

HUSSERL, HEIDEGGER, AND THE TASK OF A PHENOMENOLOGY OF JUSTICE

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RESUMO – O artigo investiga a relação Husserl-Heidegger, para além de suas contribuições à fenomenologia e hermenêutica como novos métodos em filosofia, articulando ontologia e subjetividade, através de um paradigma semântico-lingüístico, de forma a delinear qual seria a tarefa hodierna de uma fenomenologia da justiça.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE – Fenomenologia. Hermenêutica. Linguagem. Ontologia. Subjetividade. Teoria da justiça.

ABSTRACT – The article investigates the Husserl-Heidegger relationship, beyond their historical contributions to both phenomenology and hermeneutics as new methods in philosophy, by articulating ontology and subjectivity through a semantic, linguistic paradigm, so as to delineate the task of a phenomenology of justice.

KEY WORDS – Hermeneutics. Language. Ontology. Phenomenology. Subjectivity. Theory of justice.

“Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men”. (John Dewey, *The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy*, 1917, in *John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899-1924*, vol. 10, ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980, p. 46.

Introduction

When one sets out to think what might be the prolegomena to 21st-century research in phenomenology, justice may well be regarded as the object *par excellence* of a phenomenology of the lifeworld (*Phänomenologie der Lebenswelt*). The semantic, linguistic turns of the first half of the last century seem to be in order as environmental ethics, bioethics, human rights, and all the subfields of applied ethics fall short of a reasonable articulation of ontology and subjectivity without falling back into essentialism, skepticism or cynical nihilism. Social justice has stolen the scene and even dominated the ethical-political scenario in the second half of the last century as continental philosophy failed to come up with a reasonable, intelligible language

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of morals. To be sure, following Husserl and Heidegger, Scheler, Sartre, Levinas, and Ricoeur bequeathed to us the *Materialen* for an ethics of alterity, such as the deconstructionist ones proposed by Derrida, Caputo, and Marion, against all imaginable conceptions of ethics¹.

Justice is perhaps the most felicitous way to recast the correlated questions of being, subjectivity, and meaning, after all the crises of humanisms and phenomenological, hermeneutical undertakings to deconstruct traditions and treatises of human nature. For justice nowadays, more than ever, must be rethought in sustainable, phenomenological terms, as both its social, political and environmental, cosmological dimensions must correct the shortcomings of human, all-too-human *desiderata*. In effect, both Husserl and Heidegger taught us to separate world and earth, being and beings, environment and self, just as we seek to avoid opposing subject and object, realism and antirealism, theory and practice. Both thinkers help us renew the philosophical quest as a new beginning, to think anew the world, inhabit the earth, make our environment sustainable, and respond to its otherly call and the call of each other. In this sense, *Dike* or cosmological views of a just, harmonious order, like its theological and anthropological, psychological counterparts, had to withdraw, as it were, allowing for the emergence of subjectivity on the scene, as modernity was staged in the wake of the critique of metaphysics. Yet modern conceptions of the *humanum* were doomed to failure as freedom failed to fulfill its idealized promises and promised ideals: liberty, equality, and community were all unmasked as equally conditioned by historical, socially and linguistically conditioned variables and contexts of meaning. Nietzsche's perspectivism indeed presupposes both Kant and Hegel, as the linguistic-semantic turn only takes place after an epistemic shift from ontology to subjectivity. Accordingly, humans are now uniquely conceived as both subject (social actors, moral agents, self-understanding, existing beings, rather than mere spectators or creatures) and object of a hermeneutic, deconstructive phenomenology, which from Husserl and Heidegger through Foucault and Derrida never ceases to defy transcendental thought, yet without successfully overcoming or naturalizing it. Hence, one of the greatest tasks for 21st-century phenomenology – and for that matter, for any transcendental philosophy of the future – is to make sense of justice by means of a transcendental kind of argument, such as, “how is justice after all possible?” In order to recast the question “what is justice?”, at once attending to the empirical complexity of social, scientific analyses of institutions and nature *and* addressing the deconstructionist, pragmatic suspicion of the impossibility of justice, one must revisit the lasting contributions to contemporary theories of justice by Rawls, Habermas, and their critics, and reexamine the challenges posed by a phenomenology of the lifeworld and a hermeneutical approach to the social sciences.

¹ See Jacques Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*. Polity, 2001. John Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project*. Indiana University Press, 1987; *Against Ethics*. Indiana U Press, 1993.

According to a broad, well-known definition of justice, people are to receive what they are due, in full agreement with the oft-quoted Roman Ulpian code, "Justice is the constant and perpetual will to render to every man his due". From Husserl and Heidegger through Foucault and Derrida, phenomenology, hermeneutics and deconstruction have systematically raised the intriguing question: "What is properly due to a human being?" The critique of humanism, metaphysics, and traditional conceptions of human nature have not, however, delivered any promise of a social, environmental ethics capable of replacing or accounting for the modernist drive toward emancipation and its persistent claims for recognition, freedom, equality, and justice. Hence it seems that a hermeneutical, phenomenological approach to theories of justice would comprise at least two main tasks, namely:

1. To perform an *epoche* of the world in its cosmological, theological, and anthropological dimensions (following Heidegger's critique), at once stepping back from metaphysics and retrieving a transcendental, ontological understanding of the meaning of justice, both in intersubjective and semantic-linguistic terms;
2. To recast a political theory of justice in light of a transcendental-semantic interpretation of Rawls's reflective equilibrium, so as to account for what has been understood by Habermas as an interactive dynamics of lifeworlds and social, political, and economic institutions.

Even though this would certainly take us much further in a broader phenomenological research, I can provisionally enunciate some of its main theses:

1. A non-metaphysical, political conception of justice, such as the ones proposed by Rawls's theory of justice as fairness and Habermas's theory of communicative action, could still be taken as a starting-point to guide us in a fecund attempt to reconcile the liberty of the ancients with the liberty of the modern, communitarian and universalizable claims, by recasting both political realism and contractarianism in hermeneutic, phenomenological terms, beyond the aporetic disputes between contemporary analytic and continental traditions, liberals and communitarians, modernists and postmodernists. Part of the monumental legacy of the Rawls-Habermas debate consists, above all, in revisiting the Hegelian critique of Kant, as we recognize that in order to keep our freedoms and rights we must inevitably and continually recast what Ken Baynes aptly dubbed "the normative grounds of social criticism"².
2. A phenomenology of justice cannot thus be confined to a static phenomenology, as if the eidetic intuition or direct perception of a universal "Idea of Justice" were available for our political judgment of instances supposedly characterized as "just" – say, a just society, a just constitution, just relationships or even just social, economic, and political institutions.

² Kenneth Baynes, *The Normative Grounds of Social Criticism: Kant, Rawls, Habermas*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992.

Hence both Husserl's later developments of the conception of *Lebenswelt* in genetic, generative approaches³ and Heidegger's critical appropriation of Husserlian and Hegelian phenomenology are evoked to support a historical, socially and linguistically mediated conception of intersubjectivity and fitted into Rawls's procedural device of reflective equilibrium, particularly on the correlation between a political culture and a normative conception of the person. Insofar as it is understood as a method to justify general principles (ethical-political principles of justice) on the grounds that they accord with and correct our intuitive judgments about particular cases, the reflective equilibrium can be regarded as a phenomenological device of representation, articulating an ontology of the social lifeworld with a grammar of fairness and intersubjective practices of democratic participation, rational deliberation, social tolerance, and egalitarian recognition. To be granted, Rawls did not pursue all these dimensions in any explicit sense, except for toleration, while Habermas elaborated on both deliberative and participatory democracy, and Axel Honneth has been working extensively on the basic conception of recognition for a democratic discursive theory of justice⁴.

3. Finally, the attempt to retrieve a philosophy of praxis without falling back into the subjective-objective dichotomy or the theoretical-practical dualism rejected by Husserl, Heidegger, and Rawls would lead us to revisit the crucial, albeit misleading problem of the liberal-communitarian debate, to wit, the question of normativity being equated with the problem of the self and its contexts of signification: legal, moral, ethical, social, and political. This, to my mind, transcends contextualist and particularists dimensions in a political philosophical discussion, but must be dealt with as paradigmatic perspectives of ontology, subjectivity, and language, adopted by philosophical methods overall, as suggested by Foucault, Apel, and Habermas⁵.

Even as one starts today from the fact of reasonable pluralism in a globalized world, one may still resort to procedural devices of representation on the level of multicultural, intersubjectively shared values and norms without hastily identifying the latter with the main source of morality or asserting the primacy of particularized traditions over universalizable normativity – as the communitarian critique of an “unencumbered self” wrongly insinuated. Rawls's later writings and Habermas's political essays have ultimately brought in the question of a concrete ethos, its rich, cultural complexity and dynamic actualization in everyday practices of socially and linguistically mediated lifeworlds, to unveil the limitations of the Kantian model as one moves from noumenal selves towards the social, political, and economic

³ See Anthony Steinbock. *Home and Beyond*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1996; Donn Welton. *The Other Husserl: The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology*. Indiana University Press, 2000.

⁴ Axel Honneth, *Das Andere der Gerechtigkeit. Aufsätze zur praktischen Philosophie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2002.

⁵ Rainer Forst, *Kontexte de Gerechtigkeit: Politische Philosophie jenseits Von Liberalismus und Kommunitarismus*. Frankfurt/ Main: Suhrkamp, 1996.

institutions that render human sociability a meaningful phenomenon. As he recollected his own “way to phenomenology”, Heidegger went as far as to say that “the age of phenomenological research seems to be over”. But he hastened to add that, as long as we no longer conceive of phenomenology as a “school of philosophy”, phenomenology remains “the possibility of thinking... of corresponding to the claim of what is to be thought”. And he concluded, in a 1969 supplement to this autobiographical text, with a lapidary quote from his magnum opus: “The comprehension of phenomenology consists solely in grasping it as possibility [Das Verständnis der Phänomenologie liegt einzig im Ergreifen ihrer als Möglichkeit]” (*Sein und Zeit*, p. 38)⁶. In this sense, one may speak of an unfinished task of working on a phenomenology of justice, by revisiting the contributions of Husserl and Heidegger to this new way of thinking the possibility of “what is to be thought”.

The Transcendental Problem of Meaning

“Husserl, Heidegger and the Transcendental Problem of Meaning” would be indeed an appropriate subtitle for a paper to celebrate the 80 years of the publication of *Sein und Zeit*, around the correlation of “World, Subjectivity and Meaning”⁷. For we may use the word *Signifikation*, in the Husserlian terminology, to refer to both *Bedeutung* and *Sinn* in their distinctive, correlated roles in carrying out a phenomenology of meaning. Much has been said and written about the problematic relationship between Heidegger and Husserl, either to highlight the geniality of the disciple and his incalculable debt toward his master, or to signal the misunderstandings and misreadings from both parties and the incommensurable magnitudes in another plot of philosophical parricide. I should just like to focus here on the single problem of meaning/signification (*Bedeutung*) within the constellation of signifiers that make up the 20th-century receptions of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and the philosophy of language with a view to clarifying the originality and grandeur of Heidegger’s interpretation of Husserlian phenomenology, particularly the former’s transcendental conception of meaning, through the subtle recasting of the articulation between world and subjectivity, beyond the Husserlian correlations between intentionality, consciousness and intersubjectivity. Furthermore, the remarkable contribution of the Husserlian phenomenology of meaning to a new semantic turn and, indirectly, to the linguistic and hermeneutic turns in phenomenology consolidated by Heidegger’s ontology finds in this misapprehended interlocution some of the very clues that lead us from the worldhood of the world to the mode of Being-in-the-world proper to *Dasein*.

Before anything, I must recall the difficulty of resorting to the translation of several of Heidegger’s key concepts, such as *Dasein* (which I’ll leave untranslated), *Weltlichkeit* (translated here as worldhood, worldliness or

⁶ M. Heidegger, “My Way to Phenomenology”, in W. Kaufmann (ed.), *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*. New York, Meridian Books, 1975, p. 241.

⁷ Such was the subtitle of an original version of this paper, dedicated to Professor Emildo J. Stein.

worldishness) and *Bedeutung* (translated as meaning or signification, depending on the context and Heidegger's criticisms of Husserl's phenomenology of meaning). I am following Magda King's superb commentary of *Sein und Zeit* (originally published in 1964) and the proposed translations offered by Joan Stambaugh's (which came out in 1997) and John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson's (1962) translations⁸. Although some of these polemical difficulties seem to be inherent in translating Husserl and Heidegger into any other language, I shall seek to focus on the main issues relating to the convergences and divergences of these two great, original thinkers.

As we know, the treatise was dedicated to Edmund Husserl, on the 8th of April, 1926, "in veneration and friendship" (*in Verehrung und Freundschaft zugeeignet*) on the occasion of his sixty-seventh birthday, celebrated in the Black Forest village of Todtnauberg. The young Heidegger, who since 1911 had begun his readings of phenomenology and from 1916 on began closely working with Husserl until becoming his assistant in 1919, not only cherished and cultivated this friendship with his master, but had also the opportunity of discussing several of the latter's projects and works in progress, notably the first draught of the article on phenomenology for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, written between September and December 1927 and published in the 14th. edition of 1929. In 1928, Heidegger published Husserl's lectures on the phenomenology of time consciousness (*Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins*). That same year, Husserl gave two lectures in Amsterdam on phenomenology and psychology (*Phänomenologie und Psychologie. Transzendente Phänomenologie*), right before being forced to retire at Freiburg. These texts, together with Husserl's 1931 paper on "Phenomenology and Anthropology", read before the *Kant-Gesellschaft* and his famous handwritten notes on his personal copy of *Sein und Zeit* and *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (1929), provide us with the material for the so-called Heidegger-Husserl affair⁹. We might also recall that Husserl attended Heidegger's inaugural class at Freiburg in July 1929, "Was ist Metaphysik?", and set out to critically study several texts from his former pupil, especially *Sein und Zeit*, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* and "*Vom Wesen des Grundes*". Several Husserl and Heidegger scholars have emphasized the replacement of the former's conception of transcendental subjectivity by the worldliness of *Dasein* in the latter, so as to problematize the conceptions of temporality in both and their respective appropriations of Kantian philosophy. Daniel Dahlstrom, on his turn, could thus conclude his study of the Heidegger-Husserl relationship:

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Trans. J. Stambaugh. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998; Trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. New York: Harper and Row, 1962. I am using the German text of the 7th edition, abbreviated SZ.

⁹ *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger, 1927-1931*. Boston: Kluwer, 1997. Edited and translated by Thomas Sheehan and Richard E. Palmer. Cf. Timothy J. Stapleton, *Husserl and Heidegger: The Question of a Phenomenological Beginning*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1983.

Heidegger's silence about the stark similarities between his account of temporality and Husserl's investigation of internal time-consciousness contributes to a misrepresentation of Husserl's account of intentionality. Contrary to the criticisms Heidegger advances in his lectures, intentionality (and, by implication, the meaning of 'to be') in the final analysis is not construed by Husserl as sheer presence (be it the presence of a fact or object, act or event). Yet for all its "dangerous closeness" to what Heidegger understands by temporality, Husserl's account of internal time-consciousness does differ fundamentally. In Husserl's account the structure of protentions is accorded neither the finitude nor the primacy that Heidegger claims are central to the original future of ecstatic-horizonal temporality...¹⁰.

On the other hand, Donn Welton has convincingly shown that the nearly systematic use of the "ontological" in Heidegger to refer to the transcendental account of *Dasein*, as opposed to the "ontical" alluding to what Husserl called "regional ontologies", reveals their disagreements about their understanding of the world. Grosso modo, it has become usual to assert that every apprehension (Heidegger's *Auffassung*, Husserl's *Erfassung*) and, therefore, every perception (Husserl's *Wahrnehmung*) or circumspection (Heidegger's *Umsicht*) could be reducible to an interpretation (*Auslegung*) dependant on language, qua articulation of the hermeneutic "as" (*als*) irreducible to the apophantic "as", within a structure of meaning (*Bedeutung*). Welton questions, however, whether Husserl or Heidegger would ever have agreed to current versions of the so-called "*interpretation thesis*"¹¹. Now I should like to reexamine in which sense the Transcendental Problem of Signification in Husserl and Heidegger might help us recast the correlation between World, Subjectivity, and Meaning. The Transcendental Problem of Signification may be provisionally stated as follows: how *Dasein* qua Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*) proves to be the being whose transcendental, ontological structure consists in its comportment of self-understanding (*Sichverstehen*), not so much as a capacity, faculty or categorial property but as its very mode of being, in itself and its relating to every other being ready-to-hand (*Zuhanden*) or present-at-hand (*Vorhanden*). The Transcendental Problem of Signification remains, after all, a self-positing questioning of subjectivity vis-à-vis ontology and language: the very question of the Being of beings must be recast so as to avoid misleading preconceptions of entities and discursivity that would keep us in sheer oblivion. Following Dorothea Frede, we may thus distinguish at least three levels to be tackled in this problematic, namely:

1. The immanent level of worldishness and of the world according to an understanding of the Husserlian project, as the transcendence of beings and of objects is only given within the flow of consciousness;
2. The properly transcendental level of subjectivity at stake in the Heideggerian programme of retrieving the hermeneutical thrust of self-understanding, to wit, by calling into question the transparency of the transcendental self of Husserl's phenomenology;

¹⁰ Daniel O. Dahlstrom, "Heidegger's Critique of Husserl", in Theodore Kisiel & John van Buren (eds.), *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994, p. 244.

¹¹ D. Welton, *The Other Husserl*, op. cit., p. 1-24; 96-130 Cf. David Hoy, "Heidegger and the Hermeneutic Turn," in the *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon. Cambridge U.P., 1993, p. 181-186.

3. The theoretical level of the Husserlian phenomenology of signification, which despite its later developments towards an ontology of the *Lebenswelt* and generative phenomenology, failed to radicalize a pre-theoretical conception of praxis in the co-constitution of horizons between subject and world¹². In order to make sense of the question of Being (*Seinsfrage*) and deal with its forgetfulness (*Vergessenheit*), Heidegger thematizes the ontical-ontological difference (*ontisch-ontologische Differenz*), as Ernildo Stein has shown, throughout the six parts corresponding to the six main theses outlined in SZ, namely¹³:

1. The question of Being (*Seinsfrage*) which has today been forgotten is the question about the meaning of Being (*die Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein*);
2. The fundamental analytic of *Dasein* unveils its transcendental structure.
3. *Dasein* is Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*);
4. Being-in-the-world is correlated to care (*Sorge*) qua the Being of *Dasein*;
5. Care is temporal (*zeitlich*);
6. Temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) is ecstatic insofar as *Dasein* is historical (*geschichtlich*).

Hence, we may speak of the Fourfold Task or the Four Projects at stake in SZ:

1. Fundamental ontology (*Fundamentalontologie*)
2. Existential analytic of *Dasein* (*Fundamentalanalyse des Daseins*)
3. Hermeneutics of facticity (*Hermeneutik der Faktizität*)
4. Deconstruction of Ontology (*Phänomenologische Destruktion der Geschichte der Ontologie*).

In order to better understand the shortcomings of existentialist and dichotomist readings (following Heidegger's famous preface to Richardson's book) of SZ, several critics and commentators have suggested that one should also take into account Heidegger's own struggles with the phenomenological problem of interpretation, including his readings of philosophical traditions and of his own hermeneutic, linguistic, and semantic transformations of transcendental philosophy. My working hypothesis here is that Heidegger is struggling with the post-Kantian, Hegelian problem of overcoming transcendental idealism by resorting to a historically, linguistically mediated phenomenology. Since Heidegger does not accept a dialectical solution, he ends up falling back into a Nietzschean-inspired perspectivism that allows also for a Husserlian-like correlation between world-forming (*Weltbildend*) and the existential experience of meaning.

The Transcendental Problem of the World

According to Husserl,

The world is the total set of objects of experience and of possible empirical knowledge, of objects on which grounds actual experiences are knowable in a right theoretical thinking". ["Die Welt ist der Gesamtinbegriff von Gegenständen möglicher Erfahrung und Erfahrungserkenntnis, von Gegenständen, die auf Grund aktueller Erfahrungen in richtigem theoretischen Denken erkennbar sind. [*Ideen 1 – Husserliana* III/1 11]

¹² D. Frede, "The Question of Being: Heidegger's Project", in the *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, 42-69.

¹³ E.J. Stein, *Seis Estudos sobre Ser e Tempo*. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1988.

Both Husserl and Heidegger suggested that the problem of the world is better understood in terms of worldishness (*Weltlichkeit*, worldhood, wordliness) and of what might be elaborated as a transcendental phenomenology of meaning. Furthermore, both Husserl and Heidegger turned to Aristotle's conception of ontology in order to work out such a phenomenological theory of meaning. Heidegger has particularly shown that Aristotle's work remains one of the best clues to the understanding of Western metaphysics and to the "destruction" of its onto-theologic. For Aristotle's *Metaphysics* bears witness to the oblivion of Being at the same time that it compels us to a phenomenological return to the ordering of the *physis*, which can categorially grasp the unity-in-diversity of Being. Although Heidegger remarks that even Aristotle failed to articulate Being qua universal *transcendens* in terms of its ontological determinateness (SZ 3), his usage of analogy and the Aristotelian conception of *legein* qua *apophainesthai* allows us to retrieve the question of the worldhood of the world as the phenomenological problem par excellence. To describe the "world" as a phenomenon, i.e. "to let us see what shows itself in 'entities' within the world", such is the main task of phenomenology which Heidegger undertakes to explore in the third chapter of Division One of his magnum opus (SZ 63ff). "The worldhood of the world" (*Die Weltlichkeit der Welt*) designates more than one theme among others in *Being and Time*, as it remains Heidegger's lasting contribution to phenomenology and the guiding motif of his *opera omnia*. Although I cannot elaborate on this problem here, it is my contention that Heidegger's contribution problematizes the taken-for-granted ontological conceptions of both naturalism (empiricism) and transcendental phenomenology, including Husserl's decisive contributions. In effect, it was with a view to understanding Being-in-the-World as the basic state of *Dasein* (SZ 53-62), that Heidegger set out to problematize and elucidate anew the concept of the world. As early as 1927, in his magisterial lecture-course on "The Basic Problems of Phenomenology", Heidegger boldly asserted that "[t]he concept of the world, or the phenomenon thus designated, is what has hitherto not yet been recognized in philosophy". And he proceeds to distinguish "the whole cosmos", "the universe", from the world which philosophically transcends the totality of all entities, in the very "alethic" sense of Heraclitus' ordering. He adds,

World is not something subsequent that we calculate as a result from the sum of all beings. The world comes not afterward but beforehand, in the strict sense of the word. Beforehand: that which is unveiled and understood already in advance in every existent *Dasein* before any apprehending of this or that being, beforehand as that which stands forth as always already unveiled to us.

Dasein is always already in the world. Accordingly, "world" must now on be understood in a phenomenological sense, as opposed to the "pre-philosophical" concept of world as "totality of intra-worldly beings". For Heidegger, the world is "a determination of being-in-the-world, a moment in the structure of the *Dasein's* mode of being". This radical understanding of the world has lent to subjectivist and existentialist misreadings of Heidegger's project, but neither philosophical anthropology nor humanism is what determines the ultimate orientation of this

ontological problematic. Thus, in order to overcome the epistemological present-at-hand (*vorhanden*) dichotomy opposing a subject vis-à-vis an object, Heidegger shows that *Dasein's* everyday attitude towards the ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) does not require the emergence of a thematically conscious subject (SZ 67 ff.) Heidegger's critique of traditional "ontology" is particularly aiming at the idea of a primordial intentionality, which always already presupposes a background environment (*Umwelt*) that accounts for the most trivial relations of everydayness. The context or background of the world always precedes *Dasein's* "consciousness of something". There remains, however, a fundamental question: How is *Dasein's* primacy articulated with the primacy of the world? It is precisely to elucidate the relationship of *Dasein* to the world that Heidegger calls for a phenomenological understanding of worldhood and its transcendental implications. Before I proceed to explore Heidegger's critique of Husserl's conception of transcendental subjectivity qua consciousness, I must briefly allude to the worldly implications of this problematic.

Now, the name of Husserl occurs 17 times in *Sein und Zeit*, and out of the more than 20 allusions to his thought or to some of his works in Heidegger's treatise refer to a supposed anthropological conception inherent in the phenomenological conception of world and consciousness. To be sure, for Heidegger, Husserlian phenomenology could not be reduced to a mere science of the conscious life or even to the "objective subjectivity" claimed by Husserl himself (CM § 13) –, since it was phenomenology that paved the way for an ontology or *prote philosophia* giving access to objectifying structures beyond psychologist and logicist versions of rationalism and empiricism. Thus it is thanks to Husserl's insights into the horizon-making of the "world" that we are led to rethink anew the relations of "being" and "time". In his most celebrated autobiographical text on his way into phenomenology (*Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie*, 1963), Heidegger explains that one of the motives for his phenomenological wonder, when he began reading the *Logical Investigations*, was precisely the problem of psychologism, which did not seem to have been adequately dealt with by Husserl's philosophy: after all, how could one carry on a phenomenological description of conscious acts without falling back into some sort of psychologism?¹⁴ Just as the reading of seminal works by Brentano and Braig, when Heidegger was still at the *Gymnasium*, were his "rod and staff" – echoing the words of the Psalmist in the *Lutherbibel* [*dein Stecken und Stab trösten mich*, Psalm 23:4], Heidegger avows that Husserl's *Investigations* were decisive to widen his ontological horizons. Moreover, Husserl's phenomenology of the world gave also access to Heidegger's unthought way: "What for the phenomenology of conscious acts is realized as the self-unveiling of phenomena is more originally thought by Aristotle and all Greek thought and existence as *aletheia*, as the unveiling of the veiling of what is present, its disclosure and self-showing". It is in the phenomenological conception of the world that Heidegger contrasts his own way of un-concealment with the Husserlian programme of taking consciousness of

¹⁴ In Portuguese, see E.J. Stein's translation, Pensadores, p. 298. "Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie", in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1969, pp. 81-90. Cf. W. Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 234-241.

something as the token for lived experiences. For Heidegger, Husserl's most important legacy consisted in the methodological innovation proposed by phenomenology. Just like Descartes, Hume and Kant revolutionized modern thought by their respective contributions to rationalism, empiricism and idealism, Husserl decisively contributed to a new interpretation of the philosophical problems of ontology, subjectivity and language, by his new approach to the problem of knowledge, now conceived in relational terms of the sense and meaning of phenomena envisaged by consciousness qua temporal flow of lived experiences (*Erlebnisse*). To be sure, Heidegger does not follow Husserl in his assessment of Descartes and Hume's contributions to modern philosophy, insofar as the former remains within a substantialist model of subjectivity and the latter still presupposes a duplication of the *self* when dealing with an originary empathy (*Einfühlung*) to justify an intersubjective ontology. Husserl indeed resorts quite often to these three thinkers so as to highlight the pitfalls of any theory of knowledge which refuses the possibility of an innate rationality or of a reason absolutely certain of its own cognitive presuppositions, and at the same time must respond to the givenness of sense (*Sinngebung*) as entities are made manifest to be known and meaningfully appropriated by language. Husserl thus proposes a return to the things themselves (*zurück zu den Sachen selbst*), no longer conceived as facts, sense data or brute matter for the senses, but as constituted objects of correlation between consciousness and the being of phenomena. Husserl's correlative conceptions of intentionality, intersubjectivity and normativity translate the co-constitution of world and subject, insofar as both are presupposed and co-constituted in their mutual signification. Furthermore, sense, meaning, and signification occupy an outstanding place within Husserl's monumental corpus, throughout over 45,000 pages of shorthand writings, notes, and unfinished manuscripts that, together with his published works, make up the forty volumes of the *Husserliana*. Now it is widely known that Heidegger had access to several of these unpublished writings, notably to the second book of *Ideas*, which also inspired much of what would be elaborated as a phenomenology of perception by Merleau-Ponty. Although he explicitly assumed a methodological conception of phenomenology in the famous section 7 of the Introduction to *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger roughly outlined such a conception which would be radically transformed by his hermeneutic turn, as it was thematized in third chapter of the First Part, especially in sections 14 through 24¹⁵. But it is right here at the intersection of meaning and ontology that we must find the hermeneutic key to the originality of Heidegger's critique of Husserl. Even though Husserlian phenomenology does provide the material for a theory of meaning that would ultimately lead to a linguistic turn in philosophy, key-concepts such as consciousness, intentionality, representation, reduction, signification, constitution, intersubjectivity and the noetic-noematic correlation remained within a transcendental investigation that failed to overcome the dichotomies between subject and object, on the one hand, and that between theory and praxis, on the other. Husserl's guiding idea of

¹⁵ Cf. Magda King, *A Guide to Heidegger's Being and Time*. Ed. John Llewlyn. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001.

avoiding dogmatic positions between a Platonic realism and a Kantian anti-realism could not overcome the traditional paradigm of language, in that signification fulfilled the corresponding presence of represented things for a rational, thinking speaker. However, Husserl's phenomenological concepts of world and lifeworld would be decisive for a later attempt at a generative phenomenology of meaning. In the words of the Moravian thinker, "the lifeworld [*Die Lebenswelt*] is always already there [*immer schon da*], being for us beforehand, a foundation for anyone, be it in theoretical practice or in the extratheoretical praxis. The world is given to us beforehand, to us who are awake, who are always somehow subjects with a practical interest... [the world] is given to us as a universal field of every actual and possible praxis, given to us beforehand as horizon" (*Krisis* p. 145). For Husserl, the ontology of the *Lebenswelt* is constituted in the subject, in the "living presence" of the subject, who is not just consciousness, but also real body, and unity of body and soul. Although Heidegger's influence upon Husserl cannot be denied in the 30s, the term *Lebenswelt* had already been used by Husserl as early as 1907 (See W. Biemel, "Die entscheidenden Phasen in Husserls Philosophie", *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, XIII, 204-205, 1959), and was used in several passages in the second Book of *Ideas*, from 1916-17, esp. in an appendix to section 64, on the primacy of the (absolute) spirit over (relative) nature (*Ideen* II, p. 384, cf. 302 n.), and in several writings in the 20s. *Lebenswelt* was then used to characterize the communicative personal world, the natural world, the intuitive world and the "aesthetic world" of experience, as opposed to naturalist and objective conceptions from the natural sciences. *Lebenswelt*, in this sense, is taken as equivalent to *Umwelt* (environmental world), *Alltagswelt* (everyday world), *Erfahrungswelt* (world of experience) and the natural concept of world (*natürlicher Weltbegriff*), which Husserl borrows from Richard Avenarius. But it is most notably in the *Krisis* texts (*Husserliana* VI, 1st ed. 1954; 2nd. ed. 1993) of the 30s that Husserl provides us with at least four provisional concepts of lifeworld:

1. lifeworld is what can be meaningfully given in intuition
2. the ground of sense
3. the realm of relative subjective truths
4. the lifeworld is an essential structure, as a perceptual world (*Eidos*).

The concepts of *Welt* and *Lebenswelt* are at first formulated according to an ontological conception, belonging rather to a static phenomenology (non-genetic, non-generative) and should be therefore distinguished from the transcendental concepts of *Lebenswelt* as horizon and as foundation. As Anthony Steinbock's brilliant study has shown, one might thus speak of six distinct concepts of *Lebenswelt* in Husserl¹⁶. The four preliminary conceptions of lifeworld in the *Krisis* would be thus irreducible to a single concept and could not allow for a coherent, unambiguous theory of the lifeworld in Husserl. According to Husserl, an ontology of the lifeworld is carried out without any transcendental interest in the natural attitude prior to the *epoche*. That might help us make sense of Husserl's contempt for Heidegger's

¹⁶ Steinbock, Anthony. *Home and Beyond*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1996.

conception of *Dasein* qua Being-in-the-world. Grosso modo, for Husserl, an ontology of the lifeworld must be differentiated from a transcendental analysis of the lifeworld – for instance, in sections 37 and 51 of the *Krisis* – even though one may as well recall that Heidegger’s analytic was never reducible to a philosophical anthropology. The Husserlian task consisted in attaining to a theory of the essence of the lifeworld so as to elucidate the transcendental concepts of the *Lebenswelt*, in its modalities of “territory” qua horizon of the world (*Welthorizont*) and foundation of the Earth (*Erdeboden*). If within a Cartesian perspective, the lifeworld is essentially approached as world, as totality, or as a pure intentional phenomenon, perhaps this is made evident by the treatment it receives as object or “physical body” (*Körper*). After all, the world qua synthetic totality is, for Husserl, correlated to the universality of synthetically connected undertakings. Phenomenology must deal with entities in their totality, as world, so that from the world one could proceed to the object, to the world itself qua object, insofar as the world has a structure – from a phenomenological standpoint – of an object (*Ideen I*, p. 10, 390; § 49, 114). For Heidegger, on the contrary, that meant an aporetic constraint on Husserlian investigations, as every ontical concept of the world must always already presuppose an ontological conception of worldliness which can only be accessed through *Dasein* qua Being-in-the-world. *Dasein* is precisely what makes worlding and world-forming possible, since it is always in the world that *Dasein* is, exists and lives factually. The Husserlian conception of abandoning an ontology of the lifeworld, so as to leave the ontical world of the natural attitude towards a transcendental analysis of the lifeworld as horizon and foundation, remains foreign to the Heideggerian formulation of a fundamental ontology. Hence the Husserlian conception of the world could be thus summarized according to its programme of phenomenological research:

1. The world is presupposed as having the same structure of an object.
2. From a phenomenological standpoint, that means that the world becomes a correlate to intentional life (as in a Cartesian analysis of the world).
3. The world becomes an all-embracing unity, a *telos* and *arche*, a single constitutive force.
4. Precisely as “factual” world, it marks the development of the unitary sense of all objects, communities and cultures.
5. In the last analysis, there is no longer the possibility of finding a radically other world, that is, a *Heimwelt* implies every possible *Fremdwelt*, insofar as they are co-constituted in opposed modalities (normal and anormal) of sense constitution.

In effect, Heidegger seems to articulate his Hermeneutic of Facticity in response to Husserl’s *Lebenswelt*. In its very thrownness, the factual self is given the possibility of an authentic self-understanding, unveiling thus the ecstatic nature of existence, “left to the null ground [*an den nichtigen Grund*] of itself [*Überlassenheit*]” (SZ 348). The worldhood of the world is indeed what accounts for the lighting of the *phainomena*, the manifestness of “the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to light” (SZ 28). The phenomenological retrieval of the *kosmos* implies also a recovery of the *physis*. That is why Heidegger problematizes, from the outset, any “natural conception of the world” (SZ 51f.) – and hence his consistent critique of

naturalism. For in order to conceive of nature as “an entity which is encountered within the world” (SZ 63), one must always start, as it were, from within this world. Thus, “[n]either the ontical depiction of entities within-the-world nor the ontological Interpretation of their Being is such as to reach the phenomenon of the ‘world’”(SZ 64). Because world and *Dasein* belong together in the same relation of betweenness and transcendence, worldhood itself is defined as an *existentiale* (SZ 64). In the last analysis, worldhood cannot be ontologically understood apart from *Dasein*'s fundamental state of Being-in-the-world (SZ 65). As opposed to his use of the word “world” in ontological terms, Heidegger mentions, in section 14 of *Sein und Zeit*, two different ontical concepts of “world”, viz. world as (*als*) the totality of beings (universe) and the environmental world wherein (*worin*) a factual *Dasein* is said to live (e.g., public and domestic world). An ontological use of “world” is found in the appearing of entities to (*an*) a determinate address of intentionality (e.g., the realm of possible objects of mathematics). While both the first and third “worlds” are defined as sum of entities, the second one is defined as horizon since the life-world is *Dasein*'s “natural” milieu. Heidegger introduces a fourth conception of world to designate what has been called “worldhood” or “worldliness” (SZ 93). As an ontological, horizational world, worldhood is another way of saying that the world worlds, just as time times. In effect, *Weltlichkeit* and *Zeitlichkeit* essentially translate the same truth of Being, the *aletheia* of the cosmos as betweenness out of which (*aus*) *Dasein*'s being emerges, as Heidegger successfully recasts the Heraclitean articulation of *kosmos* and *physis*, beyond all predicative aporias. After all, to affirm the worldhood of the world refers back to the How of appearing of entities within the world and to the facticity of *Dasein*, as *Dasein* is thought as a precondition for Being:

Of course only as long as *Dasein* is (that is, only as long as an understanding of Being is ontically possible), ‘is there’ Being. When *Dasein* does not exist, ‘independence’ ‘is’ not either, nor ‘is’ the ‘in-itself’. In such a case this sort of thing can be neither understood nor not understood. In such a case even entities within-the-world can neither be discovered nor lie hidden. *In such a case* it cannot be said that entities are, not can it be said that they are not. But *now*, as long as there is an understanding of Being and therefore an understanding of presence-at-hand, it can indeed be said that *in this case* entities will still continue to be”(SZ 255).

The Transcendental Problem of Subjectivity

Heidegger followed much of Husserl's critical analysis of the fate of ontology in the history of modern philosophy. However, he could not agree with Husserl's positive assessment of the transcendental philosophy of subjectivity or the fundamental role assigned to a theory of representations in the overcoming of the ontological paradigm of premodern metaphysics. In several notes of SZ, Heidegger critiques the substantialist conception of the self and subjectivity which persisted in Kantian transcendental psychology. To be sure, Heidegger saw in the shift from the *Investigations* to the first book of *Ideas* the hermeneutic key to understanding how Husserl anticipated several of the problems involved in the contemporaneous debate

on rationality, through the attempt at a possibility of a science without presuppositions. It is particularly interesting that Husserl anticipated an endless debate on semantic and pragmatic, by introducing the notion of a semantic category (*Bedeutungskategorie*), as opposed to a genetic approach, differentiated from the static approach of the first writings, as one proceeds from the abstraction of the world, out of a natural attitude (*Einstellung*) toward a phenomenological-theoretical attitude – for instance, when dealing with the phenomena space and time. According to Heidegger, Husserl missed the practical thrust inherent in the very posing of the problem of intentionality and, subsequently, of intersubjectivity, as would be later on galvanized in the generative problem of the historicity and of the co-constitution of the consciousness and of the world, especially in the *Krisis* writings. Furthermore, Heidegger cannot accept Husserl's use of the *epoche* as a Cartesian procedure to recover a transcendental account of the method to be carried out in phenomenology. The notion of intentionality, inherited from Brentano, in the constitution of mental or psychic acts, that is, the fact that each consciousness is, always already, consciousness of something, was largely discussed in the 5th Investigation and is now dismissed together with the Cartesian dichotomy of subject-object. Hence the difference between an "intuitive act" (that reaches its object) and a "signifying act" (which simply envisages such an object) – a fundamental difference for the conception of "fulfilling" (*Erfüllung*) in the (re)constitution of meaning qua *signification* –, had been phenomenologically articulated by Husserl just to be dismissed by Heidegger's account of the formal indication (*formale Anzeige*). Heidegger maintains the Husserlian assumption that the indicating meaning is pointless, insofar as it does not direct one to a fulfillment of what it says. But Heidegger emphasizes that the formal indication turns out to be a methodological resource to account for the pretheoretical function of meaning in *Dasein's* search of authentic self-understanding. Formal indication means, in the last analysis, that *Dasein's* incompleteness and indefiniteness attest to its future-oriented possibilities and worlding temporality, so that interpretation never comes to full closure. In this sense, the hermeneutical circle serves to indicate an endless working out of the phenomenological reduction – but Heidegger certainly did not accept the Husserlian terminology, given its compromise with the paradigm of subjectivity. To be sure, since consciousness is always intentionality, a difference between "pure thought" and "contact with reality" does not reside in the object, but in its mode of givenness, in its mode of being experienced. Knowledge thus emerges as the confirmation by intuition of what had been meant and envisaged in signifying intention, not filled, insofar as the "emptiness" of signifying acts is finally fulfilled by the "fullness" of intuitive acts (cf. Sixth Investigation).

The Transcendental Problem of Signification

From the *Logical Investigations* up to the *Origin of Geometry* appended to the *Crisis* writings, the entire phenomenology is, in effect, oriented towards the problem of meaning. After developing the idea of a pure logic with a view to furnishing a "science of science", Husserl proceeds to examine the nature of "meaning" and its

problematics in the second volume of his *Logical Investigations*. The title of the volume is very revealing (*Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*) of Husserl's phenomenology of meaning, which is largely developed in the first four investigations. The phenomenological orientation of his studies is carefully expounded in the Introduction:

We are not here concerned with grammatical discussions, empirically conceived and related to some historically given language: we are concerned with discussions of a most general sort which cover the wider sphere of an objective *theory of knowledge* [*objektiven Theorie der Erkenntnis*] and, closely linked with this last, *the pure phenomenology of the experiences of thinking and knowing* [*einer reinen Phänomenologie der Denk- und Erkenntniserlebnisse*]. This phenomenology, like the more inclusive *pure phenomenology of experiences in general* [*reine Phänomenologie der Erlebnisse überhaupt*], has, as its exclusive concern, experiences intuitively seizable and analysable in the pure generality of their essence, not experiences empirically perceived and treated as real facts ... This phenomenology must bring to pure expression [*zu reinem Ausdruck*], must *describe* in terms of their essential concepts [*deskriptiv in Wesensbegriffen*] and their governing formulae of essence, the essences which directly make themselves known in intuition, and the connections which have their roots purely in such essences. Each such statement [*Aussage*] of essence is an *a priori* statement in the highest sense of the word (LI II, 249/6)¹⁷.

It is thus made clear that, in order to understand the essential constitution of our objects, we must proceed in “purely intuitive fashion” to investigate, according to the laws of a pure logic, how these objects have been given in grammatical form, that is, in linguistic expressions:

The objects [*Objekte*] which pure logic seeks to examine are, in the first instance, therefore given to it in grammatical clothing. Or, more precisely, they come before us embedded in concrete mental states which further function either as the *meaning-intention* or *meaning-fulfillment* of certain verbal expressions – in the latter case intuitively illustrating, or intuitively providing evidence for, our meaning – and forming a *phenomenological unity* with such expressions (LI II, 250/8).

What Husserl is concerned about is not the psychological judgement (“the concrete mental phenomenon”) but the logical judgement, “the identical asserted meaning, which is one over against manifold, descriptively quite different, judgement-experiences” (LI II, 251). Thus Husserl goes on to develop a veritable analysis of signification, by studying the logical core of language in the First Investigation, “Expression and Meaning” [*Ausdruck und Bedeutung*]. It is interesting to notice that Husserl starts this investigation by pointing out the ambiguity (*Doppelsinn*) in the term “sign” (*Zeichen*): “Every sign is a sign for something, but not every sign has ‘meaning,’ a ‘sense’ that the sign expresses [*Jedes Zeichen ist Zeichen für etwas, aber nicht jedes hat eine “Bedeutung”, einen “Sinn”, der mit dem Zeichen “ausgedrückt” ist*]” (LI II, 269/30). Although all signs signify, in that every signified has been pointed to by a signifier, not all signifiers have a meaning, insofar as not all signs are “expressions” (in Husserlian terminology). Of course, to speak of the *signifié/signifiant* oppositional couple is an anachronistic abuse on our part, for

¹⁷ *Logical Investigations*. 2 vols. Trans. J.N. Findlay. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970. Abbr. LI.

Ferdinand de Saussure's famous *Cours de linguistique générale* was not published before 1916. Moreover, strictly speaking in Saussurean terms, that would be quite problematic. One must only bear in mind that Husserl's conception of language falls within what has been called a "traditional" view of language, which Heidegger completely subverted, together with its implicit conception of truth as correspondence. According to this view, language is a mere vehicle for expressing and transmitting a thought, which represents some independent reality. This traditional view, which dates back to Aristotle, maintains that a rational correspondence between the essence of a thing and its thought, and the word referring to both, is what makes knowledge and language possible. The order of "determination" is thus obtained as we move from reality to thought and language, while the order of "reference" is to be dealt with in the opposite direction, as words refer to concepts and things. The traditional, metaphysical notion of "truth" is therefore logically implied by this view: truth is the correspondence of ideas with reality, *adequatio intellectus ad rem*. The rational coherence of reality, thought, and language has become, in philosophical tradition, the task of metaphysics, epistemology, and logic, respectively. Following the revival of Kantian philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century, insoluble epistemological problems led some German philosophers of mathematics to turn to logic as a new kind of *philosophia prima*. And Frege was among those logicians whose contributions played a decisive role in the development of Husserl's theory of meaning. According to Frege, the meaning (*Bedeutung*) of a sentence or name is its reference, while the sense (*Sinn*) designates how the object referred to is actually thought of. This important distinction between "meaning" and "sense" was established in a seminal article by Frege, "*Über Sinn und Bedeutung*," first published in 1892. Because subtle differences between Frege's and Husserl's terminologies may lend to some misunderstandings, one must make clear the following correspondence: what Frege calls "Sinn" is named "Bedeutung" by Husserl, while Frege's "Bedeutung" corresponds to Husserl's "Gegenstand". One of Frege's own examples can help us to illustrate this distinction: although the two expressions "the morning star" and "the evening star" have the same meaning (*Bedeutung*) for they refer to the same object, the planet Venus, they do not have the same sense (*Sinn*), in that they refer to Venus in different ways. For Husserl, however, no distinction is to be made between "Sinn" and "Bedeutung", as we read in the *Logical Investigations*,

"Meaning" [*Bedeutung*] is further used by us as synonymous with "sense" [*Sinn*]. It is agreeable to have parallel, interchangeable terms in the case of this concept, particularly since the sense [*Sinn*] of the term "meaning" [*Bedeutung*] is itself to be investigated. A further consideration is our ingrained tendency to use the two words as synonymous, a circumstance which makes it seem rather a dubious step if their meanings are differentiated, and if (as G. Frege has proposed) we use one for meaning in our sense, and the other for objects expressed [*für die ausgedrückten Gegenstände*]. To this we may add that both terms are exposed to the same equivocations [*Äquivokationen*], which we distinguished above in connection with the term "expression" [*bei der Rede vom Ausgedrücktsein*], and to many more besides, and that this is so in both scientific and in ordinary speech (LI II, 292/58).

Even though it was Frege's antipsychologism which inspired much of Husserl's phenomenological conception of a pure logic, we can see that Husserl's theory of meaning differs from Frege's precisely because of the former's understanding of psychological concepts such as consciousness and intentionality. The entire problematic of constituting the object of thinking, and therefore what one refers to when speaking of something, is now to be examined in our study. Before we go on to consider what Husserl means by "Bedeutung" or "Sinn", we shall first try to expound Husserl's conception of the "Gegenstand", that is, the object of reference of an expression. We have seen that Husserl starts the First Investigation with a remark on the ambiguous sense of the term "Zeichen": on the one hand, a sign has the general characteristic of "expression" (*Ausdruck*); on the other hand, a sign may stand for nothing, without expressing anything, being simply taken for an "indication" (*Anzeichen*), such as marks and notes. And Husserl proceeds to assert that "(t)o mean [Das Bedeuten] is *not a particular way of being a sign in the sense of indicating something*". (LI II, 269) An indicative sign is thus deprived of "Bedeutung", it is *bedeutungslos*, in that it does not fulfill a "significant function" (*eine Bedeutungsfunktion*). It follows that expressions (*Ausdrücke*) are to be distinguished from indicative signs (*anzeigenden Zeichen*) in that they are meaningful (*bedeutsamen*) (LI II 275/37). Furthermore, an expression not only has a meaning but it refers to certain objects (*Gegenstände*), that is, every expression is *about* something (*über Etwas*) (LI II 287/52). And this is not always a relation of naming, for not all expressions name their object(s). It is precisely at this level of reference of propositions that Husserl's theory of meaning marks itself off from Frege's. Whereas Frege associates the meaning (*Sinn*) of a proposition with the thought (*Gedanke*) expressed and its reference (*Bedeutung*) is the truth-value (*Wahrheitswert*), Husserl's proposition means a *Gedanke* but refers to a *Sachverhalt*, "state of affairs" (LI II 288/53). Husserl illustrates this by pointing out that two sentences saying different things such as "a is bigger than b" and "b is smaller than a" express, in fact, the same state of affairs, in that "the same 'matter' [*Sache*] is predicatively apprehended and asserted in two different ways". The phenomenological approach which characterizes Husserl's analysis of meaning cannot thus be content with a simple understanding of symbolic and linguistic functions, but it seeks to go back to the "things themselves", to employ the evidence of fully developed intuitions, truly symbolized by the words, and to reconstitute all meaning by determining their "irrevocable identification". For the main purpose of Husserl's "phenomenology of knowledge" remains the reconstitution of the essential connection between meaning-intention (*Bedeutungsintention*) and meaning-fulfillment (*Bedeutungserfüllung*), i.e. how the "subjective" and the "objective" are meaningfully articulated in the essence-structure of "pure" experiences. I am deliberately using the verb "re-constitute" to emphasize the implicit move of "recovery" in Husserl's theory of meaning, especially when he uses the verbs *auffassen* ("construe", "apprehend") and *auslegen* ("lay out", "explicate") in an interpretive, illustrative sense which we hope to explore throughout this paper. The constitution of meaning, from its founding intention to its fulfilled signification, is itself reconstituted by Husserl's methodological *Einführung* into

phenomenology proper, of which the *Logical Investigations* constitutes the ideal propaedeutics. That is why Husserl concludes the First Investigation with the logical thesis of “the ideally unified meaning” (§§ 29-35). Because logic has been established as “the science of theoretical unity”, the nature of all given theoretical unity is “unity of meaning” and that is what makes knowledge possible. Husserl makes clear, however, that he is not advocating the metaphysical existence of “universal objects” in a divine mind or in some *topos ouranios*, but he is radically seeking to overcome both idealism and realism by displacing the center of the epistemological debate, away from its actual reference toward the very correlation of meaning between the “knowing” subject and the object to be “known”. Objectivity (*Gegenständlichkeit*) is determined by the logical laws of meaning, “which consider meanings in respect of their having or not having objects”. As an object, “the parallelogram of forces” results from the apprehension of an “ideal meaning”, while “the city of Paris” is a “real object” of sensory or imaginary perception. But both require for their “being known” a correlative kind of apprehension (*Auffassung*). Therefore, Husserl is no longer primarily concerned about the “reality” of the object and its “existence”, but he is affirming that only an “objectifying act” gives us an “object” through its “presentation” (if it is actually there) or through its “representation” (if it is not there, but is, for instance, imagined or thought). That means that we may as well be dealing with purely imaginary objects, objects which are “merely thought”. Meaning is given thus in the very signifying intention toward an object:

If we seek a foothold in pure description, the concrete phenomenon of the sense-informed expression breaks up, on the one hand, into the *physical phenomenon* forming the physical side of the expression, and, on the other hand, into the *acts* [*Akte*] which give it *meaning* [*Bedeutung*] and possibly also *intuitive fullness* [*anschauliche Fülle*], in which its relation to an expressed object is constituted [*eine ausgedrückte Gegenständlichkeit konstituiert*]. In virtue of such acts, the expression is more than a merely sounded word. It *means* something [*Er meint etwas*], and in so far as it means something, it relates to what is objective [*Gegenständliches*]. This objective somewhat can either be actually present [*gegenwärtig*] through accompanying intuitions, or may at least appear in representation [*vergegenwärtigt*], e.g. in a mental image [*im Phantasiebilde*], and where this happens the relation to an object is realized (LI II, 280/44).

Brentano’s notion of intentionality in the constitution of mental acts, i.e. the fact that all consciousness is consciousness of something, is critically discussed in the Fifth Investigation (“On Intentional Experiences and their ‘Contents’”). It is only then that the difference between an “intuitive act” (which reaches its object) and a “signifying act” (which simply aims at it), an essential difference which underlies his entire conception of “fullness” (*Fülle*) in the (re)constitution of meaning, is phenomenologically articulated. Because consciousness is always intentionality, the difference between “pure thought” and “contact with reality” does not lie in the object, but in its mode of givenness, in its mode of being experienced. Knowledge appears then as the confirmation by intuition of what was meant in the unfulfilled, signifying intention, in that the “emptiness” of signifying acts is finally fulfilled by the “fullness” of intuitive acts. Such is indeed the pervasive theme of the Sixth Investigation, “Elements of a Phenomenological Elucidation of Knowledge”. Even

though I cannot deal here with Husserl's meticulous theory of intuition, I have simply tried to indicate its correlative significance for his theory of meaning. In fact, Husserl's phenomenology must always be taken as a whole, as a complex whose correlated parts inform and support each other. Precisely because phenomenology originally meant to get rid of "presuppositions", some of the main groundmotifs of the *Logical Investigations* cannot be fully understood until we take into account their developments in Husserl's *Ideas*. As the title of his Second Investigation indicates (*Die ideale Einheit der Spezies und die neueren Abstraktionstheorien*), Husserl's key notion of "ideality" is to be now extensively expounded. I have suggested above that the ideality of meaning is bound up with the fact that pure logic deals exclusively with "the ideal unities that we here call 'meanings'" (LI II, 322). Such is the basis for knowledge, in general, and for scientific expressions in particular, in that objectivity and "objective meaning" are made possible. The essence (*Wesen*) of meaning cannot thus reside in a subjective experience, but must be found in its "content", in its "Idea": in Husserl's own illustrative words, "we mean, not this aspect of red in the house, but Red as such" (LI II, 340). This act of meaning as an identical, intentional unity is an act "founded" (*ein fundiertes*) on underlying apprehensions (*Auffassungen*) of the object, i.e. on certain aspects of this object "meant" by the knowing subject: "a new mode of apprehension has been built on the intuition [*Anschauung*] of the individual house or of its red aspect, a mode of apprehension [*Auffassungsweise*] constitutive of the intuitive presence of the Idea of Red [*die für die intuitive Gegebenheit der Idee Rot konstitutiv ist*]" (LI II, 340/114). We cannot thus have "meaning" without the givenness of the object itself; moreover, this givenness is correlative to intuitive acts, which possess its object, whether by "perception" (*Gegenwärtigung*, "presentation") or by memory and imagination (*Vergegenwärtigung*, "re-presentation") (§§ 25-30). Since perception is, for Husserl, a "primary intuition", insofar as it gives us being *in persona*, it is in this correlative opposition between "intuition" and "re-presentation", but especially in (re)presentation itself that we must find one of the conceptual clues to the ambiguous sense he assigns to the word "meaning" (*Sinn/Bedeutung*). Following Brentano's theory of intentionality, Husserl affirms the interdependence of intentional acts and representations, in that "an intentional experience only gains objective reference by incorporating an experienced act of presentation in itself, through which *the object is presented to it* [*Ein intentionales Erlebnis gewinnt überhaupt seine Beziehung auf ein Gegenständliches nur dadurch, da in ihm ein Akterlebnis des Vorstellens präsent ist, welches ihm den Gegenstand vorstellig macht*]" (LI II, 598/443). We must recall that Husserl's systematic criticism of the theories of abstraction that were proposed by Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Mill, in the Second Investigation, reaches a climax in his attack on the traditional conception of representation as "a device for economizing thought" or as mere "substitution" (§§ 24-31). As over against idealism and empiricism, Husserl criticizes the language of cause-and-effect which characterizes those theories of thinking, and proposes the psychological explanation which takes into account the intentional nature of consciousness. Furthermore, Husserl maintains that we intend or mean a "generality", in a part-whole correlation

of meaning which ultimately discloses a unity of fulfillment. He finally denounces the nominalist tendency to confuse generality with the representative function of an image or name. For Husserl, meaning is thus bound with intentionality and its fulfillment as expression: expressions as such are constituted by their meaning. As he says in the First Investigation,

The new concept of meaning therefore originates in a confusion of meaning with fulfilling intuition. On this conception, an expression has meaning if and only if its intention – we should say its “meaning-intention” – is in fact fulfilled, even if only in a partial, distant and improper manner. The understanding of the expression must be given life through certain “ideas of meaning” (it is commonly said), i.e. by certain illustrative images. (LI II, 295)

An essential distinction is thus upheld between intuition and meaning: as Levinas puts it, “(m)eanings aim at their objects; intuition, and in particular perception, reaches them”¹⁸. It follows that “representation”, as opposed to the “direct presentation” of perception, implies different modes of apprehension in the objectifying act. Of course, the use of three different words in German (*Vorstellung*, *Repräsentation*, and *Vergegenwärtigung*) might serve to indicate the psychological nuance of their semantic trope, in connection with the theory of intuition. However, Husserl’s theory of meaning turns out to emphasize an equivocal, albeit significant continuity between these words, so that it remains within a theory of representation (*Vorstellung*), itself compromised with a certain metaphysics of presence. Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology moves away from the ontological ground of Kant’s critique towards the constitutive problem of subjective life, and yet he fails to account for the very “foundation laying” (*Grundlegung*) which allows for the articulation of the limiting function with the self-determination of the in-itself as freedom in the practical use of reason. For Heidegger, this zero-point or null-ground is the groundless soil of *Dasein*’s freedom, so that Husserl’s shift from the “world of things” towards the “life-world”, and the transitions from his static phenomenology towards genetic and generative phenomenologies in the later writings, just reveals the unfinished, aporetic task of a transcendental phenomenology of meaning. The essence (*Wesen*) of phenomenology, its peculiar characteristic as foundational, pure science, consists in its radical opposition to what Husserl calls “the natural attitude”. As opposed to our naive belief in the world, which we often take for granted in our natural, dogmatic attitude, Husserl challenges us to suspend, to bracket, such an ensemble of *doxai* we call “world”, in order to become conscious of this very “world” we have constituted as unity of meaning and of our being-in-the-world which conditions this constituting. Phenomenology as we find in Husserl’s *Ideas I* may be fairly described as an invitation to see what has been given to us in the constitution of the world and the meaning of this givenness (*Gegebenheit*). “Seeing” must be understood in its most phenomenological sense, the “bringing into light” and “making to appear” (*phainesthai*) of the phenomena, which Heidegger so neatly explores in § 7 of *Sein und Zeit* (“*Die phänomenologische Methode der Untersuchung*”). Heidegger’s

¹⁸ Levinas, Emmanuel. *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl’s Phenomenology*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Press, 1973.

“ontological investigation” essentially differs from Husserl’s “logical investigation” precisely because the “transcendental” claims of the latter were linked to subjectivity qua consciousness and intentionality. Heidegger’s hermeneutic turn seems to subvert such a tacit longing for the *parousia* of the Other. In effect, Husserl’s philosophy gradually moves away from an ideal, transcendental logic towards the intersubjectivity of a transcendental, linguistic community. The Cartesian *cogito* is no longer reified in the dichotomist opposition of *res cogitans* to the *res extensa*, but it gives way instead to the stream of consciousness (*Bewusstseinsstrom*) uniting each distinct *cogitatio* to a distinct *cogitatum* (*Ideas* §§ 28, 34-37). The transcendental spiral of Husserl’s epistemology, predelineated in his ideal of a *Wissenschaftslehre* in the *Logical Investigations*, is now more sharply drawn against the contrasting backgrounds provided by both naturalism and idealism. Heidegger realized that the rich promises of the *Investigations* were not fulfilled as Husserl sought to deliver a scientifically acceptable account of a presuppositionless science. For Heidegger, phenomenology had to explore its vocation as a radical questioning of the meaning of its first principles, beginning with the question of the meaning of Being. Hence, *Dasein* was to fulfill the significant role of horizontal opening of worldhood and temporality. Thus Heidegger sought in *Sein und Zeit* to pave the way for a radical rupture with the ontical forgetfulness of the ontological difference, by proposing a new approach to language, by the existential analytic of *Dasein* as the sole viable method of correlation between worldhood and meaning. The *Kehre* and subsequent attempts to approach the theory-praxis problem without resort to traditional conceptions of ethics and language just attest to this monumental task of thinking anew the essence of *techne*. Insofar as it is regarded as ultimate horizon and the meaning of *Dasein* as Being in the world, time was then shown to open up the possibility of a new way of dwelling on Earth: poetically, by avoiding the domination of nature, the reification of presence-at-hand and the technological instrumentalization of *techne* as an end in itself. Poetically, that is, by letting language emerge anew as the House of Being itself. Perhaps only then could one think anew in nontechnical, nontranscendental terms the question of the meaning of Being. Unlike a stone in the middle of the road, worldless, *Dasein*’s existential thrownness is what allows for worlds to come into being as it is now only up to *Dasein* to poetically dwell and freely think the essence of praxis.