

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

Abraham D. Stone

June 6, 2010

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, suggest why 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 suggest 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.

This paper, despite its title, will be devoted mostly to setting up the problem in Husserl. At the end I will then briefly describe Heidegger's and Carnap's contrasting solutions.

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. Its literal meaning is “end” or “limit,” and this brings us to the first ambiguity. 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 [*ὄρον*] [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*].¹

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 ambiguous 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.² 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 here is not that one is broader and the other narrower; rather, they

¹*An.Pr.* 1.1.24^b16–18.

²I 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*₁) I §12, 2:46/Husserliana (henceforth *Hua*) 19, ed. U. Panzer (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1984), pt. 1, p. 52,6–10.

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 20.³ 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 had “many discussions.”⁴ As for Heidegger, we can be sure he read it, because the manuscript bears a notation in his hand.⁵

³*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).

⁴Landgrebe 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.

⁵See U. Melle, Editor’s Introduction to *Hua* 20.1, xxvii n. 1.

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 supposed 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 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*).⁶

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),

⁶Not 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.

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*), “understanding” (*Verstand*), or “interpretation” (*Auffassung*).

To get back, then, to special case of “thinking without understanding”: the point is that a signitive act (an act of *uneigentlich* thinking/understanding) points to (*weist hin auf*) the intuitive act—that is, the intuitive act of *Auffassung* (so note: “thinking” and “understanding” both themselves have broader and narrower senses). This account is at work at several junctures in Husserl’s system. Most importantly, it forms the basis of his definition of knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) and 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 false or 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 which fail to express any possible intuition.

How, then, does the spoken word, the so-called *Wortlaut*, come into this picture?⁷ 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* 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.⁸

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”).⁹ Second, the connec-

⁷Note at this stage, as opposed to in *The Origin of Geometry*, Husserl sees no relevant difference between speaking and writing.

⁸Husserl 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 (*LU₁ VI* §15a, p. 2:532/Hua 19.2:598,599–25,35). But he takes that back in the later version of Hua 20, for good reasons which we will discuss below.

⁹Are the important senses of “active,” “rational,” etc., in, for example, Spinoza, or in Kant, really captured here? This 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.

tion 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.¹⁰ 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 to a prior *Urstiftung*.¹¹ 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.¹²

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.

¹⁰More precisely: a conscious act is passive insofar as it contains *either* unconscious motivation or sense-data-like, unmotivatable components, and it is “purely and completely free” when it contains only the latter: where “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).

¹¹See *Erste Philosophie (1923–4), Zweiter Teil: Theorie der Phänomenologischen Reduktion*, Hua 8, ed. R. Boehm (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965), 150,29–30.

¹²*Ideen* II, §60c, Hua 4:268,33–269,14.

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 unambiguous 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 all thought consists ultimately of the *Auffassung* of simple objects. But these simple objects—and/or the corresponding simple meanings or words—are just what would be called “terms” in the narrower sense. As Husserl puts it:

The terms express the founding acts of the entire “referring 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.¹³

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:

¹³*LU*₁ VI §60, p. 2:654/Hua 19.2:712,1–5.

In order firmly to establish differences of meaning, bring ambiguities 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, 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 act directed at just *that* (type of) intuitive fulfillment. The 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 problem, and the choices for solving it, derive ultimately 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.¹⁴

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

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 *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.”¹⁵ In such a case, then, the pathbreaker not only fixes the sense of wavering *Wortlaute*, but also *re-fixes* the old, unsuitable senses themselves.

¹⁴“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.

¹⁵*LU*₁ VI §53, p. 2:637/Hua 19.2:694,11–15.

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.”¹⁶ 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” student of 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,

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.¹⁷

Second, geometry: in this case, the problems appear when physicists (that is, Einstein) try to apply geometrical *Grundbegriffe* to nature.¹⁸

¹⁶“Philosophie,” 290/Hua 25:4,17–19.

¹⁷*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.”

¹⁸*Einleitung*, Hua 35:7,13–21. See also 380,32–381,10; *Erste Philosophie 2*, Hua 8:140,10; *LU₁* I §18, pp. 2:64–5/Hua 19.2:70,3–10.

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*].¹⁹

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

¹⁹“Philosophie,” 305/Hua 25:20,14–27.

291/5 n.).²⁰ 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.²¹

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

²⁰Cf. the complete rejection of this view, *Einleitung*, Hua 35:293,7–15.

²¹*Erste Philosophie* 2, Hua 8:11,19–26.

and probable ratiocination [*Raisonnement*]”²²—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.²³

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)

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 childhood²⁴) requires also a new *Urstiftung* of terminology. Since, Husserl says, I must now begin anew with “immediately, adequately justifiable [*begründbare*] statements,”

I must orient the meanings of the words of these statements towards the adequately self-given primordial source [*Ursprung*],

²² *LU*₁ VI, Introduction, 2:479/Hua 19.2:543,7–9.

²³ *Erste Philosophie* 2, Hua 8:21,18–23

²⁴ See, for example, *Erste Philosophie* 2, Hua 8:123,25–6; 180,22–5; *Einleitung*, Hua 35:76,18–34.

must, to a certain extent, newly form their meanings, without regard to preceding tradition.²⁵

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 ambiguities 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.²⁶

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)

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

²⁵ *Einleitung*, Hua 35:65,28–31.

²⁶ *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.

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.²⁷

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*).²⁸ 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

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,

²⁷ *LU*₁ V §13, pp. 2:358–9/Hua 19.2:393,20–24.

²⁸ "Philosophie," 290/Hua 25:4,15–16; see *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A837/B865.

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.²⁹

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.³⁰

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 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

²⁹ “Philosophie,” 291–2/Hua 25:6,3–12

³⁰ *Einleitung*, Hua 35:306,19–15., 26–9.

Philosophy has no realm [*Gebiet*] [of subject matter] which can be signified [*zu bezeichnendes*] to the natural human being through direct exemplification [*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, Fink³¹ (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 unambiguously referring to phenomenological objects, and derives merely from the fact that 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 unambiguous 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 ambiguity of broad and narrow senses, as it stems from the unwanted associations of historically given terms, the problem here will be with other type of ambiguity: the kind driven by the unity of analogy. Ambiguities 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 ambiguity, for example, between the description of phenomenological and psychological “consciousness,” “acts,” etc., or between immanently (noematically) and transcendentally intended “objects,” “properties,” and so forth. In both of these cases, the ambiguity resembles that between

³¹E. Fink, “Die phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls in der gegenwärtigen Kritik,” *Kantstudien* 38 (1933): 229–333.

“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.”³² The different categorial forms, in other words, are all the different possible analogies of this kind (the different possible kinds of analogous structure). Two ambiguous senses which are related by analogy are, therefore, two senses in which the same categorial form is applied to different subject matters. The ambiguity 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 ambiguity, 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 ambiguous statement and those in some other, unambiguous ones. We might, for example, give alternate definitions of the ambiguous 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 convey this new content in a way which unambiguously 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.

³²*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).

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.³³

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*).³⁴ 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.³⁵ From this he now derives the conclusion that an act of simple perception has *no* signitive expression of its own. In the case of 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)

³³ *LU*₁ VI §5, p. 2:492/Hua 19.2:555,14–18.

³⁴ *LU*₁ VI §58, p. 2:652/Hua 19.2:709,14–20.

³⁵ *LU Ergänz.* 1, t. 2 §3, Hua 20.1:67,30–68,1; §4, 72,13–73,23.

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 statements about essences are all already categorially formed.³⁶ 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 to the ultimate privacy of the phenomenological realm, that I won't be able to do this. One might suspect, in fact—and 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 epistemologically isolated.

³⁶See, for example, *Ideen* I, §15, p. 29/Hua 3.1:29,16–20.

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.³⁷

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).³⁸ Such logical determination of each thing out of merely formal relations is the project of the *Aufbau*.³⁹ 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*.⁴⁰

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 out of which nothing can slip away; which has no spatio-

³⁷*Ideen* II, §18g, Hua 4:88,26–9

³⁸Following the original reading of Landgrebe’s text. (Husserl later, sometime after 1924, struck out the word “logically.” See Biemel’s critical apparatus.)

³⁹See *Aufbau* §12, pp. 14–15.

⁴⁰17th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993); see especially §21, pp. 95–101.

temporal outside and cannot be inside any spatio-temporal context.⁴¹

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, unambiguous communication about the realm in question is missing. The pathbreaker can say things about it, but only the formal structure of such statements will be transmitted; the meaning of their *terms* will remain ambiguous. Or rather: the meaning of those terms will tend inexorably to be naturalistically misinterpreted, since other subjects, as good logical positivists, 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.⁴²

4.3 *The limits of truth and being*

Recall again Husserl's theory of truth (from the *Logische Untersuchungen* on): truth, namely, is the synthesis of a signitive *Hinweisung* with its adequate corresponding *Ausweisung* (its fulfillment). 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 also holds that "being" refers to this same synthesis, only, so to speak, taken in the opposite direction:

If epistemology [*Erkenntnistheorie*] wants to investigate the problem of the relationship between consciousness and Being,

⁴¹*Ideen* I, §49, p. 93/Hua 3.1:105,31–6.

⁴²This, 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.

it can have before its eyes only Being as *correlatum* of consciousness, as consciously “intended” [*Gemeintes*].⁴³

“Being,” to be precise, refers to the correlate, on the side of the object, of the synthesis of truth in consciousness, which is to say: it refers to the sameness of the object under different ways (signitive vs. intuitive) of intending it.

Being in the sense of truth is . . . identity of the object which is simultaneously, in the [synthetic act of] adequation, intended [*gemeinten*] and given.⁴⁴

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 noematic X (the identity of the object-pole).⁴⁵

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 though we usually speak of truth only in the former case and

⁴³“Philosophie,” 300/Hua 25:15,30–32. For lack of a better substitute, I will follow the rather misleading convention of translating the infinitive *Sein* as “Being” and the participial substantive *Seiendes* as “being.”

⁴⁴*LU*₁ VI §39, p. 2:598/Hua 19.2:655,10–12.

⁴⁵For 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.

being in the latter.⁴⁶ A term (or other noun phrase) can just as well be called “true,” in the intended broad sense of “true,” as can a full subject–predicate statement; and similarly: a state of affairs can have being just as much as can the object named by a noun or noun phrase. None of this should be particularly surprising in a follower of Brentano. 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 object, qua being, which is named by the term—the object insofar as it makes the term true (truly referring)—is *not* the simple object given in that simple fulfilling perception. 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)

Truth and being, even in the case of terms, always refer to such an *Überschuß* beyond the intention of the *schlicht* perception itself: they always signify a certain form of synthesis (a 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 is not per se true, nor is its object, per se, a being—at least, not in the sense of “being” in question here

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)

⁴⁶ *LU*₁ 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 on p. 2 above: in addition to the terms (narrowly speaking), "Being or non-Being" must be additionally posited (*προστιθέμενον τοῦ εἶναι ἢ μὴ εἶναι*). In any case, it emerges that a true term as such, even if it succeeds in expressing a particular *schlicht*, perceptual content, never directly expresses the intuitive *Deckung* of this content with its own signitive intention: never, that is, expresses that which *makes* it true. This applies just as much to terms as words as it does to terms as meanings:

To being per se [*an sich*] there correspond truths per se, and to these, in turn, firm and univocal statements [*Aussagen*] per se. (I §28, p. 2:90/Hua 19.2:95,29–31)

And the same, a fortiori, applies to true judgment-meanings and the words or sequences of words to which they correspond. Meanwhile, the syncategorematic terms "being" and "truth" are supposed to express this *Deckung*, but only in (formal-logical) generality. The sense of truth or being peculiar to a specific case is not, then, 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 which makes statements about that subject matter possibly true. 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.⁴⁷

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 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

⁴⁷"Philosophie," 308/Hua 25:24,5–8.

before the object of unambiguous 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 we say what being and/or truth are in an individual 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.⁴⁸

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.

⁴⁸ *LU*₁ VI §65, p. 2:673/Hua 19.2:730,19–23.

With that, however, let me now turn to a (very brief) 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.⁴⁹ 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 ambiguity. 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 ambiguity” in natural language as the source of metaphysical error,⁵⁰ and Heidegger via his discussion of “ambiguity” (*Zweideutigkeit*) 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.⁵¹ 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. (To name two key examples: Heidegger’s discussion of the term *λόγος* near the beginning of *Sein und Zeit*; Carnap’s of the term *Metaphysik* near the end of the *Aufbau*.⁵²)

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

⁴⁹ *Aufbau*, Preface, xiii; *Sein und Zeit*, §3, p. 9.

⁵⁰ *Aufbau*, §30, pp. 39–41.

⁵¹ *Sein und Zeit*, §37, pp. 173–5.

⁵² *Sein und Zeit* §7B, pp. 32–4; *Aufbau* §182, pp. 258–9. Note that both of these discussions aim at resolving a seemingly intractable equivocality once and for all: Heidegger’s by showing that the historical uses of *λόγος* all derive from a single root meaning; Carnap by claiming that, of all the possible choices of ways to use *Metaphysik*, only one is practically correct (*Zweckmäßig*).

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*;⁵³ in Carnap, with the expressions set in the *Aufbau* between little inverted P’s.⁵⁴ Both require this beginning, and also require the successful rederivation of this beginning, so to speak, as a test of correctness. Thus, in Carnap, the expressions between K’s 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);⁵⁵ while, in Heidegger, the *uneigentlich* mode of discourse of *das Man* must be re-derived, in the end, from an understanding of *eigentlich* temporality.⁵⁶ 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 be-

⁵³See especially *Sein und Zeit*, §5, p. 16; §18, p. 87; §26, p. 119; introduction to 1.3B and beginning of §35, pp. 166–7.

⁵⁴Carnap 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 he actually chooses, this customary language is 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).

⁵⁵The 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. 69–71). But these later sections are intended to give more precision to the “test” (*Prüfung*) of the system described in §17.

⁵⁶See *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.”

tween 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.

In Heidegger, the sense of Being as such—the sense, that is, of what is always and essentially *zunächst* unexpressed; of *the* subject matter, that is, which we have always failed to discuss until now—this is the very sense towards which all our *uneigentlich* discourse points as its fulfillment. This shows how to deal both with (1) the problem of historical associations and with (2) the problem of communicating a new content of knowledge, when all I can state objectively is a form. With respect to (1): the associations we have with current terminology, as *man* uses it, are not arbitrary at all. Philosophical signs (*Wortlaute*), in other words, are the non-arbitrary end point of an absolute history of terminology (philosophy speaks German, or Greek). 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*). The fact that such signs now point, arbitrarily, away from themselves, is just a symptom of the fact that, if they were *eigentlich* understood, we would uncover the one subject matter *man* is always trying to avoid. With respect to (2): since there is only *one* subject matter which is always “new” in this sense, a merely formal definition of philosophy (of phenomenology), which leaves the content of its subject matter wholly undetermined, can nevertheless be unambiguously deformed, *entformalisiert*.⁵⁷ Or, to summarize both points: that which is essentially at first inexpressible can be expressed precisely by displaying our *inexpression* of it as its *uneigentlich* expression. This leads to the idea of philosophy beyond the limits of “logic” (though not beyond the limits of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, in the *eigentlich* sense of the term): philosophy as expression of what is essentially not formal.

For Carnap, on the other hand, the attempt to express this sense of the inexpressible is the original source of all philosophical nonsense. The error, roughly (which is encoded in the forms of our our customary natural language), is that “There is nothing outside” (outside the limits of logic) is treated as “There is something outside which is not” (something

⁵⁷“With respect to what must the formal concept of phenomenon be de-formalized into the phenomenological [concept of phenomenon]? . . . Phenomenology is the mode of access to that, and the mode of demonstrative [*ausweisende*] determination of that, which is to become the theme of ontology” (*Sein und Zeit* §7C, p. 35).

outside those limits, something not a being), rather than as “There is no x such that x is outside.” But therefore *every* piece of radically rigorous science—every radically responsible, absolutely objective statement—must be purely formal. It must be possible to determine the irrelative nature of every object out of the formal structure of relations. To show the possibility of this is, as I mentioned already above, the task of the *Aufbau*. It requires showing reducibility: all objects must be logical derivatives of (must be quasi-objects relative to) a single common domain (although *which* domain is not important; in other words, we have freedom in our “choice of basis”), and it requires a technique of quasi-analysis: a way of attaching properties to objects which we initially take as mere empty somethings. But since the full reduction of all knowledge to any such given basis is not yet complete (could never be, in fact, before the proverbial end of inquiry), the road to univocality and sense lies through the construction, starting now, of a future, logically perfect language: through the kind of arbitrary concept formation, in other words, which Husserl admits is so convenient in the *Technik* of mathematical logic. This, for Carnap, is the task of philosophy. Philosophy, in other words, aims not to describe some radically new subject matter which we have never yet managed to discuss, but rather to give us the means for our future, *eigentlich* discussion of the same one realm of objects to which we have always been trying to refer. 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, *Zweckmäßigkeit*.⁵⁸

⁵⁸I would like to thank members of the Contemporary European Philosophy Workshop at the University of Chicago and of the Department of Philosophy at San Francisco State University, as well as those in attendance at a Workshop in Phenomenological Philosophy held at the University of Seattle in April 2010, to whom I presented previous versions of this paper, for helpful questions and comments, as well as those with whom I have discussed related issues for many years, including especially Allan Richardson and Burt Hopkins, and including recently also my student Christoph Durt.