

# Husserl, Heidegger and Carnap on Fixing the Sense of Philosophical Terminology

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## **Abstract**

Husserl's theory of terminology focuses especially on the causes of, and possible remedies for, equivocality and unsteadiness of meaning. I argue that, given Husserl's conception of philosophy as he wants to practice it, his own theory of terminology predicts that it will be plagued by problems of equivocality and unsteadiness of meaning which can never be remedied, and that such problems are indeed to be found in Husserl's writing. Finally, I use to these conclusions to help explain what both Heidegger and Carnap reject in Husserl, and therefore, in turn, why the question, how to give to or recover for terminology an unequivocal and fixed meaning, becomes crucial for both of them.

The train of thought I will follow here begins with two facts about Husserl. First, the main and most intractable problems in interpreting him, and the major conflicts between his interpreters, arise from and are fed by the equivocality and unsteady meaning of his terminology. Second, Husserl has a highly developed *theory* of terminology, beginning with, but by no means limited to, the earliest periods of his thought. This theory of terminology, moreover, focuses on the causes of equivocality and unsteadiness of meaning. These two facts, taken together, show that there is something philosophically deep, some deep aspect of the self-knowledge of knowledge, in Husserl’s work, and helps explain why figures of the stature of Heidegger and Carnap took so much interest in him.

Nevertheless, I will claim that Husserl’s theory of terminology is inadequate to his problems: that the self-knowledge of philosophy is here (as always) incomplete. This helps explain what both Heidegger and Carnap reject in Husserl, and therefore, in turn, why the question, how to give to or recover for terminology an unequivocal and fixed meaning, becomes crucial for both of them. Both of them, in fact, approach this question in a way which is essentially a modification — albeit a root and branch modification — of Husserl’s approach.

## 1 Introduction and example: equivocality of the term “term”

As an introduction to the relevant features both of Husserl’s terminology and of his theory of terminology, I will begin by discussing the term “term,” which is itself an ancient piece of philosophical terminology.<sup>1</sup> Its literal meaning is “end” or “limit,” and this brings us to the first equivocation. Is a term one of the two “ends” of a subject–predicate judgment — as opposed, then, to the middle of such a judgment, which is the copula? Or is it rather an end of *analysis*: any simple component of a judgment, copula included? Aristotle’s introduction of the term already wavers between the two alternatives:

I call a term [*ῥορον*] [1] that into which the proposition is analyzed, [2] such as the predicate and that of which it is predicated, being or non-being then being posited in addition [*προστιθεμένου*].<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>And note that Husserl explicitly claims that his analysis serves to determine “the much-used, but never scientifically clarified, talk of *terms* in traditional logic” (*Logische Untersuchungen*, 2nd ed. [Halle: Niemeyer, 1913–21] IV §13, 2.1:331/Husserliana [henceforth Hua] 19, ed. U. Panzer [The Hague: Nijhoff, 1984], pt. 1, p. 339,22–4).

<sup>2</sup>*An.Pr.* 1.1.24<sup>b</sup>16–18.

In (1) it seems that any end of analysis will be called a term, but in (2) it looks as if this will be restricted to the subject and the predicate, while the affirmation or negation expressed by the copula (“being or not-being”) is regarded as something additional. The inherited, historical term “term” thus brings with it conflicting tendencies, conflicting associations. To use it univocally, Husserl will need to distinguish between a broader sense and a narrower (or, as he often says, a “pregnant”) sense. This is a typical problem which turns up over and over in Husserl’s work. In the present case, the question is whether to admit so-called syncategorematic terms: terms which, like the copula, have to do not with the objects (things, properties, relations) which the judgment describes, but rather with the logical structure or import of the judgment itself.

The term “term,” however, is also equivocal in a second way, a way which is typical of a second pervasive difficulty in Husserl’s terminology. Here the distinction, roughly speaking, is between a term as a kind of word or verbal expression, a term as a kind of meaning or sense, and a term as a kind of thing.<sup>3</sup> What we have here is not, any more than in the first case, an example of pure, arbitrary equivocality (as we have, perhaps, in the two meanings of the English word “bank”). But what connects the different senses in this case is not that one is broader and the other narrower; rather, they are connected by what is traditionally called a *unity of analogy*: “terms,” in each of the three realms, fulfill a role which is somehow structurally the same.

To see how this works out in detail, we need to look at details of what Husserl says about words, meanings and things. He discusses this nearly everywhere in his writings, but the main sources are the First and Sixth Logical Investigations, as well as Husserl’s attempts at a new edition of the Sixth Investigation, published in Husserliana volume 20.<sup>4</sup> Especially relevant, in the latter case, is the manuscript published there as text no. 2, which dates to July, 1913. It is likely that Carnap was familiar with this text, since it concerns subjects which interested him a great deal, and was typed up by Ludwig Landgrebe around 1924, during a period in which he and Carnap

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<sup>3</sup>I say “roughly speaking” in part because, according to Husserl, not only “term” but also “word,” “meaning,” and “thing” are equivocal. See *Logische Untersuchungen*, 1st ed. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1900–01) (henceforth *LU*<sub>1</sub>) I §12, 2:46/Hua 19.1, p. 52,6–10.

<sup>4</sup>*Logische Untersuchungen, Ergänzungsband, Erster Teil: Entwürfe zur Umarbeitung der VI. Untersuchung und zur Vorrede für die Neuauflage der Logischen Untersuchungen (Sommer 1913)* (henceforth *LU Ergänz.* 1), ed. U. Melle (The Hague: Nijhoff, 2002).

had “many discussions.”<sup>5</sup> As for Heidegger, we can be sure he read the text in question, because the manuscript bears a notation in his hand.<sup>6</sup>

But to return to Husserl’s theory of terminology. Rather than starting at either end, so to speak, with either words or things, it is easiest to begin with a distinction which falls within senses or meanings, between proper (*eigentlich*) and improper (*uneigentlich*). This distinction is meant to explain how we can “think” something — that is, mean something, signify it to ourselves — without “understanding” it. The earliest supposed example of this which caught Husserl’s attention was in the case of arithmetic: a fact about small numbers (for example:  $2 + 2 = 4$ ) can, he claimed, *either* be merely, signitively “thought” in the same way as a similar fact about large numbers, *or* it can be properly, intuitively “understood.” This relationship between mere thought and thought-with-understanding is, as he later explained, simply a special case of general relationship between signitive and intuitive intention. An act of signitive intention is one which, so to speak, points on towards a further, intuitive act which would “fulfill” it — that is, an act in which the object which was improperly (*uneigentlich*) intended in the signitive act is itself present and hence properly (*eigentlich*) intended. Husserl’s general term for this relationship of “pointing on” is *Hinweisung*; or, moving in the

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<sup>5</sup>Landgrebe to Husserl, November 11, 1932, in E. Schuhmann and K. Schuhmann, eds., *Edmund Husserl: Briefwechsel* (Boston: Kluwer, 1994), pt. 4, p. 298,19–23. I owe my awareness of this letter to G.E.R. Haddock, *The Young Carnap’s Unknown Master: Husserl’s Influence on Der Raum and Der logische Aufbau der Welt* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 2 n. 8 (but this latter work should in general be treated with caution). Since Landgrebe, in the same period, also typed up the texts of *Ideen II* and *Erste Philosophie*, both of which I will be citing later on, the same argument applies to those two works, as well.

For those unfamiliar with Husserl’s influence on Carnap: Carnap makes extensive and explicit use of Husserl (especially of Husserl’s doctrine of *Wesenserschauung*) in his first published work, *Der Raum (Der Raum: Ein Beitrag zur Wissenschaftslehre, Kant-Studien Ergänzungshefte 56* [Berlin: Reuther and Reichard, 1922]). By that time, Carnap was already living in Buchenbach, near Freiburg. We know, from Landgrebe’s report, that Carnap participated in Husserl’s seminars in Summer 1924–25 (after which he left for Vienna). But Landgrebe first arrived in Freiburg, as a 21 year old student, in the summer of 1923, so it is possible that Carnap also had some personal interaction with Husserl, or at least attended his lectures, before that, and that Landgrebe fails to report this simply because he has no personal knowledge of it. In his major early work, the *Aufbau (Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, 4th ed. [Hamburg: Meiner, 1974]), Carnap cites Husserl explicitly only a few times, but there are many signs of continuing heavy influence there and even in later periods of Carnap’s thought.

<sup>6</sup>See U. Melle, Editor’s Introduction to Hua 20.1, xxvii n. 1.

opposite direction, he will say that the signitive intention is an “expression” (*Ausdruck*) of the fulfilling intuitive one. The process of moving from signitive to intuitive, when successful, is called “demonstration” (*Ausweisung*). If, on the other hand, the signitive intention points on to a intuitive fulfillment which is not forthcoming (for example, in the case of  $2 + 2 = 3$ ), then the process of failed transition is called “rejection” or “repudiation” (*Abweisung*).<sup>7</sup>

I said a moment ago that the relationship between signitive and intuitive *thought* is, for Husserl, merely a special case of the relationship between signitive and intuitive intention in general. It will be fairly important, for our purposes, to recall exactly which special case that is. There are, according to Husserl, two quite different types of object which we can intend: on the one hand, objects which are simple (*schlicht*); on the other, objects which are “categorially formed.” Examples of categorially formed objects (the main examples regularly offered by Husserl himself) would be: subjects, predicates, parts, wholes, objects-with-predicates, states of affairs, sets (and members of sets), collectiva (and members of collectiva), series (and members of series). These are all examples, in one way or another, of *relative* beings; the simple objects, in contrast (the “this-heres,” as Husserl sometimes calls them) are supposed to be simple in that they are *irrelative*. It is in terms of this contrast, then, that Husserl understands the Kantian distinction between understanding and sense: the simple objects are intuited in mere acts of sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*), whereas intuitions of categorially formed objects involve sensible intuitions of simple objects and then, further, an (intuitive) application to those simple objects of “thinking” (*Denken*) — or, as Husserl also says, of “understanding” (*Verstand*) or “interpretation” (*Auffassung*).<sup>8</sup>

To get back, then, to special case of “thinking without understanding”: the phrase itself involves a confusing use of “thinking” and “understanding.” For Husserl, the two terms are potentially synonyms. In this phrase, however, he uses “thinking” in a broad sense, so as to cover both *eigentlich* and

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<sup>7</sup>Not all of this terminology is yet in use at the time of the *Logische Untersuchungen*, but it all turns up in *Ideen I* and is used often after that.

<sup>8</sup>The ontological view according to which everything is either simple or a composite of simples is questionable, as is the implicit interpretation of Kant, according to which the object of sensible intuition as such is given as individual (ignoring the role of space — which is in the subject, not the object — in individuation). Indeed I consider both to be mistaken. But Husserl holds these views, and neither Heidegger nor Carnap attacks him on these grounds.

*uneigentlich* cases, whereas “understanding” refers narrowly to the *eigentlich*, fulfilling act. The special case in question is one in which that fulfilling act is itself the intuitive positing of a categorially formed object — i.e., is an act of intuitive *Auffassung* applied to simple, merely sensible intuitions.

This account of *eigentlich*, intuitive positing, on the one hand, and *uneigentlich*, signitive positing, on the other, is at work at several junctures in Husserl’s system. Most importantly, it forms the basis of his definition of knowledge or cognition (*Erkenntnis*) and of truth: these are names for the match-up (*Deckung*) between signitive and intuitive. The signitive thought is “true” if and when the included *Hinweisung* receives its *Ausweisung*; and *Erkenntnis* (*Erkenntnis* in a pregnant sense, in which what is *erkannt* must be *true*) is the act in which such a match-up is (dynamically or statically) recognized. Almost as important, however, is the role played by this account in establishing a distinction between truth (or truth in a pregnant sense) and “correctness” (*Richtigkeit*), which is the mere *suitability* of a signitive thought to receive intuitive fulfillment. It is because there can be an *unrichtig* signitive intention that *Erkenntnis*, understood more broadly, can be, not only false, but even absurd. *Round square*, for example, is an *uneigentlich* thought (a merely signitive intention towards an object-with-predicate) which cannot, in principle, be fulfilled: the *Hinweisung* here, in other words, is one which *necessarily* meets with *Abweisung*. So we see that, although every *eigentlich* thought has an expression — an expression, as Husserl puts it, in the “medium” of signification — the reverse does not hold. There are signitive thoughts — *unrichtig* ones — which fail to express any possible intuition.

How, then, does the spoken word, the so-called *Wortlaut*, come into this picture?<sup>9</sup> Since an act in which we perceive or imagine such a sound does not, by itself, point on towards any external fulfillment, we can understand or interpret the sound (note: now in yet another sense of “understand” or “interpret”) as a word in the full sense, a “sign” (*Zeichen*), only insofar as that perception is accompanied by a second, signitive act: an act which Husserl calls “sense-giving” (*sinnverleihende*). But Husserl also claims, at least later on, that the reverse is true: that no signitive act is possible except as accompanying the perception (or, at least, imagined perception) of a sign. The *Hinweisung* of a signitive act is always a pointing *away from*

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<sup>9</sup>Note at this stage, as opposed to in *The Origin of Geometry*, Husserl sees no relevant difference between speaking and writing.

some intuitively given sign *and on towards* the signitively intended object. A summary of this position would be: no sign without signification, and no signification without a sign.<sup>10</sup>

This concept of sign requires that the connection between sign and signified be intrinsically unmotivated. For if the signitive intention required a sign in some way *intrinsically* related to the object — say, a sign which was a picture or diagram of the object — then that signitive intention would not be fully *uneigentlich*, and would therefore be unable to take on the desired role in the definition of knowledge and truth. With no intrinsic motivation, however, where does the *Hinweisung* get its force? There are, according to Husserl, just two basic possibilities. First, I myself may consciously set up the correlation. This would be the original establishment (*Urstiftung*) of a sign. As consciously motivated, this is an example of what Husserl calls a “position taking” (*Stellungnahme*) of consciousness, and is thus *rational* and *active* by definition (that is: by Husserl’s definition of “reason” and of “activity”).<sup>11</sup> Second, the connection may be a matter of association, of “habitus”: due to previous use of and/or exposure to the sign, a perception or imagination of the *Wortlaut* gives rise, without conscious motivation, to an expectation (or, technically, a protention) of the fulfillment. Because no conscious motivation, no *Stellungnahme*, is involved, this is (again, by definition) an *irrational* and *passive* connection.<sup>12</sup> The second case, of meaning via habitus, when it occurs, rests on or refers back to a prior instance of the first case, of meaning by stipulation: association is made possible only due

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<sup>10</sup>Husserl in the first edition of *LU VI* actually discusses what he takes to be some exceptions to this: for example, in the “wordless recognition” of a certain piece of equipment (*Werkzeug*) as a drill (*LU<sub>1</sub> VI* §15a, p. 2:532/Hua 19.2:598,25–599,35). But he takes that back in the later version of Hua 20, for good reasons which we will discuss below.

<sup>11</sup>Are the important senses of “active,” “rational,” etc., in, for example, Spinoza, or in Kant, really captured by this definition? This is the question which needs to be addressed both in considering the later stages of Husserl’s ethical thought and in explaining what I take to be the ethical motivations of Heidegger and Carnap. But I will not address it further here.

<sup>12</sup>More precisely: a conscious act is passive insofar as it contains *either* (a) unconscious motivation or (b) sense-data-like, unmotivatable components, and it is “purely and completely free” when its passivity is only of type (b): when “passivity only plays its role in the provision [*Herbeischaffung*] of the primary matter [*Urmaterial*], which includes no further implicit theses” (*Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution* [henceforth *Ideen II*], Hua 4, ed. M. Biemel [The Hague: Nijhoff, 1952], §56b, p. 224,13–15).



to a prior *Urstiftung*.<sup>13</sup> But, Husserl says, the *Urstiftung* in question may not have been in *my* consciousness:

There stand against each other: *my own* thoughts and *adopted* thoughts. . . . [Each one of the latter] has, as something adopted, the character of an acquisition, which has arrived from another ego, which has its *Urstiftung* in it.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, and even more strikingly, an *Urstiftung* need not have occurred in any one consciousness in particular. In some cases, the subject who first established the association is just an impersonal someone: *man*. Husserl discusses this point, in *Ideen* II, in a somewhat more general context (practical as well as theoretical):

Against the tendencies which come out of other persons stand the impositions of convention, of custom, of tradition, of spiritual milieu: “one [*man*]” judges so, “one” holds the fork so, and so forth. (269,16–21)

But it is clear from the surrounding text that the same very much applies to the type of theoretical case we are considering.

To return, then, both to the initial issue about terminology and to the initial example of the term “term”: “terms,” in the various senses of the term, will be what we need to focus on if we want univocal signs, in particular, for *thoughts*. In the broadest senses of “term,” this is obvious but unsurprising: anything which can be signified at all, whether a simple object or (an aspect of) a categorial form, could be called a “term”; or, any ultimate component of a signitive or intuitive intention (meaning) could be called that; or, any unanalyzable *Wortlaut*. More important is the fact that, since every categorially formed object is ultimately based on the simple objects to which the categorial forms are applied, all *eigentlich* thought consists ultimately of the *Auffassung* of simple objects — that is, the intuitive grasp of simple objects as categorially formed. But these simple objects themselves — and/or the corresponding simple meanings or words — are just what would be called “terms” in the narrower sense. As Husserl puts it:

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<sup>13</sup>See *Erste Philosophie (1923–4)*, *Zweiter Teil: Theorie der Phänomenologischen Reduktion*, Hua 8, ed. R. Boehm (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965), 150,29–30.

<sup>14</sup>*Ideen* II, §60c, Hua 4:268,33–269,14.

The terms express the founding acts of the entire “relating representation [*beziehende Vorstellung*],” or, which is to say the same thing, they name the founding objects, and they *therefore* also present the place at which alone a contribution of sensibility is to be sought.<sup>15</sup>

So establishing fixed and unequivocal terminology in a broad sense (signs which signify thoughts) will depend, ultimately, on establishing fixed terminology in a narrow sense (signs which signify simple objects). We will see below that there are problems with this.

## 2 How the sense of terminology can be fixed, according to Husserl

Supposed we are faced with some pieces of terminology (broadly speaking) which are equivocal and/or of unsteady meaning. According to Husserl, the process by which we fix the sense of such terminology must essentially be one in which terms qua *Wortlaute* are clearly and distinctly attached to signitive acts. The problem with the original, unfixed terminology, in other words, is that the spoken (or written) signs failed completely to determine the accompanying signitive act. Husserl claims, however, that this fixing of the connection between *Wortlaut* and signitive meaning can't be accomplished without going back, in turn, to the corresponding *intuitive* meanings — that is, to the relevant *ausweisende* intuitions:

In order firmly to establish differences of meaning, bring equivocalities to evidence [*Abhebung*] or limit the unsteadiness of meaning-intention, we must have recourse [*zurückgehen*] to intuition. (I §21, pp. 2:70–71/Hua 19.2:76,2–5)

This is because, although it is possible to mean one clear thing in a merely signitive, *uneigentlich* way (“ $2 + 2 = 4$ ,” for example, is not normally equivocal), the *knowledge* that just one thing is meant (the *Erkenntnis*, properly speaking, of univocality) requires intuition (2:72/77,10–12). So a simple prescription, according to Husserl, would be as follows. Faced with a possibly equivocal term, go back to intuitions to which it points; see if they are the same (types of) fulfilling intuition in all cases; if not, then, choose just one of the alternatives, and then make sure, in the future, to associate the term with signitive acts directed at just *that* (type of) intuitive fulfillment. The

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<sup>15</sup> *LU*<sub>1</sub> VI §60, p. 2:654/Hua 19.2:712,1–5.

last step, clearly, involves something like a new *Urstiftung* of the term. But note that its originality, or rationality, only goes so far: the existence of the problem, and the choices available for solving it, derive from the inherited use of the word — that is, from passive association.

This simple prescription, therefore, although it may be sufficient in cases where we aim just to eliminate a verbal dispute, will not suffice when our aim is to make further progress in a science, or indeed to found a new one. In “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,” Husserl uses the example of Galileo — an example which continues to loom for him later. “Galileo,” one should note, is here not the empiricist Galileo (the one who revolutionizes physics by looking through a telescope), but rather Galileo the rationalist conceptual reformer (the one who realizes that the book of nature is written in language of mathematics). And while there are other ways of understanding the achievement of that rationalist Galileo (one in Natorp, for example, and presumably another one in Einstein), from Husserl’s point of view it lies specifically in establishing — which is to say, fixing the sense of — a correct *terminology* for physical science. In a case like this, as in the simpler case where the above simple prescription would be appropriate, one must go back to intuitions. But now it will not be enough just to choose some intuitive meaning with which our existing terms happen, at times, to be associated. One must settle, rather, on a correct, “essential” terminology:

All statements [*Aussagen*] which describe the phenomena through direct concepts, do so, insofar as they are valid, through essential concepts [*Wesensbegriffe*]; thus, through conceptual word-significations [*Wortbedeutungen*] which must allow of being cashed out [*sich . . . einlösen lassen müssen*] in essential insight.<sup>16</sup>

A founding figure like Galileo must therefore have carried out a new *Urstiftung* in a stricter sense: he must have understood the objects signified by existing terminology well enough to see *why* we have words with the meanings we do (rather than with some other meanings), and then consciously have chosen the best motivated ones — or must, more likely, have found ways to improve on any of them. Research in an area is fully meaningful, *sinnvoll*, only if

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<sup>16</sup>“Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,” *Logos* 1 (1911): 314/*Aufsätze und Vorträge (1911–1921)*, Hua 25, ed. T. Nenon and H.-R. Sepp (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1986), 32,10–13.

It takes and seeks to determine [its object], this thus-intuited [*dieses so Geschaute*], precisely as that as which, as it were, it demands to be taken and determined. (313/Hua 25:31,1–2)

Indeed, it is for this reason that there must be founding geniuses, “pathbreakers,” such as Galileo, who discover the right method, and with it the right concepts, the right word-significations, in a given field (308/Hua 25:24,1–16): this kind of fully active, rational fixing of terminology can’t be due merely to the impersonal someone, *man*.

For reasons already mentioned above, such a pathbreaking fixing of terminology will normally involve a narrowing or widening of historically given meanings, on the way to getting the right ones. Such narrowing or widening, in other words, is part of what the subject matter itself will demand from the pathbreaker. Its “clarificatory value” consists in the fact that it is not “an extra-essential, merely disjunctive concept extension [*Begriffserweiterung*]” — a kind of generalization which, as Husserl admits in a footnote, *is* very convenient in the *Technik* of mathematical logic — “but, rather, a genuine generalization which rests on the commonality of essential characteristics.”<sup>17</sup> In such a case, then, the pathbreaker not only fixes the sense of wavering *Wortlaute*, but also *re-fixes* the old, unsuitable senses themselves.

So far this all sounds like a private matter which could go on within a single consciousness. But if the new terminology is to mark a new epoch in science, it must not remain with the pathbreaker alone. In fact (in a passage alluding to Plato’s *Meno*), Husserl makes communicability the criterion of scientific rigor: “As far as science, actual science, holds sway, so far can one teach and learn, and everywhere in the same sense.”<sup>18</sup> What makes the teaching possible, presumably, is the pathbreaker’s recourse to the intuitions behind our existing terms: both teacher (pathbreaker) and student (follower) are already looking at the object, so to speak; the teacher need only “remind” the student what kind of treatment the object motivates or “demands.”

Before going on, I should note that, while Galileo is the main example in “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,” there are two other key examples, elsewhere in Husserl, of the need for radical clarification of fundamental terms or concepts (*Grundbegriffe*). First of all, set theory. Husserl says that the fundamental concepts of set theory, as it has been carried out so far,

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<sup>17</sup> *LU*<sub>1</sub> VI §53, p. 2:637/Hua 19.2:694,11–15.

<sup>18</sup> “Philosophie,” 290/Hua 25:4,17–19.

have, on the one hand, a primordial, clear obviousness [*Selbstverständlichkeit*] and nevertheless, on the other hand, a certain mysterious indeterminacy, a mysterious unsteadiness of sense, which shows itself in that, when one wants freely to apply universal propositions seen with insight, freely to let their consequences unfold, there arise incongruities, even contradictions, whose source [*Grund*] is unclear.<sup>19</sup>

Second, geometry: in this case, the problems appear when physicists (that is, Einstein) try to apply geometrical *Grundbegriffe* to nature.<sup>20</sup>

### 3 The case of philosophy: radical *Urstiftung*

The question of how, or whether, we can fix the sense of *philosophical* terminology is therefore the question of how, or whether, philosophy can be founded as a rigorous science. As is obvious from the title, Husserl in “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft” argues that it can. At this stage, moreover, he apparently takes this to be relatively unproblematic. He contrasts the method of “scholastic ontologism” (something like the kind of simple disambiguation discussed above, in that it seeks to derive knowledge just from a more consistent use of our existing terms) with that of the phenomenologist:

Scholastic ontologism lets itself be guided by language ... but gets lost in drawing analytic judgments out of the word-significations. ... The phenomenological analyst ... draws no judgment at all out of the word-concepts, but rather looks through the words in question into [*in ... hineinschaut*] the phenomena which language suggests [*anregt*].<sup>21</sup>

What is needed here, in other words — and this is fairly explicit in “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft” — is just a new pathbreaker (presumably,

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<sup>19</sup> *Einleitung in die Philosophie: Vorlesungen 1922/23*, Hua 35, ed. B. Goossens (Boston: Kluwer, 2002), 6,36–7,6. *Einleitung in die Philosophie* contains lectures from Winter 22/23, at a time when Heidegger and Carnap were both around Freiburg; also Husserl mentions explicitly in *Formale und transzendente Logik* ([Halle: Niemeyer, 1929], §170d, p. 255 n./Hua 17, ed. P. Janssen [The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974], 295 n.) that he made the transcript available to his “younger friends.”

<sup>20</sup> *Einleitung*, Hua 35:7,13–21. See also 380,32–381,10; *Erste Philosophie* 2, Hua 8:140,10; *LU<sub>1</sub>* I §18, pp. 2:64–5/Hua 19.2:70,3–10.

<sup>21</sup> “Philosophie,” 305/Hua 25:20,14–27.

Husserl) who will do for the realm of pure consciousness what Galileo did for the realm of nature.

One reason to worry about this analogy is that Husserl's understanding of Galileo's achievement changes as time goes on. By the time of the *Krisis* Galileo actually looks more like a villain than a hero, but even much earlier than that, in *Ideen* I, we are assured that he did *not* simply tell us the true nature of the objects we were all already looking at; rather (under rational motivation), he “subtracted” a mathematical world to the sensible one. Still later, moreover, Husserl suggests that an epoch-making pathbreaker, even in the positive sciences, can't be content with sinking deeply into the subject matter, but must perform phenomenological reflection — that is, must be a philosopher. This is in stark contrast to “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,” where Husserl says that issues in the philosophy of each science “can and must” remain separate from the disciplines themselves, in “a different dimension” (290–91/Hua 25:5,1–8, 291/5 n.).<sup>22</sup> From the later point of view, philosophy has nothing to learn from the example of rigor in other sciences, and, on the contrary, such true rigor as they contain depends, at least implicitly, on a correct understanding of philosophy. A complete account of this issue in Husserl would be very useful in understanding later debates between Carnap and Heidegger, among other things. But we need not get into it just now, because more serious problems with the supposed analogy emerge anyway simply from Husserl's own understanding of the special nature of philosophy.

Philosophy, first of all, is supposed to be a discipline of absolute rationality, and, hence, of absolute responsibility. Husserl says this in many places (including in “Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft” itself), but here is a particularly ringing version, from vol. 2 of *Erste Philosophie*:

The philosophical urge [*Drang*] [is the urge] to a presuppositionless beginning; to a new, really radical life of knowledge [*Erkenntnisleben*], . . . a life in which the philosopher stands before himself with absolutely good conscience as cognitive agent [*als erkennend Tätiger*], [and] can understand and take responsibility for the sense and right of every cognitive act and every choosing and deciding which holds sway within it.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Cf. the complete rejection of this view, *Einleitung*, Hua 35:293,7–15.

<sup>23</sup>*Erste Philosophie* 2, Hua 8:11,19–26.

This means that philosophy is actually quite different from all other sciences, and in a very relevant way:

The unique position and function of philosophy over against all natural-naive, all positive sciences lies in [the fact] that it does not, as they do, have a given beginning. (48,28–31; see also 11,9–14)

In particular, this means that the position of the true philosopher — the founder of philosophy as a rigorous science — must be far more hostile to the history of the discipline than, for example, Galileo was to the history of physics. The attempt to move forward as if historical terminology had a somewhat acceptable meaning — “to solve the great epistemological problems,” for example, “through mere critique of traditional philosophemes and probable ratiocination [*Raisonnement*]”<sup>24</sup> — is what Husserl calls philosophizing “from above” (*von oben her*), thinking especially of Hegelians (and of Hegelianizing Kantians, such as the Marburg School). Opposed to this method, which simply begins using philosophical terminology left and right as if assured that it meant something, is Husserl’s own responsible philosophizing “from below” (*von unten her*), which takes no such thing for granted.

All of this sounds good enough, perhaps, but note: by Husserl’s own theory, it means that the philosopher disavows *all* the unconscious motivations behind our existing terminology. The absolute beginning of philosophy must be absolutely unmotivated. As Husserl says in *Erste Philosophie*: whereas a vocation (*Beruf*) for other disciplines can grow up naturally and gradually,

The idea of philosophy itself includes a kind of radicalism of ultimate validity [*Endgültigkeit*], which cannot grow up, in a natural way and unnoticed, from any naturally naive love of knowledge or from any yet-naive love of science.<sup>25</sup>

The philosopher, therefore,

requires, *necessarily*, his own *resolution* [*eines eigenen . . . Entschlusses*], which first and primordially makes him into a philosopher at all — an *Urstiftung*, so to speak, which is a primordial self-creation. (19,28–31)

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<sup>24</sup> *LU*<sub>1</sub> VI, Introduction, 2:479/Hua 19.2:543,7–9.

<sup>25</sup> *Erste Philosophie* 2, Hua 8:21,18–23

This general new *Urstiftung* of the person (which Husserl also describes as the rebirth of the “child of the world,” the *Weltkind*, into a new, phenomenological childhood<sup>26</sup>) requires also a new *Urstiftung* of terminology. Since, Husserl says, I must now begin anew with “immediately, adequately justifiable [*be-gründbare*] statements,”

I must orient the meanings of the words of these statements towards the adequately self-given primordial source [*Ursprung*], must, to a certain extent, newly form their meanings, without regard to preceding tradition.<sup>27</sup>

To do otherwise,

to bring in concepts of *mens, animus, intellectus, substantia cogitans* which I have from elsewhere — as it may well be [*etwagar*] out of philosophical tradition — is a total falling away from the philosophical goal; it is a kind of philosophical mortal sin. (73,12–15)

All of this explains why Husserl’s war with traditional philosophical terminology is both implacable and ultimately unwinnable. Over and over, we hear the complaint that existing terms are treacherous

because of the confusing unclarity and equivocalities which attach to them in common use, and also, as well, due to the notorious philosophical theories which are bound up with them as an evil inheritance from the past.<sup>28</sup>

Over and over, therefore, we find the demand that

*all* of our terms must be understood exclusively according to the sense which *our* presentations predetermine for them, and not in any other one which history or the reader’s terminological habits [*Gewohnheiten*] suggest. (§33, p. 60/Hua 3.1:69,9–13)

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<sup>26</sup>See, for example, *Erste Philosophie* 2, Hua 8:123,25–6; 180,22–5; *Einleitung*, Hua 35:76,18–34.

<sup>27</sup>*Einleitung*, Hua 35:65,28–31.

<sup>28</sup>*Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Erstes Buch: allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1913) (henceforth *Ideen I*), Introduction, p. 6/Hua 3.1, ed. K. Schuhmann (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1976), 8,18–22.



Husserl, in fact, regularly engages in a similar struggle even with his own previously established terminology, which explains many of the most annoying features of his works: the tendency, for example, to introduce a new term (such as *Noema*) with great fanfare and then later prove very skittish about using it, relying mostly on various coded equivalents; or the boundless and increasing enthusiasm for Greek and Latin terms as replacements for existing German ones. In all such cases, the point is to get rid of unwanted associations with the terminology already built up, whether by previous philosophers or by Husserl himself. But what would really be necessary to establish correct terminology here would be to do away with *all* associations. And yet that would go against the whole point of using historical terminology, or indeed any consistent terminology: namely, to rely on a word's existing associations. These inherently contradictory considerations are summed up already in the *Logische Untersuchungen*, in Husserl's discussion of the word *Akt*:

The expression *Akt* is so firmly rooted in the linguistic usage of a long series of psychologists, and on the other hand so hackneyed and so clearly detached from its original [*ursprünglichen*] sense, that we can . . . retain it without worries.<sup>29</sup>

But if we were to resolve this dilemma in the obvious way — simply do away with all historical terminology, and, indeed, at every stage, with our own previously established terminology — then we would find that no one understands us. And this brings us to second problem with philosophical terminology: its unteachability.

#### 4 The case of philosophy: teachability

Husserl wants to include philosophy in the requirement that rigorous science be teachable. That, in fact, is how the requirement comes up: as a criticism of Kant's statement that one can't learn philosophy, only "philosophizing" (*Philosophieren*).<sup>30</sup> Husserl takes this statement as symptomatic of a general problem with traditional philosophy — a problem which phenomenology alone can solve. In a passage which Carnap was later to echo, almost word for word, in the preface to the *Aufbau*, Husserl says that we must seek, not

<sup>29</sup> *LU*<sub>1</sub> V §13, pp. 2:358–9/Hua 19.2:393,20–24.

<sup>30</sup> "Philosophie," 290/Hua 25:4,15–16; see *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A837/B865.

a philosophical “system” in the traditional sense, as it were a Minerva which springs, fully formed and prepared, out of the head of a creative genius — in order then in later times to be preserved next to other such Minervas in the silent museum of history,

but rather

a philosophical teaching-system [*Lehrsystem*], which, after vast preparatory efforts of generations, actually begins from below with a foundation secure from doubt, and like every competent construction [*Bau*] grows into the heights as building stone is added to building stone, according to guiding insights, as one firm form to another.<sup>31</sup>

Similar points, along with similar metaphors, continue to turn up in Husserl’s later works, as well. In *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, for example, he explains that the “future task of philosophy, or, what comes to the same thing, the predetermined [*vorgezeichnete*] goal of the entire scientific future of humanity” requires a full system of descriptive phenomenology, which will replace traditional philosophy, because

All philosophy from above, all philosophy of speculative genius must have finished playing any role [*muß ihre Rolle ausgespielt haben*], if there is a firm ground of work upon which one can, however laboriously, sow and reap.<sup>32</sup>

Despite all of this, however, Husserlian phenomenology appears particularly *unteachable*, basically because the peculiar sense of phenomenological terms can only be grasped by someone who has already made Husserl’s peculiar “new beginning” (has already carried out the phenomenological reduction). There are several ways to understand the difficulty involved. One

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<sup>31</sup>“Philosophie,” 291–2/Hua 25:6,3–12; cf. *Aufbau*, Preface, p. xiv: “in der Philosophie . . . erlebten wir das Schauspiel, . . . daß nacheinander und nebeneinander eine Vielzahl philosophischer Systeme errichtet wurde, die miteinander unvereinbar sind. Wenn wir dem Einzelnen in der philosophischen Arbeit ebenso wie in der Fachwissenschaft nur eine Teilaufgabe zumessen, so glauben wir, um so zuversichtlicher in die Zukunft blicken zu können. . . . So wird sorgsam Stein zu Stein gefügt und eine sicherer Bau errichtet.” Perhaps needless to say, large parts of philosophy have since attained the desired form, only without the predicted benefits.

<sup>32</sup>*Einleitung*, Hua 35:306,15–19, 26–9.

way would lead through the details of Husserl's metaphysics: the sui generis ontological status of the realm of pure consciousness, together with the radical difference between the natural and phenomenological attitudes, ensures that the "natural," prephenomenological human being cannot be given any sure pointers to the phenomenologists' meaning. Under this aspect, the difficulty — which in "Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft" is hardly visible — gets increasingly noticed by Husserl himself. Philosophy (that is, phenomenology), he begins to say, is far harder to introduce than other sciences, because

Philosophy has no realm [*Gebiet*] [of subject matter] which can be signified [*zu bezeichnendes*] to the natural human being through direct demonstration [*Aufweisung*], no realm already known to him through natural intuition and thought formation. (4,20–25)

This line of thought is then carried to its logical conclusion — namely, that phenomenology cannot be introduced at all — by Husserl's close student, Fink<sup>33</sup> (though it doesn't seem that Husserl himself, his famous endorsement of Fink's paper notwithstanding, was ever willing to go quite that far).

Here, however, I prefer to come at the difficulty from a terminological, rather than a metaphysical, perspective. The problem, from this point of view, is the problem of univocally referring to phenomenological objects, and derives merely from the fact that the phenomenological realm is supposed to be the radically *new* realm of a newly founded, radically responsible philosophy: a realm, therefore, to which there has been no previous univocal reference. Phenomenological statements, that is, don't just say something new about previously named objects; or, in other words, phenomenological concepts are not logically derivable from any previously accepted ones. If the difficulty can be traced to such sources then, one may hope, it will become clear why both Heidegger and Carnap felt that (what they took to be) Husserl's metaphysical error could be traced to his views on terminology, and why they each took the *right* way of fixing terminology as *the* duty of the philosopher.

Whereas our discussion in the previous section centered mostly on the equivocality of broad and narrow senses, as it stems from the unwanted associations of historically given terms, the problem here will be with other

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<sup>33</sup>E. Fink, "Die phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls in der gegenwärtigen Kritik," *Kantstudien* 38 (1933): 229–383.

type of equivocality: the kind driven by the unity of analogy. Equivocations of this type also plague Husserl's system, and moreover in ways relevant to our question about how the natural human being can approach it: the equivocation, for example, between the description of phenomenological and psychological "consciousness," "acts," etc., or between immanently (noematically) and transcendently intended "objects," "properties," and so forth. In both of these cases, the equivocality resembles that between "term" as word, "term" as meaning, and "term" as object. Beyond that, however, the distinction between "terms" narrowly speaking and "terms" broadly understood, so as to include the syncategorematic ones — in other words, the distinction between simple and categorially formed objects — plays an important role in explaining how unity of analogy is possible. The sense, according to Husserl, in which formal logic is general logic — the sense, that is, in which the science of the mere forms of thought, in abstraction from its content, is also the science of thought about objects *überhaupt* — is that the discipline of formal logic studies categorial forms, each of which can be used in the *Auffassung* of any realm of simple objects. Formal logic, or formal ontology, is thus about the possible "variations of the empty something."<sup>34</sup> The different categorial forms, in other words, are all the different possible analogies of this kind (the different possible kinds of analogous structure). Two equivocal senses which are related by analogy are, therefore, two senses in which the same categorial form is applied to different subject matters. The equivocality is not about the structure, but about the content which is to be supplied in place of the empty somethings of formal logic. To clear up the equivocation, then, we must say what is intended in the terms narrowly speaking: what are the *simple* objects which, in each of the two cases, form the basis of our categorially formed thought.

In principle, in a general case, this can be done by showing the logical relationship between terms in our equivocal statement and those in some other, univocal ones. We might, for example, give alternate definitions of the equivocal terms using others which are already well understood. But phenomenology, *ex hypothesi*, is about a radically new subject matter; its terms, in the intended sense, bear no logical relation to existing ones. To

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<sup>34</sup>*Ideen* I, §14, p. 28/Hua 3.1:33,17. Strictly speaking, formal logic includes not only formal ontology, or the study of all possible categorial forms, but also formal apophantics, which is the study of all possible categorially formed signitive expressions (of which only the *richtig* ones correspond to actual categorial forms, forms of object potentially given in categorial intuition).

convey this new content in a way which univocally differentiates it from old, analogous thoughts will therefore require that we say directly what its simple, sensible components are. And this, according to Husserl is just what cannot be said. There are three, not unrelated, ways to see that that is the case.

#### 4.1 Limits of “logic”

So far we have talked as if there are signitive terms which directly express intuitive ones: expressions, in the medium of signification, of categorially formless *eigentlich* intentions, of completely simple acts of sense (perceptions). This was key to our explanation of “term” in its various senses, and it does correspond to Husserl’s position in the first edition of the *Logische Untersuchungen*. Discussing the significance of proper names and of demonstratives such as *Dies*, he says that such a word

names the object “directly [*direkt*].” It intends [*meint*] it not in an attributive way, as bearer of this or that characteristics [*Merkmale*], but rather without such “conceptual” mediation, as that which it “itself” is, just as perception would place it before the eyes.<sup>35</sup>

This is why, in *Ideen* I, “formless substrates” (simple objects) are called “this-heres”: in calling something “this” (or in referring to it by a proper name), the significance of one’s *Wortlaut* is the expression of a simply intending act, whose object is simple. Unfortunately, a view like this tends to break down the supposed distinction between thinking and sensibility (categorially formed and formless); Husserl actually ends up saying, paradoxically, that even the simply perceived, the *schlicht Wahrgenommene*, comes with its own categorial form: the form “object” (*Gegenstand*).<sup>36</sup> Probably for this reason, he moves, in the attempted second edition of the Sixth Investigation, to a diametrically opposed point of view. “Among objectivating acts,” he says (that is, acts in the theoretical attitude), only categorial acts, *Denkakte*, are suitable to be meanings — that is, to be the intuitive fulfillment of some signitive intention.<sup>37</sup> From this he now derives the conclusion that an act of simple perception has *no* signitive expression of its own. In the case of

<sup>35</sup> *LU*<sub>1</sub> VI §5, p. 2:492/Hua 19.2:555,14–18.

<sup>36</sup> *LU*<sub>1</sub> VI §58, p. 2:652/Hua 19.2:709,14–20.

<sup>37</sup> *LU Ergänz.* Hua 20.1, text no. 2 §3, 67,30–68,1; §4, 72,13–73,23.

a demonstrative, even in monological use, the simple object of perception is not intended simply, but rather grasped under a certain thought-form:

It becomes the theme of a thesis all its own, which aims at what is seen as its goal, intends it out [*es herausmeint*] and posits it as object-whereof (as subject or object). (77,18–21)

But this means that, in an intersubjective use of a demonstrative (where the hearer does not share the speaker’s particular intuitions), all that gets directly conveyed is the “universal” meaning (the meaning common to every use of the demonstrative in question); meanwhile,

precisely what the perception . . . contributes, as necessary as it is for giving the “this” reference [*Beziehung*] to the object intended in a given case, lacks expression. (80,33–6)

And even in the case of a proper name,

the object itself in its own proper being [*Eigenheit*], but no proper *way* of being [*Eigenartigkeit*], no being-so-constituted [*Wiebeschaffensein*] of the named object comes to expression. (82,30–32)

Proper names, too, then, in themselves (that is, without any accompanying description, and ultimately demonstration) express merely a form, rather than a content.

Now, phenomenology is a science of essence, which means that the phenomenologist per se is not interested in naming or demonstrating the individual, simple contents of pure consciousness, in any case. But it will nevertheless be impossible to specify phenomenology’s subject matter without first demonstrating such simple individuals. Intentions toward essences are, according to Husserl, already categorially formed; they are founded on intentions toward individuals, either real or imagined.<sup>38</sup> To tell you which essences I, the phenomenologist, am discussing, I will ultimately need to say what simple individuals they are essences *of*: that is, I will need to give an (at least, imagined) example. And it is now clear, without reference to the metaphysical peculiarity and/or ultimate privacy of the phenomenological realm, that I won’t be able to do this. One might suspect, in fact — and

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<sup>38</sup>See, for example, *Ideen* I, §15, p. 29/Hua 3.1:29,16–20.

this is what Heidegger and Carnap conclude — that such metaphysical and epistemological doctrines are consequences of the terminological situation, rather than reasons for it. A certain way of thinking about content and its expression is what makes it seem that the subject matter of philosophy (of radically responsible science) must be metaphysically and epistemically isolated.

#### 4.2 *The limits of objective communication*

Let me now begin with considerations from a different direction entirely, which nevertheless will lead us to the same conclusion (not by coincidence: what we are exposing here is the inner coherence, or consistent incoherence, of Husserl's system). In this case the beginning issue, which we can at first consider without thinking about phenomenology at all, is: how can I communicate with other subjects whose intuitions are or may be specifically different from my own? The problem is raised by numerous everyday situations. Some subjects, for example, are blind: how can I tell them that objects (as seen by me) differ in color? Similar problems may arise — at least, Husserl thinks they do — even in communication with seeing subjects from other cultures. They certainly will arise, in even worse forms, if I want to communicate with members of other species, whose senses might be utterly different from my own.

Husserl takes up this issue, or complex of issues, in *Ideen* II. In simple cases, the answer is that we can use shared experience to establish communication about what we don't share. The seeing can tell the blind how to use other senses to detect difference in color (for example, using a spectrograph). This resembles the way speakers can eliminate simple verbal disputes: since we are already talking about the same things, already share many associations, it is relatively easy for us to come to a joint disambiguation of our terms. But, once again, Husserl considers this type of solution insufficient for the needs of truly rigorous science. The need in question, in this case, is the need for a fully objective mode of discourse. In the case of, so to speak, radical intersubjectivity, I cannot rely on any similarity at all between the *schlicht*, perceptual content of my experience and that of the alter egos with whom I hope to communicate. As far as sensibility goes, we may have nothing in common. Hence what can be communicated in such a case — which is as much as to say, what forms the truly objective content of my utterances in *any* case — is merely formal. Taken objectively, then, my statements

are all about empty somethings. The *Ding* as something identical which is given, in principle, to all possible subjects “has no sensuous-intuitive content whatsoever,” but is rather

only an empty identical something as correlate of the identification, possible according to and grounded by experiential-logical rules, of what appears, in changing “appearance” of different content, to the subjects which stand in intersubjective connection.<sup>39</sup>

Each subject understands the others, in other words, only by translating formal-logical statements about the common, objective world, the world of mathematical physics, into statements about its own perceptual world: that is, as Husserl says, by translating statements about “the world naturalistically considered” into statements about the subject’s own “everyday world” (*Alltagswelt*) (§53, Hua 4:208,25–7), or, as Carnap will later say, by translating from the physical language into the protocol language. One consequence of this is that intersubjective communication about *Dinge* requires a complete fulfillment of the demands of formal logic. The *Ding* “must be logically determinable in a way which determines the irrelative from out of relatives” (§18d, Hua 4:76,21–2).<sup>40</sup> Such logical determination of each thing out of merely formal relations, as we will see, is the project of the *Aufbau*. Carnap might as well have written “this is my task” next to this passage in *Ideen* II, rather than, as he famously did, in the margins of Russell’s “Relation of Sense-Data to Physics.” And the relation between the physical world (the world of *res extensa*) and the world of *Alltäglichkeit* is also a major theme of Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit*.<sup>41</sup>

To return to Husserl, however: we have arrived once again at Galileo, or in other words at an explanation for the possibility of a pathbreaker in natural science, and once again in a way which makes it difficult to account for the equivalent in the case of philosophy. For suppose there is another realm about which we need to communicate, a realm whose objects bear no real relation to anything natural (to anything spatio-temporal). The realm of pure consciousness, for example. As Husserl says in *Ideen* I,

Consciousness, considered in “purity,” has to count as a *context of being closed in itself* . . . into which nothing can penetrate and

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<sup>39</sup> *Ideen* II, §18g, Hua 4:88,26–9

<sup>40</sup> Following the original reading of Landgrebe’s text. (Husserl later, sometime after 1924, struck out the word “logically.” See Biemel’s critical apparatus.)

<sup>41</sup> 17th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993); see especially §21, pp. 95–101.



out of which nothing can slip away; which has no spatio-temporal outside and cannot be inside any spatio-temporal context.<sup>42</sup>

Suppose further, again, that this realm is radically new, so that the objects within it stand in no *logical* relation to those we have discussed in the past. In that case, all basis for objective, univocal communication about the realm in question is missing. We may or may not have our own intuitions of the objects in that realm, but we have, ex hypothesi, no univocal terms for them. The pathbreaker can say things about them, but only the formal structure of such statements will be transmitted; the meaning of their *terms* will remain equivocal. Or rather: the meaning of those terms will tend inexorably to be naturalistically misinterpreted, since other subjects will have no choice but to translate the pathbreaker's statements into the terms of their own everyday experience. And note again that we reached this conclusion without the need to assume something special about the metaphysical status of this new realm, or about its essential privacy.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4.3 *The limits of truth and being*

When it comes to the term “being,” Husserl applies the same rule as elsewhere. To know what the word means, we must ask after the object of the corresponding (signitive or intuitive) intentional act:

If epistemology [*Erkenntnistheorie*] wants to investigate the problem of the relationship between consciousness and Being, it can have before its eyes only Being as *correlatum* of consciousness, as consciously “intended” [*Gemeintes*].<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>*Ideen* I, §49, p. 93/Hua 3.1:105,31–6.

<sup>43</sup>This, incidentally, is why Husserl's many attempts to explain “transcendental intersubjectivity” — to break through phenomenological privacy into the certain conclusion that other transcendental egos *exist* — never succeed in addressing the true problem. Even if there are such transcendental alter egos, I still have no way of conveying that information *to them*. Or in other words: although *I* may carry out a reduction of their conscious states (via a so-called double reduction of my empathic *Vergegenwärtigungen*), *they* still have not carried out the reduction, and I have no way of telling them how to do so.

<sup>44</sup>“Philosophie,” 300/Hua 25:15,30–32. For lack of a better substitute, I will follow the common, but rather misleading, convention of translating the infinitive *Sein* as “Being” and the participial substantive *Seiendes* as “being.”

In accordance with the old definition of truth as *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, or, as he paraphrases, as the adequacy of being to thought, Husserl then concludes that being on the side of the object is correlate to truth on the side the intention. But the truth, recall, according to Husserl, is the synthesis of a signitive *Hinweisung* with its adequate corresponding *Ausweisung* (its fulfillment). A true intentional act, in other words, is one in which a signification and an intuition of the same object are both present, not just side by side, but specifically *as* having that identical object in common. “Being,” then, refers to the correlate, on the side of the object, of this synthesis of truth in consciousness, which is to say: it refers to the sameness, the *identity*, of the signified object and the intuited one.

*Being* in the sense of truth is . . . identity of the object which is simultaneously, in the [synthetic act of] adequation, intended [*gemeinten*] and given.<sup>45</sup>

If, moreover, we consider the various empty or indeterminate components within perceptions themselves (components of intention directed, for example, at parts of a seen object which are not in view) either as themselves signitive (which is Husserl’s view at this stage) or as in certain respects analogous to signitive intention (which is Husserl’s view later on), then we can see why Husserl will later associate the perceived object *an sich*, the perceived object qua (truly) being, with the pure identity of the object pole, the noematic X.<sup>46</sup>

Now, Husserl thinks of this synthesis of truth as something which happens both in “relating” (*beziehende*) acts like judgments and in non-relating, purely nominal acts — including, ultimately, in the type of signitive acts which can be called “terms” (in the narrow sense). In principle, in other words, we ought to speak both of truth and of being in both cases, even

<sup>45</sup> *LU*<sub>1</sub> VI §39, p. 2:598/Hua 19.2:655,10–12.

<sup>46</sup> For the meaning of “An-sich-Sein,” see *Ideen* I, §47, p. 89/Hua 3.1:100,37–101,8, and see also *Einleitung*, Hua 35:191,15–192,30. That this coincides with “true being” should be clear from the above, and see also *Ideen* I, Introduction to 4.2, p. 282/Hua 3.1:315,1–10: “If one speaks of objects simpliciter [*schlechtweg*], one normally means actual, truly existing [*seiende*] objects of a given being category. . . . In the logical sphere, that of the statement [*Aussage*], truly- or actually-being and being-rationally-demonstrable [*vernünftig ausweisbar-sein*] stand, in principle, in correlation.” For the connection with the noematic X, see §142, p. 296/Hua 3.1:329,12–27. For the terminology “object pole” in this connection, see *Ideen* II §25, especially Hua 4:106,29–107,12, and see *Einleitung*, Hua 35:89,25–33.

though we usually speak of truth only in the former case and being in the latter.<sup>47</sup> A noun phrase can just as well be called “true,” in the intended broad sense of truth, as can a full subject–predicate statement: namely, insofar as both the signitive and intuitive acts corresponding to the phrase qua *Wortlaut* may be simultaneously present, and present precisely qua giving the same object. We now come back, however, by a different route, to a problem we already encountered above. Even at the stage of the *Logische Untersuchungen*, at which a term (qua signitive intention) is taken to be fulfilled by a simple perception, nevertheless the simple object named by the term, the simple object given in that simple fulfilling perception, is not the same as the object *qua being*. To speak of the object as being, *seiendes*, is always to add something beyond that simplicity: namely, the moment of identity which corresponds to the synthesis of truth. A piece of paper, for example:

is recognized [*erkannt*] as white, or rather as something-white [*weißes*], where we, expressing the perception, say “white paper.” The intention [*Intention*] of the word “white” only partially matches up [*deckt sich*] with the color-moment of the appearing object; an excess [*Überschuß*] in signification, a form which is not found in the appearance itself, remains to be confirmed therein. Something white, that is: white-*being* paper. (§40, p. 603/660,3–9)

“Being,” even when applied to terms, always signifies such an excess, beyond the simple perception and its simple object: it always signifies a certain logical form (of identification), and hence the act which fulfills such a signification is always the non-simple intuition of a categorially formed object. Or, to turn this around: the perception itself cannot per se be true, nor can its object, per se, be a being:

Being [*das Sein*] in attributive or predicative function is fulfilled . . . in no [simple] perception. Here we are reminded of the Kantian saying [*Satz*]: *Being is not a real predicate. . . . Being is absolutely nothing [schlechterdings nichts] perceptible.* (§43, pp. 609–10/665,28–666,27)

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<sup>47</sup> *LU*<sub>1</sub> VI §39, p. 2:597/Hua 19.2:654,22–655,1.

The implicit interpretation of Kant is debatable, to say the least (though it may be consistent with Husserl’s overall interpretation of Kant). A better reminder might have been of Aristotle, in the passage quoted above: according to Aristotle, it seems, “Being or non-Being” is never contained in the terms narrowly speaking; it must be always additionally posited (*προστιθέμενου τοῦ εἶναι ἢ μὴ εἶναι*). In any case, it emerges that a true term as such — a term which succeeds in expressing a particular simple perceptual content — never directly expresses the non-simple, synthetic act thanks to which it *is* true. The intuitive, fulfilling act corresponding to the *Wortlaut* “truth of ‘the whiteness in this paper’” is not the perception of the whiteness, but rather the intuitive *Deckung* of that perception with a corresponding signitive intention. And correspondingly, then, the *Wortlaut* “the being whiteness in this paper,” does not signify the whiteness qua simple object of perception.

Meanwhile, the syncategorematic terms “being” and “truth” are supposed to express this *Deckung*, but only in (formal-logical) generality. It is claimed that there are *different* modes of being (and hence, correlatively, of truth) — that, for example, “this human body is (exists)” and “this human soul is (exists)” are to be fulfilled by intuitions of *Deckung* which differ in species, and that this is the phenomenological basis for the fact that the paper and the soul themselves differ in highest genus (belong to different regions of being). But the difference in question is not to be found in the simple perceptual data, which in this example are the same on each side, nor in the common formal element expressed by “is (exists).” The sense of being and, correlatively, of truth peculiar to a specific case is not expressed at all.

The consequences for a pathbreaker in philosophy are, again, grim. For, in properly fixing the sense of terms appropriate to a given subject matter (that is, in giving them their proper meanings), a pathbreaker must understand precisely this about it: what it is that makes statements about that subject matter possibly true, what it is for their objects to exist. That is:

They do not owe the motives of their procedure to any revelation, but rather to their immersion in the *sense* of experiences [*Erfahrungen*] themselves, or, as the case may be, in the sense of the “Being” which is given in them.<sup>48</sup>

In the case of pathbreaker in physics, this peculiar sense of being is one with which we are all already familiar; the pathbreaker’s “immersion” in it, and

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<sup>48</sup>“Philosophie,” 308/Hua 25:24,5–8.

consequent discovery of the concepts proper to it, is therefore supposed to be an accomplishment which we can all, in principle, understand. In the case of phenomenology, however, the subject matter is supposed to be completely new, not logically derived from any existing one and never before the object of univocal reference. The sense of being and truth involved here are, in other words, supposed to be completely *unfamiliar*. Hence even if the pathbreaker can somehow accomplish the immersion in question, there is no way to tell the rest of us what has been done. An utterance can express the truth, but not the peculiar *sense* of its own truth; can express, that is, the being of its object, but not the peculiar *sense* of its object's being. So again we see why, by Husserl's own theory, the effort to get across the correct sense of phenomenological talk is doomed to failure. And, again, one might suspect that the mysterious nature of the phenomenological realm (including the associated mysterious "parallelisms": phenomenology/psychology, noematic/transcendent) are ultimately reflections of this terminological problem.

This is all I need to say here about Husserl, but it is worth adding one more note relevant to both Heidegger and Carnap. The above seems to imply that, even though we cannot say what being and/or truth are in a specific case, we can say what they are generally speaking. To quote Husserl once more:

The correlation to the *can-be-perceived*, -intuited, -signified, -known is inseparable from the sense of Being as such [*vom Sinne des Seins überhaupt*], and thus the ideal laws which belong to these possibilities *in specie* are never more to be canceled through the contingent content of the particular being [*des jeweilig Seienden*] itself.<sup>49</sup>

But it now turns out that this so-called correlation can be explained only in terms of the difference (the "ontological difference") between the expressed (the true) and the inexpressible (that which, in a given case, makes it true) — which is to say, that it cannot be explained at all. This should give some hint as to how Heidegger arrives at his *Seinsfrage*, and why an answer to it, for him, depends on understanding the nature of *Jeweiligkeit* as such. And it should also give some hint as to why Carnap, pre-Tarski, considers "truth" as such to be an unusable metaphysical concept, and as to what he must then think he has gotten out of Tarski: in particular, why for Carnap it must not be the case that Tarskian semantics somehow implies metaphysical realism.

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<sup>49</sup> *LU*<sub>1</sub> VI §65, p. 2:673/Hua 19.2:730,19–23.

With that, however, let me now turn to a more general discussion of Heidegger and Carnap.

## 5 Heidegger and Carnap respond

Note first that both *Aufbau* and *Sein und Zeit* begin by mentioning the foundation crisis in mathematics — that is, the crisis of set theory — as example of the need to clarify concepts or terms in founding a science.<sup>50</sup> This, as we have seen, is one of Husserl’s own examples. Heidegger, in the same place (pp. 9–10), alludes also to the problems surrounding general relativity, and Carnap’s *Der Raum* is entirely devoted to those problems, which, he there maintains, are due to an unnoticed equivocation. This example, recall, is also Husserl’s. Both Heidegger and Carnap, then, imply that problems in philosophy itself derive from a similar failure to clarify and disambiguate the basic terms. And both take that project up more explicitly later on in their respective works: Carnap by discovering “type equivocality” in natural language as the source of metaphysical error,<sup>51</sup> and Heidegger via his discussion of “equivocality” as an existential mode of everyday Dasein — that is: of Dasein insofar as its involvement with Being is (as it must be, *zunächst*) “improper” (*uneigentlich*), such that the *Seinsfrage* (the proper subject matter of philosophy) remains covered-over for it.<sup>52</sup>

Both Heidegger and Carnap, moreover, like Husserl, spend, in general, a great deal of time discussing terminological points — although in ways quite different from his and from each other’s. One important example is Heidegger’s discussion of the term *λόγος* near the beginning of *Sein und Zeit* (§7B, pp. 32–4). This term is typically thought to be intractably equivocal: it can refer, among other things, to a word (in the sense of *Wortlaut*), to a meaning, to an argument which points on to a conclusion, or to the structural property of a complex object which forms the basis for a unity of analogy (*ἀναλογία*). Heidegger reduces the equivocality to a common root by deriving all these historical usages from a single primary origin — an origin which will serve to support Heidegger’s claim that the primary locus of truth and reason is sensibility. A second important example is Carnap’s discussion of the terms *Erkenntnis* and *Metaphysik* near the end of the *Aufbau*.<sup>53</sup> The question at

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<sup>50</sup> *Aufbau*, Preface, p. xiii; *Sein und Zeit* §3, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> *Aufbau* §30, pp. 39–41.

<sup>52</sup> *Sein und Zeit* §37, pp. 173–5.

<sup>53</sup> *Aufbau* §§181–2, pp. 2–257.

hand in these sections is whether metaphysics can be considered a science, i.e. whether there is metaphysical *Erkenntnis*. Carnap admits that, in some broad senses of one or both of the terms in question, such metaphysical *Erkenntnis* is possible. But he nevertheless makes a unifying proposal (*Einigungsvertrag*): the term “metaphysics” ought to be used only narrowly, to refer to a discipline which lies outside the realm of empirical or formal science, and the term *Erkenntnis* ought to be used narrowly, such that there could be, in that narrow sense of “metaphysical,” no metaphysical *Erkenntnis*, because “[the supposed science] stands in no relation [*beziehung*] to any *Erkenntnis* within the demarcation [*Umgrenzung*] so far” (§181, p. 257). This proposal, Carnap maintains, is the only practically correct one, the only one that is *Zweckmäßig* — where the immediate *Zweck*, at least, is to show that there can be no science of a closed realm of being, logically isolated from all the others, and hence that Husserlian phenomenology cannot be such a science.

What, then, is the difference between Heidegger and Carnap on this issue? One difference is often taken to be that Heidegger is interested in natural language, hence in the methods for dealing with terminology within natural language, whereas Carnap is interested in artificial languages. But this is incorrect — at least, if by “natural language” we mean any given current (*jeweilig*) everyday language as it is ordinarily (*zunächst und zumeist*) spoken. Both Heidegger and Carnap begin with natural language in that sense: in Heidegger, with the language of everydayness, of *das Man*,<sup>54</sup> in Carnap, with the expressions set in the *Aufbau* between little inverted P’s.<sup>55</sup> Both Heidegger and Carnap require this beginning in the customary and everyday, and both also require a successful rederivation of that beginning as, so to speak, a test of correctness. Thus, in Carnap, the expressions between K’s

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<sup>54</sup>See especially *Sein und Zeit*, §5, p. 16; §18, p. 87; §26, p. 119; introduction to 1.3B and beginning of §35, pp. 166–7.

<sup>55</sup>Carnap introduces the distinction between inverted-P and inverted-K expressions at §75, pp. 106–7; he explains that his initial discussion of the intended form of the constitutional system must take place “in the customary language about states of affairs” (*in der üblichen Sachverhaltssprache*), because to describe it in the constitutional system itself would involve him in a *circulus vitiosus* (as Heidegger would put it: this is the wrong way to enter the hermeneutic circle). Because of the autopsychological basis Carnap chooses, the customary language in question is, to begin with, psychological (hence the symbol “P”). The function of these P-expressions, he explains, is merely to point on towards certain familiar states of affairs: “auf gewisse bekannte Sachverhalte . . . *hinzuweisen*” (Carnap’s emphasis).

must end up with the same logical value as the expressions between P's (or, as he later understands Tarski: the expressions of the object language must exhibit their usefulness as replacements for the expressions of the metalanguage);<sup>56</sup> while, in Heidegger, the *uneigentlich* mode of discourse of *das Man* must be rederived, in the end, from an understanding of *eigentlich* temporality.<sup>57</sup> This shows what the new approach to fixing terminology, in both cases, will be like. The relation of old meaning to new (of psychological to phenomenological, so to speak) is, in both cases, not simply via a unity of analogy, but is rather itself an instance of *Hinweisung*. We begin with *uneigentlich* discourse and proceed to the *eigentlich*, which in turn must be displayed as an *Ausweisung*, rather than an *Abweisung*, of the former.

The treatment of natural language therefore points to a similarity between Heidegger and Carnap, rather than to a difference. The difference comes in, instead, in their conception of the *eigentlich* mode of discourse to which natural language, in the above sense, points on.

### 5.1 Heidegger: following reference back to its end

Heidegger, for his part, begins by agreeing with Husserl that a fully univocal mode of discourse requires an understanding which is not merely “formal” in the sense of: merely *structural*, but which, rather, is also material or contentful (*sachhaltig*). The position that can be attributed to Heidegger in these terms is not exactly Husserl's, insofar as Heidegger criticizes, among all the rest, Husserl's use of these terms (“discourse,” “understanding,” etc.), as well. But the distance is not as great as one might think. In particular, Heidegger continues to understand the difference between the formal and the contentful in terms of *sense*.

For Husserl, as we have seen, the role of sense here has to do, first, with the primacy of intuitive, as opposed to signitive, intention, and then, within the realm of the intuitive, with the primary role of sensible, as opposed to categorial, intuition. Heidegger is critical of the idea that intuition (*Anschauung*), understood as a simple staring (*Schau*) without understanding, is the

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<sup>56</sup>The requirement is stated at *Aufbau* §17, p. 22, before the introduction either of the P- and K-symbols in §75 or of the distinction between logical and cognitive value in §§50–51, pp. 51–69. But these later sections are intended to give more precision to the “test” (*Prüfung*) of the system described in §17.

<sup>57</sup>See *Sein und Zeit*, §66, pp. 331–2; §68d, p. 349, and, especially, §79, p. 406: “Das In-der-Welt-sein hat sich schon immer ausgesprochen.”



primary way of intending an object. “Intuition” of that kind is, according to him, a derivative and defective mode of that “sight” which is itself already a mode of understanding.<sup>58</sup> But Heidegger retains the distinction between, on the one hand, a proper (*eigentlich*) mode of understanding, which involves a proper mode of *sight*, and, on the other hand, an improper mode of understanding, which involves only an improper mode of sight. The latter, improper mode of sight Heidegger calls “curiosity” (*Neugier*).<sup>59</sup> And he retains the diagnosis that this lack of proper sight is always accompanied by *equivocality*. Indeed, he explains the necessity of this connection more clearly than Husserl does. Because improper sight, curiosity, is essentially a guessing-at and feeling-traces-of, it can maintain itself as a mode of sight only through an equivocality of understanding that ensures the guessed-at and felt will never show itself:

Supposing, namely, that, what *one* guesses at and feels the trace of [*das, was man ahnte und spürte*] is one day actually implemented [*umgesetzt*] in fact, then precisely equivocality has already taken care that the interest in the realized thing dies away. For this interest persists in the mode of curiosity and chatter only so long as the possibility of non-binding only-guessing-along-with is given. (§37, pp. 173–4)

That is: equivocality is not simply an unfortunate possible side effect of improper understanding, but rather is essential to the very possibility of improper understanding as a mode opposed to, and hence distinct from, the proper. Improper understanding doesn’t simply *lack* proper fulfillment, but rather actively *resists* it, by means of equivocality.

The improper nature of improper understanding and sight, moreover, is still connected, in Heidegger as in Husserl, to the lack of proper sense. To understand Heidegger’s view on this point, we need to first remember what for Husserl is simply another annoying equivocality, one which, “disturbing as it occasionally is, can hardly now be avoided,” namely that between “sense” as in “the five senses” or “the sense of sight,” on the one hand, with “sense” as in

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<sup>58</sup>See *Sein und Zeit* §31, p. 146, where “sight” (*Sicht*) is defined as “Understanding in its character of projection [*Entwurfcharakter*]”; on the following page, Heidegger goes on to say: “Insofar as it is shown how all sight is primarily grounded in understanding . . . the precedence [*Vorrang*] which corresponds, noetically, to the traditional ontological precedence of the *Vorhandenen* is taken away. ‘Intuition’ and ‘thought’ are both already distant derivatives of understanding.”

<sup>59</sup>See *Sein und Zeit* §36, p. 170.

“the sense of this expression,” on the other.<sup>60</sup> For Heidegger, in contrast, the equivocation is to be “avoided,” or rather eliminated, by tracing both uses of *Sinn* back to one root. The term “sensibility,” in terms of which Husserl, and, *mutatis mutandis*, also Heidegger, want to say that “a thinking without a founding sensibility is a countersense,”<sup>61</sup> denotes, “over against the proper concept of the categorial, i.e. the formal, objectively empty, all material contentfulness [*materielle Sachhaltigkeit*], as it is fore-given [*vorgegeben*]” (95–6), so that the requirement of founding sensibility really means: “every objective explication [*Explikation*] is not a free-floating [*freischwebende*] one, but rather one of what is fore-given” (94). But “sense” as, so to speak, the faculty — strictly speaking, the existential — of *Dasein* which makes explication possible, that which “necessarily belongs to that which understanding explication [*Auslegung*] articulates,” is just “the upon-which of projection, structured by fore-having, foresight, and fore-conception, out from which something is understandable as something”<sup>62</sup> — that is, the faculty of sense, by which the fore-given is encountered prior to its objective explication.<sup>63</sup> Improper understanding, with its improper sight, is understanding whose explication is free-floating, i.e. which lacks sense, the fore-having of the fore-given. The two senses of “sense” coincide: it is precisely when *Dasein* does not sense, i.e. does not see, that its understanding lacks sense, becomes nonsensical (*sinnlos*).

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<sup>60</sup> *Ideen* I, §85, p. 173/Hua 3.1:193,24–6.

<sup>61</sup> *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, Gesamtausgabe [henceforth GA] 20, ed. P. Jaeger, 3d ed. (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1994), p. 94 (from lectures Heidegger gave in Marburg in the summer of 1925).

<sup>62</sup> *Sein und Zeit* §32, p. 151.

<sup>63</sup> It is not correct, from Heidegger’s point of view, to call sense a “faculty” because understanding, precisely insofar as it is “never free-floating, but always situated [*befindlich*]” (*Sein und Zeit* §68a, p. 339), i.e. insofar as it always, properly speaking, includes sense, is more fundamental than any faculty (*Vermögen*): it is the being of *Dasein*’s possibility (*Möglichkeit*) per se. “Possibility as existential does not signify free-floating ability-to-be [*Seinkönnen*]. . . . *Dasein*, as essentially situated, is always already involved [*hineingeraten*] in determinate possibilities. . . . *Dasein* is the possibility of being-free for its ownmost ability-to-be. . . . Understanding [*Verstehen*] is the being of such ability-to-be” (§31, p. 144). This is indicative of the many subtleties a full discussion of Heidegger on sensibility would need to take into account. My own intention here is not, and obviously could not be, to trace out all of Heidegger’s terminological reductions (which would amount to reproducing his whole system); it is sufficient for present purposes to point out areas where there is enough deliberate terminological continuity with Husserl to make Heidegger’s response visible.

Heidegger includes his own phenomenological philosophy when he says that the famous maxim of phenomenology, “zu den Sachen selbst,” means precisely that we are to avoid all such improper understanding: the maxim stands “against all free-floating constructions, contingent discoveries [*Funden*], against the taking-over of concepts which are only seemingly demonstrated [*ausgewiesenen*], against the pseudoproblems [*Scheinprobleme*] that often spread themselves through generations as ‘problems.’”<sup>64</sup> In contrast to this, he characterizes non-phenomenological philosophy, meaning primarily neo-Kantianism (which he correctly identifies as a form of Hegelianism), as involving improper understanding, free-floating explication. Characteristic of Rickert, for example, is that, “despite all his acuteness [*Scharfsinn*], the most primitive requirement is lacking: the taking up of the facts [*Tatbestände*] as they are given. Thus the thinking becomes ungrounded [*bodenlos*].”<sup>65</sup> In fact, because this type of Hegelian, metaphysical philosophy is absolutely free-floating and empty — because it is characterized by a “fundamental being-everywhere and -nowhere” of cognition, a being-everywhere and -nowhere which is “wholly exceptional” in that it is not such as “simply hankers after a fore-given object realm” — its characteristic sight is absolutely improper: “this being-everywhere and -nowhere of philosophical cognition is not curiosity simply drawn out, but free-standing, *absolute curiosity* in a wider sense, which brings itself into its own possibility, which *leads itself*.”<sup>66</sup> This absolute curiosity is easily recognized as an absolute form of the actively improper understanding we discussed above, which preserves itself through equivocality.

Recall that, for Husserl, proper understanding must not, at bottom, be merely categorial because that would always leave it equivocal: categorial intuition is merely the intuition of a possible syntactic structure, a possible relatedness of something in general to something else to something else and so forth; only in simple, sensible intuition is the nature of the relata

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<sup>64</sup>*Sein und Zeit* §7, pp. 27–8. The allusion here is probably to the subtitle of Rickert’s *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis: Ein Beitrag zum Problem der philosophischen Transzendenz* (Freiburg: Mohr/Siebeck, 1892), although Heidegger may have in mind also the central role of the term *Problem*, as a proposed better translation of *objectum*, in Natorp’s thought: see especially *Die logischen Grundlagen der exakten Wissenschaften* (Teuber: Leipzig and Berlin, 1910), 18, 32–3.

<sup>65</sup>*Zeitbegriff*, GA 20:42.

<sup>66</sup>*Ontologie (Hermeneutik der Faktizität)*, ed. K. Bröcker-Oltmanns, GA 63, 2d ed. (Frankfurt: Kostermann, 1995), p. 62 (from lectures Heidegger gave in Freiburg in the summer of 1923).

themselves, the simple objects, the ultimate terms, ever given. Heidegger turns this around into the following diagnosis: contemporary philosophy, he says, is system-building, focused on relation as opposed to *relatum*, identifies cognition with finding everything its place within an ordered context (an *Ordnungszusammenhang*), precisely because its absolute curiosity *requires* absolute equivocality. That “something is concretely cognized when it is determined, *wherein* it belongs, its place in the total order” means that “something is seen as determinate, when it is put away [*weggestellt*]” (60–61).

Here again the main target is, first of all, the neo-Kantians, and, secondly, Hegel, insofar as the neo-Kantians are seen as neo-Hegelians. But Heidegger also maintains, and this is the crucial point for our purposes, that Husserl has not entirely succeeded in breaking free from this contemporary tendency. Phenomenology as developed by Husserl has adopted “from the Marburg school, epistemological question-framing [*Fragestellung*] (characteristic of both is the return to Descartes),” and “transcendental idealism thus enters into phenomenology” (73). One then proceeds to debate the merits of this idealism as against traditional realism:

These oppositions come to guide scientific discussion within the phenomenological movement. One does not ask, radically, whether every epistemological question is not senseless [*sinnlos*] in phenomenology. (ibid.)<sup>67</sup>

In particular, Husserl’s transcendental idealism involves the determination of the field of study, the region of pure consciousness, as a region of absolute being, as opposed to the merely relative being of anything transcendent to consciousness, on the grounds that “there is in principle the possibility, that through an ‘annihilation of the thing-world’ consciousness itself would ‘not be touched in its own existence’ — a consideration that, as is well known, Descartes already employed.”<sup>68</sup> This Cartesian–Hegelian–neo-Kantian<sup>69</sup> determination of the field of phenomenology as consciousness qua realm of absolute being is supposed to show definitively that every transcendent reality is “totally different, in its mode of being [*Seinsart*] from the mode of being

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<sup>67</sup>The latter of course is Heidegger’s opinion: see his discussion of Rickert’s so-called problem of transcendence at *Sein und Zeit* §13, pp. 60–61. Carnap takes the same position in the *Aufbau* (§178, pp. 249–51).

<sup>68</sup>*Zeitbegriff*, GA 20:144.

<sup>69</sup>Note I do not at all mean to endorse Heidegger’s interpretation of Descartes, of Hegel, or of the neo-Kantians. But I believe that Husserl and Carnap would.

of an *Erlebnis*,”<sup>70</sup> and hence to mark what Husserl calls “the difference in principle of modes of being [*Seinsweisen*], the most cardinal [such difference] which there is at all, that between *consciousness* and *reality*.”<sup>71</sup> But, as the preceding discussion would lead us to expect, it is a determination not fit to fulfill that function, because, as merely formal, it can yield only an indirect, relative characterization of the being-character of consciousness:

Consciousness in the signification of the absolute means: the priority [*Vorrang*] of subjectivity over all objectivity. This . . . determination — absolute being — is again [like the others Heidegger has previously discussed] not one that determines the being in its Being, but rather one that takes the region of consciousness within the order of constitution and assigns to it within that order a formal being-prior to [*Frühersein vor*] every objective [region]. This determination and taking of consciousness is at the same time the place where idealism and idealistic question-framing, more precisely idealism in the sense of neo-Kantianism, breaks into phenomenology.<sup>72</sup>

So, according to Heidegger, Husserl fails to arrive at any univocal terminology for his field of study in exactly the way we might predict based, especially, on section 4.3 above. The phenomenological maxim, if it were to generate the subject field of an absolute rigorous science, would have to yield an absolute characterization of that field with respect to its mode of being. But in fact all that can be arrived at, on Husserl’s own principles, is a formal, structural characterization. Thus we arrive, instead, at absolute equivocality and impropriety of understanding, or in other words at a metaphysical system which is absolutely *sinnlos*.

But, as we have seen, Heidegger thinks that the error here has arisen due to contamination from traditional, non-phenomenological philosophy. The choice of pure consciousness as the field of study is driven, in the first place, by the demand for an absolute science, rather than vice versa: in the “Rigorous Science” essay, where the transition to transcendental idealism begins, “what is asked after is *not* the specific being of consciousness, of the *Erlebnisse*, but rather its *exceptional being-an-object for an objective science of*

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<sup>70</sup> *Zeitbegriff*, GA 20:137–8 .

<sup>71</sup> *Ideen I*, §42, p. 77/Hua 3.1:87,29–88,2.

<sup>72</sup> *Zeitbegriff*, GA 20:145.

*consciousness*” (165). What takes place there is a return, not to the things themselves, but rather to “a traditional idea of philosophy,” that is, “the idea, *that consciousness is to be the region of an absolute science, ...* [an idea] which has busied *modern* philosophy since Descartes” (147). Not the maxim of phenomenology, but the incomplete application of it, is to blame for the outcome. To remove the equivocation then requires a deeper and purer application of the maxim, which is what Heidegger attempts.

The outlines of this attempt are as follows. The problem is understood to be that the definition of phenomenology according to its maxim, which is also the true fundamental sense of the *word* “phenomenology,” is simply “to let what shows [*zeigt*] itself be seen just as it shows itself from out of itself,”<sup>73</sup> which is to begin with merely formal: it seems to say nothing about *what* it is that shows itself. Hence “the title phenomenology is essentially distinct from the other titles for sciences ... in that it says *nothing about the contentfulness* [*Sachhaltigkeit*] of the thematic object of this science, but only about ... the *how*, the mode [*Weise*] in which something is thematic and is to be thematic in this research.”<sup>74</sup> If phenomenology is to be more than an empty title, then, the definition must somehow be “deformalized” (*entformalisiert*).<sup>75</sup> But, as we have shown, it cannot be deformalized by specifying a special region of being whose contents show themselves in an absolute way, because the mode of being in question could not be explicated, and because there would be no other way to specify such a region. So the question is: how *can* the deformalization be done?

Heidegger’s aforementioned analysis of *λόγος* is aimed at explaining how this deformalization is unlike, and yet related to, deformalization as it occurs in other sciences. When it comes to particular beings, explication always involves showing them in their structural *relation* to one another; the *λεγόμενον*

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<sup>73</sup>*Sein und Zeit* §7c, p. 34; cf. the formulations in *Zeitbegriff*: “to let that which is per se revealed [*das an ihm selbst Offenbare*] be seen from itself” (GA 20:117); and in *Ontologie*: “to discuss something, as it shows [*zeigt*] itself and only insofar as it shows itself” (GA 63:71), i.e., “the *how* [*Wie*] of research that intuitively presentifies its objects and discusses them only insofar as they are intuitable [*anschaulich*]” (GA 63:72). In the last passage, “intuition” is used in the sense defined at *Zeitbegriff*, GA 20:64: “The expression ‘intuition’ corresponds in its significance to that which above was already determined as ‘seeing.’ *Intuition* means: simple grasping of the bodily [*leibhaftig*] fore-found itself, just as it shows [*zeigt*] itself.” Heidegger can continue to give priority to “intuition” in this sense even while rejecting the priority of “intuition” qua simple staring.

<sup>74</sup>*Zeitbegriff*, GA 20:117.

<sup>75</sup>*Sein und Zeit* §7c, p. 35; cf. Husserl, *Ideen* I, §13, p. 26/Hua 3.1:31,32.

is always the being which is to be made visible in such a relation. Hence  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  comes to mean “relation” (*Beziehung*), and the whole of the possible structures of relation, the possible analogies, becomes, as the subject matter of formal “logic,” the framework of all possible sciences of beings.<sup>76</sup> The deformation always means: specifying the precise science of beings in question by specifying the mode of being of the *relata* in its regional subject matter. But while this is not wrong, it involves a highly derivative sense of  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  — a sense which, in turn, can be explicated only in terms of more primary senses.  $\Lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  as relation can be traced back (reduced) to  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  as the articulation of that which is already *seen* as articulated, that is, of the beings whose mode of being is *Zuhandenheit*, readiness-to-hand, and whose very nature is *Verweisung*, reference away from themselves and on to something else.<sup>77</sup> Hence although it is true that that region of being — the one we primarily and for the most part encounter — is analogous in its structure to every other, to regard its *Verweisung*-structure as a special case of logical structure in general is to put the cart before the horse, phenomenologically speaking:

Every reference [*Verweisung*] is a relation [*Beziehung*], but not every relation is a reference. Thereby the formal-universal character of relation comes to light. . . . In the end it must even be shown, that “relation” itself, *because* of its formal-universal character, has its ontological origin in a reference.<sup>78</sup>

What we should be looking for, then, is not an absolute science, a science of beings the being of whose objects is *absolute* — i.e., not *relative* — but rather for, so to speak, the end of reference.

Since, however, *Zuhandenheit* is a mode of being essentially characterized by reference, the *end* of reference no longer has that mode of being. If we call the structure of *Zuhandenheit* as a whole, as delineated by reference, “involvement” (*Bewandtnis*), then:

The totality of involvement [*Bewandtnisganzheit*] itself . . . ultimately goes back to a for-which, with which there is *not* any

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<sup>76</sup>See *Sein und Zeit* §7B, p. 34; §33, p. 159.

<sup>77</sup>See *Sein und Zeit* §32, p. 149.

<sup>78</sup>*Sein und Zeit* §17, p. 77. In many contexts *Beziehung* itself is properly translated as “reference,” and I have sometimes translated it that way above. But Heidegger’s contrast between *Beziehung* and *Verweisung* (which, incidentally, is by far the less common term) requires that “reference” be reserved for the latter.

longer an involvement [*bei dem es keine Bewandtnis mehr hat*], which is itself not a being in the mode of being of the ready-to-hand within a world, but rather a being, whose Being is determined as Being-in-the-world. . . . This primary “for-which” is a “for-the-sake-of-which.” But “for-the-sake-of [*Um-willen*]” always pertains to the Being of *Dasein*, for which, in its Being, there is always essentially an issue *about* this Being itself [*dem es in seinem Sein wesentlich um dieses Sein selbst geht*]. (§18, p. 84)

In this way, *every* merely formal structure reduces, via its foundation in the involvement-structure of reference, back to *Dasein*, which is to say, back to the being which is primarily and for the most part pre-ontological, which has primarily and for the most part a fore-understanding of Being, but for which Being is always, primarily and for the most part, *not* explicit. And this explains why the definition of phenomenology cannot and need not deformalize itself by specifying some particular content, of the many possible ones, which can be taken up in the formal structure of the fore-found which is to be explicated (the *φαινόμενον* which is to become *λεγόμενον*). The very possibility of the formal in that sense — the equivocal relation-structure which can take on any of many possible contents — can be explicitly understood only in terms of the one fundamental at-first-unexplicated fore-foundness, that of Being itself:

What is, according to its essence, *necessarily* the theme of an *explicit* demonstration [*Aufweisung*]? Obviously that which, primarily and for the most part, precisely does *not* show itself. . . . That which, however, remains in an exceptional sense *hidden*, or which falls back again into *concealment* or which shows [*zeigt*] itself only “*in disguise*,” is not this or that being, but rather, as the preceding considerations have shown, the *Being* of beings. (§7C, p. 35)

Phenomenology has no region of absolute or relative beings to call its own because it is no science of beings at all, but rather the science of Being as such, fundamental ontology.

If we were to pick up the above clue and pull hard enough on it, more or less all of *Sein und Zeit* would come out. But here instead let me step back and draw the relevant contrast with Husserl. As a structure of reference, the region of *Zuhandenheit* resembles its analog in Husserl, the *Ding*-world as



lowest stratum of nature, i.e. as what we primarily encounter. The unity of nature, for Husserl, is a unity of reference:

Because, however, *causal dependency* of this temporally extended [*zeitweilig*] alteration also belongs to the sense of experience [*Erfahrungssinn*], it is a priori given that no perceptual judgment, no immediate truth of experience, which merely analyzes [*auseinanderlegt*] what currently is originarily demonstrated [*sich . . . ausweist*] as a *dinglich* being and has its grounding in this immediate experiential evidence, is irrelative [*irrelativ*], or, what is the same, that each refers [*verweist*] us to an infinity (endlessness) of unexperienced, but experientiable causalities.<sup>79</sup>

The important difference is that, for Husserl, the infinite reference structure of nature is incapable ever of referring us back to the realm of pure consciousness, the absolute realm compared to which the whole structure is merely relative. This *endlessness* of Husserlian nature is equivalent to the problem we noted above, namely that consciousness in the natural attitude can never be given any motive to perform the reduction. But it is also the very structure of endlessly *uneigentlich* sight that characterizes what Heidegger calls “absolute curiosity.” As Heidegger understands this, then, the

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<sup>79</sup>Hua 39, text no. 64 (Sept. 1926), 715,7–14. Since Husserl received the manuscript of *Sein und Zeit* in April of 1926, this piece could conceivably show some of Heidegger’s influence. But see the very similar passage, also using the term *verweisen*, at *Einleitung*, Hua 35:13,37–14,4 (i.e., dating to 1922/23).

*Verweisen* and its derivatives are not very common terms with Husserl, at least not in the earlier part of his career, but he does use them in two technical senses consistently throughout a long period. The usage in this quotation is a special case of the general fact that the sense of thing-perception “refers,” in every aspect, to infinite concatenations of possible fulfillment, that is, possible completion of what is *eigentlich* given only in part: see, e.g., *Ideen I*, §44, pp. 80–81/Hua 3.1:92,3–11; *Erste Philosophie 2*, Hua 8:147,38–148,4; *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, Hua 1, ed. S. Strasser, 2d ed. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1963), §19, p. 46. The other use of *verweisen* is in the context of genetic phenomenology, where a present sense is said to “refer” or “refer back” (*zurückverweisen*) to its origin. See, e.g., *Erste Philosophie 2*, Hua 8:74,8–12; *Lebenswelt*, Hua 39, text no. 4 (1928), 30,27–9, 34,2–4; *Cartesianische Meditationen* §38, Hua 1:82. Here I focus on the first of these two usages, but it should be obvious that a complete comparison between Husserl and Heidegger would also refer essentially to the second. See especially Husserl’s late remark at *Lebenswelt*, Hua 39, text no. 45 (Apr., 1936?), 527,16–18: “Gegenüber dieser eigentlichen Rechtfertigung haben wir die uneigentliche — die Berufung auf das Man, d.i. den Verweis darauf, dass alle [es] so tun und es immer so getan wurde etc.”

endless reference-structure of Husserl’s primary transcendent region, and the consequent unteachability of Husserl’s phenomenology, are direct results of the way improper understanding, as curiosity, actively resists its own end. Husserl’s reduction, which purports to be a turn towards absolutely univocal and properly given content, is really a looking-away-, or, literally, seeing-away-from (*Absehen-von*) the true end, the *Um-willen*, of reference, into absolute impropriety and equivocality.<sup>80</sup>

Not that Heidegger would attribute this to Husserl’s personal failing, however. The very essence of the primary region, *Zuhandenheit*, is to point away from itself and a fortiori from its end. It is just this at-first-never-appearing that marks out the essential *Um* of Dasein, the “Um-dieses-Sein-selbst,” as the phenomenon par excellence, the subject of phenomenology. To overcome it, we need only, so to speak, reverse the sense of reference: in everydayness, the primary mode in which the ready-to-hand is given, the beings encountered refer us *away* from finitude (i.e., endedness) and proper understanding, into endlessness and equivocality.<sup>81</sup> This applies especially to the ready-to-hand entity most directly connected to *λόγος* or “discourse” (*Rede*) in its primary sense, the letting-be-seen which is constitutive of phenomenology:

The spoken-outness [*Hinausgesprochenheit*] of discourse is language. This totality of words, qua in which discourse has a “worldly” Being of its own, is fore-found as an innerworldly being like [something] ready-to-hand.<sup>82</sup>

A word in its everyday sense, like any piece of ready-to-hand equipment, points us away from itself into an infinite context of reference, and in taking that direction we have already accepted, implicitly, that to successfully disambiguate the word would be *both* to follow faithfully that existing sense *and*

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<sup>80</sup>For the reduction as *Absehen-von*, see *Zeitbegriff*, GA 20:150.

<sup>81</sup>That Heidegger’s method in *Sein und Zeit* can be described as reduction of an improper infinite totality to a proper finite one suggests that his allusion to the foundation crisis in mathematics may be less casual than it appears. Cf., in a text (one of the many texts) in which Husserl in effect responds to Heidegger on these issues (inter alia he discusses “world,” “circumspection,” “curiosity,” and “logic”): “Endlessness brings its paradoxes with it, as soon as we let it conclude and become a totality” (*Lebenswelt*, Hua 39, text no. 9 [1932?], 70,18–20). Neither Husserl nor Heidegger likely are thinking of any particular mathematical solution to the set-theoretic paradoxes, on a par with Russell’s theory of types or the Zermelo-Fraenkel axiomatization, but the problem may nevertheless be on their minds in at least some of its mathematical detail.

<sup>82</sup>*Sein und Zeit* §34, p. 161.

to adopt the word freely for our own technical use. It is this implicit tension which erupts into explicit contradiction when combined with the idea of an absolute science, that is, a science which in its *Ursprung* would not need to following any existing *Verweisung*.

To resolve the contradiction, then, we need to recognize that the fundamental science — or fundamental  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , at any rate — is not of that nature, and is not to be attained by that method. Rather than a seeing-away-from the terminology that we at first encounter, we need a seeing-back-at it, away from the endless, improper reference into which it primarily leads, back towards, first, a proper sight of its own finite being, which is an essential character (an existential) of Dasein, and then, secondly, towards the one end of reference which it always already has: *the* subject matter which we have always failed to discuss until now, the sense of Being as such. If we do this correctly, then the existing sense of philosophical signs (*Wortlaute*), as seen in their “historical associations,” will be revealed as anything but arbitrary: since public history is the history of flight from the end of sense, the history of terminology in the language of philosophy (that is, in German, or in Greek) is the history of covering up its proper subject matter. The key to using this terminology truly, that is, univocally, is to trace it back through this history (in a process of “destruction”) to its *Ursprung* (which is now no longer understood as an *Urstiftung*).

## 5.2 Carnap: referring our language forward to its end

It will be somewhat easier to explain Carnap’s response to this same set of problems, which he also inherits from Husserl. It would be worthwhile, and quite relevant to our present concerns, to say exactly why that is so. The temptation is to attribute the difference either to a lack of clarity on Heidegger’s part or to a lack of philosophical depth on Carnap’s. But these concepts of clarity and depth themselves belong to the circle of problems about philosophical and ordinary language which are at issue here, and the words “clarity” and “depth,” moreover, are equivocal in various difficult and relevant ways. It is certain, at least, that both Heidegger and Carnap are after a kind of clarity or transparency in philosophical language, and that both aim thereby to reveal and reconnect to the deep fundament in which the whole built-up superstructure of language ought to be anchored (in contrast to the later Wittgenstein, for example, who disavows both heights and depths in favor of simply clearing the ground of rubble). And it is equally certain that

both reject a kind of false philosophical depth. “If we ask after the sense of Being,” Heidegger writes, “the investigation is not profound [*tiefsinnig*] and does not ponder around digging up something [*ergrübelt nichts*] which stands behind Being, but only asks after [Being] itself, insofar as it stands within the intelligibility [*Verständlichkeit*] of Dasein.”<sup>83</sup> I suspect the difference here arises rather from the very topic we are discussing, namely the different respective approaches which Heidegger and Carnap take towards fixing their own terminology. Roughly speaking: Heidegger’s approach reacts back, in a way that Carnap’s does not, on what Carnap later on calls the *metalanguage*, and this makes it very difficult to attain a position outside of Heidegger’s own thought from which to compare it with Husserl.

Be that as it may: with Carnap, too, we can start with the contrast between the formal, that is, structural, and the contentful, the *sachhaltig*. Whereas Heidegger picks the horn of the dilemma according to which all univocal communication must be more than merely formal, Carnap picks the other horn, according to which only the formal is truly communicable. This position gets its start already in Carnap’s earliest work, *Der Raum*: an important fact since, at that time, he still makes the point with explicit reference to Husserl. The space of intuition (*Anschauungsraum*), Carnap maintains there, “is an order-system [*Ordnungsgefüge*], the formal species of which we can indeed define conceptually, but, as in the case of everything intuitive [*bei allem Anschauungsmäßigen*], not its particular quality [*Sosein*]<sup>84</sup> — where a *formal* structure is understood to mean, as in Husserl, “an order-system . . . of relations, not between determinate objects of a sensible or non-sensible realm, but rather between wholly indeterminate relation-members.”<sup>85</sup> The “particular quality,” on the other hand, is known by Husserlian material-*eidetic* insight:

As Husserl has shown, we have to do here, not at all with facts in the sense of empirical actuality, but rather with the essence (‘*eidōs*’) of certain givennesses, which can already be grasped in their particular quality by being given once. (§II, p. 22)

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<sup>83</sup>*Sein und Zeit* §32, p. 152. Note this is one place where the convention of translation *Sein* as “Being,” with a capital B, is particularly misleading: the word is perfectly ordinary and, of course, no more capitalized than any other German noun.

<sup>84</sup>“Der Raum” §II, p. 22. For further discussion of the terminology Carnap uses here (in particular, with respect to the Drieschian origin of some of it) see my [reference to my own work deleted for blind refereeing].

<sup>85</sup>“Der Raum” Introduction, p. 5.

And Carnap recognizes that the impossibility of “conceptually defining” the particular quality of the structural members we intend, as opposed to the formal structure of which they are members, is going to cause problems with communication:

Because of the aforementioned impossibility, here in the realm of intuition, of conceptually defining the signification of the fundamental concepts, as much the elements [*Grundgebilde*] (points, lines, angles, etc.) as, too, their relations [*Beziehungen*] (incidence, intersection, congruence), they can only be made intelligible [*verständlich*] by indication [*Hinweis*] of some intuitive characteristics [*Merkmale*] (§II, p. 24).<sup>86</sup>

At this stage, however, where he is not dealing with any claim to absolute science, Carnap correctly doesn’t consider the problem in question to be insurmountable.

Things come to a head only in the *Aufbau*, where Carnap aims to achieve, with his “constitution theory,” the goal set by Kant and Husserl: to set philosophy itself, as a whole, on “the way of science (in the rigorous sense).”<sup>87</sup> In that fundamental context, Carnap encounters the problem in its full blown nature, and his response is radical. The meaning of every fully objective statement, Carnap claims, can only be that of a “structural description,” where a structural description is one containing only “formal properties” of a relation, that is, “those which allow of formulation without reference to the contentful sense [*inhaltlichen Sinn*] of the relation and to the species of objects between which it holds” (§11, p. 13). Hence structural description in this sense is “the highest stage of formalization and dematerialization [*Formalisierung und Entmaterialisierung*]” (§12, p. 15). For reasons we have examined in detail above, it follows directly from this that our statements must never describe more than one material region of being:

It emerges from the above investigations . . . that every object-name which occurs in a scientific statement [*Aussage*], can in principle . . . be replaced with a structural characterization [*Kennzeichnung*] of the object, together with the indication [*Angabe*] of

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<sup>86</sup>In the context of projective geometry, the term *Grundgebild* is (now?) used to mean “primitive form,” but Carnap is clearly talking here about what we would call “elements.” Cf. the use of the term *Grundelemente* to describe the members of the basis class in the *Aufbau* (§61, p. 83).

<sup>87</sup>*Aufbau*, Preface, p. xiii.

the object realm to which the characterization relates. . . . Hence every scientific statement can be transformed into a statement which includes only structural properties and the indication of one or more object realms. Now a fundamental thesis of constitution theory states . . . that there is at bottom [*im Grunde*] only one object realm, with the objects of which every scientific statement has to do. We thus . . . obtain the result, that *every scientific statement can in principle be so transformed, that it is only [nur noch] a structure statement*. This transformation, however, is not only possible, but required. For science wants to speak of that which is objective [*vom Objektiven*]; but everything which belongs, not to structure, but rather to what is material [*zum Materialen*], everything which is concretely demonstrated [*aufgewiesen*], is ultimately subjective. (§16, p. 20)

The thesis of logical empiricism, that every empirically meaningful description must be a description in the terms of formal logic, is thus bound up with the thesis of the unity of science: that “the objects do not disintegrate [*zerfallen nicht*] into different, unconnected realms, but rather *there is only one realm of objects and therefore only one science*” (§4, p. 4).

I mentioned above that Carnap might as well have written “this is my task” next to Husserl’s demand that the *Ding* be logically determinable, rather than, as he did, next to passage from Russell which serves as epigraph to the *Aufbau*. It should now be clear how that task sets up the whole structure of constitution theory. It requires showing reducibility: all objects must be logical derivatives of (must be, in the terminology of the *Aufbau*, “quasi-objects” relative to) a single common domain. But the domain in question is not a realm of absolute fore-giveness which forms the special object of philosophy. Even in an “epistemically” (*erkenntnismäßig*) ordered system like the one in the *Aufbau*, in which the common fundamental domain is supposed to consist of “the given” (§64, p. 86), the “epistemically primary” (§54, p. 74), we still begin, qua *philosophers*, by treating that domain as the purely formal region of the empty something. From a technical point of view, this is supposed to be made possible by the technique of “quasi-analysis,” which provides a “formal substitute” (*formale Ersatz*) for internal, qualitative description — provides, that is, a way of attaching properties to such initially empty objects, based only on a structural description of the relations in which they stand to one another (§69, pp. 94–5). More

importantly, this empty beginning is made possible by the fact that the “logically perfect” state of complete disambiguation is placed, not in the past, but in the future.

In his claim that every scientific statement can *in principle* be transformed into a structure description, Carnap glosses “in principle”: “i.e., when the required findings are at hand” (*d.h., wenn die erforderlichen Kenntnisse vorliegen*) (§16, p. 20). It is important to understand how deep this qualification goes. Positive science, not philosophy, is responsible for gathering the “material” which will make a complete constitutional system possible. The selection of correct constitutional definitions — in other words, the establishment of the true epistemic order — awaits the results of empirical science.<sup>88</sup> This extends even to the choice of epistemically primary basis.<sup>89</sup> Neither the realm of what is primarily given, nor any other realm of objects, belongs specifically to philosophy as such. Carnap agrees with Heidegger, then, that philosophy is unique in having only a methodological definition, rather than one in terms of subject matter:

What still remains over at all for *philosophy*, if all sentences which *mean* [*besagen*] anything are of an *empirical* nature and belong to positive science [*Realwissenschaft*]? What remains are no sentences, no theory, no system, but only *a method*, namely the [method] of logical analysis.<sup>90</sup>

But he disagrees as to what the method is. What philosophy will do with the accumulated material of positive science is, according to Carnap, just to assign it its place in a formal structure — that is, precisely what Heidegger calls “putting it away.” Of the survey of empirical object-types in Part II of the *Aufbau*, Carnap says:

Hereby we will obtain, in a certain sense, an overview of the material [*Material*] which is to serve for the construction [*Bau*] of the constitutional system, and there thus results, as task of

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<sup>88</sup>See *Aufbau* §156, p. 209 (“diese [Unzulänglichkeit] beruht weniger auf den Schwierigkeiten, die einige noch ungelöste logische Probleme bieten, als auf den Schwierigkeiten und Ungeklärtheiten der empirischen Erkenntnisse der einzelnen Realwissenschaften”) and, more explicitly, §179, p. 253.

<sup>89</sup>See Carnap’s citation of empirical psychologists in this regard, *Aufbau* §67, pp. 92–3.

<sup>90</sup>“Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache,” *Erkenntnis* 2 (1931): 237.

this system according to its material side, the demand to assign [zuzuweisen] a place within the system to all this demonstrated [aufgewiesenen] material.<sup>91</sup>

What then is supposed to distinguish between this approach and the “free-floating,” Hegelian philosophy from above, with its unfounded concepts and its resulting pseudoproblems, which Carnap, of course, joins Husserl and Heidegger in rejecting?

To understand Carnap’s response, we need to notice that he gives a slightly different account, compared to Heidegger, of the tendency which leads to the asking and answering of pseudo-questions. The terms are almost the same but the direction is reversed. Whereas for Heidegger the basic tendency is absolute curiosity, which always flees forward *into* endlessness, away from an end which is really behind it, for Carnap the tendency is a kind of absolute despair, a kind of shrinking *back* from what the situation really demands of us. In a metaphysical pseudoproblem, we put forward as a theoretical question what is really a decision we need to make, and therefore, given that decisions are ultimately responsible to duty, a task we need to accomplish:

*The “riddles of life” are not questions, but situations [Situationen] of practical life. The “riddle of death” consists in shock [Erschütterung] at the death of a fellow human being, or in Angst before one’s own death. It has nothing to do with the questions which can be posed about death. . . . The riddle consists rather in the task of “being done with [fertig zu werden]” the life-situation, to get over [verwinden] the shock, and perhaps even to make it fruitful for further life. (§183, pp. 260–61)*

Whereas for Heidegger, then, the remedy for impropriety is to heed the call of conscience which turns us back out of curiosity and towards the true end, what Carnap demands is that we overcome our despair in faith: “the faith that the future belongs to this attitude [Gesinnung]” (Preface, p. xvi). The task of philosophy, in this context, is not to turn us back toward, or to make explicit, primordial fore-giveness, but rather to prepare the formal means by which we can choose the language we will need for our tasks, and whose univocality will result, not from its responsibility to such fore-giveness, but

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<sup>91</sup> *Aufbau* §6, p. 7.



from its correctly chosen conventionality: that is, from its responsibility to our ultimate end. And this means, finally, that what philosophical terminology needs in the way of fixed sense is not truth (correspondence to what the object essentially demands), but merely correctness, *Richtigkeit*, which in turn comes down to convenience, suitability for our (absolute) end, our finitude: *Zweckmäßigkeit*.