In defense of description

In the 1874 *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* and again in a series of lectures that Husserl attended during 1888 and 1889, Brentano defended what would now be a somewhat deviant concept of psychology.²⁶⁴ He did not conceive of the discipline in a regressive way; he did not reject experimental innovations. But neither did he conceive of the discipline in a way that fully corresponds to the predominant contemporary

²⁶³ Husserl's phenomenological project as a whole, including his theory of meaning, is rooted in Brentano's descriptive (or "psychognostic" or "phenomenological") style of psychology in the following important respects. First, Husserlian phenomenology attempts to describe the same subject matter that Brentano made focal through his contrast between "mental" and "physical phenomena" (see section 4.3.3); it attempts to describe precisely those data that Brentano called "mental phenomena". Second, Husserl appropriates Brentano's attempted exclusion of "metaphysical presuppositions". At the outset of his philosophical project, Husserl brackets the issue of whether given entities are mind-dependent or mind-independent, much as Brentano in his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (a) eschews Cartesian divisions between mental and physical *substances* (in favor of the less contentious distinction between evidently different types of phenomena) and (b) delays the question of whether intentional experiences have a soul at their basis or are instead the theme of what is in fact a "psychology without a soul" (*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, trans. Rancurello, Terrell, and McAllister (New York: Humanities Press, 1973 [1874]) pp. 11, 18). Finally, Husserl appears to have derived his hope that we may successfully bracket metaphysical presuppositions, as did Brentano, from the view that second-order (or "inner") perception is built into first order experiences of desiring, hearing, imagining, and the like (see section 4.3.2).

²⁶⁴ The 1888-89 lectures were among those in Brentano's series on the subject matter that he at different times called "descriptive psychology", "descriptive phenomenology" and "psychognosy". See Brentano, *Descriptive Psychology*, trans. Benito Müller (New York: Routledge, 1995).

understanding of psychology as a primarily explanatory and experimental enterprise. Instead, Brentano believed that the study of the psyche should become “genetic” and experimental only at a secondary stage. On this view, psychology should ultimately provide an explanation of conscious processes, and in some cases should do so by tracing the genesis of our mental events from neuro-physiological substrata. Yet psychology should also include a pre-experimental component that (a) aims to describe rather than to explain, (b) proceeds by reflection rather than by (visual and auditory) observation, and (c) stands independent of all inquiries concerning the physiological conditions and efficient causes of mental events. In other words, psychology should include a theoretically fundamental, reflective, and “descriptive” subdiscipline, as well as the experimental and explanatory practice that is more familiar today.²⁶⁵ For psychology should first describe the reflectively available phenomena that it is determined to explain.²⁶⁶ Psychologists are right, for example, to seek to understand the links between our readily apparent mental events and their less obvious physical conditions; but before we can pretend to explain our “mental phenomena”, whether in terms of “physical phenomena” or in any other terms, we must first perform at least the following descriptive tasks: we must identify and clarify “those characteristics that are common to all mental phenomena”;²⁶⁷ we must “classify mental phenomena” into importantly

²⁶⁵ Compare the following statements from Brentano’s 1888 “Descriptive Psychology” lectures: “Genetic psychology is ... the second part of psychology”; “Descriptive psychology is the prior part. The relationship between [descriptive psychology] and genetic psychology is similar to the one between anatomy and physiology”; thus, descriptive psychology “is the foundation of genetic psychology” (*Descriptive Psychology*, p. 137). Moreover, as Victor Velarde-Mayol suggests, the 1874 *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* already draws this distinction between primary and secondary kinds of psychology that became more explicit in Brentano’s later work.

²⁶⁶ Barry Smith (*Austrian Philosophy: The Legacy of Franz Brentano* (Open Court: Chicago, 1995), p. 27) and Victor Velarde-Mayol (*On Brentano* (Belmont, CA; Wadsworth, 2000), p. 10) similarly see Brentano as making it almost axiomatic that “description of phenomena is prior to their explanation”.

²⁶⁷ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 44.

distinctive sets; and we must “determine satisfactorily the characteristics ... of each class”.²⁶⁸ In short, we must accurately characterize the nature and types of the phenomena that we seek to explain.

Now, these descriptive tasks can precede explanation, on Brentano’s view, because of the privileged epistemic access that we each have to our own experience. More precisely, Brentano holds that there are two epistemic capacities that together allow us to complete the tasks of a descriptive psychology. First, Brentano asserts that there is an “inner perception” of our acts of consciousness built into those acts. “Every mental act”, he writes, “includes within itself a consciousness of itself”.²⁶⁹ When I see sunlight on a tree, for example, I am at the same time conscious that I am seeing; my experience in this sense has as its “primary object” the sunlight on the tree, but also has itself as a “secondary object”.²⁷⁰ In this way, my experience makes me capable of affirming that sunlit branches have stood before me *and* that I have seen them. Moreover, though this consciousness of my own experiencing is not focal like my observation of the tree is, it is nonetheless no more disputable than my perception of the primary objects of my experience. Indeed, although I might often be mistaken about certain primary objects of my experience, such as “external” things and relations, I know and cannot be mistaken that I am having an experience which itself has a certain determinate content.²⁷¹ First,

²⁶⁸ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 31.

²⁶⁹ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, pp. 153-154; quoted by Velarde-Mayol, *On Brentano*, p. 72.

²⁷⁰ As Rolf George and Glen Koehn note in their essay, “Brentano’s relation to Aristotle” (*The Cambridge Companion to Brentano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 20-44), Brentano here appropriates Aristotle’s claim that our mental acts always include a sense of themselves “on the side” — i.e., alongside their consistently primary orientation toward “something else”, other than themselves (*ibid.*, pp. 28-29; cf. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, 12.9, 1074b35).

²⁷¹ Cf. the following claim from Brentano’s *Psychology*: “no one can really doubt that a mental state which he perceives in himself exists, and that it exists just as he perceives it” (p. 20; quoted by Velarde-Mayol, *On Brentano*, p. 18). Along the same lines, Brentano even goes so far as to take “inner perception” to be

then, there is an eminently trustworthy reflexive capacity built into our living experience; and this capacity for “inner perception” makes possible a kind of psychology that, while not yet experimental, is nonetheless empirical. Second, Brentano holds that we are capable of achieving intuitive insight concerning structures.²⁷² Like his “master” Aristotle before him and his students Stumpf and Husserl after him, Brentano holds that we can intuitively grasp the characteristics that are essential to a certain type of phenomena.²⁷³ For our minds do not only deduce consequences from presupposed principles, or propose merely probable inductive conclusions made likely by our experience of so many individuals. Rather, as members of the Brentano school like to point out, our minds can also discern that extension is necessary for the appearance of a color, that there can be no sound without a volume and a pitch, that no group of four can appear unless a group of three also appears, and so on. We do not need to hazard uncertain generalizations, based on the experience of so many colors and tones and groups, in order to establish these conclusions. Instead, it seems that an insightful encounter with no more than a single instance of the sort of phenomenon in question

the most evident and foundational mode of perception (see *Sensory and Noetic Consciousness* (New York: Routledge, 1981), pp. 4-5). He claims that our “inner perception” of our own mental acts has “immediate, infallible self-evidence” (*Psychology*, p. 91). Husserl can only follow his teacher along this line up to a point. He agrees with his teacher that “adequate perception can only be ‘inner’ perception” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 5, p. 86), but he does not ascribe across-the-board veridicality to a faculty of “inner perception”. He instead holds that “most perceptions of psychic states cannot be evident” (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. VI, Appendix 4, p. 341). In what follows, we need only achieve Husserl’s level of confidence, and admit the possibility of perceiving certain mental events no less evidently than we perceive things such as basketballs and dulcimers.

²⁷² Velarde-Mayol has similarly noted that Brentano, following Aristotle, posits a capacity for “inductive intuition”. Such intuition “consists of seeing the *intelligible conditions of a particular instance*” (*On Brentano*, p. 24).

²⁷³ Brentano refers to Aristotle as his master in a brief autobiographical comment: “First of all I had to apprentice myself to a master. But since I was born when philosophy had fallen into the most lamentable decay, I could find none better than old Aristotle” (*Die Abkehr vom Nichtrealen*, p. 291; translated by Rolf George and Glen Koehn, in “Brentano’s relation to Aristotle”, *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano*, p. 20). For Aristotle’s affirmation of an intuitive faculty that is capable of grasping basic principles (and that thus can serve as the “originative source of scientific knowledge”), see *Posterior Analytics* 1.3-1.4, especially 72b18-24, and 2.19, especially 100b10-17. For Stumpf and Husserl’s agreement that there is categorial intuition, see my section 3.2 above.

would suffice.²⁷⁴ Second, then, we have a capacity for discerning the characteristics that are essential to a type of phenomena, perhaps even from a single token; and we thus have a capacity for grouping and differentiating types of phenomena in terms of their essential characteristics. Given this capacity for intuition of structures, together with the capacity for “inner perception”, we have what we need for a reflective, descriptive, and categorial discipline. We have the conditions for the possibility of a descriptive psychology, wherein we are guided and constrained by the data of “inner perception”, and thereby discern what is essential to different classes of mental phenomena.

Brentano exposes the experiential dimension of meaning by just this sort of reflective description. He employs descriptive means to show that meaning is, in important part, a kind of experience; and his descriptions of living experience entail that all meanings are either concrete experiences or dependent aspects of experiences. Moreover, Brentano grounds his description in reflections that should be available to and repeatable by each of his readers. We can accordingly begin to assess his account of meaning as act by checking to see whether the descriptions on which it is based hold up against reflections on our own experience.

²⁷⁴ Velarde-Mayol has made the same point with reference to the geometrical conclusion that “all squares are rectangles” (*On Brentano*, p. 25). In our experience of squares, he notes, we can grasp the relevant “necessary and universal laws *at a single stroke*, so to speak” (*ibid.*, p. 24). In such cases, he writes, “it is not necessary to see many cases, one could be enough” (*ibid.*, p. 25). But it is tempting (if not accurate) to interpret geometry as an axiomatic discipline, within which all conclusions follow deductively from presupposed definitions. What the examples of colors and sounds show is that sure intuition is also possible with regard to classes of material (or empirical, not-purely-formal) phenomena.

4.3.3: Meanings and reference

The relevant descriptions occur in Brentano's definition and subsequent classification of mental phenomena. That is, it is Brentano's distinction of mental phenomena from all other phenomena, along with his distinction of the subtypes of mental phenomena, that together offer reason for regarding meaning as an act. As an initial step, then, consider how Brentano defines mental phenomena.

Brentano defines mental phenomena in terms of intentionality. For Brentano, as for Husserl after him, the word "intentionality" roughly designates a sort of openness, or direction, or orientation.²⁷⁵ To say that an entity or event is intentional, in the Brentanian tradition, is to say that it is of, or about, something other than itself. Given that understanding of intentionality, we may express Brentano's definition of mental phenomena by the following formulations:²⁷⁶

- Mental phenomena are appearances "characterized" by the feature of intentionality. No other phenomena display that feature.²⁷⁷
- A presentation²⁷⁸ of x is a mental phenomenon if and only if x is intentional.

²⁷⁵ Compare my first discussion of intentionality as being of in section 2.2.3.

²⁷⁶ I take slight interpretive liberties in equating these formulations. For, whereas Brentano at some points identifies the phenomena with "that which is perceived by us" (*Descriptive Psychology*, p. 137), I follow Husserl's practice and distinguish phenomena from that which appears via phenomena. To thus speak of the "appearances of" mental and physical events, when interpreting Brentano's text, in some cases constitutes a departure from what Brentano probably intended. Yet it would make for only superficial clarity to pretend that acts of sorrow and sympathy and the like are themselves mental appearances rather than that which appears via mental phenomena; it would likewise avoid complications only at the expense of precision to pretend that bicycles and streams and other physical things are themselves physical phenomena rather than things that appear by way of physical phenomena.

²⁷⁷ Brentano asserts the coincidence of the mental and intentional on pp. 88-89 of his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. See p. 88 for his inclusion of all that is mental within the category of the intentional ("Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional ... inexistence of an object ..."), and p. 89 for his inclusion of all that is intentional within the category of the mental ("This intentional inexistence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena").

²⁷⁸ Brentano and Husserl alike use the term "presentation" (*Vorstellung*) in a very broad sense. Each could say: "In view of the generality with which we use this term it can be said that it is impossible for conscious activity to refer in any way to something which is not presented" (*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 198). Each uses the correlated term "phenomena" (*Phänomene*) in an equally broad sense.

- If we call every x the presentations of which are mental phenomena an “experiential item” — whether such items are whole experiences or moments (i.e., non-independent parts) of some experience(s) — then all and only experiential items are intentional.

Brentano arrives at this definition by differentiating two sets of phenomena. There are, he claims, two non-overlapping sets of appearances, which sets together exhaustively include “all the data of our consciousness”.²⁷⁹ On the one hand, there are what Brentano calls “physical phenomena”. Here Brentano places the appearances that occur in the absence of any experience of others and in the absence of any reflection on living experience. These are the data that are available to our sensory modalities, imagination and thought apart from any “inner perception” or empathy. Examples of such data include the presentations of “a figure, a landscape which I see, a chord which I hear, warmth”, and the like.²⁸⁰ On the other hand, according to Brentano, there are phenomena that we encounter only via “inner perception” of our own living experience and by means of in-feeling (or empathetic) perception of others’ experience. Brentano calls these appearances “mental [*psychischen*] phenomena”. They include the appearances of “hearing”, “seeing”, “feeling” and other sensory and imaginary “act[s] of presentation”; they include the appearances of “judging”, “recollecting”, “expecting”, “inferring”, “opining” and “doubting”; and they include the appearances of acts of “joy, fear, hope, courage, despair, ... love, hate, desire”, and so on.²⁸¹ Because we are aware that we live

²⁷⁹ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 77. We need not fully accept Brentano’s strict separation of mental and physical phenomena in order to adopt important elements of the description to which it leads. As we will see, the tidy split of physical and mental phenomena plays a rhetorical rather than presuppositional role in establishing the Brentanian descriptions that were pivotal for Husserl’s theory of meaning.

²⁸⁰ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 80.

²⁸¹ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 79.

through such acts and because we are cognizant of aspects of such acts, we can speak with reason of their appearance. Because we know that each such act is distinct from “that which is presented” in it and because our awareness of such acts is essentially secondary, we have some basis for distinguishing the data that are available via this awareness from all that which presents itself through “physical phenomena”.²⁸²

Now, Brentano’s crucial descriptive claim is that each mental phenomenon resembles all others, and differs from all physical phenomena, in virtue of manifesting an intentional direction toward an object. He finds this orientation toward objects in the way that mental acts appear: “In presentation something is presented, ... in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on”.²⁸³ In this way, each appearance of that which is “mental” (or experiential), and no physical phenomenon, presents an act’s object as well as an act. Or such is Brentano’s claim: “every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself”, and only mental phenomena thus manifest a “reference to a content”,²⁸⁴ no mental phenomena lacks this feature of intentionality, and “no physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it”.²⁸⁵ If we prefer to speak in terms of experiences and their aspects, we may put the same claim thus: every experiential item is intentionally oriented toward a referent or field distinct from itself, and only experiential items are thus intentionally open to, or directed at, some other. Do these equivalent assertions withstand reflection on our own experience?

²⁸² Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 79.

²⁸³ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 88.

²⁸⁴ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, pp. 88-89. Though Husserl found himself “force[d] to abandon the terminology” of “mental phenomena” and the intentional “inclusion” of an object, he still “adhere[d] to Brentano’s essential characterization” of intentionality to such an extent that we may overlook those “departures” here (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 11, p. 97).

²⁸⁵ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 89.

We might have some qualms regarding the conditional according to which x must be intentional if x presents itself via mental phenomena. For it seems that there are saliently different sorts of experiential items — that there are non-intentional as well as intentional items that can only achieve focal status through reflection or empathy. Among the realities the appearances of which are mental rather than physical phenomena, it seems we should include not only whole, concrete experiences, which Brentano called “mental acts”, but also the component aspects of those acts.²⁸⁶ And it seems that certain act-components such as sensations, which show up within our reflection by way of mental phenomena, might not yet be intentional. Husserl, at least, objected to the conditional in question on the grounds that sensations are not intentional items. He claimed that sensations, which no doubt comprise a class of experiential items, instead only acquire a kind of intentional relation to an object when they are subjected to an act of apprehension — an “objectifying interpretation”.²⁸⁷ To follow the path to Husserl’s 1900-01 view of meaning, then, we need not admit that every component of every experience is intentional. We need not fully include the experiential within the intentional. It is rather enough for the purposes of Husserl’s theory of meaning merely if, as Husserl says, “in perception something is perceived, in imagination, something imagined, in a statement something stated, in love something loved”, and so on.²⁸⁸ It is sufficient if such whole conscious experiences (or “mental acts”) are experiences of ___.

²⁸⁶ Brentano crucially employs the language of “mental acts” when first presenting his concept of mental phenomena. See *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, pp. 79-80.

²⁸⁷ On the non-intentionality of sensations, see *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 10, p. 97. (Husserl there writes: “That not all experiences are intentional is proved by sensations and sensational complexes”.) On what Findlay calls the “objectifying interpretation” of sensations, see *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 2, p. 83. (Findlay could have chosen a better translation for *Auffassung* than “interpretation”, given the difference between the sensations to which our acts of sense-perception apply, on the one hand, and the texts to which our acts of interpretation apply, on the other hand.)

²⁸⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. V, § 10, p. 95.

Thus we need not — and indeed Husserl thinks we should not — strictly adhere to Brentano's claim that, if x is an experiential item, then x is intentional.

What matters much more for our purposes is whether the converse conditional holds true. What matters, in other words, is whether the only phenomena that manifest intentionality are mental phenomena. And it does in fact seem to hold that, if x is intentional, then x is an experiential item. For it is solely in reflection on one's own living experience and in attention to another's experience that we fix our focus on what is intentionally directed at an object or intentionally open to a field. In contrast, those things that are only objects of experience, rather than acts or act-aspects, plainly do not possess intentionality. Hills are not given a sensory or imaginary world; clouds have no access to a domain of ideas. Entities that do not belong to the set of experiential items simply are not *oriented* or *open* or *directed* in the respect that consciousness essentially is.

Granted, there are liminal cases. Some entities that can be objects of our focus apart from any attention to mental acts do possess a kind of orientation. And their orientation to something other than themselves might tempt us to regard these entities as intentional. Yet these entities possess their particular kind of direction solely in virtue of experience; their referential function can only be clarified in terms of experience. For example, computers that run thought-like programs, representational works of art and simple signs are all, in some sense, about something other than themselves. Whether by physical pointing or pictorial resemblance or complex processes of computation, these things refer us to something distinct from their own component materials. However, these entities do not by themselves intend that to which they point; they rather become

involved in an intentional kind of orientation solely by functioning as media for conscious experience. Signs, for example, derive their referential character from the signifying intentions of conscious beings. They bear the traces of intentionality, but they cease to make reference and lose their character as signs to the extent that we take them by themselves, in abstraction from conscious experience. Paintings, likewise, lose any representational character that they possess, and even amount to nothing more than paint scattered across a surface, insofar as we consider them in abstraction from all creators and viewers. Computers are similarly reduced to nothing more than mechanical converters, exchanging input for output, insofar as we regard them in abstraction from the conscious beings for whom things may be presented and for whom the terminus of calculations can be significant. Whatever orientation such things would possess apart from experience no more constitutes an intentional mode of reference than a bowl's openness to liquid constitutes an intentional openness to a field of manifestation. Instead, the referential character that we recognize in signs, paintings and computers derives from, and hinges on, referential experience. So these liminal cases require only a nuanced specification, rather than any *ad hoc* revision, of the general thesis at issue. We can still say that what is intentional must be either a whole experience or a dependent aspect of a concrete experience; we need only amend to this thesis a consequence that it already suggests, namely that whatever bears the trace of intentionality can do so solely insofar as it is dependent on experience.

It thus follows from reflective description that every mental act is intentional (even though quite possibly not every aspect of such acts is intentional), and conversely that whatever is intentional is either a mental act or an aspect of such an act.

Intentionality and experience may not be equivalent notions, in that certain non-intentional aspects of mental acts may give the experiential a broader extension than the intentional. Yet all whole experiences are intentional and all that is intentional is also experiential. To that extent, Brentano's definition of mental phenomena withstands critical scrutiny. The definition expresses a typically overlooked but essential character of our mental acts, and effectively demarcates the sphere of intentionality within that of living experience. What is more, this definition historically provided a founding insight for Husserl's phenomenology of logic. In order to see how the more psychological side of Husserl's semantics follows from that definition, however, we should first consider also how Brentano divides up the mental acts that appear via mental phenomena. For that classification provided another founding insight, as well as the point of departure, on the basis of which Husserl constructed his more psychological account of meaning.

Brentano's classification of mental acts is the broadest division *within* his psychology. It falls just one tier beneath the distinction that delimits the field of psychology from that of physical science; and it subsumes in turn all of Brentano's more specific subdivisions of mental phenomena. What Brentano proposes, in his basic division of mental phenomena, is that there are exactly three genera of mental acts. There is a class of "mere presentations", in which "something appears to us" without yet being affirmed or denied, loved or hated; there is a class of judgments, which involve not only the presentation of a content but also its "acceptance (as true) or rejection (as false)"; and there are acts of "love and hate", which go beyond presentation by involving also "emotions", "interest", "wish[es]", or the like.²⁸⁹ Brentano understands this last class of mental phenomena as the field of ethics; he regards the class of judgments as the

²⁸⁹ Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, pp. 198-99.

field of logic; and he identifies the capacity for presentation as the foundation for the other mental faculties. Does this classification withstand reflection on our experience?

We might quibble with the points at which Brentano draws his divisions. We might object that he splits the field of mental acts at the wrong joints. We might ask if there are not more or fewer than three basic categories of mental phenomena. But what we cannot very well contest is that Brentano's three categories comprise modes of intentional orientation. For we do indeed find ourselves oriented to the world, directed to a variety of objects in a plethora of ways, and what Brentano calls "judgment", "presentation" and "love and hate" are clearly among the ways (if not exhaustive of the ways) in which we may be so oriented. If I stare blankly and idly at a painting, for example, my orientation toward it is at minimum one of presentation. If I then take an interest in the painting, I enact a different, aesthetically appreciative mode of orientation to the same object. If I judge, in a disinterested way, that the painting adheres to a certain artist or school's principles of composition, I enact another distinctive orientation toward the painting. In each case, it is hardly disputable that I am engaged in a type of intention. Brentano's contention that presentation, judgment and the like are kinds of experience is therefore well founded.

Further, that descriptively founded contention held no small significance for Husserl's theory of meaning. For whether or not all presentations and acts of love and hate are meanings, judgments, at least, plainly are. Indeed, logicians no less than psychologists readily regard judgments as a model class of meanings.²⁹⁰ Given Brentano's demonstration that at least certain judgments are experiences, then, it should

²⁹⁰ While Bolzano notably contended that judgments and presentations (*Vorstellungen*) alike are meanings, logic perhaps deals primarily in judgments. Sentential logic, at least, takes as its primary subject matter judgments that may hold true and that stand in relationships of deductive consequence to one another.

follow for all parties that an exemplary subgroup of meanings are experiences.

Brentano's descriptive classification of mental phenomena thus provides an evidential basis for the more psychological sort of semantics at work in the later *Logical Investigations*, and might even seem to suggest that meanings in general are mental acts.

However, Brentano's classification of mental phenomena certainly does not establish on its own that meaning is entirely experiential. Much less does it entail that all meanings are concrete experiences. The description at work in Brentano's classification shows that some judgments are experiences and that judgment is a kind of experience; yet judgment may thus function as a sort of experience without that function exhausting its nature. We may deduce from Brentano's classification that many meanings are experiences; but it does not follow that meanings are exclusively either experiences or aspects of experience. On the contrary, thoroughgoing advocates of a supposedly mind-independent sphere of "meanings in themselves" may consistently affirm the same semantic thesis for which Brentano's descriptive classification provides a secure basis. Bolzano, for example, may readily grant, without falling into incoherence, that certain meanings are mental acts.²⁹¹ To be consistent, Bolzano merely needs to call these meaning-acts "subjective", and to contrast them with an "objective" class of presentations and judgments that he claims are independent of all mental acts. Even given that there is a large, "subjective" class of meanings that are experiences, then, why suppose that the ideas and propositions that Bolzano called "objective" meanings are also experiential items? Why think that both classes of meanings — logic's "objective" class as well as psychology's "subjective" class — are either experiences or dependent on experience?

²⁹¹ Indeed, as we have seen, the fact that some meanings are experiences does not only function as a point of departure for Husserl's Brentanian account of meaning; it also functions as a starting point for Husserl's Bolzanian account of meaning's independence from our experience.

Husserl found an answer to this question in Brentano's definition of mental phenomena. He found it, more precisely, in the compelling description that partly constitutes that definition. Recall Brentano's descriptive claim that whatever is intentional is experiential. In some cases, as we saw, that description clearly holds: entities that are only objects of experience, such as walls, tables and chairs, plainly do not possess intentionality, whereas our whole experiences (say, of seeing walls, tables and chairs) do have an intentional orientation. There were also liminal cases to which a dualistic description did not as easily apply. But while plaques and portraits and other such cases perhaps undermined Brentano's tidy separation of mental and physical phenomena, they, too, conformed to the essence of Brentano's description. For these things that function as media of reference and thereby bear the stamp of intentional acts are divested of their referential role and thus stripped of their intentional residue, as we saw, insofar as they are severed from the experiences in which they exercise their referential function. Borderline cases thus confirmed Brentano's descriptive claim that x is experiential if x is intentional; they showed that x can bear the referential mark of intentionality only insofar as x is an experience or depends on experience.

Now, in light of that description, consider the status that objective meanings have with respect to experience. Brentano's description shows how the sphere of experience circumscribes that of reference: items can only have a referential character to the extent that they are, or depend on, experience(s). Given that circumscription, then, it follows that an objective signification that is essentially referential cannot be apart from some experience(s). Moreover, objective meanings in general are referential by their nature. So much is evident from the two following reflections. First, objective significations,

like signs and pictures, direct us to a referent. Whether we focus on the reiterable significations of noun-phrases, such as “bright afternoon” and “mountain lake”, or those of assertoric sentences, such as “the moose is running”, it is plain that the meanings to which we refer primarily function as media of reference. Second, objective meanings, unlike paintings and signs, are fully constituted by that referential function. Of course, inkblots and sound complexes and other things that function as signs are referential, insofar as they are signs; but all such things that function as signs may be distinguished from their signifying function. In contrast, there are no things that function as objective significations, no underlying materials to divorce from that referential function. Thus, objective meanings are constitutively and ineradicably referential. To be sure, there may be no existing referent for a given reiterable concept, and no state of affairs to fulfill a given proposition. But there can be no concepts or propositions without some act(s) of reference, no objective meaning apart from some act(s) of meaning. In that sense, objective significations are fully dependent on the living experience of meaning.²⁹²

Such was the almost psychologistic conclusion at which Husserl arrived by means of his teacher’s psychological descriptions. In Brentano’s classification of mental phenomena, Husserl found grounds for the fairly obvious but nonetheless hugely important understanding that certain (“subjective”) meanings are intentional experiences. In Brentano’s definition of mental phenomena, Husserl found a descriptive demonstration that any remaining (“objective”) group of meanings must also be experiential. Together these descriptions gave Husserl reason to regard every meaning as either an experience or

²⁹² Despite Brentano’s much-discussed aversion to most things Kantian, Brentano and Husserl are in agreement with the early Kant on this point. For Kant too had suggested that, while there may be no existing referent for a given concept, objective significations in general depend on some existing act(s) of reference (Cf. Kant’s 1763 *Only Possible Proof-Ground*, 2:78-79). Moreover, this point on which they agreed spurred Kant and Husserl alike toward transcendental methodological developments.

a dependent aspect of some experience(s). They showed that acts of meaning constitute the concrete basis without reference to which all of our talk about objective meanings is inevitably abstract. They established that there could be no objective meaning apart from some experience(s) of meaning. And they thereby provided insights at variance with those that Husserl had inherited from Bolzano, setting Husserl's view of meaning at odds with itself.

4.4: Meaning as paradox: conflicts between logical and psychological insights

Had Husserl entirely accepted both Brentano and Bolzano's theories of meaning, he would have been forced into contradictions. For those two theories, when taken in full, do not only represent the sort of tensed viewpoints that may turn out to be complementary. Instead, the two thinkers who were the primary influences on Husserl's theory of meaning also made bluntly incompatible claims about its subject matter. On the one hand, Bolzano contended that there are logical entities "in themselves". He did not only defend Husserl's view that there are objective concepts, judgments and truths; he also denied that the sphere of logical objects depends on any experience. On the other hand, Brentano claimed that there are no objective significations. He did not merely hold, with Husserl, that reiterable concepts and judgments are entirely dependent on some intentional experience(s); he rather denied that we should speak of significations at all unless we are referring to acts of signification.²⁹³ Clearly, then, we cannot coherently conjoin every claim from Brentano and Bolzano's theories of meaning.²⁹⁴

²⁹³ This stronger stance is evident in Brentano's assertion that "logic ... has psychology as its source" (*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 21). It is evident when he includes the "characteristics and laws of judgments" within the "essential fields of psychology" (*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, foreword to the 1874 edition, p. xv.). And it is evident again in Brentano's claim that "judgment belongs to

Fortunately, the synthetic reach of Husserl's composite semantics extends only to the genuine insights that his primary influences achieved from their disparate vantage points. Husserl did not maintain, and did not seek to reconcile, every thesis that his mentors expressed. On the contrary, the same well-founded claims concerning meaning that Husserl appropriated from his mentors gave him reason to reject some of their less defensible views. In particular, Bolzano's cogent case that objective significations transcend our passing experiences prevented Husserl from adopting Brentano's decision to regard meaning solely as an act; and, conversely, Husserl's descriptive psychological insight that objective meanings depend on living experience kept him from affirming Bolzano's speculation that such meanings are independent of all experience.

Still, even by accepting only those Bolzanian and Brentanian insights that I have detailed in sections 4.2 and 4.3, Husserl was left with a significant dissonance. Bolzano's cogent arguments had sounded an almost logicist note, showing that objective meaning is independent of our thought. Brentano's descriptions had sounded an almost psychologistic note by effectively demonstrating that all meaning is or depends on some

the field of psychology ... and is directly accessible to scientific inquiry only in this domain" (*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 307; from a 1911 appendix to *The Classification of Mental Phenomena*). On these points Husserl's Bolzanian "development [had] led to [his] drawing apart" from Brentano; it had led Husserl to see there are at least some judgments (or propositions) that we have neither verified nor articulated, which thus are inaccessible to our psychological reflection (Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the first edition). Granted, Husserl and Brentano alike consistently opposed the psychologistic "theory according to which beings other than men could have insights which are precisely the opposite of our own"; they both rejected the psychologistic view that "confuse[s] logical validity with the genetic necessity of a thought, whether for the individual or the human species"; and they both granted "that psychology has anything at all to contribute to epistemology and logic" (Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 307; from a 1911 appendix to *The Classification of Mental Phenomena*). But, as Robin Rollinger puts it, "... Brentano remained unconvinced that it was necessary to posit propositions and other Bolzanian "thought-things" in order to rescue logic from relativism" ("Brentano and Husserl", *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano*, pp. 267). Thus, as Rollinger notes, Brentano completed the whole of his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* "... without the slightest mention of propositions", and instead depicted judgment solely as "an act of consciousness" ("Brentano and Husserl", p. 260).

²⁹⁴ Can a reductive psychological account of logical objects cohere with the insistence that logical objects are absolutely independent from experience? It seems not, even when we consider Brentano's unusually broad notion of psychology and correspondingly unusual type of psychological reductionism.

act(s) of reference. By acknowledging both of these discordant semantic insights, Husserl forced himself to walk a thin line.

It is almost as though Husserl had tried to affirm Protagoras' well-known claim, according to which "man is the measure of all things", and had also caustically asked, with Socrates, if it would be any less absurd to regard "a pig" as "the measure of all things".²⁹⁵ Husserl knew why Socrates scoffed. He had learned from Bolzano that the sphere of true propositions does not depend on our epistemically limited cognitive capacity — that human beings, like pigs, are not "the measure of things that are, that they are", nor "of the things that are not, that they are not".²⁹⁶ Yet Husserl also knew that Protagoras' famous claim is "not mere babbling".²⁹⁷ He had learned from Brentano that there is some reason to suspect that human beings are the measure of truth, and that there is indeed better reason to suspect humans than "pigs" and other "things that have sensation" of being this criterion.²⁹⁸ For Husserl had realized, thanks to Brentano's descriptions, that there could be no objective meanings (including truths) without intentional experience, and more specifically that there could be no objective meanings without a categorial kind of intentional experience.²⁹⁹

Husserl was thus forced by genuine insights into a philosophical problem that jeopardized his nascent phenomenological project. The study of meaning that had

²⁹⁵ According to Plato's *Theaetetus* (151e, 160c-d and 161c), Protagoras made his famous claim "at the beginning of his book *Truth*", a book which we no longer possess. The question that I quote Socrates effectively poses at 161c of Plato's *Theaetetus*, by offering the following retort to Protagoras' famous doctrine: "I don't see why he does not say ... that a pig or a dog-faced baboon or some still-stranger creature of those that have sensations is the measure of all things" (trans. Harold Fowler).

²⁹⁶ *Theaetetus*, 151e.

²⁹⁷ As Socrates says with reference to Protagoras' claim that "man is the measure", "it is likely ... that a wise man is not merely babbling" (*Theaetetus*, 152b). Socrates' apparently caustic question indirectly reveals the truth underlying Protagoras' (less than entirely valid) claim.

²⁹⁸ *Theaetetus*, 161c.

²⁹⁹ Brentano seems to have echoed Protagoras intentionally on this point, stating that "the man who judges with evidence is the measure of all things" (quoted by Velarde-Mayol, op. cit., p. 56).

culminated in his *Logical Investigations* left him with apparently conflicting realizations. Where Bolzano had offered proofs showing the independence of objective meanings from our passing experiences of meaning, Brentano had offered descriptions that exposed meaning as an experience on which objective meanings depend. And these arguments and descriptions drove Husserl to accept apparently competing theories. But while Husserl was thus pushed to publish two discrepant views of meaning as his own, he did not yet, in his *Investigations*, resolve the discord that his dyadic semantics posed. Indeed, Husserl in his 1900-01 publication did not even explicitly recognize the discord between the two sides of his theory of meaning as such. In that “breakthrough” work, he instead left the problem that threatened his philosophical project with incoherence both inexplicit and unresolved.

5: From a two-faced semantics through a two-step reduction to a “two-sided” logic

5.1: A methodological development

Though Husserl did not openly address the discord between his Brentanian and Bolzanian semantic insights within his “breakthrough” work, the same discord became central to the phenomenological program. For the discrepancy within Husserl’s dyadic semantics shaped his phenomenological method; and that method then served, in turn, to partly confirm the theory of meaning from which it arose, and to resolve that theory’s internal dissonance. This circular development may be parsed by reference to three of Husserl’s major publications, in roughly the following way. First, in the *Investigations* of 1900-01, Husserl faced the problem of how to come to terms with the dyadic phenomenon of meaning. Next, that problem then precipitated a two-step method, which

Husserl perhaps most famously presented in the first volume of his *Ideas Concerning Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, of 1913.³⁰⁰ Finally, when Husserl then applied that two-step method to the field of logic, as he did throughout the 1929 work titled *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, he found that his procedure not only reinforced his earlier understanding of signification as fundamentally “two-sided”, but also explained why meaning displays those two sides.³⁰¹

In this chapter, I trace in greater detail the circular relation between Husserl’s method and theory of meaning. In section 5.2, I examine how the semantic studies that Husserl published in 1900-01 determined the contours of the method that he articulated in 1913. In 5.3, I examine how Husserl’s method, when employed for the 1929 publication that Husserl devoted exclusively to logical issues, substantiated the basic tenets that he had endorsed with respect to signification when he published his first book of logical studies. In 5.4, I examine how Husserl’s method led to his resolution of the dissonance between his Brentanian and Bolzanian semantic insights. Then, finally, given that circular reasoning is suspect, I use section 5.5 to pose the critical question that the reciprocity between Husserl’s method and conclusions must prompt. I there consider if it was not viciously circular for Husserl to derive conclusions about meaning by means of his method — given that Husserl’s method was, in important respects, a product of his theory of meaning.

³⁰⁰ Husserl. *Ideas Concerning Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy, volume I: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson. London: Collier, 1969 [1913].

³⁰¹ Husserl. *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. Trans. Dorion Cairns. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969 [1929]. The language of “two-sidedness” emerges in the 1929 *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (see, e.g., §§ 8-9), but that language expresses the same understanding that Husserl had already begun to achieve in 1901.

5.2: Origins of the eidetic and transcendental reductions

We are told that the *Logical Investigations* were the “breakthrough” to Husserl’s phenomenological program. But while we would thus expect the phenomenological method to be an accomplishment of the *Investigations*, there is no thorough or explicit account of that method in Husserl’s 1900-01 text.³⁰² Instead, Husserl was able to achieve a full statement of his method only after the *Investigations* were complete.³⁰³ After also sketching a budding concept of phenomenology in lectures that he gave during the first decade of the twentieth century, Husserl first articulated his methodology for the reading public in the well-known 1913 *Ideas* publication subtitled *General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (hereafter: *Ideas I*).³⁰⁴ In what way, then, were the 1900-01 *Investigations* the breakthrough to the method articulated in 1913?

³⁰² As Jocelyn Benoist notes in his “Phénoménologie et ontologie dans les Recherches logiques” (*La représentation vide suivi de Les Recherches logiques, une œuvre de percée.*, ed. J. Benoist and J.-F. Courtine (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), p. 112), a reading of (the 1901 edition of) the *Investigations* evidences an “under-determination of the idea of phenomenology. Its first use lacks lucidity. Nowhere in the work does one find a definition in good and due form. On the contrary, in reading the *Logical Investigations*, it is difficult to know what is phenomenological. One can reconstruct what is phenomenological only by an examination of what Husserl does.” As Husserl notes in his foreword to the second edition of the *Investigations*, the few sections on the idea of phenomenology contained in the introduction to Investigation I (as in Findlay’s English translation) are the result of the thorough “revision” done in 1913. Whereas very little is said in the *Investigations* about a phenomenological method, however, explicit theses regarding meaning abound. The views of meaning thus precede (and, I will argue, gave rise to) a clarified phenomenological method.

³⁰³ Of course, even this statement of Husserl’s method was only as “full” or complete as a provisional exposition can be; it would be regularly modified through the course of Husserl’s later work. Still, *Ideas I* appears to be the first publication in which Husserl provides a conception of his program and method that would remain roughly intact, despite all of his modifications. It represents a pivotal development in Husserl’s methodology, wherein Husserl first clarifies that phenomenology is an eidetic and transcendental discipline.

³⁰⁴ Although the first volume of *Ideas* is the best-known early exposition of the phenomenological method, an early concept of that method is already depicted in the 1907 course of lectures titled *The Idea of Phenomenology* and the 1906-07 lecture-course, *Introduction to Logic and Theory of Knowledge*, and is already present in Husserl’s private writings as early as 1905 (cf. Husserl’s history in *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (trans. David Carr, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), especially at p. 243, regarding his first “explicit self-consciousness” of his method); see also Dermot Moran and Joseph Cohen, *Husserl Dictionary* (New York: Continuum, 2012), p. 273).

As we have seen, the *Investigations*, taken cumulatively, produce a discord in their presentation of meaning that they then leave provocatively unresolved. This discord incited a reception that was hostile on two fronts: some dismissive critics complained of an “unfruitful and sterile [logical] formalism” at the same time that others charged Husserl with “a relapse into psychology” (and, more precisely, into psychologism).³⁰⁵ Moreover, even for those who would seek to understand Husserl’s intent before disparaging his work, the discord within Husserl’s account of meaning elicits a question about that account’s coherence. Even charitable readers are forced to ask: how could Husserl posit, and claim to study, an intentional basis of objective meaning, without thereby embracing the psychologistic claim that meaning and truth depend on our passing experience?³⁰⁶

In *Ideas I*, we see the response: phenomenology, Husserl claims, has reflective access to a theoretical field of intentionality that is not identical to the psychologist’s field of real, factual experiences.³⁰⁷ By reason of this access, phenomenology would be capable of giving non-psychologistic accounts of an intentional ground of objectivity. But what is this not-exactly-psychological field of intentionality? And how could phenomenology achieve access to it?

³⁰⁵ The first attack came from Melchior Palágyi, a critic whom I have already mentioned, who, according to Husserl, entirely failed to notice the later *Investigations*’ attempted “elucidation of the origin of the logical concepts” (cited by Husserl in his “A Reply to a Critic”). The wording of the second attack is Heidegger’s (*History of the Concept of Time*, trans. Ted Kisiel (Indiana University Press, 2009 [1925]), p. 24), but Heidegger uses these words to represent a judgment of Paul Natorp’s. As noted before, Husserl refers to this second critique too, though without mentioning Natorp, as “the often heard, but to [his] mind grotesque reproach, that [he] may have rejected psychologism sharply in the first volume of [his] work, but that [he] fell back into psychologism in the second” (*Logical Investigations*, foreword to the second edition of the sixth Investigation, p. 178).

³⁰⁶ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the second edition of the sixth Investigation.

³⁰⁷ Compare Husserl’s claim, in the Introduction to *Ideas I*, that the phenomenological method “make[s] the [“general structures” of the] transcendently purified consciousness with its essential correlates perceptible and accessible” (p. 41).

If we are to do phenomenology and gain access to its distinctive domain, according to Husserl's 1913 work, we must engage in an unusual course of thought that essentially involves two steps. One of these steps Husserl calls "transcendental". The other he calls "eidetic". Together they comprise the "phenomenological reduction".³⁰⁸ That is, the two steps together comprise the specifically phenomenological method, by means of which a reflection on our living experience can purportedly access a domain of research that differs from the real, factual experiences at issue in psychology.

The procedure for the "transcendental" component of Husserl's method is as follows. To begin, employ existential "doubt" as a "device of method"; set well-justified attributions of existence "out of action".³⁰⁹ Most importantly, hold back from (a) our natural tendency to ascribe existence to the appearing world and (b) our habit of regarding ourselves as existing members of an existing world. Without any intention to deny these existential theses, "bracket" them: put them out of play.³¹⁰ Next, while thus suspending the operation of our belief in the existence of much of what appears, consider the nature of appearance itself. That is, while standing back from what Husserl calls "the

³⁰⁸ While Husserl formulates the phenomenological reduction(s) somewhat differently in different texts, he introduces it as a two-part procedure, which involves transcendental and eidetic components, both in the 1913 introduction to *Ideas I* (pp. 39-41) and in the 1931 preface to the English edition of *Ideas I* (pp. 5-8). For all of the divergent shapes that the phenomenological method undertook in Husserl's thought after 1913, he still conceived of phenomenology in 1931 as "a science of the eidetic essence of a transcendental subject", which is to say that he still saw his as a discipline of thought requiring both "the reduction to the transcendental and, with it, [the] further reduction to the Eidos" (*Ideas I*, Preface to the 1931 English Edition, p. 7).

³⁰⁹ *Ideas I*, § 31, pp. 97-98.

³¹⁰ *Ideas I*, §§ 31, 32. To be clear, Husserl does not believe that these existential theses are false. He "does not deny the positive existence of the real [*realen*] world and of nature"; on the contrary, he says that the world's existence "is quite indubitable", and acknowledges that "everyone accepts [the world], and with undeniable right, as actually existing" (*Ideas I*, Author's Preface to the 1931 English Edition, p. 14). But Husserl can very well ask how we achieve our sense that the world exists — how that sense of existence is constituted, and how our thought can have objects that transcend it — without skeptically doubting the world's factual existence. For, while our belief that the world exists is extraordinarily well founded, it is not on that account incapable of reflective examination. Instead, Husserl's surely understandable query of how the world can appear to us essentially includes as a sub-query the issue of how the world can appear to us *as existing* (rather than as, say, illusory, or merely supposed).

standpoint of everyday life”, wherein we take “the world as it confronts us” for granted, and wherein we understand our mental activity as an existent part of the world, “lay bare the presuppositions essential to this viewpoint”.³¹¹ Rather than presuming that there is an existing world and that there are beings within the world for which the world appears, as we move on to pose questions about the world and the beings within it, broach instead the more fundamental question of how it is possible that the world appears at all.³¹²

This psychology does not do. For, as *Ideas I* puts it, “psychology is a science of realities [*Realitäten*]”; it concerns itself with mental events that “take their place with the real subjects to which they belong in the one spatio-temporal world”, and just “in so far as [these mental events] have real existence [*Dasein*]”.³¹³ That is, psychology sets itself the task of investigating mental events to the extent that they are parts of the natural world; it asks, for example, how our mental events are causally related to various stimuli and behaviors and neural occurrences. In attending to conscious processes, then, the psychologist typically assumes a perspective that sees only real parts of the world sitting external to other real parts of the world,³¹⁴ and bypasses the question of how the transcendent field of experience, with all of its parts, is available to consciousness. In order to do phenomenology, in contrast, the psychologist would have to ask reflectively (or, in the language of *Ideas I*, “transcendentally”) how any transcendent objects, and

³¹¹ *Ideas I*, Introduction, p. 40.

³¹² Cf. *Ideas I*, § 53.

³¹³ *Ideas I*, Introduction, pp. 39-40.

³¹⁴ Following Husserl, Merleau-Ponty described the psychological perspective in these terms. He noted that the psychologist meets so many beings and pieces that stand (“*partes extra partes*”) in “only external and mechanical relations” to one another, related if at all as “function to variable”, and often by the efficient causality of “motion received and transmitted” (*Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 84). Merleau-Ponty also noted, following Husserl, that this “objective” approach, by taking consciousness too as “no more than a sector of being”, cannot consider how that consciousness might have “an inner communication with the world” (*ibid.*, pp. 68, 111). It cannot, then, adequately consider “the problem of the constitution of the world”, which, as Husserl clarifies in *Ideas I*, it is phenomenology’s task to consider (*ibid.*, p. 69).

indeed a whole publicly observable “objective field”, are available for investigation to his or her own consciousness.³¹⁵

The phenomenological method is thus essentially “reflective”, in a way that psychology is not.³¹⁶ Whereas psychology avoids self-critical questions and so counts among the disciplines that Husserl classes (“in a good sense” and “without ... any depreciation”) as “dogmatic”, phenomenology poses what Husserl calls questions of an “epistemological” or “specifically philosophical” type.³¹⁷ Psychology self-confidently seeks results, wasting little or no time with “skeptical problems relating to the possibility of knowledge”; phenomenology temporarily suspends psychology’s confidence and places psychological results into brackets, taking the skeptical challenge seriously. Or, to be more precise, phenomenology takes the skeptical challenge *constructively*: without adopting the skeptic’s negative view of established scientific claims, it heeds the skeptic’s demand to put aside existing bodies of knowledge, so that it may thereby ask how knowledge is possible. In what I have presented as the first step of Husserl’s 1913 method, then, which Husserl at that time and afterward called the “transcendental reduction”, phenomenology delays the study of any particular region of objects, and instead considers “the transcendence that the objects of knowledge claim to possess in relation to knowledge itself”.³¹⁸

Once this “reflective” and “epistemological” change of orientation is made, subjectivity then comes into focus as that which Husserl calls “transcendental

³¹⁵ *Ideas I*, § 86. On “specifically philosophical” questions see Robert Sokolowski, “Husserl on First Philosophy”, § 3, “Husserl’s Discovery of Philosophical Discourse”, and “The Method of Philosophy: Making Distinctions”.

³¹⁶ According to § 77 of *Ideas I*, “phenomenological method proceeds entirely through acts of reflection” (p. 197).

³¹⁷ *Ideas I*, § 26, pp. 86-88.

³¹⁸ *Ideas I*, § 26, p. 87.

subjectivity”.³¹⁹ In other words, subjectivity then presents itself as that for which, a *step over (transcendere)* from which, there is an appearing field.³²⁰ Correlatively, while our presumption that the world exists is placed into brackets, we are left nonetheless with the world’s appearance. That is, though we have adopted a position from which we do not presume the existence of that which appears to exist, we still have the phenomena: we still have presentations of sensuous individuals and backgrounds, of imaginary and hallucinatory objects, of states of affairs, of objective significations, of essences, and so on, as data that are variously given within an experiential field. We are thus left, in Husserl’s language, with “unities of sense”.³²¹ Some of these unities present themselves as “valid”; others are merely supposed. But they all count as what Husserl calls “noemata”: they are all correlates of what we might call mental events or living experiences and what Husserl calls “noeses” (as short for stages of *nous*). By means of the phenomenological method’s transcendental step, then, we have a thoroughly intentional frame of reference. In place of the picture of an all-encompassing thing-based world, which psychology operatively assumes, we have a dyadic and fundamentally subjective framework, and a new field of research. On one side (the “noematic” side), we have the objects of every other epistemic enterprise, as so many transcendent unities of sense; and, on the other side (the “noetic” side), we have a domain of subjectivity

³¹⁹ *Ideas I*, § 26, p. 87. For Husserl’s depiction of the reduction as an “epistemological” procedure, see also his claim that “the phenomenological reduction ... is the ultimate source for the only conceivable solution of the deepest problems of knowledge” (*Ideas I*, § 97, p. 263).

³²⁰ Compare Husserl’s characterization of “what can remain over when the whole world is bracketed”: “Consciousness in itself has a being of its own which in its absolute uniqueness of nature remains unaffected by the phenomenological disconnection. It therefore remains over ... as a region of being which ... can become in fact the field of a new science — the science of phenomenology” (*Ideas I*, § 33, pp. 101-102).

³²¹ For example, Husserl claims that the terms “reality and world” come to offer themselves, within the reflective orientation achieved by the transcendental reduction, simply as “the titles for certain valid unities of sense” (*Ideas I*, § 55, p. 153).

importantly different from that which psychology studies: we have subjectivity considered as that for which unities of sense are constituted. But does the step into this frame of reference, by itself, differentiate Husserl's phenomenology from psychologism? Does this step by itself show us how Husserl could, without any "relapse" into psychologism, claim that objective meaning depends on meaning *qua* act?

On the contrary, the transcendental reduction on its own does not necessarily exclude psychologism. Granted, the reflective move within Husserl's method prevents its practitioners from interpreting, say, neuroscientific objects as the ground of propositions and truths. For if we place our belief in the existence of the human nervous system into brackets, we would then be obliged to explain, without presupposing any conclusions derived from neuroscientific inquiry, how a neuroscientist can experience the objects comprising his or her field of study. Our attempts to explain experience and judgment in terms of the human brain would then be preempted by a demand to do just the opposite — and so we would be blocked from claiming that logical objects are only functions of human brain processes. But the transcendental reduction does not preclude all forms of psychologism. Consider, for example, a transcendental orientation of the sort that Hume deploys. Hume's genetic epistemology is a transcendental project: Hume poses constitutional questions, asking how the objects of our perception and thought ("impressions" and "ideas") come to be; and, although this is not only a "device of method" for Hume as it is for Husserl, Hume temporarily suspends the belief that there is a world of substances standing in causal relations with one another. Yet, by adopting this transcendental orientation, Hume is certainly not prevented from reductively denying that there are general meanings of the sort that Bolzano and Husserl affirm. Instead, Hume

programmatically seeks to reduce such media of thought to so many fleeting psychological entities. He depicts all ideas as nothing but faded impressions (albeit impressions often combined into various “concatenations” and occasionally grouped under names into various associative configurations). He enacts what Husserl calls a “systematically applied psychologism”.³²² Clearly, then, a transcendental line of thought does not rule out all claims of a psychologistic sort.

Moreover, there is even a structural affinity between transcendental and psychologistic orientations. Consider characteristic psychologistic assertions. Suppose we say that logical laws are only descriptions of our patterns of thought and intellectual aversions; or suppose we say that numbers are only our “mental constructs”, and derive their being from our acts of counting.³²³ Such claims effectively offer replies to constitutional questions. For, when we reductively regard the objects of our thought (such as numbers and logical laws) as dependent on our passing thoughts, we have already shifted our attention away from a straightforward focus on objects and reflectively considered how those objects come to be given in our experience. Thus it is not only the case that rare kinds of psychologism are compatible with a transcendental orientation; it is also the case that psychological reductionism very often involves the constitutional kind of questioning that is essential to the transcendental reduction.³²⁴

³²² *Logical Investigations*, Inv. II, appendix to chapter 5, p. 302.

³²³ Husserl disparages this view of numbers in *Ideas I*, § 22 (p. 81). We need not presuppose the world’s existence in order to make psychologistic claims such as these.

³²⁴ Of course, Husserl intends his “reduction(s)” to be a restorative *return* to a certain domain of the things themselves, rather than an *elimination* of what is given in some disparaged modes of insight. (For a clear treatment of Husserl’s “reduction” as a “restoration” and a “return”, see Bob Sandmeyer, *Husserl’s Constitutive Phenomenology: Its Problem and Purpose* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 74 ff.) Still, as we can see, there are certain parallels between the restorative transcendental reduction and purposefully eliminative psychological reductionism.

So the transcendental reduction is not enough. We might follow Husserl through the transcendental aspect of his procedure and still psychologically hold that objective meaning depends on our own factual experiences. In order to gain access to phenomenology's not-exactly-psychological field, then, we must also take another step. We must undertake what Husserl called the "eidetic reduction".

The eidetic step within Husserl's phenomenological reduction serves to deflect attention from the contingent matters of fact to which transcendental reflection might otherwise lead us. It serves as a change of regard — even though it does not reverse the transcendental reduction's reflective direction. For whereas the transcendental orientation that phenomenology demands directs us reflectively back toward our own experiences, phenomenology through its eidetic step then comes to regard those factual experiences merely as examples. Specifically, the eidetic reduction requires us to take our factual experiences as examples by which we can discern the essence (or *eidos*) of experience as such. Thus, in the eidetic reduction, I do not concern myself with the "individual element" of my experience.³²⁵ The person engaged in the eidetic reduction does not pay heed to the time or location of his or her experience, or to his or her distinctive personality.³²⁶ Within the eidetic reduction, instead, we employ our individual experiences in a "merely exemplary capacity", using them much as we might use the pieces of an "abacus" in order "to grasp ... in their pure generality the series 2, 3, 4, ... as

³²⁵ According to *Ideas I*, "phenomenology ignores" the factual character of the experience on which each of us can reflect (§ 75, p. 192). Husserl does not rule out a "factual study" study of the individuals who can perform the transcendental reduction, but that "metaphysics" is not the task of Husserl's phenomenology of logic (*Ideas I*, Introduction, pp. 40-41).

³²⁶ We can imaginatively vary when, where, and for whom a given experience occurred, while keeping what is essentially the same experience in mind. According to Husserl, it is generally true that an individual, or "*tode ti*" (this here), presents a factual, "*hic et nunc*" (here and now) aspect, which can be varied while the individual's essential character remains the same (cf. *Ideas I*, §§ 2, 75). A singular *eidos* indeed must not vary, any more than does the answer to the question, "what is this individual?".

such, pure numbers as such”.³²⁷ Starting, via the transcendental reduction, from the factual consciousness to which we have reflective access, we then in the eidetic reduction place our focus on “the essential nature of the consciousness of something” and on “conscious living experience in general”.³²⁸ Having made a transcendental turn toward subjectivity, and reflectively disclosed our own consciousness as the kind of being for which there is appearance, we then attend to the structure and possibilities of transcendental subjectivity in general.

In this way, the eidetic reduction completes Husserl’s path toward a domain of inquiry that is distinct from, and that does not problematically overlap with, that of psychology. Already in the transcendental reduction Husserl achieves a distinction between psychological and phenomenological domains. Already with that reduction Husserl marks how his reflective research program turns from experience understood as one natural reality among others and toward experience understood as that for which there is appearance. That distinction between domains, however, does not erase their important overlap, insofar as both transcendental and psychological study direct an individual’s reflective inquiry toward his or her own individual experiences. It is only by the eidetic reduction that phenomenology then takes a different angle of approach to this shared field of individual experiences, directing our gaze away from the factual dimensions of those experiences, and toward the essential issue: what is experience?³²⁹

³²⁷ *Ideas I*, Husserl’s preface to the English edition, p. 5.

³²⁸ *Ideas I*, § 34, pp. 103-104.

³²⁹ Of course, the general essential question, “what is experience?” includes narrower essential questions regarding types of experience, such as “what is the experience of signs?” and “what is the experience of images?”. Further, according to Husserl, who contends that each singular experience has an “ideally selfsame essence, which like every essence could particularize itself not only *hic et nunc* but in numberless instances”, our essential questioning also includes the question, “what is *this* experience” (*Ideas I*, § 75, p. 192).

Together with a transcendental turn, then, the eidetic turn culminates in a direction of reflective inquiry that veers away not only from the natural realities typically at issue in psychology, but also from the facts with which psychology is characteristically concerned.³³⁰ When we, having already bracketed the existence of the natural world, find ourselves nonetheless reflecting on factual experiences that undoubtedly lie within psychology's field, the eidetic reduction issues the following prompt: neglect inductive concern regarding what happens to hold for so many observable factual experiences, and consider instead what must hold for each conceivable experience.³³¹ Thus, once we undertake both the eidetic and transcendental components of Husserl's method, we point ourselves toward a thoroughly distinctive domain of study. We turn toward a domain of study within which (a) psychology's transcendent realities are bracketed and (b) the factual variables of individual experiences are disregarded. We orient ourselves toward "experiences as such, considered from the standpoint of their own essence as liberated from all natural apperception".³³²

Now, this orientation represents a significant philosophical accomplishment, because it opens up the possibility of a transcendental discipline not beset by psychologistic problems. It allows us to say, *without expressing any type of psychologism*, that objective meaning has an intentional basis. For Husserl's 1913 method puts us in position to say, *in a strictly general way*, that there could be no signification if there were no experience. It puts us in position to affirm the general

³³⁰ Cf. Husserl's distinctions of the "real" from the "irreal", on the one hand, and of "fact" and "essence", on the other hand, in the introduction to *Ideas I* (pp. 39-41).

³³¹ If the transcendental turn may be pictured as a horizontal one, which sets the natural world to the side as it moves toward the distinct but overlapping field of transcendental subjectivity, then the eidetic turn is a vertical one, which neglects the superficial, factual aspect of those experiences making up the field that phenomenology and psychology hold in common, and looks toward what any possible experience (or any possible experience of a certain type or content) must be.

³³² *Ideas I*, § 79, p. 205.

dependence of objective meanings on acts of meaning. Yet it at the same time prevents us from judging that logical objects depend on a particular piece of the world or that invariant meanings require my own (recently begun) stream of experience. The transcendental reduction blocks us from interpreting any transcendent entity as the ground of logic's objective significations, and the eidetic reduction guards against our regarding the particular factual experience upon which we can reflect as that ground.³³³ Together, then, these two reductions allow us to non-psychologically posit an intentional basis of ideal unities of meaning.

In Husserl's case, moreover, the two-pronged phenomenological reduction also represents a crucial methodological achievement. For, by clarifying the boundaries of Husserl's distinctive field of research, the reduction provides a needed defense against those who confuse phenomenology with psychologism. Take those readers who dismissively charged Husserl with letting psychologism creep back into his thought in the later *Logical Investigations*. Consider what those readers would find if they then proceeded through both steps of the method that Husserl articulated in 1913. By thus complying with the phenomenological procedure, Husserl's readers would indeed find themselves regarding all unities of sense, including logical objects, as generally dependent on intentionality. No less follows from the transcendental reduction. By taking up this view of intentionality and objective signification in general, however, Husserl's readers would not further commit themselves to any of the familiar

³³³ As we have seen, the transcendental reduction does not suffice for Husserl's attempt to decisively differentiate phenomenology from all psychologism. The eidetic reduction is also a necessary aspect in "the phenomenological outlook", according to Husserl, as a means to overcome "the extraordinarily widespread disposition of our time to interpret the eidetic psychologically"; it is needed in order to overcome, i.e., the tendency to "confuse the consciousness of [objective] essences ... with these essences themselves" (*Ideas I*, § 61, p. 163).

psychologistic claims, according to which they as existing individuals, or the existent species to which they belong, are the ground of meaning. On the contrary, the transcendental and eidetic reductions rule out precisely those claims. In this way, then, the procedure that Husserl made explicit in 1913 guides his readers to a position from which they can make general claims regarding the origin of objective meaning without yet delving into any metaphysics of individuals. The phenomenological method exposes the possibility of such a position, and with it exposes the gap between psychologism, on the one hand, and Husserl's study of an intentional basis of logical objects, on the other hand. Contra the charges leveled by dismissive critics of the *Investigations*, then, Husserl's 1900-01 theory of meaning is not incoherent — and the 1913 procedure demonstrates precisely how Husserl could coherently affirm both sides of his semantics.

We can thus see how the *Investigations* constituted the “breakthrough” to the partly eidetic, partly transcendental two-step that is the phenomenological method. We can see how that two-step method is a response to strains inherent in the two-faced semantics that Husserl defended in 1900-01. The transition occurred as follows: Husserl's dyadic semantics elicited charges of incoherence and of a “relapse” into psychologism; these charges then created a demand for Husserl to clearly distinguish his own mode of inquiry from that which psychologists practice; and Husserl then presented his readers with a method which demonstrated the psychology-phenomenology distinction and which showed how Husserl could reconcile his Bolzanian and Brentanian semantic claims. Again, the question of whether those claims could cohere at all had put at risk the philosophical project inaugurated in the *Investigations*. How could Husserl claim that objective significations are *both* independent of our passing experiences of

meaning *and* nonetheless dependent on the experience of meaning? As we can see in light of his 1913 work, Husserl could have made both of those claims coherently in 1900-01 if he had been speaking about transcendental acts of meaning and transcendent (or objective) meaning in general. And the phenomenological method provides a way of speaking about precisely that general subject matter. Thus, the phenomenological method is an artifact of Husserl's struggle to demonstrate the difference between phenomenology and psychology. The two-step method articulated in 1913 is an attempt to reconcile the two facets of his dyadic semantics; it is a response to the charges of incoherence that his 1900-01 account of meaning had provoked and left unresolved.

Now, to be sure, Husserl does not apply his method only to the logical realm. Husserlian phenomenology is not concerned exclusively with categorial experience and objects. Husserl also employs his method in the study of "pre-predicative" experience; he also utilizes the transcendental and eidetic reductions in order to consider, for example, the kind of bodily presence that is available in tactile experience. He provides methodologically distinctive studies of various sensory and imaginary acts. Therefore it is not as though the phenomenological field consists solely in the categorial level of experience, nor as though Husserl's reflective description is concerned only with syntactical acts of judging, questioning, commanding, and the like. Yet while Husserl's application of his method rather extends so that all sensing and sense become an object of phenomenological study, his method nonetheless arose out of issues in the theory of meaning. The method stems from specifically semantic problems, even though the method's functionality is not confined to the logical realm.

I should also make one further, and final, qualification, in order to more adequately indicate how Husserl's two-step method was determined by his two-faced semantics. This qualification concerns the order of the transcendental and eidetic "steps" within the phenomenological procedure. In my analysis of that procedure up to this point, I have for purposes of clarity consistently presented the transcendental reduction as a first step, to be followed by what has perhaps seemed like an essentially secondary eidetic reduction. In Husserl's practice, however, this order is often reversed.³³⁴ In practice, Husserl often begins with an anti-psychologistic defense of the eidetic, and only afterward broaches a distinctively phenomenological topic, by raising the transcendental question of how the eidetic is constituted. He structures his later major logical publication, for example, so that it comprises a first half (or so), in which he investigates the transcendent and invariant *nature* of objective significations, along with a second half (or so), in which he traces objective signification's intentional and transcendental *origin*. So, too, when Husserl first introduces a reading public to his "method of "phenomenological reductions"", the eidetic reduction is given as a first step, and followed by the transcendental.³³⁵

Still, however its parts are arranged, Husserl's 1913 method is a response to his 1900-01 semantics. For, whatever their order, each of the two steps within Husserl's

³³⁴ Moreover, though we need not investigate this possibility here, the eidetic and transcendental steps that I have divided in my analysis may be inseparably tied to one another. Husserl often divides the two steps in his own analyses of his method, yet he does not hesitate to depict the reductions somewhat fluidly. The reductions often appear less like discrete methodological pieces in fixed relations and more like mutually dependent, and so only abstractly isolable, aspects of a method that they jointly comprise (cf. *Ideas I*, Introduction, p. 40, and § 88, p. 239).

³³⁵ *Ideas I*, Introduction, p. 40. When the eidetic reduction thus occupies the first place within Husserl's two-step, it functions as an initial and incomplete procedure, which is comparable in its results to an objectively oriented philosophy of logic — much as an isolated transcendental reduction might achieve only a kind of psychological conclusions. So, when Husserl undertakes the eidetic step first, it is then only in the transcendental reduction that he achieves access to the distinctively phenomenological field of study.

procedure is tied to one of the two sides comprising his dyadic theory of meaning. More precisely, the eidetic and transcendental reductions both respond to a demand that is raised by a side of Husserl's partly Bolzanian, partly Brentanian view of signification. Notice how the eidetic reduction answers to the requirements imposed by Husserl's Bolzanian insights. Through engaging in this reduction, a person effectively refuses to reject objective concepts and propositions, and is prevented from regarding invariant meanings as dependent on our passing experiences of meaning. Notice further how the transcendental reduction answers to an imperative inherent in Husserl's Brentanian insights. By engaging in the transcendental reduction, a person is turned toward the concrete, living experience of meaning; he or she is prompted to inquire reflectively about the intentional origin of meaning; and he or she is prevented from fixating on causally interacting particles in a way that occludes intentionality.

In these ways, the transcendental reduction follows from the Brentanian view of meaning, and the eidetic reduction from the Bolzanian view. Each half of phenomenology's two-step moves the person who engages in it away from a view of meaning that contradicts one half of Husserl's dyadic semantics. And the full two-step thus places its practitioner in a position to see the field of study to which Husserl had broken through via his 1900-01 semantics. The full two-step thereby attempts to show how that dyadic view of meaning could be consistent; and so the method is an attempt to answer the charges of incoherence that Husserl's semantics had incited. In its parts and as a whole, then, the procedure that Husserl recommended to his readers is essentially a response to exigencies created by his investigation of meaning.

Thus Husserl's concept of phenomenology, in its pivotal 1913 expression, stems from his 1900-01 theory of meaning. The two-step method is motivated by the two-faced semantics. However, as we have already begun to see, this means that the influence between Husserl's semantics and method did not flow only in one direction. After he articulated a method in response to problems within his theory of meaning, Husserl was not then content to leave those problems without any resolution. Instead, Husserl then deployed his method in an attempt to resolve the questions that his semantics had raised. He used his partly transcendental, partly eidetic procedure to ratify, to integrate, and to revise his partly Brentanian, partly Bolzanian view of meaning. So, in the remaining sections of this chapter, I turn to that ratification (in 5.3), integration (in 5.4), and revision (in 5.5). I examine and assess the reciprocal determination that Husserl's method exerted upon his semantics.

5.3: The legitimating result of the phenomenological reduction

5.3.1: The reduction's operation in Husserl's later theory of meaning

We might suspect that Husserl's methodologically pivotal work, during the years leading up to 1913, caused a reversal in his theory of meaning. We might suspect that the transcendental turn amounted to a total about-face. In fact, however, there is a basic continuity between Husserl's earlier and later accounts of meaning. Husserl's method, once explicit, did not cause him to reject either fundamental piece of his dyadic semantics. Instead, once Husserl achieved his enduring conception of phenomenology as an essentially eidetic and transcendental discipline, his subsequent logical studies purported to confirm the primary insights of his earlier semantics.

To find decisive evidence that Husserl's method, once accepted, would serve to legitimate his earlier, two-faced view of meaning, we need look no further than *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. That 1929 work is plainly the best source for Husserl's mature and methodologically informed account of meaning.³³⁶ What we must notice is only (a) how that 1929 text's procedure complies with the concept of phenomenology that Husserl clarified in 1913 and (b) how Husserl argues in that 1929 work in support of Brentanian and Bolzanian claims that he had first defended decades before.

In what sense, then, does *Formal and Transcendental Logic* comply with the pivotal concept of phenomenology articulated in *Ideas I*? We must grant, of course, that Husserl's methodological development was not complete in 1913. His understanding of the phenomenological discipline rather continued evolving throughout his phenomenological practice. Still, the persistent notion that phenomenology involves a partly eidetic, partly transcendental two-step is clearly operative in his 1929 publication. We can discern as much simply from the work's title and general structure. Even the adjectives that Husserl includes in the full title of his *Logic* already give reason to expect a partly eidetic, partly transcendental approach to logical issues.³³⁷ And a closer look at the *Logic* confirms this expectation. In the five chapters comprising the book's first, "formal" part, Husserl straightforwardly describes "the structures and the sphere of

³³⁶ Outside of the *Investigations*, *Formal and Transcendental Logic* is the only major work that Husserl published during his lifetime the scope of which is confined exclusively to the logical realm of categorial acts and objects. It is the only one of Husserl's publications that focuses entirely on logical issues that also originated after Husserl first publicly formulated the reduction(s) in his 1907 lectures on the *Idea of Phenomenology*. There are other works that have been published since Husserl's death, in which Husserl focuses importantly on the semantic dimensions of experience. They include his 1908 lectures on "the theory of meaning", his lectures on "transcendental logic" from the early 1920s (now organized and translated in *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*), and the materials that Ludwig Landgrebe edited and published under the title *Experience and Judgment*. But none of these works offers an account of meaning as unitary and comprehensive as that which Husserl chose to publish in 1929.

³³⁷ If Husserl had named his work "Eidetic and Transcendental Logic", the title would have been less specific but no less correct. Given Husserl's terminology, all that is formal is also eidetic — although not all that is eidetic is formal (on "material and formal generalities", see *Experience and Judgment*, § 86).

objective formal logic”.³³⁸ In compliance with the spirit of the eidetic reduction, he recognizes (and then goes on to survey) the eidetic field of self-identical concepts and judgments and arguments that today’s logic textbooks formally analyze. Then, in the seven chapters that comprise the “transcendental” part of his *Logic*, Husserl reflects on the subjective conditions of this eidetic field. In concert with other “critiques of knowledge” or “transcendental philosophies” that we see in “the modern age”, he “turns back” from a straightforward focus on an objective field to consider how that transcendent field can be an object for our thought.³³⁹ Thus, although the language of “reductions” appears somewhat less ubiquitously in 1929 than it did in 1913, Husserl’s “two-sided” *Logic* is nonetheless structured according to the pair of reductions popularized through *Ideas I*.³⁴⁰

How, then, does Husserl, in his *Logic*, uphold the primary contentions of his earlier theory of meaning? Above all, he does so by depicting logic as an essentially two-sided science. He initially depicts logic in this way by roughly historical means, and then fills in the details of his historical sketch through extensive formal and transcendental analyses. So, in what follows, I first reconstruct Husserl’s historically based outline of logic’s purportedly two-sided essence, and then distill the most salient aspects of his fuller picture of the same, in order to show how this depiction of logic’s two sides reinforces the two-faced account of meaning offered by the *Investigations*.

³³⁸ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 42 (“The structures and the sphere of objective formal logic” is the title of Part I).

³³⁹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 10, p. 34.

³⁴⁰ For Husserl’s claim that logic is essentially “two-sided”, see §§ 8 and 56 of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*.

5.3.2: Semantic theses reinforced

Crucially, Husserl's 1929 history of logic does not merely rehearse the familiar account. It does not identify logic primarily with our existing, evolving discipline of the same name, and it does not measure logical accomplishments solely against the criterion of recent advances. Instead, Husserl's history defines logic by reference to the historical intention from which he believes the discipline arose. Moreover, Husserl does not attribute logic's initial rise primarily to Aristotle. That is, Husserl does not picture Aristotle as the first Western figure to engage in what can correctly be called logic. In agreement with the predominant contemporary history of logic, Husserl readily acknowledges the materials assembled in the *Organon* as "historically the first part of a systematically executed logic".³⁴¹ But, distinguishing logic's systematic execution from its founding intention, Husserl's history gives primary pride of place to Aristotle's teacher.

According to what is perhaps the central contention within Husserl's history of logic, the form of inquiry and body of knowledge in question arose in the first instance "in the struggles of Plato's dialectic".³⁴² More specifically, Husserl's view is that today's logic stems historically from Plato's struggles with a "universal denial of science".³⁴³ Against this "sophistic skepticism", "Plato had to weigh, and establish by criticism, precisely the essential possibility of such a thing as science".³⁴⁴ He had to clarify that which distinguishes *episteme* from what only purports to be so; he had to identify "the essential requirements of 'genuine' knowledge and 'genuine' science"; he had to locate

³⁴¹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 12, p. 42, my italics.

³⁴² *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, p. 1.

³⁴³ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, p. 1.

³⁴⁴ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, pp. 1-2.

“norms ... in conformity with which ... a science consciously justifying its method and theory ... might be built”.³⁴⁵ Moreover, Plato could not achieve these goals merely by pointing to examples of already firmly established and universally respected enterprises. In the absence of any body of knowledge that skepticism would recognize as such, Plato was forced to identify what is essentially required of any science without lapsing from his normative project into one that was merely descriptive of purported sciences: “If all science was called in question, then naturally no factual science could be presupposed”.³⁴⁶ Thus, what Plato needed was a theory of science that was not a mere theory of existing sciences: he needed a theory of the norms the aspiration toward which defines science, and a theory of the general criteria that an organized body of knowledge would have to meet in order to be certified as genuinely scientific. So it came to pass that Plato, according to Husserl’s history, became the first to seek a thorough “self-understanding and self-justification” on behalf of the sciences.³⁴⁷ So Plato initiated the “theory of the pure principles of possible cognition and science” — the “theory of science” that Husserl calls “logic”.³⁴⁸

While Husserl thus regards Plato as something like a first logician, he does not diminish Aristotle’s role in the history of logic. Instead, Husserl pictures Aristotle as

³⁴⁵ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, p. 1. Husserl does not think that any science “consciously justifying its method and theory” had yet been built in Plato’s time. He regards the geometry, astronomy, natural philosophy, and other “cultural formations” of that age as “naively straightforwardly effected work[s] of theoretical reason”, which, because they were lacking a critical theory of science that Plato provided, could not become “what we today call science, in our pregnant sense of the word” (ibid.). Science in the “pregnant sense” becomes possible, according to Husserl, when science subjects itself to scrutiny in terms of principles prior to itself. In Suzanne Bachelard’s words, science in Husserl’s “pregnant sense” becomes possible just as “the teleological idea that governs all scientific activity gradually comes to light: the scientist not only makes judgments but also grounds them” (*Husserl’s Logic*, p. xli).

³⁴⁶ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, p. 2. This is the case, as Husserl notes, whether there are existing sciences or not: “The possibility of science cannot be *shown by the fact* of sciences, since the fact itself is shown only by <their> subsumption under that possibility as an idea” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 101, p. 236).

³⁴⁷ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, p. 12.

³⁴⁸ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, p. 2.

jointly responsible, with Plato, for the rise of logic. More exactly, Husserl credits “Aristotle’s analytics” with the first “systematic” realization of the meta-scientific intention that remained relatively nebulous in “Plato’s dialectic”.³⁴⁹

Husserl’s history is hardly unusual in crediting Aristotle with “a first commencement of a logic of theoretical formations”.³⁵⁰ For Aristotle’s formal logic indisputably engages in a formal analysis of judgments such as those we find in any theoretical enterprise. It clearly conducts a “survey of the (always materially determinate) judgments of life and science”, in which “the most universal groupings of judgments according to types, the perfect likenesses of form among judgments pertaining even to heterogenous provinces, immediately come to the fore”.³⁵¹ Whereas others had already formally analyzed real continua, real sets, and other objects, “Aristotle was the first ... to execute in the *apophantic* sphere — the sphere of assertive statements ... — that formalization” that had already taken place in mathematics.³⁵² He was “the first”, in short, “to bring out the idea of form which was to determine the fundamental sense of a formal logic”.³⁵³ Thus, today’s formal logic builds on Aristotle’s beginnings. Husserl’s assertions to this effect only repeat the standard account of logic’s historical origins; he cannot but concur with the standard history on this point.

Husserl’s history is more novel in its suggestion that Aristotle’s pioneering formal logic is basically an expression of Plato’s intentions. According to this suggestion, Aristotle engages in his formal analysis of the apophantic sphere in order to achieve

³⁴⁹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, p. 7. Husserl uses the term “Aristotle’s analytics” to name the philosopher’s mode of thought rather than to refer exclusively to the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*. Within Husserl’s lexicon, analytics is to Aristotle what dialectic is to Plato.

³⁵⁰ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 12, p. 42.

³⁵¹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 12, p. 42.

³⁵² *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 12, p. 42.

³⁵³ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 12, p. 42.

precisely the same goal that Husserl detects in “Plato’s dialectic”. That is, Aristotle performs a formal analysis of the judgments of purported sciences so as to attain “a theory relating to the essential conditions for any possible science”.³⁵⁴ When he directs his attention to judgments, when he abstracts their forms (replacing determinate categorical terms with formal place-holders capable of signifying any content), and when he shows how these judgment-forms stand in lawful relations to one another, his goal is to reveal the formal laws that constrain every system of judgments deserving to be called a science. Thus Aristotle’s whole project of formal apophantic analysis, on Husserl’s reading, is motivated by Plato’s aim of identifying the preconditions for science. Aristotle’s own categorical logic, and consequently each subsequent expansion of formal logic, is an expression of the “universal theory of science” that Plato had intended.³⁵⁵

We need not decide here whether Husserl is correct that logic has been driven, however unwittingly, by a Platonic intention. What matters for our purposes is what this history implies, within Husserl’s framework, with respect to meaning. We need only note how Husserl’s 1929 history, in its implications, aligns with his 1900-01 view of logic and meaning.

Given the premise that logic, in virtue of the historical intention from which it arose, is the theory of science, it follows, within Husserl’s conceptual scheme, that logic is an essentially two-sided discipline. For the theory of science, according to Husserl’s conception, has two sides. On one side, the theory of science is a study of the reiterable, intersubjectively available domain of propositions. It concerns the range of objective judgments that hold true — existing sciences and possible sciences as objectively

³⁵⁴ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, p. 4.

³⁵⁵ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, p. 7.

understood — and the rest of the apophantic sphere that Aristotle formally analyzed. On the other side, the theory of science is a study of judicative mental acts. It concerns the experience of knowing that Plato had to define and defend against skeptics who denied that knowledge is possible. Husserl's history of logic leads him to this account of logic's two sides.

In this way, moreover, Husserl's 1929 account of logic's historical origins also leads him to reaffirm his 1900-01 theory of meaning. For his history of logic, in its two-sided depiction of the theory of science, invokes his two-faced conception of meaning. When Husserl pictures the theory of science as a study of the domain of propositions, he draws on his Bolzanian view of meaning. When he pictures the theory of science as a study of mental acts, he draws on his Brentanian view of meaning. Already in its historical sketch of logic as a two-sided discipline, then, Husserl's 1929 publication echoes the basic contentions of his 1900-01 theory of meaning.

These echoes recur throughout Husserl's *Logic*, beyond its introductory history of logic's beginnings and across its "formal" and "transcendental" analyses. Indeed, Husserl's *Logic* as a whole not only echoes, but also methodically reinforces, the *Investigations*' dyadic semantics. Its first five chapters, in their eidetic characterization of logic's typical subject matter, repeatedly reach Bolzanian semantic conclusions;³⁵⁶ and its final seven chapters, which pose transcendental questions concerning logic, include a defense of the *Investigations*' Brentanian insights regarding meaning.

³⁵⁶ Husserl's mature conception of logic deviates from Bolzano's in certain important respects. Husserl explicitly differentiates his understanding of the relation between logic and mathematics from Bolzano's (see *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 26d, p. 74); Husserl readily acknowledges the value of contributions that had been made to logic since Bolzano's time (see, for example, Husserl's comments about George Boole's work, in *ibid.*, §§ 23a and 25); and Husserl argues that logic is inseparable from transcendental questions that Bolzano was not as ready to ask. But these deviations do not diminish the depth of Husserl's Bolzanian inheritance.

Take the “formal” chapters of Husserl’s *Logic*. In those chapters, with their eidetic approach to the “sphere of objective formal logic”, Husserl arrives at several of Bolzano’s positions. As he had in his Bolzanian work of 1900, Husserl again claims that logic’s “sphere” consists of transcendent “apophantic meanings” —³⁵⁷ “thoroughly firm and steadfast objects”³⁵⁸ that “reach beyond the subjectivity now actually cognizing and its acts”.³⁵⁹ He again claims that the judgments comprising logic’s “province” are each “identical” throughout varying acts of judgment.³⁶⁰ He again claims that the judgments at issue in logic are “ideal” in a way that “psychologism”, with its “old inherited fears of Platonism”, fails to recognize.³⁶¹ And he again claims that logic’s invariant judgments, if true, are available “to everyone”, “at any time”, “even before their discovery”.³⁶² Husserl thus finds, from his eidetic outlook, that logic is a Bolzanian theory of science — a formal analytics of an ideal realm of transcendent significations. He leverages an eidetic procedure to reinforce Bolzano’s theory of meaning.

Next, take the “transcendental” chapters of Husserl’s *Logic*. Husserl there argues that logic ought to “overstep” its typical, relatively “straightforward” concern with

³⁵⁷ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 54b, p. 131.

³⁵⁸ Objective meanings are “thoroughly firm and steadfast objects”, according to Husserl, in that they are “seizable objectivities, steadfast under observation, always re-identifiable, and accessible to repeated observation, analysis and description” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 11, p. 36).

³⁵⁹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 8, p. 30.

³⁶⁰ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 17, pp. 55-56.

³⁶¹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 26b, pp. 71-72.

³⁶² *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 44bγ, pp. 111-112. Importantly, Husserl retains this view throughout his transcendental analyses. See especially § 80. Husserl there mentions a few “truisms”: he notes the belief that “there are indeed truths in themselves, that one can seek, and also find, by avenues already predelineated in themselves”; he notes that “one never asks whether there is a truth, but only how it can be reached or, at worst, whether it is not utterly unattainable by our factually limited powers of cognition . . .”; and he echoes the Bolzanian reasoning of his *Prolegomena*, by recognizing again that “the possibility of sciences depends entirely on [the] certainty that their provinces exist in truth, and that, concerning their provinces, theoretical truths-in-themselves exist”. Husserl then goes on to question these beliefs. Crucially, however, Husserl through his transcendental questioning does “not intend to give up any of these truisms”; he instead continues to acknowledge that these truisms “surely rank as evidences” (*idid.*, p. 176).

objective conditions of knowledge, such as objective significations and logical laws, in order to also identify the subjective conditions for the possibility of knowledge.³⁶³ He argues that logic indeed *must* make this reflective turn, if it is to be, true to its founding intention, a theory of science. (He argues, in other words, that logic must include a transcendental component so that it can provide a critical theory of knowledge that achieves a “radical self-understanding and fundamental self-justification” on behalf of the existing sciences.³⁶⁴) Through Husserl’s own transcendental turn toward the subjective conditions of knowledge, moreover, he arrives again at what I have called the Brentanian semantic claims of the *Logical Investigations*. That is, Husserl’s transcendental analyses of logic lead him to conclude that there could be no objective significations or truths if there were no act(s) of meaning. He contends that all objective judgments are “productions”, with a “genesis” in some “formative doing”,³⁶⁵ and he likewise indicates that there could be no objective truths without the experience of truth (*Evidenz*).³⁶⁶ The “reductive deliberations” of Husserl’s transcendental logic thus lead him back to the Brentanian view that meaning and truth are fundamentally intentional.

³⁶³ Compare *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, §§ 9-10 and 69.

³⁶⁴ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 56, p. 137. If logic does not identify science’s operative presupposition of meanings and truths in themselves, or if logic uncritically holds our evidence of such meanings as being “absolute evidences”, according to Husserl, it abandons too early the critical impulse that defines it as theory of science (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 92b, p. 200). Logic would thus fail to be an adequate theory of science insofar as logicians, in “self-forgetfulness”, fixate only on objective significations and neglect the “subjective-logical”, never taking their own “productive [and, more specifically, categorial] living as a theme within [their] field[s] of vision” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, pp. 11, 14).

³⁶⁵ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 63, pp. 149-150.

³⁶⁶ On this point, see especially chapters 5 and 6 of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* part II. Husserl there offers a “criticism of the naïve concepts of evidence and truth ... that govern the whole logical tradition” (§ 92a, p. 198). He argues that, while there is indeed evidence for Bolzano’s postulates of meanings and truths in themselves, this and every evidence only occurs within an intentional horizon. “If what is experienced has the sense of transcendent being”, he writes, “then it is the experiencing that constitutes this sense” (§ 94, p. 206). So, while we are conscious of truth’s transcendence in our “concourse with others”, in our experiences of “illusion”, and in our other realizations that what is given exceeds what our own minds grasp, this sense of transcendence is “included intentionally in the consciousness itself” (§ 94, pp. 206-207). Thus we can always ask, and logic as transcendental ought to ask, how the truths of objective formal logic “can take on and confirm this sense of transcendence that we have” (§ 93c, p. 204).

Through its two main parts, then, as in its introductory account of logic's historical origins, Husserl's *Logic* reinforces both of the views of meaning that he had defended in his *Investigations*. His eidetic analyses of the "structures and spheres of objective formal logic" reiterate many of the *Prolegomena*'s anti-psychologistic contentions regarding meaning; and his transcendental investigation of logic, with its almost-psychologistic character, recites the later *Investigations*' conclusion that objective meanings presuppose experience. Husserl thus seeks to overcome the "one-sidedness that determines the specific sense of traditional logic as essentially an 'objective' logic", via his transcendental turn, without thereby falling into the differently one-sided approach of "psychologizing logicians and epistemologists".³⁶⁷ Much as he had sought a middle way in his *Investigations*, so Husserl seeks again to recognize the evidences on both sides of the psychologism debate. But is such a two-sided account of meaning tenable?

Whereas Husserl had left the conflict between his two views of meaning inexplicit in 1900-01, he readily acknowledges this conflict in 1929. This acknowledgement is evident in the way that Husserl attempts to pre-emptively deflect the charges of incoherence that had been raised against the similarly two-faced semantics of his *Investigations*. Husserl explicitly anticipates, and rejects, the charge of a "relapse into psychologism".³⁶⁸ He denies that his more Brentanian account of meaning is equivalent to "the psychologizing of ... unreal signification formations".³⁶⁹ He denies that his transcendental questioning has left him "blind to the peculiar objectivity of all ideal formations", or "blind" in particular, to the "judgments, ... truths, ... arguments, proofs,

³⁶⁷ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction, pp. 9, 13.

³⁶⁸ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, §56, p. 136.

³⁶⁹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, §56, p. 136.

and theories” that “make up the objective province of logic”.³⁷⁰ And he denies that his more psychological view of meaning mistakes “syllogisms” for “psychic processes of judging and inferring”.³⁷¹ Yet how could the anti-psychologistic conclusions that Husserl reaches through his eidetic approach to logic not stand at odds with the almost psychologistic conclusions that he reaches through his transcendental approach? Do not basic “equivocations” become inevitable with Husserl’s turn to a transcendental concept of logic?³⁷² Or how could Husserl give a transcendental account of logical objects if not by “equating” those ideal “formations” with certain “real occurrences belonging to the sphere of psychology”?³⁷³ By reaffirming his earlier Bolzanian and Brentanian views of meaning, Husserl in his 1929 text raises again these questions of coherence that his 1900-01 breakthrough had left unresolved.

5.4: The most controversial consequence of the reduction(s)

Husserl’s *Logic* supplies his answer to the above questions regarding the coherence of his semantics. That answer, in two words, is “transcendental subjectivity”. With this term, Husserl signifies his rejoinder to the “mutual bugbears” of “a wrong skeptical relativism and a no less wrong logical absolutism”,³⁷⁴ he names the field of study by reference to which he could purportedly recognize the sane motives behind both psychologistic and logicist theories of meaning without falling prey to the errors of either theory; and he designates the result of his attempt to circumspectly understand meaning *via* a partly transcendental and partly eidetic approach. These, at least, are my

³⁷⁰ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 56, p. 135.

³⁷¹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 56, p. 135.

³⁷² *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 70, p. 158.

³⁷³ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 57a, pp. 137-138.

³⁷⁴ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 105, p. 246.

interpretive claims. In this section, I aim to establish that transcendental subjectivity did in fact serve as Husserl's answer to the charges of incoherence that had been raised against his theory of meaning. I attempt to show how Husserl in fact utilized his two-step method not only to reinforce his psychological and logical semantics, but also to resolve the strain between these views of meaning.

Already in section 5.2, I indicated that I think Husserl invokes transcendental subjectivity in order to account for his pair of seemingly opposed insights regarding meaning. On my view, again, the transcendental reduction responds to Husserl's Brentanian insight by affirming that objective meanings have an intentional origin; the eidetic reduction answers to Husserl's Bolzanian insight by denying that any of the contingent beings who happen to engage in the phenomenological procedure are themselves that origin; and the transcendental subjectivity to which the eidetic and transcendental reductions jointly lead thus ought to accommodate both Brentano and Bolzano's semantic insights. On my view, then, "transcendental subjectivity" does not (or does not only) designate a grandiose speculative construction, but rather expresses (albeit among other things) a restrained reply to a legitimate question regarding objective meanings. Husserl's invocation of transcendental subjectivity would allow him to answer the question "whence meanings?" without saying anything more psychologistic or speculative than that intentional experience in general is a condition for the possibility of objective signification.

In Husserl's *Logic* we can see the evidence that supports this reading. Throughout that text as a whole, Husserl is engaged in what he calls "the radical

overcoming of the problem of transcendental psychologism”.³⁷⁵ This means, in part, that Husserl is continuing the approach to meaning that he had pioneered in 1900-01. As he had been in his *Investigations*, so he is again engaged in a “war against logical psychologism” in all of its varieties.³⁷⁶ And he again is not content to merely expose the faults in the project of psychological reductionism. In order to overcome that project in a sufficiently “radical” way, Husserl is again attempting to defeat it at its roots — to recognize the sensible reasons for mistakenly supposing that logic ought to be fully included in psychology. In both respects, Husserl in his *Logic* is following the course of his *Investigations*. He is showing how psychologistic conclusions are faulty, as he had in his “Prolegomena to Pure Logic”, while also acknowledging the insights behind psychologism, as he had in the later *Investigations*’ case that meanings are inseparable from experience. But how, then, does the *Logic* represent an important advance, in Husserl’s view, beyond the *Investigations*? And why does Husserl refer specifically to a problem of *transcendental* psychologism?³⁷⁷

According to Husserl’s 1929 analysis, the problem of transcendental psychologism ultimately consists in “an obscurity” that has impacted “the whole of transcendental philosophy”.³⁷⁸ Superficially, no doubt, the problem at issue is simply that certain *transcendental* accounts of meaning, such as Hume’s, have subscribed to *psychological reductionism*. At bottom, however, the problem is that the origin of objective meaning has historically remained obscure — and obscure in such a way that

³⁷⁵ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 56, p. 136.

³⁷⁶ See *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, §§ 56 and 57a, for Husserl’s continued opposition to the “anti-Platonism” of “English empiricism”, and §§ 65 and 67 for his opposition to other representationalist failures to recognize the objectivity of the ideal.

³⁷⁷ These questions are the same, because it is precisely the 1929 analysis of transcendental psychologism that Husserl, in his *Logic*, casts as a necessary addition to his 1900-01 attempt to uproot psychologism.

³⁷⁸ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 56, p. 136.

any theory proposing to seek this origin *via* “a concrete consideration of cognitive subjectivity” has inevitably been regarded as psychologistic.³⁷⁹ The problem, in other words, is that the subject of transcendental logic has not been sufficiently differentiated from that of logical psychologism.

Hume did play an important role in the history of this obscurity. For Hume, who embraced psychologistic answers to each of the transcendental questions that he posed, was perhaps the first to “raise the transcendental problem of the constitution of the world”.³⁸⁰ It was Hume who set the precedent for subsequent transcendental philosophy, and that precedent is one in which the transcendental and the psychologistic are coextensive. This coextension obtains, as Husserl notes, in Hume’s transcendental account of logical objectivity. Hume stops short of a thorough psychologistic account of logical objectivity, but just insofar as he stops short of any transcendental account of his “relations of ideas”; and, when Hume does pose transcendental questions regarding logic, by asking about the origin of abstract ideas, he does not hesitate to depict those objective ideas psychologistically.³⁸¹ After Hume, Kant went some way toward disassociating psychologism and transcendental philosophy, when he introduced a transcendental program in “reaction against” Hume’s.³⁸² Yet Kant did not go far enough, by Husserl’s lights, but remained too much in “dependence on” that against which he reacted, because he retained Hume’s hesitation to ask about a transcendental origin of logical

³⁷⁹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 67, p. 155.

³⁸⁰ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 229. Although Husserl traces transcendental philosophy to Cartesian beginnings, he regards Hume as “the first to see the necessity of investigating the objective itself as a product of its genesis from subjectivity” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 100, p. 226). Accordingly, while Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology has a Cartesian character, it is importantly co-determined by the style of Hume’s investigations. Husserl, of course, nonetheless regards his project as superior to those of his predecessors.

³⁸¹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 229.

³⁸² *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 100, p. 230.

objectivity.³⁸³ For Kant not only refused, against Hume, to subject logic to any “psychologistic reinterpretation of its ideality”; he also, in keeping with Hume’s position concerning relations of ideas, “ascribed to [logic] an extraordinary apriority, which raised it above” all “transcendental questions”.³⁸⁴ So it could still seem to be the case, after Kant, that any account of logical objectivity that is transcendental is ipso facto psychologistic.

Given this history, we can readily understand how the hostile reception of Husserl’s *Investigations* was inevitable. For Husserl in that text “had the courage to venture” a proto-transcendental analysis of logical objectivity: he (a) accepted “the ideality of the formations with which logic is concerned as the characteristic of a separate, self-contained “world” of ideal objects”, and he (b) asked “how subjectivity can in itself bring forth, purely from sources appertaining to its own spontaneity, formations that can be rightly accounted as ideal objects”.³⁸⁵ But he did not yet show how these two

³⁸³ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 100, p. 230.

³⁸⁴ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, §§ 99, 100, pp. 228, 230. When Husserl speaks of the “half-way character of [Kant’s] advancement of a systematic transcendental philosophy”, he means that Kant, thanks to Hume, “never thought of asking transcendental questions about the sphere of formal logic, taken as a sphere in and for itself” (ibid.). Granting that “Kant’s logic is presented as a science directed to the subjective”, Husserl claims that this logic “*actually* . . . concerns the ideal formations produced by thinking and, concerning them, . . . fails to ask properly transcendental questions” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 100, p. 230). Kant falls back on formal logic when he offers a transcendental account of the natural sciences, but he offers no similar account of logic: “Formal logic is, for him, something absolute and ultimate, on which philosophy can be built without more ado” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 100, p. 234). Granted, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant distinguishes “transcendental logic” from that “general logic”, more familiar today, which “abstracts from any relation of [cognition] to the object, and considers only logical form in the relation of cognitions to one another” (A55/B79, trans. Guyer and Wood). (Such a general logic provides criteria for truth, according to Kant, that are “to [an] extent entirely correct but not sufficient” (A59/B84). In order to account better for the truth of synthetic a priori judgments, a science would thus be necessary that “determine[s] the origin, the domain, and the objective validity of such cognitions” (A57/B81). Kant calls this science, which “expounds the principle without which no object can be thought at all”, “transcendental logic” (A62/B87).) On Husserl’s history, however, Kant was led to pose transcendental questions about synthetic a priori judgments by Hume’s transcendental criticism of our knowledge concerning “matters of fact”; and Kant “did not make his analytic Apriori a problem”, much as Hume had similarly stopped short of any transcendental inquiry regarding his “relations of ideas” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 100, p. 230).

³⁸⁵ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 100, p. 230.

projects could cohere; he did not yet explicitly invoke “transcendental subjectivity” in his descriptions of the origin of meaning; he did not yet make an *explicitly* transcendental turn. The *Investigations* instead left obscure how a description of objective meaning’s intentional origin could be anything but psychologistic. They thereby left the obscurity that has shrouded transcendental philosophy intact, and failed to fully overcome the “problem of transcendental psychologism”.

To be sure, as Husserl readily concedes in 1929, his 1901 work already “paved the way to a transcendental phenomenology” and to a transcendental account of meaning.³⁸⁶ “It may even be said”, Husserl’s *Logic* grants, that the *Investigations* already employed “the same method of intentional ‘analysis’ that is used in transcendental phenomenology”.³⁸⁷ For the *Investigations* provide an “eidetic” description of “intentional mental processes”.³⁸⁸ They offer a description, moreover, that anticipates Husserl’s transcendental reduction by disregarding that the mental processes described are those of a specific sort of thinking being. Their description, in other words, does not permit “*the relation*” between (a) the intentional processes reflectively described and (b) “*the organism*” to which those processes factually belong to “*enter expressly into* [this description’s] *conceptual content*”.³⁸⁹ And so the subjectivity that the *Investigations* present as the basis of logical objectivity is not specifically human; they rather attempt to describe what subjectivity is, more generally, as the basis of objective meanings. Despite all this, the *Investigations* remained too psychological, from Husserl’s 1929 perspective, to be fully compliant with the transcendental reduction. For in Husserl’s 1900-01 work,

³⁸⁶ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 56, p. 136.

³⁸⁷ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 225.

³⁸⁸ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 225.

³⁸⁹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 225.

“a psychological apperception is performed”, by which apperception the relation between our living experiences and a mundane organism becomes “co-positd” along with the experiences under description.³⁹⁰ And it is not enough, according to Husserl’s 1929 work, to effectively exclude all references to this relation from one’s phenomenological description. Instead, it is also necessary that the relation between the content of one’s reflective description and a particular organism be explicitly or “consciously parenthesized”.³⁹¹ Only thus can “that content” of our reflective descriptions “acquire [the] transcendental significance” that allows for “the radically ultimate clarification of the problem of transcendental psychologism and, at the same time, its solution”.³⁹²

On these textual grounds we can safely draw the following interpretive conclusions. First, Husserl believed, in 1929, that psychologism could be adequately overcome only by reference to transcendental subjectivity. Husserl in 1900-01 had already refused the false dichotomy of logicism and psychologism. He had already presented the intentional basis of meanings and truths without succumbing to psychological reductionism. Yet his campaign against that reductionist paradigm was still inadequate, we are told, precisely because it did not denote as “transcendental subjectivity” the intentional experience that it described. Second, then, Husserl held that

³⁹⁰ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 225.

³⁹¹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 225. Husserl makes this distinction between a conscious parenthesis and an inexplicit exclusion the basis for a concomitant distinction between, respectively, the “transcendental phenomenology” of his *Logic* and the “psychological phenomenology” of his *Investigations* (ibid.). He could grant that he already saw, in 1901, that “logic must overcome its phenomenological naivete” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 100, p. 233.). That is, he had already seen that logic, “even after having learned to recognize that which is ideal, ... must be more than a merely positive science of logico-mathematical idealities”; and he had already intimated that logic, “with a continuously two-sided research ... must go back systematically from the ideal formations to the consciousness that constitutes them phenomenologically” (ibid.). But he had not yet identified the consciousness that constitutes ideal formations as “the concrete ... nexus of transcendental subjectivity”; and, in not doing so, he had also failed to argue that “the ideal objectivity of the formations with which logic is concerned” may be in “no way altered” by his claim that these formations are “essentially products of the correlative structures of productive cognitive life” (ibid.).

³⁹² *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 225.

he was able to “radically overcome transcendental psychologism” in 1929 thanks to the methodological achievements that he had announced in 1913. It was Husserl’s two-step method, specifically in its transcendental aspect, that resulted in the reference to transcendental subjectivity, by which reference alone Husserl believed that psychologism could be adequately defeated. Third (and equivalently), Husserl believed that this same reference enabled him to clarify and solve the problem that he had confronted in his 1900-01 semantics. For Husserl’s 1929 deployment of his method issued in his detailed account of, and proposed resolution to, the apparent incompatibility of his Bolzanian and Brentanian semantic insights. Again, Husserl’s 1900-01 semantics had provoked accusations of incoherence because they presented meanings first as independent of human experiences and then as dependent on experience. And Husserl answered these accusations in 1929 by identifying the acts of meaning on which objective meanings depend as those of a “transcendental subjectivity” — those of a constitutive intentionality accessed by reflection but importantly distinct from the human psyche.

Transcendental subjectivity thus functioned, within Husserl’s thought, as the answer to the riddle that his dyadic semantics had posed. Before he invoked transcendental subjectivity, when Husserl first argued that a third way between psychologism and logicism was necessary, he had not yet demonstrated that such a route was even possible. So, when Husserl then developed and followed the full two-step course that led to transcendental subjectivity, he did so in order to show, against suspicions from either side, that his middle way was viable. He did so in order to demonstrate that it is possible to describe that for which there is appearance solely in terms of its essential features, and that it is thereby possible to recognize, without falling

into psychologism, that meanings require intentionality. Husserl invoked transcendental subjectivity, then, in order to show that Brentanian and Bolzanian insights not only should be, but also can be, coherently incorporated into a unitary theory of meaning.

In this respect, Husserl's invocation of transcendental subjectivity could express a conciliatory and restrained thesis, designed to accommodate disparate insights without passing beyond what those insights demand into unwarranted speculation. Yet the term "transcendental subjectivity", and the synthetic account of meaning for which it stands, has been little (if any) less controversial than the "relativist" and "absolutist" antitheses that it was designed to overcome. Husserl's 1929 response to accusations of incoherence raises as many objections as it answers. Moreover, while some of these protests stem from misunderstanding, there are also well-informed dissents from Husserl's transcendental account of meaning that emerge from within the phenomenological program.

I turn now to these internal critiques. First, in section 5.5, I critically consider the process by which Husserl sought to substantiate his dyadic semantics. Then, in chapter 6, I assess the resulting notion of transcendental subjectivity, which Husserl proposed as his resolution to the strain between his dissonant accounts of meaning.

5.5: A methodological criticism

We have now seen (in section 5.2) how the *Investigations*' problematic theory of meaning shaped the phenomenological method and (in sections 5.3 and 5.4) how Husserl then deployed that method in order to exonerate his maligned semantics. This methodological development prompts a critical question. It prompts us to ask: Is there

not some vicious circularity here? Does not the reasoning that Husserl offered after 1901, in order to defend and extend his contested theory of meaning, illicitly presuppose that which it was supposed to establish?

This formulation attaches some methodological content to one of Heidegger's popular complaints about his teacher's thinking. That complaint, roughly, is that Husserl uncritically inherited his theory of meaning. In Heidegger's own, more acerbic words, the charge is that Husserl's account of meaning is one in which "a rigorous investigation of the matter is disregarded and a completely banal Platonism is resorted to".³⁹³ More specifically, the allegation is that Husserl fell into his two-sided semantics not because of critical, inquisitive work, but rather because he was naively participating in the "Platonic" practice of "opposing a valid sense to a real, temporal sense".³⁹⁴ And the trouble, as we can now see, is not simply that Husserl was heavily dependent on certain influences, such as Bolzano, when he first articulated his view that signification has both "ideal" and "real" sides; the issue is also that the phenomenological method, by means of which Husserl later purported to offer a "rigorous investigation" that supported and extended his earlier semantics, was itself dependent on that questionable dyadic view of meaning. Given Husserl's methodological development, then, Heidegger's reproach implies that his teacher's semantics was credulous straight through, from its 1900-01 indications that meaning is essentially ambiguous to its 1929 attempt to explain that ambiguity with reference to transcendental subjectivity.

³⁹³ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, trans. Daniel Dahlstrom (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005 [1923-24]), p. 68.

³⁹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, p. 70.

There are, however, at least two problems with this line of criticism. One is the probing character of Husserl's initial, positive appropriation. Another is the fact that Husserl eventually negated or revised many of the views that he initially appropriated.

The first problem stems from the body of evidence that we have in the *Investigations*, documenting the manner in which Husserl initially appropriated aspects of his predecessors' theories of meaning. This evidence of course confirms Heidegger's view that Husserl inherited semantic theses from various historical figures (including those that I surveyed in chapter 3). Most important in the present context, the *Investigations* cite Hume's distinction of "relations of ideas" and "matters of fact", along with Leibniz's parallel distinction of "*vérités de raison*" and "*vérités de fait*", as antecedents for Husserl's own distinction between real, passing acts of meaning and ideal, invariant meanings — what Husserl calls "the most fundamental of epistemological distinctions".³⁹⁵ Yet this mere fact of intellectual inheritance hardly entails that one or another previous theory was "simply taken over".³⁹⁶ On the contrary, as we have seen (in chapter 4), Husserl reached his 1900-01 semantic conclusions through his own extensive investigations concerning experiences of meaning and knowing, and concerning the presuppositions of objective logic. He did not take over any predecessor's theory of meaning in full; rather, when he did turn from his study of his primary subject matter to secondary discussions of relevant literature, he considered a broad range of the theories on offer, and did so with a careful (if occasionally tendentious) scrutiny. In this respect, it appears less that "a rigorous investigation of the matter is disregarded" in Husserl's 1900-01 discussions of meaning than that such an investigation is just beginning. For the

³⁹⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 51, pp. 119-120.

³⁹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, p. 69.

manner in which the *Investigations* take up the theses that they inherit evidences a first-hand examination of the matters at issue. Of course, if “Platonism” is a heresy, then Husserl’s semantics is anathema. If, however, we put off the polemic practice wherein “Platonism” is a pejorative, in order to ask if there is actually a basis for the distinction between real and ideal meanings, then we may begin to see the many ways in which Husserl interrogated this same distinction.

This leads us to the second problem with the criticism according to which Husserl uncritically adopted and retained his two-sided depiction of meaning. This second problem is that Husserl revised his theory of meaning,³⁹⁷ and that his practice of criticism extended to precisely the real-ideal distinction that he is alleged to have “simply taken over without the slightest alteration”.³⁹⁸ No doubt the phenomenological method, in its application to questions of meaning, may seem to simply beg the question: Husserl’s partly eidetic, partly transcendental procedure was shaped by the Bolzanian and Brentanian theories of meaning that it purports to legitimate and reconcile. In fact, however, Husserl’s method led him to persistently re-examine his views concerning meaning, and ultimately to substantially alter many of those views. In the remainder of this section, I itemize a few of those re-examinations and revisions most closely related to the “Platonic” differentiation of ideal from real meanings, in order to demonstrate that Husserl was critical of the appropriated claims that he made central to his semantics.

³⁹⁷ The revisions in Husserl’s later theory of meaning are plentiful enough to be regarded by some in Husserl studies as excessive. Dallas Willard, for example, writes that the “theory of propositions” in *Ideas I* and *Formal and Transcendental Logic* is “immensely — and, I think, unfortunately — more complex” than that in the *Investigations* (“The Paradox of Logical Psychologism: Husserl’s Way Out”, p. 54).

³⁹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, p. 69.

Important revisions were already underway at the time when the *Investigations* were brought to press. Husserl had been working interminably on modifications.³⁹⁹ And, most important for our purposes, Husserl was already critical, and already expressed reservations in the text that went to the publisher's, of the view that he had inherited from Lotze, according to which objective meanings are species to which individual acts of meaning belong. Moreover, Husserl's reservations about this Lotzean view led him to also question the same "Platonic" distinction to which Heidegger objects.

Consider first, then, how Husserl's 1900-01 text, through its attention to the phenomenon of meaning, finds both support for, and resistance to, Lotze's species view. Husserl initially accepts Lotze's view, in the *Investigations*, in order to account for the relationship between the psychological and logical sides of meaning. He had realized that an identical signification can be realized in a variable "multiplicity of individual experiences".⁴⁰⁰ And so he had been pushed to ask: If significations so transcend the "vanishing noise" of words "uttered here and now", and the quickly elapsing life of our significative acts more generally, how then do these acts reach beyond themselves to significations?⁴⁰¹ How are logical objects that, according to the *Prolegomena*, are "untouched by the contingency, temporality, and transience of our mental acts", realized in those acts?⁴⁰² It is in response to this question that Husserl, at first, affirms that the

³⁹⁹ Malvine, Edmund's wife, reportedly had to steal the manuscript from his desk to take it to the publisher.

⁴⁰⁰ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 30, p. 229. Husserl had observed, for example, that whereas "my act of judging that the three perpendiculars of a triangle intersect in a point" is "a transient experience" that "arises and passes away", its signification is given as a "geometrical truth" that "neither arises nor passes away"; he had noted that "What this assertion asserts", namely the proposition, "is the same, whoever may assert it and on whatever occasion or in whatever circumstances he may assert it" (*Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 11, p. 195)

⁴⁰¹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 11, p. 195, p. 110.

⁴⁰² *Logical Investigations*, *Prolegomena*, § 46. In the words of the (revised) *Prolegomena*, the question is more exactly "how this ideal stands to the real, how it can be immanent in it and so come to knowledge" (§ 51, p. 120).

ideal content of our thought is related to our passing experiences of thinking in precisely the way that the species is related to the individual. He claims, for example, that it is “as a species, and only as a species”, that an identical signification “can embrace in unity ... the dispersed multiplicity of individual singulars”.⁴⁰³ He argues that we are able to have the same meaning “in mind” in various acts of speaking and silently thinking, despite how these acts differ, because this sameness is that of a species that can, in principle, be realized or instanced in different acts. He embraces a model on which “meaning is related to varied acts of meaning ... just as Redness in specie is to the slips of paper which lie here, and which all ‘have’ the same redness”.⁴⁰⁴ Now, the reasoning behind this view proceeds by analogy: much as we can discern the same word when we hear various sensuously differing expressions (e.g., differing pronunciations of the same word), or as we can discern the same red when we see various colored objects (“the same red in these different strips”), so, the reasoning goes, we can reflectively discern the same signification when we reflect on various significative acts. If we abstract from differences among experiences, we find that “there is *something* in the correlated acts which really corresponds to such selfsameness of meaning” — much as there is something in various shades of red in virtue of which they belong to the same species, “redness”.⁴⁰⁵ For these reasons, Husserl concludes in 1901 that different acts of meaning can share the same signification because significations are species of which various (actual and possible) acts of meaning are members.

Having arrived at this conclusion, however, Husserl already in 1901 foresees “serious problems” in so describing the phenomena of “occasional”, or indexical,

⁴⁰³ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 32, p. 230.

⁴⁰⁴ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 32, p. 230.

⁴⁰⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 30, p. 229.

meanings.⁴⁰⁶ He discerns that a vast plurality of expressions have meanings that are indexed to “the occasion, the speaker, and the situation” of that expression.⁴⁰⁷ He perceives, further, that the class of such expressions is not limited to statements in which the explicit subject term could, depending on contextual determinations, have different referents (as in, for example, “the terrier is faster”, “Thomas wants to leave”, or “the peaches are ripe”). He observes that sentences expressing judgments “about ... inner experiences” — among which sentences Husserl includes all “interrogative, optative, and imperative sentences” — are also indexed to an individual setting, insofar as each such sentence refers to an unspecified “I”.⁴⁰⁸ And he sees that all other expressions that include a personal pronoun, a demonstrative, or “the [other] subject-bound determinations ‘here’, ‘there’, ‘above’, ‘below’, ‘now’, etc.”, are likewise bound to particular settings.⁴⁰⁹ (Husserl does not yet explicitly note in 1901, as he would in 1913, that “every empirical predication” too appears to implicitly include, as part of its meaning, the “here” and “now” that “designates the speaker’s vaguely bound ... environment”.⁴¹⁰ But he does already realize, in 1901, that this “occasional” character holds of an abundance of ordinary expressions.) And this plethora of expressions whose meaning, in important part, “varies from case to case”, such that they may only be understood in full by reference to “the occasion, the speaker, and the situation”, already

⁴⁰⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 24, p. 216.

⁴⁰⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 26, p. 218.

⁴⁰⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 25, p. 216. If the command, “Run!”, for example, is short for, “I order you to run”, then the command’s meaning is indexed to the sentence’s speaker (as well as to the person to whom the command is directed).

⁴⁰⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 26, p. 220. As “the word ‘I’ names a different person from case to case, and does so by way of an ever altering meaning” (Inv. I, § 26, p. 218), demonstratives such as “this” similarly vary in their reference.

⁴¹⁰ *Logical Investigations*, foreword to the second edition, p. 7, and Inv. I, § 26, p. 220. Insofar as the meanings of all empirical predications presuppose an unspecified body’s spatial orientation (or *sens*) and temporal location, it would follow that they too belong to the class of occasional meanings.

prompts Husserl to ask: “Can we there still stick to self-identical meaning-unities, elsewhere made clear in their opposition to varying persons and their experiences, when here our meanings must vary *with* such persons and their experiences?”⁴¹¹

Responsiveness to these phenomena, then, pushes Husserl to criticize not merely the Prolegomena’s Lotzean thesis regarding the relation between ideal and real meanings, but also the still more basic Bolzanian (or “Platonic”) division of invariant meanings from passing experiences of meaning. Husserl does not merely ask, in other words, whether the “important facts of fluctuation of meaning” debunk his species-model of the relation between real and ideal meanings; he also asks, more fundamentally, whether the subjectively, contextually indexed character of so many expressions shows that there are no ideal meanings. He asks whether the phenomenon of occasional meaning is “enough to shake our conception of meanings as ideal (i.e., rigorous) unities, or [at least] to restrict its generality significantly”.⁴¹²

To this latter question, Husserl answers negatively. He claims that each occasional expression too has an ideal meaning: “The content meant by the subjective expression, with sense oriented to the occasion, is an ideal unit in precisely the same sense as the content of a fixed expression”.⁴¹³ Husserl grants, again, that the meaning of occasional expressions is contextually determined. Each time someone utters, “it is raining”, for example, the meaning of that utterance clearly hinges on the (inexact) place and time to which the speaker is referring, at which place and time it is supposed to be

⁴¹¹ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 26, pp. 217-218.

⁴¹² *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 28, p. 223.

⁴¹³ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 28, p. 223. My discussion here benefits from Kurt Weigelt’s *The Signified World: the Problem of Occasionality in Husserl’s Phenomenology of Meaning* (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2008).

raining.⁴¹⁴ And so the expression, “it is raining”, without determination by any particular context, lacks the single meaning that, say, “ $2 + 3 = 5$ ” has. Though occasional expressions thus do not have “fixed” or fully determinate significations once divorced from their context, however, this does not entail that concrete, contextually embedded occasional expressions also lack determinate, fixed significations.⁴¹⁵ On the contrary, Husserl argues, “each subjective expression is replaceable by an objective expression which will preserve the identity of each momentary meaning-intention”.⁴¹⁶ “It is raining”, for example, is short for “it is raining in this (vaguely bound) time and place”. And all that is intended but implicit in my contextually indexed expression can be explicated: “what is objectively quite definite”, if inexact, such as where and when I mean that it is raining, “must permit objective determination, and what permits objective determination must, ideally speaking, permit expression through wholly definite word-meanings”.⁴¹⁷ The variability in the meaning of occasional expressions, then, is not a matter of invariant meanings changing, but rather of a change in the contexts and intentions of speakers who use those expressions: “change in meanings is really *change in the act of meaning*”.⁴¹⁸ By this line of reasoning, Husserl weighs Bolzano’s invariant significations and finds them compatible with the phenomenon of occasional meanings.

If the “speaker and situation” of every occasional expression is ideally determinable, however, this does not close the question about the species view. It does not settle whether Husserl’s view of ideal significations as species can account for the

⁴¹⁴ Husserl mentions this example in *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 27, p. 221.

⁴¹⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, §§ 25, 28.

⁴¹⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 28, p. 223.

⁴¹⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 28, p. 223.

⁴¹⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Inv. I, § 28, p. 224. Husserl grants that “we are infinitely removed from this ideal” of explicating all that is implicit in our speech, and that we in most cases lack reason and resources to approach it in our speaking and thinking (Inv. I, § 28, p. 224). But the important point is simply that our meaning-intentions are susceptible to expression in utterances with fixed meanings.

individually indexed character of many acts of meaning. On the contrary, that occasional character poses the following questions: Can we legitimately call each ideal meaning a species, and thereby claim that it is capable of being instanced in various acts of meaning, if this ideal signification is itself indexed to a singular act of meaning? Does every ideal signification admit of being realized in various significative acts, and *in the same way* that the essence of red abstracted from this red strip always admits of being realized in other red individuals? Or, instead, does not the reference to a here and now contained in the meanings of occasional expressions jeopardize the attempt to view those meanings as species? Would not multiple acts that realize the same occasional meaning only be alike, and thus qualify to count as members of the same species, in being about the same logical object, which is itself indexed to a singular act? And does not that logical object, as an occasional meaning, appear to be the essence of precisely one individual act, in a way that the meaning of “red” is not the essence of one individual? Husserl did not yet answer these questions in 1901, but he was already studying the phenomenon of meaning in a way that posed what he recognized as a challenge to Lotze’s species view. Thus the picture that emerges from Husserl’s 1901 treatment of occasional expressions and of the real-ideal relation, as from much of Husserl’s work, is less of a doctrinaire philosopher uncritically inheriting “banal” distinctions than of a principled thinker repeatedly testing out evidences obtained in one horizon within new horizons of research.

As a next piece of evidence indicating the critical way in which Husserl inherited his semantic views, I submit the fact that Husserl eventually came to regard “the position of the Prolegomena”, according to which objective meaning are species, as importantly

“incorrect”.⁴¹⁹ Throughout the shifts in his later semantics, Husserl did retain the old distinction between contingent experiences that have a “binding temporal position”, on the one hand, and the invariant significations that can be realized in these passing acts, on the other hand.⁴²⁰ But he altered his answer to the question of how ideal significations are related to real acts.

This revision is evident in *Ideas I*. Husserl there proposes that the essence of each real act of meaning is only parallel, *and not identical*, to an ideal, transcendent meaning. On this proposal, my act of judging that it is raining is distinct from what it is to judge that it is raining; and that essence, or species, of certain acts of judging, is distinct from the proposition that it is raining; and that proposition, in turn, is distinct from the state of affairs that it is raining. What we must notice here is simply how Husserl introduces a framework that is more elaborate than the one that he had previously employed. According to Husserl’s earlier view, again, the essence of the act of judging that it is raining, in virtue of which all acts of so judging are specifically alike, is identical to the ideal judgment (or proposition) that it is raining. By 1913, in contrast, Husserl rejects this identification. He claims that he had previously confounded the specific types of acts of meaning, which types our particular acts of meaning instantiate, with the ideal significations that we express in our acts of meaning.⁴²¹ For Husserl by 1913 had

⁴¹⁹ Husserl acknowledges this perhaps most plainly in his “letter to Ingarden of 5 April 1918”: “A long time ago I recognized that the position of the Prolegomena is incorrect, or correct only with regard to truths of essence ... The independence of the sense of the proposition in relation to the contingent judgment and the judging person does not imply that the ideal identity is the identity of a species” (translated by Weigelt, *The Signified World*, p. 182).

⁴²⁰ *Experience and Judgment*, § 64c, p. 257.

⁴²¹ In *Ideas I*, § 61, e.g., Husserl claims that there was “oscillation” in his simpler, earlier view; he claims that he had previously identified “the concept of the logical proposition” with both “the logico-categorical objectivity” and “the corresponding essence immanent in the judging thought” (pp. 164-165). On the division between “the judgment as experienced” and “the judgment *simpliciter* as noema”, see also *Ideas I*, § 94.

adopted a new account of the way(s) in which ideal meanings transcend our acts of meaning. He had come to posit a “distinction and parallelism between the ‘noetic’ and ‘noematic’”, and thus between the essence of real acts of meaning, on one side, and transcendent, ideal meanings, on the other side.⁴²² From Husserl’s later perspective, then, the *Investigations* had only begun to come to terms with the complicated business that they called “the essential ambiguity of meaning as an idea”.⁴²³ They did not yet recognize that the species of acts of meaning, on the one hand, and the ideal meanings expressed by those acts of meaning, on the other hand, are two distinctive sides of signification.

A further revision in Husserl’s view of meaning occurs in his concept of psychologism. I have already begun to indicate (in section 5.4) how Husserl’s opposition to psychologism, while sustained, nonetheless developed over time. As I noted, Husserl by 1929 regarded his 1900-01 attempts to overcome psychologism as insufficient. For while Husserl was fairly consistent in his understanding of and opposition to empiricist psychologism,⁴²⁴ he claimed to gain increasing clarity on the other variety of logical psychologism that he first labeled “aprioristic” and that he later preferred to call “transcendental”.⁴²⁵ In the *Investigations*, Husserl criticizes an “apriorist” psychologism that would “deduce” ideal laws from the sometimes-real, sometimes-ideal subjectivity of

⁴²² *Logical Investigations*, 1913 foreword to the second edition, p. 7.

⁴²³ *Logical Investigations*, 1913 foreword to the second edition, p. 7.

⁴²⁴ Husserl’s consistent opposition to empiricist psychologism may be tracked across his primary logical works. Following the second *Investigation*’s extended critique of Locke and Hume’s theories of abstraction, the second chapter of *Ideas I* is devoted to a “contest with empiricism” in which Husserl seeks to show, on phenomenological grounds and against “naturalistic misconstructions”, that “the ideal in all its diversity is an object”, i.e., is something of which we can make true predicative statements (§§ 18, 22). *Formal and Transcendental Logic* likewise includes a critique of the “anti-Platonism” that tries to find “an origin of all concepts” in psychological processes while neglecting, at the same time, that the laws of thinking (or “relations of ideas”) are objects of which we can have an experience — or for which a transcendental philosophy would have to seek an origin (§ 100).

⁴²⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena to Pure Logic, § 38, p. 83.

a “transcendental psychology”.⁴²⁶ “It is the curse of [such] theories”, according to the 1900 work, “to at one time give ... a real, at another time an ideal sense” to the terms “consciousness” and “reason”.⁴²⁷ We may be inclined to see a resemblance between this sometimes-real, sometimes-ideal subjectivity described in 1900 and the purported basis of objective meaning to which Husserl in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* claims to have reflective access. But Husserl in 1929 claimed, to the contrary, that the *Investigations* did not yet recognize the “transcendental significance” of the subjectivity that they analyzed because they did not yet “parenthesize” their “psychological apperception” of this content.⁴²⁸ The fifth and sixth investigations study a subjective origin of objective meaning, without yet identifying that subjectivity as transcendental; and they thus come too close, from Husserl’s later perspective, to accidentally implying that real subjectivity is the origin of ideal objects. According to Husserl’s later assessment, then, it was the *Investigations* that, with their provocative return to descriptive psychology, too closely resemble transcendental psychologism. Again, though, Husserl’s later and sometimes more speculatively ambitious tendency toward deciding on the origin of logical objectivities can appear, when approached from the viewpoint of the “breakthrough” work, as at least resembling the “apriorist” psychologism that was rejected in the *Prolegomena*. Husserl’s concept of psychologism thus developed in a way that gave rise to the question of how best to avoid transcendental psychologism. That question of whether Husserl was right to posit transcendental subjectivity — and of whether his compulsion to do so was demanded by the phenomena

⁴²⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena to Pure Logic, § 38, p. 83.

⁴²⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena to Pure Logic, § 38, p. 83.

⁴²⁸ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 225.

of meaning — is therefore another testament to the fact that the later Husserl revised his earlier semantics.

Another shift that Husserl's phenomenological work prompted him to make occurred in the language that he used to describe the temporal status of ideal meanings and of other ideal objects. In *Ideas I* as in the *Investigations*, Husserl designates the valid signification that “can at any time be perceived as valid” and that is, in that sense, prior to “all theories concerning it”, as “non-temporal”.⁴²⁹ By the time of writing *Experience and Judgment*, however, Husserl was compelled by phenomenological consideration of how “objectivities of the understanding ... have their givenness-time” (i.e., their temporal character in lived experience) to claim that “the timelessness of objectivities of the understanding, their being ‘everywhere and nowhere,’ proves ... to be a privileged form of temporality”.⁴³⁰ Husserl still discerned a “supertemporality” in the capacity of such objectivities to “appear simultaneously in many spatiotemporal positions and yet be numerically identical as the same”.⁴³¹ But he no longer took this supertemporality to necessarily imply atemporality. For all objectivities that are “once ... actualized or ‘realized’” in our understanding, according to the later Husserl's view, “are [thus] localized spatiotemporally” (albeit in such a way that they are reiterable).⁴³² In some cases, then, “supertemporality” would imply not non-temporality but “omnitemporality” — a sort of invariant and reiterable character that, “nevertheless, is a mode of

⁴²⁹ *Ideas I*, § 22, p. 82.

⁴³⁰ *Experience and Judgment*, § 64c, p. 261.

⁴³¹ *Experience and Judgment*, § 64c, p. 260.

⁴³² *Experience and Judgment*, § 64c, p. 260. Husserl continues to allow the possibility, following Bolzano, of “a horizon of objects capable of being further discovered, although still unknown”, which, “as long as they are not discovered (by anyone), ... are not actually in spatiotemporality” (ibid.). Cf., along with the ensuing discussion of “free” and “bound” idealities in § 64d, the parallel discussion in § 100 of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*.

temporality”.⁴³³ In this allowance that supertemporality is, in some cases, a mode of temporality, we have another instance of the later Husserl adapting his account of meaning in light of that which he describes.

Husserl’s initial views of issues so crucial for his account of meaning as the temporal status of ideal objects, and how significations transcend significative acts, and what exactly “transcendental psychologism” designates, were therefore not so uncritically inherited that they were protected from revisions based on phenomenological questioning. Neither was Bolzano’s postulate of “truths in themselves” — the key to Husserl’s “Platonism” — immune from this questioning. On the contrary, the second part of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* involves a criticism of the same Bolzanian evidences by which Husserl had initially secured his old distinction between real acts and ideal meanings.

As I have noted (in section 5.3.2), Husserl’s *Logic* questions several of Bolzano’s “idealizing presuppositions”.⁴³⁴ It questions the thesis that there are truths that the logician can “reactivate”, “identify”, and “build upon”; and the thesis that there are truths that we might never discover to be true; and the thesis that these truths “themselves” are “actualizable by following explorable ... ways of cognition”.⁴³⁵ Husserl in 1929 still recognized that these presuppositions “surely rank as evidences”.⁴³⁶ Yet he also

⁴³³ *Experience and Judgment*, § 64c, p. 261.

⁴³⁴ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, §§ 73-81.

⁴³⁵ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 73, p. 164, § 80, p. 176.

⁴³⁶ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 80, p. 176. Husserl continued to embrace Bolzano’s claim “that there are indeed truths in themselves, which one can seek, and also find, by avenues prelined in themselves” (§ 80, p. 176). He continued to embrace the Bolzanian claim that science is predicated on this presupposition: “One never asks *whether* there is a truth, but only *how* it can be reached or, at worst, whether it is not utterly unattainable by our factually limited powers of cognition ...”; and “The possibility of sciences depends entirely on this certainty ...” (§ 80, p. 176). Husserl accordingly couched his decision to affirm the independence of truths in terms of the following dichotomy: “Either logic operates with a universal fiction, and is therefore anything but normative; or logic is indeed normative, and this ideal is

emphasized how “astonishing” and “remarkable” it is to suppose that “we know *a priori*” that there are truths that we do not know, or “that courses of thinking with certain final results ‘exist in themselves’”.⁴³⁷ And Husserl’s astonishment incited his reexamination of these presuppositions. It prompted him to ask how logical objectivity and truth can “take on and confirm this sense of transcendence we have”; it prompted him to ask “how we can know” that there are truths that we do not know; it prompted him to ask how, and in what sense, we can validly suppose that there are independent truths.⁴³⁸ Having begun, then, in 1900-01, by critically affirming Bolzano’s thesis that there are independent truths, Husserl by 1929 was also asking, transcendently, how this excess of what is true over what we grasp as true can possibly be evident.

It is accordingly clear that Husserl extensively reexamined and revised the views of meaning that he inherited from various predecessors. Without any more exhaustive summary of this reexamination and revision, it is plain already that Husserl’s actual attempts to account for meaning are not neatly captured by the caricature that Heidegger sometimes presented of his teacher.⁴³⁹ Given the critical character of Husserl’s initial appropriation of various semantic claims, together with his repeated re-examination of those claims, it hardly seems fair to say that Husserl “disregarded” any “rigorous investigation” of the “Platonic” distinction between ideality and reality.⁴⁴⁰ It is true that Husserl discerned an inner kinship between his full phenomenology of logic, on the one

indeed an actual fundamental norm pertaining inseparably to the possibility of genuine science” (§ 73, p. 166).

⁴³⁷ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 79, p. 175.

⁴³⁸ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 79, p. 175, § 93c, p. 204.

⁴³⁹ It should be noted, in Heidegger’s defense, that he is not often, even in his lecture courses, quite as agonistic and acrimonious in his comments regarding Husserl as he is in those presently at issue.

⁴⁴⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, trans. Daniel Dahlstrom, pp. 68-69.

hand, and the motives of Plato's works, on the other.⁴⁴¹ It is true also that Husserl in the *Investigations* accepted Bolzano's old distinction between ideal unities of meaning and real acts of meaning as variously "self-evident". But the partly Bolzanian, partly Brentanian theory of meaning that Husserl inherited was one that he took up critically, through his own first-hand reasoning (depicted in chapter 4); and it was one that Husserl began questioning again, and revising, as soon as he had made it his own. Far from "a rigorous investigation" being "disregarded", then, it rather appears that Husserl remained unsettled, though principled, to the end. He did not hastily abandon his earlier insights, but he did return, in accordance with what he called the "zigzag" of "genuine" understanding, to examine his earlier account of meaning again against the appearance of meaning itself.

We may still be inclined to ask whether there was not something viciously circular about the process wherein Husserl's theory of meaning first shaped, and then was reinforced by, his phenomenological method. Yet our suspicion that Husserl's two-step method is incapable of offering critical resistance to the two-sided theory of meaning from which it arose has turned out to be unjustified. We have seen that the phenomenological method, with its roots in Husserl's view of meaning, in fact resulted in several revisions. These revisions, moreover, should come as no surprise. For Husserl's attempt to account for meaning indeed had a "zigzag" character, rather than the character

⁴⁴¹ As I discussed in section 5.3.2, Husserl regarded Plato as the founder of logic because Plato, when faced with the "universal denial of science by sophistic skepticism", sought to identify the subjective and objective conditions for the possibility of science (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Introduction). We may not agree with this view of logic's historical origins. Yet Husserl's view of Plato's influence is at least less "banal" than the condescending mode of speech wherein "Platonism" is a poorly defined term of abuse. "Platonism" can signify either (a) the simple recognition of the eidetic or (b) the ultra-realism regarding universals — the confusion between the eidetic and the thing-like — of which Plato himself articulated the still-decisive criticisms in the *Parmenides*. Ascriptions of "Platonism" (to Husserl, among others) too often condemn (a) as though it were necessarily (b).

of vicious circularity, in the sense that it was a consistently self-critical process.⁴⁴² An encounter with the data in question would issue in a provisional theory; Husserl would then measure that provisional theory through another return to the things themselves; this measurement would then issue in the next provisional theory; and so on.⁴⁴³ Now, if Husserl's 1900-01 view of meaning were not based on any encounter with the things themselves, then we would not expect a method determined by that view to result in revisions. If Husserl's semantics had consisted of "the most banal Platonism" because he had eschewed any investigation, then it would indeed be surprising to find him engaged in an ongoing process of reexamination thorough enough to reach even the core of his initial theory of meaning. If, however, Husserl's original reasoning on behalf of his Brentanian and Bolzanian views of meaning was largely cogent, then it is no surprise that a method shaped by those views led to further original investigations and to revisions. It is then only natural that Husserl returned to the phenomenon of meaning from a perspective, and with a method, shaped by his initial views, and only natural that those views were, in some respects, revised.

Husserl's semantics is thus cleared of a popular methodological charge against it. We have seen manifold evidence that Husserl undertook both a first-hand study of meaning and a consistent reexamination of his own views. This evidence belies the claim that Husserl was guilty, in his semantics, of gullible appropriation and vicious circularity.

⁴⁴² Compare Husserl's claim that all self-critical human inquiry involves a "zigzag" where the inquirer is "first making straight for the givenness of something itself, but then [is] going back critically to the provisional results already obtained" (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 44b).

⁴⁴³ So, for example, when Husserl through his investigations encountered evidence that there are ideal meanings, that Bolzanian insight came as a shock to the Brentanian paradigm that he had unequivocally embraced at the time when he was writing *Philosophy of Arithmetic*; when he saw the apparent incoherence of a partly Bolzanian, partly Brentanian view, he felt compelled to propose a resolution by which those views might be reconciled; when he applied his method he determined that his 1900-01 inquiry had not been psychological after all; and so on.

While Husserl's process of accounting for meaning is thus importantly vindicated, however, the most contentious conclusion of that process is not. We may readily acknowledge Husserl's disposition toward rigorous inquiry and still object to his resolution of the riddle that is his dyadic semantics. Indeed, many thinkers within the phenomenological tradition — who to some extent appreciate Husserl's 1900-01 pair of semantic insights, and who thus can recognize the motive force behind the eidetic and transcendental reductions — object to that resolution. They object to the proposal that we ought to reconcile Bolzanian and Brentanian insights by reference to transcendental subjectivity.

Accordingly, I turn now from a methodological focus to a question about conclusions. The question is: how should Husserl have explained the division that he detected within the phenomenon of meaning? Phenomenological critiques of the later Husserl's attempt to explain meaning's dyadic character fall into two families. One holds that Husserl's depiction of a transcendental subjective origin of objective meaning is too speculatively ambitious; the other holds that Husserl's discussion of objective meaning's transcendental basis is not metaphysical enough. So, in the following chapter, I examine in turn the case for each of these contentions.

6: Assessing Husserl's resolution

6.1: Speculative excess?

Within the program of inquiry that Husserl initiated, there are some who dissent from the later Husserl's semantic conclusions and instead prefer the "metaphysical neutrality" of the *Logical Investigations*.⁴⁴⁴ These dissenters lament that Husserl's theory of meaning did not steadfastly retain the *Investigations*' stated policy of bracketing metaphysical claims.⁴⁴⁵ Without being hostile to metaphysics per se,⁴⁴⁶ they are suspicious of the admittedly metaphysical direction that Husserl's later semantics takes.⁴⁴⁷ They favor the unresolved dissonance of the 1900-01 theory of meaning over the later Husserl's proposed resolution. For, according to this first group of dissenters, Husserl's description of a transcendental basis of meanings, while purportedly guided by

⁴⁴⁴ On this "neutrality" see Zahavi, "Metaphysical Neutrality in *Logical Investigations*" (*One Hundred Years of Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi and Frederik Stjernfelt (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), pp. 93-108), and Benoist, "Phénoménologie et ontologie dans les Recherches logiques". Among contemporary philosophers, Benoist is perhaps the principal advocate for the metaphysically "minimalist" character of the *Investigations*, wanting to maintain the "tensions" in Husserl's 1900-01 semantics against Zahavi and others who side with the later Husserl. See "Phénoménologie", pp. 121-124, and "Husserl's Theory of Meaning in the First Logical Investigation".

⁴⁴⁵ For Husserl's discussion of the policy that puts metaphysical presuppositions out of play, see, e.g., *Logical Investigations*, Introduction to volume II, part I of the German edition, § 7. Husserl there, as elsewhere in the *Investigations*, presents phenomenology as a "theory of knowledge" that is prior to "all metaphysics" (p. 178). Above all — though, as Benoist notes, only in the original, 1901 edition — Husserl in this section explicitly excludes the "metaphysical question" concerning the "existence and nature of the "external world"". In this way, as Benoist concludes, "the phenomenology deployed in the *Logical Investigations*" is "characterized" by a "radical lack of ontological engagement" — a "metaphysical abstinence" that puts the *Investigations* in a "neutral position in relationship to empirical psychology on the one side and logic on the other" ("Phénoménologie", pp. 113-114).

⁴⁴⁶ It is possible, of course, to prefer the relatively a-metaphysical stance of the *Investigations* to the particular metaphysical direction of the *Logic* while embracing some metaphysical position. It is even possible to hold this preference while suspecting that Husserl was led toward a particular, flawed metaphysics precisely by his attempt to put the theory of knowledge prior to metaphysics. Roman Ingarden's opposition to Husserl's later semantics is an actual instance of this possibility.

⁴⁴⁷ For Husserl's characterization of himself and those who accept his view of logic as "metaphysicians", see *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 102, pp. 238-239. Husserl is careful to add that he wants to do metaphysics only in what he calls "the right way"; he does *not* want "to 'speculate'" (ibid., § 102, pp. 238-239). Cf. also Husserl's suggestion that phenomenology excludes every "realism" that takes "the ego as a ... bit of the world", as well as many "idealisms" (ibid., § 93a, p. 202).

insight, was too often conjectural. It too often involved a speculation unrestrained by the data at issue.

As a characteristic example of this type of dissent, we may take the objections of Roman Ingarden. Ingarden belonged to what is often called the “Göttingen circle”, a group of thinkers who studied under Husserl at some point between 1901 and 1915 and who are perhaps the most important proponents of Husserl’s early phenomenology. Besides Ingarden, the group notably included also several philosopher-psychologists from Munich, who had traded that cultural and intellectual center for comparatively drab Göttingen in order to study with the man behind the *Logical Investigations*;⁴⁴⁸ it included (among these Munich philosophers), Adolf Reinach, who was poised to become Husserl’s successor at the head of the phenomenological movement, before he was killed in World War I;⁴⁴⁹ and it included, during the later years, Edith Stein, whose works remain among the most valuable contributions to phenomenological research, despite the staggering injustices that she suffered.⁴⁵⁰ Now, Ingarden’s evaluation of Husserl’s later thought should hardly be taken to exactly represent the full Göttingen circle’s judgment, given that the circle was a collection of original thinkers. Yet Ingarden does roughly represent the group as a whole in the following relevant respects:

⁴⁴⁸ This subset of the Göttingen circle had studied under Theodore Lipps, one of the philosopher-psychologists whom Husserl’s *Investigations* had charged with psychologism. Along with several of Lipps’ other students who remained in Munich, and Max Scheler, and others, this part of the Göttingen circle comprised the Munich circle of phenomenologists. On the Munich circle see Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960), pp. 168-270.

⁴⁴⁹ See Karl Schuhmann and Barry Smith, “Adolf Reinach: An Intellectual Autobiography” (*Speech Act and Sachverhalt*, ed. Kevin Mulligan, Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1987) especially pp. 16-32.

⁴⁵⁰ On Stein’s contributions to phenomenology, both “signed” and “anonymous”, see Marianne Sawicki, *Body, Text, and Science: The Literacy of Investigative Practices and the Phenomenology of Edith Stein* (Boston: Kluwer, 1997) pp. 151-171. As Sawicki documents, the studies published in Stein’s own name far from exhaust her output: Stein also made significant but “anonymous” contributions to many works for which others took the credit, including at least two that have become foundational for phenomenology, namely the earliest set of Husserl’s manuscripts on time consciousness (i.e., the set drafted between 1904 and 1911, published in the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* in 1928, for which Heidegger was named as editor) and *Ideas II*.

- With the other members of the Göttingen circle, Ingarden engaged in phenomenological inquiry, and accepted at least the skeleton of Husserl's two-step method.⁴⁵¹ He accepted that, in order to access the important domain of research to which "the master" had broken through, it is necessary (a) to temporarily "neutralize" our position "about the real existence" of that which we are studying, and (b) to attend to "the essential and [in many cases] general moments" of that which we are studying.⁴⁵²
- Ingarden shared his colleagues' attraction to Husserl's early critique of psychologism, their antipathy toward neo-Kantianism, and their related reservations regarding Husserl's turn to a transcendental idealism. With the other early phenomenologists, he understood the phenomenological slogan, "to the things themselves", as a reaction to much of the work that was done under the

⁴⁵¹ When Ingarden objects to Husserl's transcendental turn, he couches that turn as a misapplication, rather than as an essential part, of the phenomenological method. He has no objection to "the investigation of the whole process of cognition", with its "eidetic analysis" and its "appeal to conscious acts"; what he objects to, instead, is Husserl's "practical performance of this task", wherein Husserl "emphasizes too strongly the subjectively directed aspect of his inquiries"; what Ingarden objects to is that Husserl, "not wanting to perpetrate any dogmatic assertion about the objects of cognition, suddenly adopts the directly opposite point of view, treating the sense of the object constituted in the cognitive process exclusively as the creation of the acts coming into consideration" (*On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism* (trans. Arnor Hannibalsson (The Hague: Nijhoff), 1975), p. 37). In this sense, Ingarden accepted a skeletal phenomenological method without accepting the way that Husserl fleshed the method out.

⁴⁵² Roman Ingarden, *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, p. 36. The first, bracketing component of this procedure clearly at least resembles Husserl's transcendental reduction. The second Ingarden explicitly refers to as an "'eidetic' attitude" (ibid., p. 36). This two-step procedure can be applied whether we are attempting to clarify, say, what various types of art objects are, with Ingarden, or what the state is, with Stein, or what speech acts are, with Reinach, or what perception and judgment are, as in Husserl's subjectively directed, purportedly pre-ontological type of phenomenology. While this procedure, in virtue of its eidetic character, often considers what is general, it can also, as Ingarden notes, consider singular essences: "Phenomenologists do not take into account accidental qualities or attributes. There can be cases of a phenomenologist's interest in the essence of certain exactly individual objects, for example of a certain determined person, but that is outside the framework of the matters which could lead him to be suspected of intruding into the field of physical research" (ibid., p. 36).

motto, “back to Kant”. He took it to express the belief that we have epistemic access to things that are independent of our epistemic faculties.⁴⁵³

Because Ingarden is representative of the Göttingen circle on these points, we would have some reason to take as likewise roughly representative of the circle’s position any evaluation he offers of the transcendental turn within Husserl’s later semantics. Because Ingarden wrote extensively about Husserl’s intellectual development, moreover, he in fact was able to leave us critical comments concerning Husserl’s later theory of meaning.

These comments occur partly in Ingarden’s *The Literary Work of Art*. *The Literary Work of Art* is primarily an attempt to clarify what aesthetic literary products essentially are. Given this focus, Ingarden’s study is basically about something other than Husserl’s philosophy.⁴⁵⁴ But the 1931 publication also contains a preface in which Ingarden directly addresses the position of Husserl’s 1929 *Logic*. Ingarden there briefly indicates what he cannot affirm in his teacher’s later position regarding the origin of objective meanings.

The chief point of contention is transcendental subjectivity, as Husserl describes it. The question is whether the subjectivity that Husserl describes is a suitable candidate

⁴⁵³ The Göttingen circle affirmed both a metaphysical realism and our epistemic access to the things themselves. “All the young phenomenologists”, according to Stein, “were confirmed realists” (quoted by Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue 1913-1922* (Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), p. 66). Reinach indicated the sort of Neo-Kantianism to which the early phenomenologists were opposed in a letter to his friend Theodor Conrad (of the Munich circle), through this snarky recitation of a lecture by a neo-Kantian professor: “This thesis [that “a true idea must agree with its object”] cannot be true, because we know nothing at all about how things really are — Kant, too, pointed this out — and the whole world is only in our consciousness, — and outside of consciousness there is nothing” (translated in Karl Schuhmann and Barry Smith, “Adolf Reinach: An Intellectual Autobiography”, p. 8).

⁴⁵⁴ To be sure, Ingarden’s whole study of aesthetic literary products functions, indirectly, as a part within his decades-long rebuttal to Husserl’s transcendental idealism. (Compare Ingarden’s 1961 statement that his opposition to various forms of idealism, including that which Husserl came to embrace, “has been in fact occupying my entire scholarly life” (quoted in Jeff Mitscherling, *Roman Ingarden’s Ontology and Aesthetics* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997), p. 50).) Nonetheless, the study’s direct theme is the structure and type of being of literary works of art.

for the role that his semantics would have it play — whether it is a basis without which there could be no ideal meaning.⁴⁵⁵ The charge is that Husserl slips into erroneous speculation when he begins to identify the phenomenologist’s “transcendental subjectivity” — a subjectivity that is reflectively described by “starting from the world and myself qua human being” —⁴⁵⁶ as a necessary condition of all objective meaning.

On Ingarden’s reading, Husserl in his *Logic* rejects his early view of “word meanings, sentences, and higher units of meaning”.⁴⁵⁷ Whereas Husserl had previously, in the *Investigations*, attributed a “strict ideality” to objective meanings, he resigns this view by making all ideal objectivities out to be “formations” dependent on the subjectivity he describes.⁴⁵⁸ He effectively trades in much of his Bolzanian view for “a universal extension of transcendental idealism”.⁴⁵⁹ It is at this point that Ingarden cannot follow the course of his teacher’s thinking about meaning. Ingarden’s objection, then, is that the “subjective operations” out of which ideal meanings are said to “arise”, in Husserl’s *Logic*, are not operations on which all such meanings actually depend.⁴⁶⁰

Ingarden offers little explicit attempt to justify this objection in his preface to *The Literary Work of Art*. He does briefly allude, in support of his criticism, to his account of what aesthetic literary products essentially are.⁴⁶¹ We need not subscribe to Ingarden’s

⁴⁵⁵ Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, trans. George Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern, 1973), p. lxxiv.

⁴⁵⁶ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 96a.

⁴⁵⁷ Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. lxxiv.

⁴⁵⁸ Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. lxxiv.

⁴⁵⁹ Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. lxxiv.

⁴⁶⁰ Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. lxxiv.

⁴⁶¹ Given the results of Ingarden’s study, there is a difference in kind between publically available but modifiable literary creations, such as novels, and strictly invariant and determinate “ideal objectivities”, such as “ideal concepts” (*The Literary Work of Art*, p. lxxiv). Our fictional literary products would be jointly founded on acts of authorship and reading, on the one hand, and on ideal concepts that give such products their “intersubjective identity” and “ontically autonomous mode of existence”, on the other hand (*The Literary Work of Art*, p. lxxiv). The ideal meanings that works of fiction presuppose, in contrast, would be independent of our conscious acts. If Ingarden is right that (a) our fictional literary works depend on our conscious acts while (b) ideal meanings do not, and correct too that (c) the later Husserl ascribes

ontology of literary works of art, however, in order to have some basis for his objection to Husserl's later semantics. Instead, the strongest case for Ingarden's objection emerges from his 1963 large-scale assessment of Husserl's later thought.⁴⁶²

Among the questions Ingarden's 1963 text poses with respect to Husserl's later philosophy is a "problem regarding the scope of transcendental phenomenology".⁴⁶³ There is, Ingarden writes, "a certain unconscious ambiguity of the role of the phenomenological reduction in Husserl's works".⁴⁶⁴ The transcendental aspect of Husserl's method, in particular, seems to serve a problematically ambiguous function. At first, the transcendental reduction's sphere of application seems to be solely "in epistemology".⁴⁶⁵ We study the structure of a dative of appearance, suspending (and reflecting on) the beliefs that are built into our natural attitude, in order to consider the nature and possibility of knowledge. We put existing bodies of knowledge out of play, and consider how knowledge is possible, partly in response to skepticism regarding our epistemic faculties. Eventually, however, the transcendental reduction's scope seems to extend to certain questions in "ontology".⁴⁶⁶ Husserl's attempts to elucidate what knowledge is and how it is possible lead into questions regarding the type of being that knowledge and its conditions possess. His epistemological inquiries raise "metaphysical problems" regarding the status that consciousness and reason have with respect to the

dependence on our conscious acts to all ideal meanings, it would follow that Husserl's later semantics is mistaken.

⁴⁶² This work, first published in Polish, is translated as *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism* (trans. Arnor Hannibalsson, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975). Ingarden there contends that Husserl's turn toward a metaphysical transcendental idealism was perhaps initiated with methodological developments that occurred during Husserl's years in Göttingen and was definitely solidified during the early 1920s. Ingarden cites extensive conversations and correspondence with Husserl, specifically regarding the realism-idealism issue(s), in support of this contention.

⁴⁶³ Ingarden, *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, p. 38.

⁴⁶⁴ Ingarden, *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, p. 39.

⁴⁶⁵ Ingarden, *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, p. 39.

⁴⁶⁶ Ingarden, *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, pp. 40-41.

world.⁴⁶⁷ Is subjectivity a dependent part of an independent world? Or does a different relation of dependence obtain? Ingarden suspects that Husserl brings an originally epistemological reduction to bear on these metaphysical issues.⁴⁶⁸

We need not settle here the persistent and widespread debate regarding the reduction's metaphysical implications. What matters for present purposes is simply that Ingarden's 1963 concern regarding the reduction's ambiguous range of application can be raised specifically with reference to Husserl's later semantics. For there is a problem with the reduction's scope — “a certain unconscious ambiguity of the role of the phenomenological reduction” —⁴⁶⁹ that occurs specifically in Husserl's description of a transcendental origin of meanings. The problem is that this description occasionally drifts, perhaps without sufficient notation that it is drifting, between two registers:

1. In a first register, Husserl describes his own singular subjectivity — and invites his readers to similarly describe their own singular subjectivities.⁴⁷⁰ He differentiates his own transcendental ego, to which he has reflective access, from “other transcendental egos” — and invites his readers to do the same.⁴⁷¹ Given

⁴⁶⁷ Ingarden, *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, p. 41.

⁴⁶⁸ More precisely, Ingarden, together with Stein and others, suspected that Husserl derived a metaphysical idealism from his transcendental reduction. Thus when Stein wrote to Ingarden of her belief in “an absolutely existing physical nature”, she added, “I have not yet had the chance to confess my heresy to the Master” (quoted in Sawicki, *Body, Text, and Science*, p. 159). Does Husserl's transcendental idealism in fact amount to a metaphysical idealism, as Hermann Philipse has recently argued again (see “Transcendental Idealism”, *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, ed. Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1995) 239-322)? Or is Husserl's transcendental idealism metaphysically realist, as per Karl Ameriks' view (see “Husserl's Realism”, *Philosophical Review* 86 (1978): pp. 498-519)? Or is Robert Sokolowski correct that Husserl, returning to a Platonic-Aristotelian mode of philosophical thinking, refused the representationalist presuppositions that underlie the modern realism-idealism controversy (cf. “Husserl's Discovery of Philosophical Discourse”, *Husserl Studies* 24 (2008): pp. 167-75.)? These are difficult and important questions, but the attempt to answer them, and to determine the founding relation between subjectivity and the real world, lies outside the bounds of this project. My focus is confined to the founding relation between subjectivity and objective meaning.

⁴⁶⁹ Ingarden, *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, p. 39.

⁴⁷⁰ Working within this mode of description, Husserl writes of transcendental subjectivity that “*I myself* am this subjectivity” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 95, p. 208).

⁴⁷¹ See, e.g., *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 96a, pp. 212-213.

this field of description, it is possible for each of us to make the following, almost tautological counterfactual claim regarding the transcendental basis of signification: “without my own ongoing conscious experience, there would be no objective meanings *for me*.”

2. In another register, Husserl describes subjectivity more generally.⁴⁷² This field of description supports another counterfactual claim regarding the transcendental basis of meaning, a claim broader and less obvious than the first. It permits us to say: “if there were no experience, there would be no objective meanings *at all*”.

The first of these counterfactuals has its importance exclusively within the theory of knowledge. Though perhaps trivial at first glance, it is vital to Husserl’s pursuit of intellectual responsibility. Husserl acknowledges that his own subjectivity is responsible for his concepts and judgments, and treats whatever transcends his conscious processes as a phenomenon the constitution of which needs to be investigated, in order “to uproot all prejudice”.⁴⁷³ The second counterfactual, in contrast, has a partly ontological bearing. Husserl identifies categorial acts (in general) as a condition for the possibility of objective meanings, in order to offer an alternative to logical psychologism. He denies the (unavoidably ontological) claim that there would be no logical domain — no truths or other meanings — apart from contingent psychological processes, and affirms in its place

⁴⁷² Working within the mode of description, Husserl identifies transcendental subjectivity — that the “explication” of which is the “task of transcendental phenomenology” — as “a universal constitutional Apriori, embracing all intentionalities” (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 98, pp. 217-218)

⁴⁷³ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 104, pp. 244. Husserl instructively compares this constitutional questioning with that of Descartes, who engages in universal doubt, and considers the relation between his ideas and his own *cogito*, in order to subject his beliefs to a thorough assessment (*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 97). Hume too practiced this type of questioning, by entertaining sweeping doubts, and describing how each person’s experience is the origin of that person’s ideas, in order to categorize and critique those ideas (cf. *ibid.*, § 100, p. 227).

the (equally ontological) claim that it is rather transcendental subjectivity on which objective meanings depend.

The concern that we should raise, on behalf of the Göttingen circle, is that Husserl may not always have kept the first counterfactual separate from the second. The concern is that the later Husserl may at points have taken some singular subjectivity like his own, which has importance in epistemology, and posited it as though it has the sort of ontological significance that he ought rather to have attributed only to subjectivity in general (or to some better qualified subject). The concern is that Husserl may have slipped into the claim that there would be no objective meanings at all — *in an ontological sense* — apart from the singular subjectivity to which a given phenomenologist has reflective access. In the terms of Ingarden's broad objection regarding the reduction's scope, then, the charge is that Husserl may have drifted too heedlessly between a theory of knowledge and an ontology of meaning. More precisely, the charge is that Husserl may not have sufficiently distinguished this or that singular transcendental ego, the reduction to which is important only for epistemological ends, with transcendental subjectivity in general, the reduction to which has significance, in part, for the metaphysics of meaning.

While I do not believe that Husserl was ultimately heedless of this distinction,⁴⁷⁴ there are nonetheless texts in Husserl's *Logic* that can seem to speculatively attribute a grandiose primacy to singular subjectivities like the one on which Husserl is reflecting. In section 95, for example, Husserl writes the following: "First of all, before everything

⁴⁷⁴ Husserl was at least far from oblivious to the general distinction between metaphysical and epistemological primacy. In § 93a of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, e.g., Husserl specifies that it is "from the standpoint of cognition" that his ego "precedes the being of the world" (p. 202). It is perhaps more difficult to distinguish epistemological and metaphysical priority, however, when it is the being of meanings that we are considering.

else conceivable, I am. This ‘I am’ is for me, the subject who says it, and says it in the right sense, the primitive intentional basis for my world” — including “for any ideal world that I accept”.⁴⁷⁵ This statement, as Husserl notes, “may sound monstrous”.⁴⁷⁶ More exactly, it may seem to endorse a hybrid of “psychologism” and “solipsism” — it may seem to recommend that each subject understand himself or herself as the “primitive basis” for “logical principles” and other valid meanings that rather appear to hold independently of our thought.⁴⁷⁷ Unaccompanied by any clear distinction between each inquirer’s transcendental subjectivity, on the one hand, and transcendental subjectivity in general, on the other hand, does not such a text suggest that each singular subjectivity is the primitive productive basis, without which there would be no meanings *at all*?

This, in any case, is the first intra-phenomenological challenge to the later Husserl’s talk of transcendental subjectivity. From the perspective of the Göttingen circle, it would have been better if Husserl had never attempted a transcendental resolution of his Brentanian and Bolzanian semantic insights. Ideal meaning indeed essentially depends on the living experience of meaning; and ideal meaning is indeed

⁴⁷⁵ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 95, p. 209. Along the same lines, Husserl writes: If I “go back and ask about the multiplicities of ... meanings, ... taking everything objective purely as a ‘phenomenon’, as an intentionally constituted unity, I ... find myself qua transcendental ego” (ibid., § 96a, p. 211).

⁴⁷⁶ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 95, p. 209.

⁴⁷⁷ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 95, p. 209. Husserl believes that intersubjectivity is necessary for objectivity; and so each transcendental subject would need to constitute others before he or she could constitute an objective meaning as objective. Husserl opposes solipsism, moreover, in recognizing that the other can do a reduction that I do not experience originally: “the other psyche also points back to a transcendental ego, but, in this case, another’s, as the ego that someone else ... would have to grasp in the ‘phenomenological reduction’” (ibid., § 96a, p. 212). Still, while Husserl thus grants that “the world is continually there *for us*”, he emphasizes that “in the first place it is there *for me*” (ibid., § 96a, p. 214, my emphasis). It is unfortunately possible, though not advisable, to interpret this as a metaphysical solipsism. We could more charitably understand it as expressing only a methodological solipsism, according to which each of us must begin what Husserl called “sense-investigation” — any study of the nature and origin of meaning — through reflection on our own subjectivity. Husserl also appears to endorse an epistemological solipsism that he attributes to Descartes: “this Ego — ... I, understood as the ultimately constitutive subjectivity, exist for myself with apodictic necessity ...; whereas the world constituted in me ... has and, by essential necessity, retains the sense of only presumptive existence” (ibid., § 99, p. 222).

nonetheless independent of contingent acts of meaning; but Husserl's endeavor to explain this dyadic appearance of meaning by means of the reduction, by reference to transcendental subjectivity, was too ambitious. He should not have presumed to display the basis of all meaning through his discipline of reflective description. For, in doing so, his transcendental account of signification runs the risk of speculatively conflating each reader's own reflectively accessed singular subjectivity with the basis of all objective meanings. It risks identifying (a) each inquirer's own subjectivity, as it is understood by way of the reduction, with (b) subjectivity in general, without which there could be no objective meaning at all. Whereas Husserl alleges in his *Logic* that the *Investigations* remained in danger of psychologism, then, those who would defend Husserl's 1900-01 account of meaning claim that it is actually his 1929 semantics that faces the greater peril.

What can we say, on behalf of the later Husserl's semantics, against this challenge? First, we must reiterate that Husserl makes a "radical separation of psychological from transcendental subjectivity".⁴⁷⁸ Thus, even if he did place his singular transcendental subjectivity at the basis of meaning, he would not have been referring to the contingent features of a particular mundane thinker who was born in 1859 and died in 1938. He would rather have been referring to the essence that he has as a singular dative of appearance. Second, and much more important, we should emphasize that it is possible to read Husserl's discussions of his own transcendental subjectivity as purely pre-metaphysical. It is possible, that is, to think that Husserl discussed his own subjectivity merely because it was the example of subjectivity in general to which he had first-person access; and it is accordingly possible to interpret Husserl's claims about the transcendental basis of all objective meaning as referring strictly to subjectivity in

⁴⁷⁸ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 99, p. 223.

general. Granted, Husserl may not be sufficiently explicit in his *Logic* about the distinction between singular and general transcendental subjectivity.⁴⁷⁹ Yet he does often operate as though that distinction is in play, and thus as though he is sensitive to the concern that I have raised on behalf of his Göttingen students. For, although Husserl regularly describes his own transcendental subjectivity, he typically speaks of transcendental subjectivity more generally when he makes ontological claims about the basis of meaning in general. So, to take the example that I have already cited above, when Husserl refers to his own transcendental subjectivity as the basis of ideal meaning, it is as the origin of “my world” — of “any ideal world *that I accept*”,⁴⁸⁰ when, in contrast, he refers to the necessary condition of any objective meaning whatever, he often uses general phrases, such as “structures of productive cognitive life”,⁴⁸¹ and “the mind”,⁴⁸² without indexing his references to a singular transcendental subjectivity.

Husserl can thus be seen as going some way toward accommodating the concerns of his Göttingen students. Does he go far enough? The mere distinction between psychological and transcendental subjectivity, while undoubtedly important for the theory of knowledge, does not by itself suffice. Transcendental philosophy excludes the reductionism that attempts to reduce consciousness to an object, but it is quite compatible

⁴⁷⁹ Husserl’s distinction between singular transcendental subjectivity and intersubjectivity performs almost the same function that we seek from a distinction between singular transcendental subjects and transcendental subjectivity in general. Because transcendental subjectivity and intersubjectivity are originally epistemological concepts, however, they compel Husserl toward views on which every given subject’s ego has a primacy that it does not have within an ontological context. In the latter context, any given subject’s limits make the distinction between singular subjects and subjectivity in general more important than the first-person access that we each have to our own experience.

⁴⁸⁰ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 95, p. 209, my italics.

⁴⁸¹ In § 100 of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, again, Husserl describes ideal meanings in general “as essentially products of the correlative structures of productive cognitive life” (p. 233). He does not write, “my productive cognitive life”.

⁴⁸² In § 57b of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, again, Husserl describes ideal meanings in general as “irreal formations produced by the mind”, and as “products of the mind” (p. 138). He does not write, “products of my mind”.

with baseless speculation. In particular, it is compatible with the “apriorist” psychologism that Husserl derided in 1900.⁴⁸³ So long as one does not bear in mind the difference between that for which there is appearance, in general, and the various singular egos for which there is appearance, it remains possible to mistake one’s own transcendental subjectivity as the “primitive” foundation for all meaning. Is the later Husserl sufficiently observant of this difference? Readers of his *Logic* can at least wish that he had made the distinction more explicit than he did. If Husserl had made that distinction both clear and central, it would have tempered certain remarks that, as is, can seem “monstrous”.⁴⁸⁴

In the last analysis, however, what matters for the phenomenology of meaning is not whether Husserl’s *Logic* was in some respects a deserving target of an Ingardenian critique. Indeed, given the admitted “provisionalness” of Husserl’s investigations of meaning, it would be foolhardy to venture any conclusive assessment of Husserl’s position — as though there were a finalized position to assess.⁴⁸⁵ What matters, instead, is simply that there is a genuine insight behind the concerns of the Göttingen circle. Husserl’s attempt to reflectively describe the subjective structures at the base of all objective meaning does face certain hazards. There is a risk of confusing the features that are specific to one’s own, reflectively accessible subjectivity with the features of subjectivity in general. There is even a risk of sliding from epistemological self-scrutiny into metaphysics, in a way that one conflates one’s own, singular living experience with the primal intentional origin of all meaning and truth. These perils of speculative excess

⁴⁸³ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 38, p. 83.

⁴⁸⁴ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 95, p. 209.

⁴⁸⁵ *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 102, p. 239.

comprise a first chief danger to the phenomenology of meaning, and they serve to recommend the metaphysical restraint of Husserl's 1900-01 semantics.

6.2: Metaphysical diffidence?

While some of Husserl's students suggested that his *Logic* was metaphysically reckless, others objected that his discussions of transcendental subjectivity were not ontological enough. According to this second set of critics, Husserl proposed too abstract a resolution for his dyadic semantics. He correctly recognized that objective meaning depends on intentionality, in general, but he did so without specifying the being(s) on which meaning so depends. Husserl erred in his depiction of objective meaning's intentional origin, then, less by commission than by omission: he erred by failing to identify and describe the concrete being(s) without which there could be no meanings.

The most influential objection of this sort is one of Heidegger's. I do not mean the objection that I have already considered (in section 5.5), according to which Husserl uncritically inherited his view of meaning. Apart from that methodological charge, Heidegger also raises a distinct objection to the conclusions of Husserl's semantics. He objects, from a position within the two-sided approach to meaning that Husserl advanced, against Husserl's later attempt to integrate the two sides of his semantics. He objects that the two-sided character of signification should be explained not by reference to an abstract subjectivity, such as we find in Husserl's "ideas of a 'pure ego' and a 'consciousness in general'", but rather by reference to the concrete being that, according to Heidegger, makes objective meaning possible.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁶ *Being and Time*, § 44c, p. 229.

In order to clarify this objection, it is important to begin by showing how Heidegger's dissent emerges from within the phenomenological program that Husserl initiated. For it may seem, initially, as though Heidegger's complaints against Husserl's semantic conclusions could only have come from a position wholly foreign to that of Husserl. As we have seen, Heidegger rejected as uncritical Husserl's mode of appropriating previous theories of meaning. Moreover, such opposition to Husserl's work was hardly an isolated incident within Heidegger's writing. Instead, Heidegger developed a philosophical project that was deeply antagonistic to that of his old teacher. In the years surrounding the publication of *Being and Time*, most of all, Heidegger conducted a sustained and often explicit critique of Husserl's phenomenology. While still acknowledging a debt to Husserl's project, Heidegger privately called it "sham philosophy",⁴⁸⁷ and publicly depicted it as negligent with respect to what Heidegger considered the fundamental philosophical question. Likewise Husserl, after studying *Being and Time*, and attempting with Heidegger to jointly define "phenomenology" for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, came to consider his former student an "antipode".⁴⁸⁸ Are Husserl and Heidegger's competing versions of phenomenology then wholly incompatible, such that mutual misunderstanding is unavoidable? Or can the divergence of Heidegger's philosophical project from that of his teacher be understood in terms of a more basic continuity of enacted aims and methods?

⁴⁸⁷ See Steven Crowell's translation from Heidegger's letter to Karl Jaspers of December 26, 1926 (*Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers: Briefwechsel, 1920-1963*, p. 71), in his *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning* (p. 265, note 3).

⁴⁸⁸ See John Scanlon's translation from Husserl's letter to Roman Ingarden of April 19, 1931 (*Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, p. 67), in *Husserl: Shorter Works* (p. 313, note 6). Husserl there names Heidegger as an "antipode" whose work he needs to study before delivering a lecture, "Phenomenology and Anthropology". It was a lecture in which "the question under discussion" would be "how far ... phenomenological philosophy can derive its method from 'philosophical' anthropology" (*Husserl: Shorter Works*, p. 316, trans. Scanlon).

Happily, we have a case here of development from within. Heidegger presents his critique of Husserlian phenomenology as an “immanent” one.⁴⁸⁹ He admits that his own project, following Husserl’s, consists in “the analytic description of intentionality in its apriori”.⁴⁹⁰ And he acknowledges that several Husserlian “discoveries” were “decisive” for his own procedure.⁴⁹¹ Further, Heidegger’s early thinking about the topic of signification, in particular, overlapped with Husserl’s. The historical development of Heidegger’s early view of meaning paralleled Husserl’s earlier path into phenomenology. Once this parallel development is clarified, we should then be in a position to see how Heidegger’s phenomenology of meaning departs from Husserl’s. We should then be in a

⁴⁸⁹ Heidegger formulates his “immanent critique of phenomenological research”, for example, where precisely Husserl’s “determinations of pure consciousness” are at issue, in his *History* (§ 11). That lecture course of 1925 came to make up much of *Being and Time*, where Heidegger’s description of his inheritance from Husserl would no longer be as extended and his critique of Husserl would no longer be as explicit. The lectures are an elongated version of Heidegger’s earlier lecture, “The Concept of Time”, which “Gadamer has called the ‘original form’ of *Being and Time*” (*History*, publisher’s foreword, p. xiv). A “penultimate form” of Division I is already present in large part in the *History* lectures (*ibid.*, p. xiii).

⁴⁹⁰ Heidegger, *History*, p. 79. On this point, see Crowell’s *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning*. Crowell does not depict the phenomenological method quite as I do: he does not present it as a two-step procedure that follows from Husserl’s two-sided theory of meaning. But Crowell does extensively document how Husserl and Heidegger’s phenomenological projects alike essentially hinge on transcendental questions regarding “the space of meaning”, and thereby supplies much that has been useful for my analysis. I have benefitted especially from Crowell’s translations of pieces of Heidegger’s dissertation; from Crowell’s arguments that Heidegger retains the transcendental and eidetic reductions (pp. 123-28, 170, 195-202); and from Crowell’s discussion regarding Heidegger’s “metontology” and correlated view of the human role in truth (pp. 169, 172, 175-81, 201, 211, 214-221, 238-43). While I am thus indebted to Crowell’s work, however, I cannot agree with him on all points. Crowell ultimately holds (echoing Levinas) that Heidegger’s 1927 phenomenological ontology “represents the fruition and flowering of Husserlian phenomenology” (p. 160). He acknowledges that Heidegger’s achievement in *Being and Time* would not be possible without, and cannot be understood as deeply without an understanding of, its Husserlian background — and yet he also contends that Heidegger’s understanding of “what the reduction accomplishes”, i.e. of the intentional origin of meaning and truth, is ultimately superior to Husserl’s (pp. 201-02; see also pp. 5 and 169 for statements of Crowell’s ultimately Heideggerian response to the problems he formulates). For reasons to be supplied at the end of the present section, I do not wholly agree with that contention.

⁴⁹¹ Heidegger, *History*, p. 27. Perhaps most “decisive” was Husserl’s recognition that the intuition of something can be “categorical”, and more particularly “ideation” (*History*, p. 79). Where “the justified denial of the reality of universals in the same sense as the reality of a chair” had “also led to the denial of the objectivity of the universal”, for Heidegger “this spell was broken by the discovery of categorical intuition, in particular ideation” (*History*, p. 72).

position to understand and also to assess Heidegger's objection to Husserl's later semantic conclusions.

How, then, did Heidegger's early philosophical route, in the years leading up to 1930, parallel the path that Husserl had already taken before him?⁴⁹² Essentially, Heidegger through these years performed what I have called Husserl's "two-step". The development of Heidegger's philosophical project, that is, involved the partly anti-psychologistic, partly transcendental double movement that Husserl had already made.⁴⁹³ To see how this is so, consider first Heidegger's 1913 dissertation, *The Theory of Judgment in Psychologism*. Heidegger there takes up the anti-psychologistic approach of Husserl's *Prolegomena*, by opposing four purportedly psychologistic theories of judgment.⁴⁹⁴ He affirms, contra psychologism, the fundamental distinction of the *Prolegomena*: he writes that, whereas "psychical reality can be termed merely fleeting and insubstantial", the ideal judgment is "identical", and may be "valid", across various acts of judgment.⁴⁹⁵ Consider next Heidegger's 1915 *Habilitation* thesis, *Duns Scotus' Theory of Categories and Signification*. Heidegger there again follows Husserl's Bolzanian step, through polemics aimed to clarify that ideal judgments and their constituent categories are not beings lying around the world. Beyond thus undermining logical psychologism, however, Heidegger in 1915 also attempted to phenomenologically clarify what judgments are *by inquiring into their origin*. Following the route that

⁴⁹² I confine my attention exclusively to Heidegger's works from the years 1914-30 in order to set aside the difficult issues surrounding the "turn" that occurred in Heidegger's thinking ca. 1930.

⁴⁹³ On this double movement see § 5.2. Cf. also Husserl's own brief history of his "long and thorny way" into transcendental phenomenology, in *Ideas I*, §§ 87 and 61.

⁴⁹⁴ These theories of judgment are those of Brentano, Wundt, Heinrich Meier, and Theodor Lipps. For a brief summary of Heidegger's dissertation, see *Logic, Truth and the Modalities: From a Phenomenological Perspective*, J. N. Mohanty (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), pp. 88-91.

⁴⁹⁵ Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* 1:170, translated in Crowell, p. 99; and Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* 1:307, translated in Crowell, p. 94.

Husserl began in the fifth and sixth Investigations, Heidegger contends that the subject matter of logic can originate from no other source than a categorial (as opposed to merely sensuous) intentionality. Thus we can see in Heidegger's early philosophic trajectory two steps that run roughly parallel to Husserl's course. In the first, Heidegger clarifies the strangely invariant and (in some cases) valid nature that judgments possess; in the second, he considers what source logic's strange objects can have.⁴⁹⁶

Moreover, Heidegger soon found it philosophically dissatisfying to merely locate the origin of the field of signification in categorial intentionality. He expressed this "intellectual unrest" in the conclusion that he attached to his 1915 *Habilitation* thesis for its publication in 1916.⁴⁹⁷ In that conclusion, Heidegger writes that the clarification of the logical sphere cannot be accomplished when we engage in the "conscious suspension ... of metaphysical problems", such as he had practiced in his *Habilitation* thesis.⁴⁹⁸ A fuller understanding of what signification is, he claims, rather requires "a metaphysical solution".⁴⁹⁹ It requires a metaphysical clarification of signification's intentional origin. In this discontent with anything less than a metaphysical account of meaning, we can see a parallel to Husserl's dissatisfaction with the semantics of the *Investigations*.

Heidegger's "intellectual unrest" is like that which Husserl felt after locating the origin of logical objectivity in an "intentionality" still so vaguely delimited that critics like Natorp

⁴⁹⁶ Heidegger was well-aware that Husserl had taken just these two steps before him. He depicted the basic thrust of Husserl's *Investigations*, e.g., as consisting in "a more radical conception of what was already advanced in Brentano's descriptive psychology, as well as a basic critique of the contemporary confusion of psychological-genetic inquiry with logical inquiry" (*History*, p. 24).

⁴⁹⁷ *The Theory of Categories and Meaning in Duns Scotus*, trans. Roderick M. Stewart and John van Buren, *Supplements: From the Earliest Essays to Being and Time and Beyond* (ed. John van Buren, SUNY Press, 2002), p. 64.

⁴⁹⁸ Heidegger, *The Theory of Categories*, p. 64. Regarding his thesis' ametaphysical discussion of categories, Heidegger writes in his conclusion that "philosophy cannot do for long without its true optics, metaphysics" (p. 65).

⁴⁹⁹ *The Theory of Categories*, p. 64.

could confuse it with the real psychological processes that are so important in psychologism. We can also see, as Steven Crowell rightly claims, Heidegger's "future trajectory ... adumbrated" in his unrest — and much as we could see Husserl's later trajectory adumbrated in the tension resultant from his cumulative *Investigations*.⁵⁰⁰ For Heidegger, as for Husserl before him, a need arose to further clarify the intentional origin of significations, and this need announced the task pursued in subsequent, less metaphysically restrained investigations.

The historical parallel between Husserl and Heidegger's philosophical developments does not reside only, then, in that Heidegger takes an anti-psychologistic first step, parallel to Husserl's; nor does it consist only in this first step taken together with the further indication that signification and validity have their basis in categorial intentionality. The historical parallel extends beyond this, as far as the second of these early steps also pre-delineates the later trajectory of each thinker. The partly anti-psychologistic, partly transcendental two-step leads to more metaphysical, and purportedly more adequate, transcendental investigations regarding the basis of meanings.

Whereas Husserl came to identify this basis as "transcendental subjectivity", however, Heidegger was not satisfied with such a general designation. Heidegger partly pursued Husserl's phenomenological, two-sided approach to the topic of meaning;⁵⁰¹ and Heidegger recognized that Husserl's program remained "in flux", lacking a finally settled

⁵⁰⁰ Crowell, p. 206.

⁵⁰¹ In his more amicable and open comments, Heidegger suggests that his project and Husserl's were not only parallel, but also mutually informative. In *History of the Concept of Time*, for example, Heidegger writes the following: "Husserl is well aware of my objections from my lecture courses ... *and is essentially making allowances for them*, so that my critique no longer applies in its full trenchancy. But it is not really a matter of criticizing for the sake of criticizing but criticism for the sake of laying open the issues and bringing understanding. It almost goes without saying that even today I still regard myself as a learner in relation to Husserl" (p. 121, my italics).

conclusion;⁵⁰² but Heidegger still felt compelled to make a definite break from Husserl's path. For what reason, then, did Heidegger prefer the phenomenological analysis of Dasein⁵⁰³ to Husserl's description of the structures of experience? In particular, why did Heidegger think it best not to say, following Husserl, that transcendental subjectivity is the basis of objective meaning and truth?

A first statement of Heidegger's objection to the later Husserl's semantic conclusions may be found in *History of the Concept of Time*. In that 1925 lecture course, Heidegger indicates why he cannot follow the phenomenological procedure to the position at which Husserl arrived in his later account of meaning. After tracing how his way of doing philosophy is importantly guided by Husserl's "breakthrough" *Investigations*, Heidegger explains why he nonetheless deviates from Husserl's course.

The explanation, in short, is that Heidegger finds Husserl's descriptions of transcendental subjectivity insufficiently ontological. Heidegger alleges that such descriptions suffer from a "neglect" of that which should be the basic focus of phenomenological research.⁵⁰⁴ He claims that Husserl's choice to study transcendental subjectivity betrays a failure to "ask about the being of consciousness".⁵⁰⁵

This is not to say, of course, that Husserl neglected the study of consciousness. What Heidegger contends, instead, is that Husserl's failure to ask about the being of consciousness can be seen in precisely those "determinations of being which Husserl gives to pure consciousness" — determinations that Heidegger ascribes to a Cartesian

⁵⁰² "It is characteristic of Husserl", Heidegger acknowledges, "that his questioning is still fully in flux, so that we must in the final analysis be cautious in our critique" (*History*, p. 121).

⁵⁰³ In the opening pages of *Being and Time*, Heidegger stipulates that it is "(the human being's) kind of being" that "we are defining ... terminologically as Dasein" (p. 11).

⁵⁰⁴ Heidegger, *History*, p. 115.

⁵⁰⁵ Heidegger, *History*, p. 102.

inheritance, and not to ontological questioning.⁵⁰⁶ What are these determinations? First, according to Heidegger, Husserl supposes that being-conscious means being-included in that (“*reell*”) region of lived experience that we can access by reflection. But, Heidegger objects, this inclusion does not inform us about the being so included, for it does not tell us what “the whole of this region” is.⁵⁰⁷ Second, Husserl views consciousness as “absolutely given” to reflection —⁵⁰⁸ given to reflection, e.g., in a way that no object of (always-perspectival) “external perception” can be. But this determination, Heidegger objects, is only a specification of the first: it tells us only how “consciousness” or “lived experience” is an object for our living experience, while “the entity in itself”, consciousness “in itself”, “does not become a theme”.⁵⁰⁹ Similarly, Husserl understands consciousness as having “priority ... within the order of constitution” over “every objectivity”, on the basis that everything transcendent is given whatever sense it has within living experience.⁵¹⁰ Consciousness thus regarded could even be understood as “absolute”, “in the sense that it is the presupposition of being on the basis of which reality can manifest itself at all”.⁵¹¹ But here too, Heidegger objects, Husserl “does not determine the entity itself in its being”, and in this case instead merely “sets the region of consciousness within the order of constitution”.⁵¹²

Husserl might raise peripheral defenses for each of these peripheral jabs. He might respond to the last objection, e.g., by arguing that his reduction does not *arbitrarily* place its subject matter “within the order of constitution”. It is not as though this order is

⁵⁰⁶ Heidegger, *History*, pp. 101, 103.

⁵⁰⁷ Heidegger, *History*, p. 103.

⁵⁰⁸ Heidegger, *History*, p. 101.

⁵⁰⁹ Heidegger, *History*, p. 104.

⁵¹⁰ Heidegger, *History*, p. 105.

⁵¹¹ Heidegger, *History*, p. 105.

⁵¹² Heidegger, *History*, pp. 105-06.

merely a curiously privileged frame of reference, which we might just as well exchange for another (trading Husserl's more epistemological standpoint for, say, a more mechanistic one, and attempting to explain consciousness primarily in terms of efficient causes and effects). Rather, the reduction's claim to neutrality stems from the insight that all other orders in terms of which we understand are themselves constituted. Such responses, however, would only prompt the crux of Heidegger's critique.

The central point in Heidegger's 1925 objections concerns the peculiarly abstract or general character of the subjectivity that Husserl studied. Heidegger perceives that Husserl's study of subjectivity attempts to be one in which consciousness is "no longer regarded in its concrete individuation and its tie to a living being".⁵¹³ He understands that this study of consciousness aims to consider intentionality not as "real and mine, but instead purely in its essential content".⁵¹⁴ And he claims that this choice to study "pure" subjectivity exposes that Husserl is concerned only with "the determination of the being of intentionality" — and not with "the determination of the being of the entity which has the structure intentionality".⁵¹⁵

On this point Husserl need not disagree. For Husserl had concluded by 1900 that the being of the entity that psychology and anthropology examine — what is "real" as well as perhaps "mine" — was such that it could not be the origin of logic's objects. He accordingly took the phenomenological reduction to be an accomplishment not despite that, but *because*, it directs us to general intentional structures (which structures Husserl thought could plausibly be characterized as the basis of objective meaning), rather than to the concrete being that is studied by the positive human sciences.

⁵¹³ Heidegger, *History*, p. 106.

⁵¹⁴ Heidegger, *History*, p. 106.

⁵¹⁵ Heidegger, *History*, p. 106.

From Heidegger's perspective, however, the accomplishment of the transcendental and eidetic reductions is far from unambiguously positive. Heidegger would prefer that Husserl had not studied quite such a generic essence of transcendental subjectivity. He would prefer that Husserl had not abstracted away from those characteristics that are specifically human, and that Husserl instead had analyzed the concrete being that serves as our starting point when we practice the phenomenological reduction. It is thus unfortunate, on Heidegger's view, that Husserl's determinations of transcendental subjectivity "are in no way drawn from *the entity itself*" to which we have reflective access.⁵¹⁶ It is unfortunate that Husserl is concerned with human being only "to the extent that it is placed under scrutiny as apprehended, given, constituting, and ideating taken as an essence".⁵¹⁷ Whereas Husserl employs the reduction in order not to study a kind of contingent being in the world, then, Heidegger thinks that phenomenology ought to study precisely "the being of the concrete entity called man".⁵¹⁸ For human being, according to Heidegger, is "the being of the entity in which consciousness and reason are concrete".⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ Heidegger, *History*, p. 106, my emphasis.

⁵¹⁷ Heidegger, *History*, p. 106.

⁵¹⁸ Heidegger, *History*, p. 107.

⁵¹⁹ Heidegger, *History*, p. 107. We might hope that these orientations are not basically incompatible. Is it not possible to have more concrete and more abstract programs of phenomenological research at work alongside of one another? Heidegger at one point comes close to recognizing a peaceful difference of compatible approaches. After suggesting that Husserl has failed to consider what is purported to be the most fundamental philosophical question, namely the question of the sense of "being", Heidegger briefly considers hedging that initial assessment: "Perhaps here [in the case of distinctively Husserlian phenomenology], we merely need to determine consciousness as a region, the way in which it is a field for a particular consideration, but not the being of the entity itself, which can [also] be set apart as a possible field of consideration" (Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 107). Heidegger even considers that "perhaps precisely here", in the case of a phenomenology that proceeds "with a view to working out the context of lived experience as a region of absolute scientific consideration", "the question of the being of the entity *should be left out*" (ibid, my italics). This comes close to Husserl's account of his own project, as an attempt to temporarily put metaphysical questions regarding individuals out of play, and as something other than what Husserl calls a regional ontology (a straightforward eidetic analysis) of the being of human beings. Might we thus achieve an irenic resolution, by which Husserl's phenomenology explores the region of consciousness in general, while Heidegger provides a transcendental (rather than straightforward)

This dissent from Husserl’s semantic conclusions is elaborated further in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. In that 1928 text, Heidegger explicitly and focally returns to the problems of transcendental logic that he, following Husserl, had investigated in his earliest works.⁵²⁰ Heidegger’s goal in the text is to clarify what is at issue in Husserl’s transcendental account of logic, namely “the essential connection between truth and ground”.⁵²¹ His “point of departure”, moreover, coincides with Husserl’s eidetic and anti-psychologistic account of logic: he begins from the “traditional definition” of truth as a “characteristic of propositions” (namely the characteristic of stating something as it is).⁵²² Heidegger seeks to surpass this understanding of truth — in terms of which Bolzano and Husserl had sought to demonstrate an independence of various truths from our acts of knowing — by appropriating it “in the right way”.⁵²³

This “right way” is, at first, Husserl’s. Heidegger thus proceeds by asking what a proposition is, phenomenologically. He notes: in encountering a proposition, we are not directed to “signs” or to an “internal” representation, but to what the proposition is about.⁵²⁴ On these grounds, Heidegger infers that propositions are essentially directed to

analysis of the being of human being, a *phenomenological* anthropology? Might we attribute Heidegger’s published attacks and self-promotions solely to his provocative style, explaining their tendency to devalue Husserl’s project and exalt their own as nothing more than the modus operandi of a “man of insight and power” — the animus appropriate to “the arrogance of thinking”, by which Heidegger thinks “the joyful science” must proceed? (Heidegger, *Essence*, p. 77, and *History*, p. 80.) Or would this reading accomplish a too easy “peace” that actually does violence to Heidegger’s understanding of his own approach? These questions are decisively answered in Heidegger’s discussions of meaning and truth in and after *Being and Time*.

⁵²⁰ The 1928 text additionally offers Heidegger’s own “external presentation of [*Being and Time*’s] guiding principles”, positioning these principles within a transcendental project and explicitly treating their continuity with, and divergence from, Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology (*The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984 [1928]), p. 136).

⁵²¹ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 123. His goal, in other words, is to clarify the connection by reason of which we “demand . . . that true statements be grounded” (ibid.).

⁵²² Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, pp. 124-25.

⁵²³ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 125.

⁵²⁴ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, pp. 125-26. So, to take Heidegger’s example, if we “suppose someone here in the classroom states the proposition: “the board is black””, we typically direct our minds not to a mental image of a blackboard, nor to the words spoken, but rather “to the blackboard itself” (ibid.).

some object: “making statements about X is only possible on the basis of having to do with X”.⁵²⁵ From this character of propositions, moreover, Heidegger then concludes that truth, understood as a possible character of propositions, is also “only possible on the basis of having to do with X”. He concludes, in other words, that objective truth is only possible because of what Husserl would call a (evidential) type of intentionality — because of the strange kind of being wherein being is “disclosed”.⁵²⁶ So far, so Husserlian: Heidegger shows, through transcendental analysis, that the “being true” of statements is “primordially rooted” in what Husserl would call a fulfilled kind of intentionality and what Heidegger calls “being disclosive”; and Heidegger affirms the Brentanian insight, according to which the totality of truths originates in intentionality, and “being disclosive” is “the genuine sense of being true”.⁵²⁷

Yet Heidegger is eager, as he writes in 1928, to distinguish his concept of “being disclosive” from Husserl’s concept of fulfilling intentionality. After applauding Husserl for recognizing intentionality as “the essence of being conscious as such”, and for thus bringing intentionality out of psychology, Heidegger reproaches Husserl for not going far enough beyond Brentano: “just as Brentano leaves the concept of the psyche itself untested, so too, in his idealistic epistemology, Husserl does not further ask the question about the being constituted as being conscious”.⁵²⁸ Again, then, Heidegger’s charge is that Husserl neglects ontological study of the being that is intentional and disclosive, in

⁵²⁵ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 126.

⁵²⁶ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, pp. 127-28.

⁵²⁷ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 127.

⁵²⁸ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 133.

which being the “being true” of statements is “primordially rooted”.⁵²⁹ Might we explain this “neglect” merely as a difference of interests?

On the contrary, as Heidegger further clarifies, he sees his own view of being disclosive, and his study of “the entity” or “being in the world” that is so disclosive, as surpassing Husserl’s study of intentionality in concreteness as well as in motivation and scope. Consider first the difference in motivations. We have seen some reason to think that the picture of Husserl as a-metaphysical epistemologist is overdrawn,⁵³⁰ yet Heidegger would still find little contest in claiming that he and Husserl have different motivations for asking similarly transcendental questions about meaning and truth. It is clear at least that where Husserl raised these “problem[s] of intentionality”, at least initially, “for the purpose of explaining knowledge”, Heidegger is motivated to examine this “phenomenon of transcendence” by the goal of “clarifying Dasein and its existence as such”.⁵³¹ Heidegger foils the hope, however, that we might locate his divergence from Husserl only in this difference of purpose and not exactly in a disagreement. To be sure, we might trace the difference of scope that Heidegger sees between his own researches and Husserl’s back to this difference of purpose: Husserl is said to have a “contracted conception” of intentionality just insofar as he thematizes the directedness of consciousness within an epistemological project.⁵³² But, however important differences

⁵²⁹ It should be noted that Heidegger at times plainly overstates what Husserl has not done. Consider, for example, Heidegger’s sweeping claim that, with intentionality, “we have a term and concept taken so much for granted that *no one* lingers with it for long” (*Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 133, my italics). Whatever Husserl’s failures may have been, he tirelessly devoted himself to “lingering with” intentionality — and, at least to that extent, to clarifying the being of consciousness.

⁵³⁰ Again, as noted in section 6.1, Husserl’s later account of logic is admittedly metaphysical. See, for example, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, § 102. While Husserl is thus not entirely opposed to metaphysics, however, it remains true that he is perhaps primarily interested in studying the structure of experience and in identifying the conditions that make knowledge possible.

⁵³¹ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 135.

⁵³² Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 134.

in purpose may be, Heidegger accentuates that his break from Husserl is still more severe, a case not only of differently oriented, but also of incompatible, approaches.

This incompatibility surfaces in Heidegger's argument that his phenomenology is the more concrete. According to this line of argument, Husserl's decision not to identify "the being constituted as being conscious" as human being has the consequence that Husserl cannot discern the "central philosophical significance" of that which he investigates under the title of "intentionality".⁵³³ Husserl is incapable of grasping intentionality's significance, then, because he stops short of "the radical formulation of the intended phenomenon [namely, intentionality] in an ontology of Dasein".⁵³⁴ His study of intentionality is deficient next to Heidegger's existential analytic because he does not understand intentionality, and the entirety of truths and other propositions based upon it, as rooted in the "kind and mode of being of Dasein".⁵³⁵ Heidegger's underlying contention, then, is that Dasein is *the* concrete foundation of intentionality and truth. Given that contention, it would follow that Husserl's choice not to take meaning as dependent on human being, and not to subsequently investigate meaning primarily in the context of a study of human being, is a failure to philosophize concretely.⁵³⁶

The same contention resonates in Heidegger's designation of intentionality as "being in the world". For whereas Husserl regards intentionality, through his reduction, as prior to any factic beings in the world, Heidegger contends that Husserl's "absolute" of

⁵³³ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 133.

⁵³⁴ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 134.

⁵³⁵ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, pp. 127. Cf. Heidegger's claim that intentionality is "grounded in existence", where "existence" signifies the "kind and mode of being of Dasein" (ibid., pp. 127, 134) Existence, in this sense, is a mode of being that Heidegger denies to other beings that we could consider intentional, like cats: "a cat does not exist" (ibid., p. 127).

⁵³⁶ In case it is not yet clear that Heidegger suggests a dependence of truth on Dasein, consider this related claim regarding being: "being is there only when Dasein understands being. In other words, the possibility that being is there in the understanding presupposes the factual existence of Dasein, and this in turn presupposes the factual extantness of nature" (*Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 156).

intentionality would depend on, and so would not *be* apart from, one type of the beings that are contingently in the world. Recall that, in one sense, Husserl's aim in his reduction was neutrality. He sought, by his method, not to invoke at the outset the very transcendent beings (or beings in the world), the possible appearing of which it is the task of a transcendental philosophy to explain. He hesitated to identify intentionality with the being of human beings, or with any other beings in the world, because this apparently would have required making those contingently existing beings into a necessary condition for all categories and propositions and truths. Against that position, Heidegger suggests that "being disclosive" requires that "Dasein is in a world".⁵³⁷ He contends that truths and meanings presuppose that "factually existing humans happen to be among other beings, within the totality of other beings".⁵³⁸ He claims that the "essence of man" is the basis of all truths and other meanings, such that any appeal to a more general subjectivity is needlessly abstract. Whereas Husserl sought to remain metaphysically neutral through a silence about which being or beings are the primitive basis of objective meaning, then, Heidegger replies that "neutrality is in no way identical with the fuzzy concept of a 'consciousness as such'".⁵³⁹

Having reached this point of incompatibility, we may see in summary that both Husserl and Heidegger are bound by phenomenology to accept a certain "Platonism", and to reject a different so-called "Platonism", but also bound thereby to decide on issues on which they part company. Both crucially accept the variety of "Platonism" discussed in

⁵³⁷ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 168.

⁵³⁸ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, pp. 168-69.

⁵³⁹ Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 140. Here we find what Crowell calls "the very issue over which the [*Encyclopedia Britannica*] collaboration... collapse[d]", and the breaking point in two otherwise structurally aligned phenomenological projects: where for Husserl, "as I reflect within the reduction, I grasp a subjectivity which cannot 'be taken as I, this man'", Heidegger objects, "yet certainly [it must be taken] as humanity (understood as the essence of man)" (Quoted in Crowell, p. 172).

Heidegger's *History of the Concept of Time*: they both recognize the eidetic, and with it at least an "indifference" of objective meaning "to subjectivity".⁵⁴⁰ Both also crucially reject that variety of so-called "Platonism" according to which truth is fundamentally "correctness", or the being true of a statement, and instead see intentionality as necessary for this form of truth as correctness.⁵⁴¹ But this phenomenological agreement prompts both to address the difficult transcendental question of how the objects of our thinking and knowing — including truths and other meanings — transcend our thinking and knowing. It is here that an incompatibility emerges from a shared methodology. For Heidegger saw Husserl as neglecting to ask the fundamental question of what being he actually disclosed, especially in Husserl's claim to achieve insight into "consciousness as such" by reflecting, as an individual human being in the world, on his own living experience. Against Husserl's semantics, accordingly, Heidegger objects that the general transcendental subjectivity purported to be the basis of meanings is only an abstraction. While the general structures of intentionality that Husserl describes may be based in some concrete subjectivity, Heidegger insists that Husserl in any case needs to identify which intentional being is actually under description.

How then should we assess Heidegger's objection? It is easy to grant that many of the intentional structures that Husserl describes may actually be structures of specifically human experience, rather than of a "pure" transcendental subjectivity that has been stripped of all human particularities. It is indeed questionable to what extent an

⁵⁴⁰ Heidegger, *History*, pp. 74-75. In this sense, as Heidegger writes, "there is some warrant for speaking of Platonism within phenomenology itself" (ibid., p. 75).

⁵⁴¹ In *The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave-Allegory and Theaetetus* (trans. Ted Sadler (New York: Continuum, 2002), p. 12), Heidegger finds the "transition ... to truth as correctness", a transition by which "Western philosophy takes off on an erroneous and fateful course", in Plato's allegory of the cave. When Heidegger later spoke of a "banal Platonism", he meant the view of truth as mere correctness.

eidetic analysis that begins from reflection on human conscious functions can identify structures that must hold in general, of any intentional being. Perhaps the only meaning-constituting functions that phenomenology can describe in any detail are specifically human constitutive functions. But what of Heidegger's more contentious claim that human being is the basis of logical objects, and that there is thus no need to appeal to generic subjectivity in order to account for the intentional origin of objective meanings and truths? This question hinges on a metaphysical issue that is importantly distinct from any epistemological problem concerning the phenomenological method's reach. To say that there would be no meaning or truth if not for human existence is to make a metaphysical claim that stands in need of support.

According to Husserl, Heidegger's claim regarding the basis of meanings and truths is "anthropologicist".⁵⁴² Heidegger's "anthropologism" is of an eidetic and transcendental sort,⁵⁴³ and does not presuppose any results from the discipline of anthropology.⁵⁴⁴ Yet it still counts as anthropologism in Husserl's sense, because it holds

⁵⁴² In his 1931 lecture, "Phenomenology and Anthropology", Husserl speaks of a "philosophical anthropology" which "maintains that that true philosophy should seek its foundation exclusively in man and, more specifically, in the essence of his concrete worldly existence" ("Phenomenology and Anthropology", trans. Richard G. Schmitt, p. 315). When Husserl says that this anthropologism has "affected the so-called phenomenological movement", he is referring, in large part, to Heidegger's work (ibid.; see also note 5, p. 313, in Scanlon's "Introduction").

⁵⁴³ John Scanlon is no doubt correct that a "philosophical anthropology" like Heidegger's, based as it is on "Dilthey's emancipation of the human sciences from the domination of the physicalistic model", "is neither empirically factual nor naively objective, but eidetic and reflective in its approach to human existence" ("A Transcendentalist's Manifesto: Introduction to 'Phenomenology and Anthropology'", *Husserl: Shorter Works* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 311). Heidegger's anthropologism is accordingly safe from "the formal fallacy of founding ideal sciences like logic upon factual, empirical sciences like psychology or anthropology ("naturalizing ideas"), and the material fallacy of construing elements of consciousness as reducible to physical elements and principles ("naturalizing consciousness")" (ibid.).

⁵⁴⁴ Heidegger, of course, would likely refuse to characterize his existential analytic as any kind of anthropology, even as a philosophical anthropology. In a 1943 text, for example, Heidegger writes that his "questioning concerning the essence of man precedes all pedagogy, psychology, anthropology, as well as every humanism. This questioning grows from, and is in no way different from, the questioning concerning the essence of truth, with which question there is coupled, under a yoke, the question of the essence of being" (*Essence*, pp. 83-84).

that the logical sphere is contingent upon the being in the world that is human being.

Against this thesis, Husserl in his “Prolegomena to Pure Logic” gives the Bolzanian retort that I represented in section 4.2. For example, he asserts that “the formula expressed in the law of gravitation” appears to have been “true before the time of Newton”;⁵⁴⁵ that truth in general appears to be “eternal, or ... beyond time”, in such a way that “it makes no sense to give truth ... a duration which extends throughout time”;⁵⁴⁶ and that the “law of contradiction” and other “propositions of pure logic” do not depend on the existence or “nature of our thought”.⁵⁴⁷ Unless we operatively presuppose this invariance and independence of truths, Husserl suggests, we cannot engage in discussion or inquiry.

What reason does Heidegger offer, then, in support of his contested claim that “truth *is* only because and as long as Dasein is”?⁵⁴⁸ Heidegger makes his case in the closing, climactic section of Division One of *Being and Time*. In what we can now surmise is a direct response to Husserl’s claims, Heidegger there writes:

“Newton’s laws, the law of contradiction, and any other truth whatsoever, are true only as long as Dasein is. Before there was any Dasein, there was no truth; nor will there be any after Dasein is no more”.⁵⁴⁹

Against the claim that inquirers must operate as though truth is independent of our inquiry, he replies: “we do not presuppose [truth] as something ‘outside’ and ‘above’ us to which we are related”.⁵⁵⁰ What grounds does Heidegger give for these positions?

⁵⁴⁵ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 39, p. 85.

⁵⁴⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 39, p. 85.

⁵⁴⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 39, p. 84.

⁵⁴⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44c, p. 230.

⁵⁴⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44c, p. 226.

⁵⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44c, p. 227.

Heidegger's case that truths depend on Dasein involves both negative and positive moves. Negatively, he disparages the claim that there are "eternal truths" as a "fantastical assertion".⁵⁵¹ He places the burden of proof onto his opponents, and asserts that the only evidence that will do is a "proof" that "Dasein has been and will be for all eternity".⁵⁵² Positively, Heidegger offers a model of the "kind of being of truth" according to which the discovering "manner of being of Dasein" is the "foundation" of the "being true of statements".⁵⁵³ He shows by reflective means (more precisely, by the same, Husserlian descriptive argument that he employs in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*) that the truth of propositions depends on a kind of intentionality, and he suggests that this intentionality occurs only in the sort of being to which we have reflective access — only in human being.

But it is precisely this suggestion that stands in need of support. Husserl would not dispute that truths and other propositions depend on intentionality. The point of contention is whether truths depend specifically on human existence — whether "there is truth only insofar as Dasein is and as long as it is".⁵⁵⁴ Why should we believe that the disclosive being at the basis of objective truths must be specifically human being? On this point, Heidegger does not supply reason that I can see. Moreover, Heidegger occludes evidence suggesting that the truthful being at issue *cannot* be specifically human, by excluding all arguments for the independence of truths that are not proofs of the perpetuity of human existence. What does Heidegger make, for example, of his

⁵⁵¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44c, p. 227.

⁵⁵² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44c, p. 227.

⁵⁵³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44a-b, pp. 218-220.

⁵⁵⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44c, p. 226.

teacher's argument that the "anthropologicistic" thesis reduces to absurdity?⁵⁵⁵ The argument, published in 1900, begins from what is, in all relevant respects, the same position that Heidegger affirmed in 1929: "If, as anthropology says, all truth has its source in our common human constitution, then, *if there were no such constitution, there would be no truth*".⁵⁵⁶ Focusing on the counterfactual that I have italicized, Husserl reasons as follows:

- The consequent of the counterfactual in question, by itself, "is absurd". For "the proposition, 'There is no truth' amounts in sense to the proposition, 'There is a truth that there is no truth'." And it is "logically impossible" that there be "a truth that there is no truth".⁵⁵⁷
- In contrast, the antecedent of the counterfactual in question "admits of falsehood, but not of absurdity". It "represents the negation of a valid proposition, having factual content", but nothing that is "logically impossible": "No one has in fact ever thought of rejecting as absurd those geological and physical theories which give the human race a beginning and end in time".⁵⁵⁸
- A counterfactual comprised of an absurd consequent and a merely false antecedent is absurd as a whole. For what is necessary cannot depend on what is contingent; what might not have been the case cannot be a necessary condition for what must be the case. (As a corollary, what is logically necessary cannot depend on an existent, unless that existent exists necessarily.)

⁵⁵⁵ I have already sketched a version of this argument, albeit one that is somewhat less closely based on Husserl's, in section 4.3.2.

⁵⁵⁶ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 36, p. 80, my italics.

⁵⁵⁷ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 36, p. 80.

⁵⁵⁸ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 36, p. 80.

- “The stigma of absurdity therefore taints the whole hypothetical statement”.⁵⁵⁹

The counterfactual absurdly makes what is logically necessary depend on the contingent state of affairs that human beings happen to exist.

How does Heidegger reply to such a challenge? To my mind, at least, this remains unclear. Heidegger does, to be sure, offer a blanket genealogy that might explain away any argument suggesting that there are eternal truths. He writes:

“The contention that there are ‘eternal truths’, as well as the confusion of the phenomenally based ‘ideality’ of Dasein with an idealized absolute subject, belong to the remnants of Christian theology within the philosophical problematic that have not yet been radically eliminated”.⁵⁶⁰

All arguments that purport to show truth’s independence of human being, then, are dismissed as more or less inadvertent expressions of theistic belief, perhaps from theists who have not quite managed to keep their theism out of their philosophy.⁵⁶¹ And so we might dismiss, without further attention, much of Husserl’s Prolegomena. Absent any closer engagement with the actual lines of reasoning that claim to display truth’s independence, however, this genealogical dismissal can only function as a kind of sweeping *ad hominem*. Again we are left without any reason for the supposition that truths must depend on a specifically human disclosive intentionality.

Still, Heidegger’s objection to Husserl’s later semantic conclusions is not without reason. Even if we lack grounds for supposing that human being is the basis of objective

⁵⁵⁹ *Logical Investigations*, Prolegomena, § 36, p. 80.

⁵⁶⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, § 44c, p. 229.

⁵⁶¹ Why Heidegger names Christian theology, in particular, is uncertain. Abrahamic monotheism, in general, does seem compatible with the intellectual need (if indeed there is one) for necessarily existent and intentional, truthful being. But why name Christianity especially, among the Abrahamic faiths, as the historical source for the view that truth is independent of human being? If anything, on the contrary, does not the Christian belief in the incarnation make it more susceptible than, say, Islam, to the view that the basis of truth is human?

meaning, there is nonetheless cause, given Husserl's premises, for metaphysical questioning about concrete individuals. Given that there would be no meanings without intentionality in general, it follows that some concrete intentional being(s) must serve as the basis for meanings. If transcendental subjectivity in general is necessary for objective meanings, this can only be because one or more singular subjects are necessary conditions for objective meaning. The phenomenology of meaning thus prompts us to ask which singular intentional being(s) could serve in this role — even if phenomenology does not have the resources to answer this question.

Of course, as Heidegger recognizes, there is value in dealing with the “arid problems” of logic's foundations in the general, non-metaphysical terms that Husserl preferred in his *Investigations*.⁵⁶² Yet, as Heidegger saw, these “arid problems” are inevitably related to metaphysical issues. Husserl too was forced to recognize this fact, thanks to those who attributed a particular metaphysical orientation (namely, a regress into psychologism) to the parts of the *Investigations* that concern the intentional basis of meaning. Once the metaphysical domain is broached, moreover, would it not be negligent to think only of generalities, and not of the singular being(s) tacitly at issue in general claims? This threat of metaphysical negligence comprises a second chief threat to the phenomenology of meaning, and serves to recommend the metaphysical ambitions that drove the development of Husserl's later semantics.

⁵⁶² Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 25.

7: Conclusion

The study above allows us to draw two kinds of conclusions. On the one hand, it provides grounds for certain conclusions about Husserl's intellectual history — his context, his influences, and the basis and development of one aspect of his thought. On the other hand, it offers grounds for certain conclusions concerning the nature and origin of logical objects. In this chapter, I distill a few of the most important conclusions of each type.

With respect to the history of Husserl's thought, we are now able to conclude (a) that the discrepancy apparent in Husserl's 1900-01 account of meaning can be attributed, above all, to his inheritance of selected descriptions from Brentano's "empirical psychology" and arguments from Bolzano's "theory of science"; (b) that the discord between Husserl's Brentanian and Bolzanian accounts propelled him to develop the philosophical method that he famously presented in 1913; (c) that Husserl then employed that two-step method, in 1929, to reinforce, to revise, and to integrate his two-sided view of meaning; and (d) that the later Husserl's attempted integration of his semantics raised at least two sorts of objections from students who had accepted the dyadic schema of their teacher's method and theory of meaning.

With regard to (a), I have shown how Husserl's "breakthrough" work affirms two nearly incompatible views of signification — how it presents meaning, first, as an independent stratum through which we categorially intend the world, and, second, as a dependent aspect of intentional experience which is founded on categorial mental acts. I have shown how these discordant views of meaning accompanied similarly dissonant accounts of logic's relation to psychology, both of which accounts were hotly disputed at

the time when Husserl affirmed them. I have confirmed what I have called Benoist's thesis: by first recognizing how Stumpf, Frege, Lotze, Cantor and Weierstrass contributed to Husserl's semantics, I have been able to demonstrate how those contributions are built onto a partly Brentanian and partly Bolzanian substructure. I thus have shown how Husserl was compelled to accept both psychological and logical accounts of meaning, despite their *prima facie* incompatibility, primarily by the descriptions and arguments that he inherited from Brentano and Bolzano. And I have displayed how Husserl selectively appropriated and bolstered the lines of reasoning that he found in those two influences' accounts of meaning.

With regard to (b), I have illustrated how the phenomenological method that Husserl articulated in the first decade of the twentieth century and announced to a broad readership in *Ideas I* essentially responds to challenges that he had confronted through his attempt to account for meaning in the *Logical Investigations*. I have clarified how Husserl's method exposes a difference between psychology and phenomenology, and how it would thereby vindicate his 1900-01 semantics from charges of incoherence. Further, I have charted how the eidetic and transcendental steps within Husserl's method answer to demands that had been imposed by his Bolzanian and Brentanian semantic insights.

With regard to (c), I have explicated how *Formal and Transcendental Logic* proceeds according to a partly transcendental, partly eidetic method, and have noted how Husserl's *Logic* reinstates his Brentanian and Bolzanian conclusions by means of that method. Against the worry that Husserl's method and theory of meaning together comprise a vicious circle, I have assembled a collection of cases in which Husserl used

his method to revise his semantics. And I have presented how Husserl's notion of transcendental subjectivity, which results from his two-step method, functions as his proposed resolution to the strain within his two-sided view of signification.

Finally, with regard to (d), I have depicted how both the Göttingen circle and Heidegger adopted at least the dyadic skeleton of Husserl's method and semantics, and how they still found fault with Husserl's resolution of the discord between his Brentanian and Bolzanian insights. I have noted how it is possible, within the phenomenology of meaning, to think that Husserl's proposed resolution was too metaphysically ambitious. And I have observed how it is also possible, within the same approach, to believe that Husserl's attempt at a resolution was metaphysically negligent.

The interest in Husserl's work, however, is not primarily an interest in what a given man happened to think and say. The hope is rather that, by critically taking up certain directions of Husserl's thought, we might get to the things themselves. Have I been able to find anything of epistemic worth, then, in and through Husserl's approach to meaning? What has my critical and developmental analysis of Husserl's dyadic semantics turned up with respect to meaning itself?

Positively, my critical analysis has found some reason to affirm Husserl's contention that signification is essentially two-sided. On the one hand, we have seen a strong Bolzanian case that there is a field of reiterable and commonly available meanings, which field is largely independent of human thought and expression. On the other hand, we have seen a cogent Brentanian case that there could be no truths or other ideal meanings apart from categorial intentionality. In this way, moreover, my assessment has also provided some reason to appreciate Husserl's two-step approach to the intentional

basis of objective meanings. For that approach was designed to be one in which we take our own conscious experiences merely as examples, and direct our attention exclusively to the general intentional structures without which there could be no phenomena or objective meanings at all.

Negatively, however, my analysis has provided some cause for caution concerning the phenomenological attempt to uncover an intentional basis of meaning. More precisely, I have offered reason to suspect that any self-enclosed phenomenology of meaning — any phenomenological account of signification that refuses all other modes of inquiry concerning the same subject — is essentially prone to be either (a) negligent with respect to its metaphysical implications or (b) profligate in its speculation. Insofar as Husserl, after determining that a type of intentionality is necessary for objective meaning in general, then refused any study concerning the being(s) at the basis of all such meaning, he was negligent with respect to what his semantics implies; yet, to the extent that Husserl sought to investigate the being(s) at the basis of all objective meaning solely through his reflective procedure, he was almost bound to attribute undue importance to the idiosyncratic, variously conditioned sort of mind to which he had reflective access. Thus, while Husserl's Brentanian and Bolzanian insights together motivate a line of inquiry regarding the intentional basis of objective meaning, the study of intentionality in general appears to be as far as phenomenology can go.

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Vita

Education

M.A., Philosophy, University of Kentucky, 2010

B.A., Philosophy, Wheaton College (IL), *magna cum laude*, 2007

Awards

Graduate School ½ Academic Year Fellowship, University of Kentucky, 2012

Graduate Student Essay Award, University of Kentucky, 2011

President's Award, Wheaton College (IL), 2003-2007

Salutatorian, Moriarty High School (NM), 2003

Teaching

Instructor, University of Kentucky, 2007-2012

Jesse Delaney