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Early Husserl

Peter Andras Varga

1 Biography and Historiography

Edmund (Gustav Albrecht) Husserl was born on 18 April, 1859, to a secular Jewish family of merchants whose ancestors had been living in the Moravian town of Prossnitz (Prostějov, today in the Czech Republic) since at least the seventeenth century. His future wife, Malvine née Steinschneider was similarly a descendent of a traditional, though more observant, Jewish family of Prossnitz, being born in 1860 while her father served in the Transylvanian city of Klausenburg (Kolozsvár / Cluj Napoca, today in Romania) at the other end of the Habsburg Empire. Husserl's family developed strong ties to Vienna, the *de facto* capital of the multi-ethnic empire, where Husserl's mother, brothers and sister lived and died. It was also in Vienna that he and Malvine were baptised and married. It is thus not surprising that Vienna constituted a focal point of Husserl's scientific formation.

During his academic peregrination, Husserl attended the Universities of Leipzig (WS 1876 – WS 1877), Berlin (SS 1878 – WS 1880/1881), and Vienna (SS 1881 – WS 1881/82). Even though the majority Husserl's studies were dedicated to mathematics and sciences (*inter alia* with Karl Weierstraß and Leopold Kronecker, the demigods of contemporaneous mathematics), he also attended philosophy courses given by Wilhem Wundt in Leipzig, as well as by Johann Eduard Erdmann, Moritz Lazarus and Friedrich Paulsen in Berlin. It is worth highlighting a strange pattern in his studies which seems to suggest he was struggling to find his true vocation: During the last two semesters, Husserl turned to the study of philosophy, dedicating the whole of the second to last semester exclusively to philosophy and registering for a number of philosophy courses with Paulsen in his final semester.¹ This, however, did not immediately result in a change of Husserl's main interest, because the reason for his move to Vienna was to obtain a doctoral degree in mathematics,

¹ The details of Husserl's study in Berlin are not available in the usual printed sources (Schuhmann 1977: 4–10; Husserl 1994b: VIII, 222–223, 235–237). See instead: Ms. Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Universitätsarchiv, Rektor und Senat, Universtitätsmatrikel, 68. Rektorat, Nr. 1179.

which he completed between November 1882 and January 1883. His highly technical unpublished doctoral dissertation, submitted in June 1882, is entitled “*Beiträge zur Theorie der Variationsrechnung*” (*Contributions to the Calculus of Variations*). Husserl provided simplified proofs for theorems on the extrema of integral functions, which, however, soon became obsolete due to more encompassing results. The young doctor spent the next semester in the mathematical circles of Berlin (contrary to a popular misconception, Husserl did not serve as a formal assistant of Weierstraß), and subsequently volunteered in the Austro-Hungarian army service corps.

Husserl’s soul-searching was apparently not in vain, since, when he returned to Vienna in WS 1884/85, he spent the subsequent four semesters studying philosophy exclusively. His two main teachers were Robert Zimmermann, the erstwhile personal protégé of Bernard Bolzano who later turned to Herbartianism, and Franz Brentano, to whom Husserl became committed by the end of his studies.² Since Brentano’s loss of the professorial title in 1880 prevented him from supervising habilitations, Husserl was sent to Carl Stumpf at the University of Halle-Wittenberg to obtain the habilitation degree that was a precondition for starting a career as an academic. After attending classes with Stumpf and Georg Cantor, Husserl obtained his habilitation in June 1887 and started his lecturing career in WS 1887/88, initiated by an inaugural lecture entitled *Über die Ziele und Aufgaben der Metaphysik* (*On the Aims and Tasks of Metaphysics*).

Husserl later claimed that his philosophical vocation had prevented him from effective forms of career building: “from publishing a lot and frequently” and “eagerly taking the audience and [the

² Husserl’s own account of his second Vienna period (1987a: 305–315; first published: Kraus 1919: 151–167) was confined to Brentano, but recent research (Varga 2015: esp. 100-101) demonstrates that Husserl attended a plethora of philosophy classes with other professors as well and his exposure to Zimmermann is quantitatively on a par with the one to Brentano. This also sheds a different light on what Brentano wrote about the alternate possibility of Husserl’s allegiance to Zimmermann (Brentano and Stumpf: 260), as well as on his reluctance, expressed as early as October 1886, against Husserl’s obtaining a professorial appointment (cf. Brentano’s response to the career opportunities discussed in Stumpf’s reply to Brentano’s letter of recommendation for Husserl, 261-263). Husserl ceased to register for Zimmermann’s classes in the last semester, which seems to indicate that his special attachment to Brentano’s circle developed only in late 1895 – early 1896, given that Brentano famously did not tolerate divided loyalties (cf., e.g., Kraus 1919: 146). This is also consistent with the fact that the oft-cited report of Husserl’s ascending to a central position within the circle around Brentano (Fabian 1986: 17) is dated February 26, 1886 (i.e., late WS 1885/86). Husserl’s famous vacation with Brentano in Wolfgangsee (cf. Schuhmann 1977: 16) also took place in the summer after his studies in Vienna. When Husserl described his university studies vis-à-vis Cantor in 1896 (see Purkert and Ilgands 1987: 206; Cantor’s letter is probably based on Husserl’s own account), he mentioned *both* Brentano and Zimmermann as guides of his “most enthusiastic” study of philosophy (besides mentioning his early interest in the philosophy classes of Wundt and Paulsen). That in Husserl’s Habilitation CV of 1887 the similar phrase “buried myself in philosophical studies” is confined to Brentano alone (Husserl 1994: VIII, 222) might indicate that Husserl was inclined to adopt a different tone when addressing members of the School of Brentano.

educational] government into consideration” (1994b: I, 25). Indeed, he spent twenty-six semesters as unsalaried lecturer (*Privatdozent*), relying on scholarships and family wealth. Several faculty members, most notably Stumpf and Cantor, however, continued to put their faith in him, and Husserl managed to finish his voluminous *Logische Untersuchungen* (*Logical Investigations*) in 1900/1901. After a series of unsuccessful attempts, he finally secured an appointment at the University of Göttingen starting from WS 1901/02.

In Göttingen, Husserl initially had strained relationships with other philosophers in the faculty, who prevented his promotion to full professor. He was thereby drawn into the circle of mathematicians around David Hilbert. The course of history took a new turn when students of Theodor Lipps in Munich, led by Johannes Daubert, discovered the *Logische Untersuchungen* for themselves, and began flocking to Göttingen between 1903 and 1905, spreading their enthusiasm in Göttingen. The Phenomenological Movement was born and Husserl became famous almost overnight.

That the story of Husserl’s philosophical formation is overshadowed by his discipleship to Brentano is far from being unintentional on the part of Husserl. Immediately after the publication of his *Logische Untersuchungen*, the wider circles of contemporary German philosophy that neither belonged to the nascent Phenomenological Movement nor directly participated in the psychologism controversy that was reignited by Husserl (see Section 3.2 below) mostly situated Husserl in the context of Hermann Lotze and Bernard Bolzano (whom Husserl claimed to have thought further, respectively rediscovered), rather than the School of Brentano. This is manifested by a series of contemporaneous doctoral dissertations written on Husserl (not to mention Melchior Palagyi’s implicit accusation of Husserl plagiarising Bolzano),³ as well as the *Ueberweg* handbook, the definitive exposition of historical and contemporaneous philosophy, which explicitly stated: „Husserl, who previously belonged to the logicians heavily influenced by Brentano, [...] now repeatedly reminds us of Bolzano” (Heinze 1902: 343) and reassigned Husserl to a different headword (compare Heinze 1897: 276 and 1902: 343).

The received view, however, underwent a sudden change due to Husserl’s public oath of allegiance to Brentano, the most effective form of which was Husserl’s contribution to the memorial volume edited by the orthodox disciple Oskar Kraus (Kraus 1919: 151–167, cf. Husserl 1987a: 304–315). Husserl’s keen declaration that “without Brentano I would not have written a word of philosophy” (Brück 1933: 3) not only forced the origins of his philosophy into the Procrustean bed of a single influence, but was also surprising from the historical point of view, given Husserl’s alienation from

³ Dimitri Michaltschew’s dissertation (1909) even went so far to coin and frequently use the subject term “Bolzano-Husserl” (or “Husserl-Bolzano”). Concerning Husserl’s reaction to the Hungarian scientist and philosopher Palagyi, see 1979: 152–161 (first published in 1903), 1994: V, 198, VI, 447.

Brentano himself (compare, e.g., Husserl 1994: I, 44 ff. and Brentano 1946: 93), the heterodox group in Graz around Alexius Meinong, and the orthodox group of disciples in Prague, whose hostile attacks against Husserl included charges of plagiarism (not to mention that Husserl's juvenilia, even when they are Brentanian, are *de facto* more indebted to Stumpf in their details). Nonetheless, Husserl's hagiographic recollections of Brentano were taken at their face value by a series of influential early scholars (cf. the paraphrases at Brück 1933: 3–7, Osborn 1934: 15–19, Farber 1940: 6–7), giving rise to the historiographic idea of a direct philosophical lineage between Brentano and Husserl. On the other hand, Husserl, despite ostensibly seeking the friendship of Paul Natorp, refused to be assimilated to the institutionalised Neo-Kantianism that was already under assault (cf. Husserl 1994: IV, 84), for he preferred a comparison on equal footing.

The main philosophical stake in interpreting Husserl's early philosophy is, of course, the continuity between Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and his philosophical beginnings. The most pregnant exposition of the received view among Husserl's disciples was given by Oskar Becker's commemorative article, which claimed that the "fundamental principles of Husserl's logic and phenomenology," including the "principle of transcendental idealism," are, with a certain "hesitation," "present" in Husserl's juvenilia, which were nominally dedicated to the philosophy of mathematics (1930: 123). The first wave of studies dedicated to the beginning of Husserl's philosophy (Illemann 1932; Osborn 1934) followed the conspicuous signposts provided by Husserl himself, even though Osborn was more keen to diagnose ruptures in Husserl's development and was instrumental in promoting the "myth" (Embree 1998: 335) of Gottlob Frege's "devastating attack" (Osborn 1934: 50) on Husserl that is supposed to have awakened him from his psychologistic slumber (see note 15 below). Moreover, the surge of post-war interest in Austrian philosophy was guided by Haller's concept of Austrian Philosophy, which sharply distinguished between the early Husserl and the Husserl of transcendental phenomenology (cf. already 1979: 16, 50). A sophisticated version of this caesura is exemplified by Rollinger's concept of Austrian Phenomenology (2008: 2 ff.).

Husserl's debut in German philosophy around 1900 was undeniably a lateral entry from the vastly different philosophical context of Austria, which underwent a different type of Kant reception, but I think it would be a foregone conclusion to assume that the difference could be narrowed down merely to Husserl's membership in the School of Brentano. At the same time, the significant discrepancy between the rich landscape of post-Hegelian German academic philosophy and the "standard narrative" of it that emerged afterwards (cf. Beiser 2014a: 7 ff.) must also be taken into account. In sum, the study of Husserl's occasionally highly technical early philosophy is simultaneously an investigation into the roots of phenomenology and a historical attempt at understanding phenomenology's relation to other contemporary strains of philosophy that originated in the same period. Correspondingly, the present chapter relies on a wide and modern textual basis in an attempt

to provide a balanced exposition of the evolving problems that preoccupied Husserl during the early phase of his philosophical career. At the same time, it intends to pay special attention to the obvious or inconspicuous elements that connect the beginnings of Husserl's philosophy to his mature transcendental phenomenology, as well as to those roots of his philosophy that extend beyond the confines of the School of Brentano.

2 Juvenilia: Anticipations

2.1 The Partial Print of Husserl's Habilitation Thesis: A Snapshot of Husserl's Thinking in 1887

Husserl's *Über den Begriff der Zahl* (*On the Concept of Number*; Husserl 1887, 1970a: 289–338, English translation [hereafter: ET]: 2003a: 305–356), the first piece of text by Husserl that was printed, is a strange amalgam of what Husserl had learned during his brief apprenticeship with Brentano in Vienna and what he had acquired from other sources. In the booklet that was composed in Summer 1887 as a prerequisite to the bestowal of the *venia legendi*, Husserl essentially subscribed to Brentano's descriptive psychological research program and its Stumpfian variation, insofar as he was interested not in providing a traditional logical or modern mathematical definition of number, but rather in the "specific question" of "the content and origin [*Inhalt und Ursprung*] of the concept of number,"⁴ i.e., "the psychological characterisation of the phenomena upon which the abstraction of that concept is based" (Husserl 1887: 17, cf. 12–13, ET: 2003a: 318). The phenomena to which Husserl applied this methodology were, however, distinctively non-Brentanian. Stumpf, who evaluated the original manuscript of Husserl's habilitation thesis for the faculty, himself was surprised by Husserl's choice of the term "*Inbegriff*" (aggregate) over "*Collectivum*", which was more customary in the School of Brentano (Gerlach and Sepp [eds.] 1994: 172). It has been readily noted (Illemann 1932: 13, n. 22) that the source of Husserl's notion of *Inbegriff* must have been Bolzano's *Paradoxien des Unendlichen* (*Paradoxes of the Infinite*), which Husserl himself reported to have encountered prior to his studies with Brentano (Husserl 2002a: 297, n. 2). What makes an aggregate special is that entirely arbitrary objects, e.g., "a few particular trees; the sun, moon, earth, and Mars," can be united to form an aggregate (Husserl 1887: 13, ET: 2003a: 315; cf. Bolzano 2012: 41). The third ingredient was the conviction shared by the "Berlin mathematical school," where Husserl studied, that "the foundation of the concept of number based on its psychological constitution"

⁴ Husserl 1887: 9, ET: 2003a: 311. The "exploration of the psychological origin of a presentation" was defined by Stumpf as the "exploration [*Aufsuchung*] of the presentations from which it was formed [*sich gebildet hat*] and the modes and ways through which it was formed from them" (Stumpf 1873; in Husserl's copy this passage is marked as "N[ota] B[ene]").

(Centrone 2010: 5) could *de facto* be instrumental for the “radical grounding of mathematics”.⁵

The framework of Husserl’s investigations is established by the thesis that he probably distilled from Brentano’s discussion of various forms of wholes and parts – physical wholes and parts (e.g., an interval and its parts), metaphysical wholes and parts (e.g. a sensation and its quality), logical wholes and parts (e.g., colour and red), and continua (e.g., space, time, and infinite numerical series) –, namely, that “[w]herever we are presented with a particular class of wholes, the concept of that class has only been able to originate through reflexion upon a well-distinguished manner of combining parts [*Verbindungsweise*], one which is identical in each whole of the class in question.” (Husserl 1887: 16, ET: 2003a: 317) Husserl’s task was thus to identify the manner of combination that is specific to aggregates as such. He called it “collective connection” (*kollektive Verbindung*), borrowing a term that he must have encountered in Brentano’s classes (cf. Ms. Husserl Y Brentano 2 / 108). For Brentano, however, collective connections are wholes that are connected merely by virtue of “any kind of relations” (107). Husserl, in contrast, believed that collective connection is a relation *sui generis* and set out to find a “more precise characterization” of it (Husserl 1887: 33, ET: 2003a: 331).

Husserl discussed five contemporary proposals (an aggregate is constituted merely by virtue of its parts’ belonging to one consciousness, or their simultaneity, temporal or spatial succession, or through the signature of their systematic differences), the authors of which included early neo-Kantians, most notably Friedrich Albert Lange, who belonged to the realist side of the debate between Kuno Fischer and Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg (see Köhnke 1986: 257 ff.). According to them, Kant’s proof of the empirical reality and transcendental ideality of space and time in the *Critique of Pure Reason* did not disprove that “the a priori forms of space and time apply to things-in-themselves” as well (Beiser 2014b: 212), and this enabled them to harmonize Kant’s transcendental aesthetics with modern scientific physiology and realist metaphysics. Husserl sided against this option, because, he believed, it rests on “the erroneous view that a psychic act and its” spatiotemporal object “stand to one another in the relation of pictorial resemblance” (Husserl 1887: 35, ET: 2003a: 333). At the same time, this critique enabled him to specify the nature of “synthesis” (33 ff.) that unites the elements of an aggregate: it is neither a “‘purely mental’ creation[] of an inner intuition,” nor a “rediscovery [...] in the external world” (36; ET: 333).⁶ The syntheses are “mental creations insofar as they are results

⁵ Ms. Husserl B II 23 / 8a (also quoted by Schuhmann 1977: 7). In this unconnected retrospective note filed together with manuscripts written around 1930, Husserl contrasts the program of rational reconstruction of mathematics, he inherited from Weierstrass, with the context of discovery (“exploratory research [*vortastende Forschung*]”, 8b). This idea recurs in Husserl’s justification for his habilitation thesis (Husserl 1887: 5 ff.).

⁶ It is precisely the clarification and rigorous exposition of the sense of this creation (*Erzeugung*) that Husserl, in retrospect, regarded as the main achievement of his *Logische Untersuchungen* and his entire phenomenology (2011b:

of activities which we exercise on concrete contents.” As such, they are “peculiar, relational concepts, which can only be produced again and again, but which absolutely cannot be simply found somewhere already completed.” (37; ET: 334) There is a long and venerable tradition according to which Husserl’s analysis of the origins of the concept of number in *Über den Begriff der Zahl*, as well as in the *Philosophie der Arithmetik* already exemplifies a “phenomenological-constitutional study” of “categorial objectivities.”⁷ I believe that this assessment could be reinforced and refined by taking into account Husserl’s relationship with that broadly conceived, early neo-Kantian tradition which, by insisting on a loophole in Kant’s proofs, aimed at overcoming Kant’s limitations on the inner sense. The influence of this tradition is exemplified by Lange, who became the protagonist in the methodical chapter of Brentano’s *Psychologie* (1874a: 13), as well as by Friedrich Ueberweg’s statement of the veracity of inner perception (1882: 97 ff.), to which Husserl added marginalia in his copy of Ueberweg’s book.

The details of Husserl’s own account of the synthesis achieved by the collective combination are difficult to decipher: “A unifying interest directed upon all the contents, plus with and in it – in that reciprocal interpenetration [*Durchdringung*] which is peculiar to psychic acts – a simultaneous act of noticing: these throw the contents into relief. And the intentional object of this act of noticing is precisely the presentation of the multiplicity or the totality of those contents.” (Husserl 1887: 36, ET [modified]: 2003a: 334) “Interpenetration” (*durchdringen*) was Stumpf’s technical term (see Ms. Husserl Q 11 I / 129) for the entanglement of the act and its inner perception, which Brentano argued, must exhibit structural differences, lest infinite regress arises. Thus, it seems that Husserl built his account of the collective connection on the inner perception of the synthetic act itself, and, furthermore, he equated “intentional object” with the product of the inner perception. He was looking for an account that, unlike Brentano’s, would be strictly independent of the actual objects unified in the aggregate.

Husserl tried to situate his account in a general theory of relations, relying on the ideas of Meinong in a way that was verging on plagiarism (Ierna 2009: 14). Husserl distinguished between physical (or contentual: *inhaltlich*) relations and psychological ones that are not connected by virtue of the contents of their *fundamenta relationis*. The collective connection, of course, belongs to the latter kind of relation, which comprises “its terms by intentionality, i.e., in that specifically determinate manner in which a ‘psychical phenomenon’ (an act of noticing, of willing, etc.) encompasses [*umfassen*] its content (what is noticed, willed, etc.).” (Husserl 1887: 52, ET [modified]: 2003a: 347) This passage, which contains an explicit reference by Husserl to Brentano, also makes it clear that for Husserl in 1887,

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⁷ Husserl 1974: 91; cf., e.g., Becker 1930: 119 ff.; Biemel 1959: 194; Sokolowski 1970: 6 ff.

intentionality was a kind of encompassing (*umfassen*), namely, that which is characteristic of inner perception, rather than a relation between acts and their objects (see Varga 2014: 105–106). At the same time, Husserl had no problems with a – phenomenologically naïve – representational relation between acts and their objects: “where we are dealing with objectively real things, these still must be represented in our consciousness by means of presentations [*Vorstellungen*].” (Husserl 1887: 13, n. 1 cf. 45, ET [mod.]: 2003a: 316, n. 10)

Husserl’s own solution is essentially in alignment with what he learned from Stumpf in the previous semester, namely, that “the concept of number is based on complicated relations, relations of higher order,” i.e., “perception of relations” (Ms. Husserl Q 11 II / 494). Stumpf’s vague reference to inner perception might have motivated Husserl’s choice of the subject of his habilitation thesis (cf. Schuhmann 2000: 80), but Stumpf’s lack of descriptive resources – especially his lack of a sophisticated concept of intentionality (65), which Husserl could not develop until 1894 (see Section 3.1 below) – was also the reason for Husserl’s idiosyncrasies, including his non-phenomenological use of intentionality. On the other hand, there are some scattered anticipations of Husserl’s more mature phenomenological views, including the distinction between the succession of presentations and the presentation of succession (1887: 20–21), which became the cornerstone of Husserl’s later phenomenology of inner time consciousness.

Less attention is paid to the introductory part of Husserl’s habilitation thesis, in which he elaborated on his meta-philosophical views, including Brentano’s idea, which he, in turn, borrowed from Auguste Comte, that the hierarchy of sciences corresponds to the complexity chain of phenomena (cf. Brentano 1874b: 12 ff.). Husserl’s frequent references to metaphysics should probably be understood against the backdrop of Stumpf’s Brentanian definition of metaphysics as a first-order general science: “metaphysics is the science of the general definitions and laws in the domain of inner and outer perception” (Stumpf 2015: 444).

Über den Begriff der Zahl merely constituted the first chapter of Husserl’s projected book, which he struggled to realise (in 1888, e.g., Stumpf reported to Brentano that Husserl was “in need of prodding;” Brentano and Stumpf 2014: 280). Stumpf’s evaluation of the lost habilitation manuscript, together with Husserl’s lecture course in WS 1889/90 (Husserl 2005b), makes it possible to conjecture (Ierna 2005) the structural evolution of Husserl’s draft until he managed to publish it in 1891.

2.2 The *Philosophie der Arithmetik* (1891) and its Follow-up Projects: Varieties of Inauthenticity

The *Philosophie der Arithmetik* (*Philosophy of the Arithmetic*; 1970a: 1–283, ET: 2003a: 299), Husserl’s first printed work that became the subject of scientific discussion of the time, remained a

torso, and the task of writing its projected second volume preoccupied Husserl during the great part of the 1890s.

As early as in his fifth habilitation thesis, which Husserl defended on July 1, 1887, he propounded that “[o]ne can hardly count beyond three in the authentic sense [*im eigentlichen Sinne*]” (1970a: 339, ET: 2003a: 357), and in *Über den Begriff der Zahl* he indicated that its scope is confined to “the very first numbers, whereas we can conceive of larger numbers only symbolically” (1887: 43, ET: 2003a: 339). Husserl came to address this issue in the *Philosophie der Arithmetik* from the point of view of arithmetical operations, which are, in most cases, merely “indirect symbolizations of numbers” (1970a: 190, ET: 2003a: 200). This limitation is rooted in the finitude of our intellect. Husserl thus reversed the traditional epistemological role of arithmetic, which is, for him, precisely a sign of our imperfection (“ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀριθμητίζει,” 1970a: 192, n. 1), while he was also in accordance with the views of experimental psychology of that time on the “extension of consciousness” (cf. Wundt 1880: 213 ff.).

According to Brentano’s definition, inauthentic (*uneigentliche*) presenting occurs when we “do not have an exactly corresponding presentation of something, or we cannot have such a presentation. We use a name, but we do not properly understand the name itself when we use it.” (Ms. Brentano EL 80, 13060) Husserl’s definition of “symbolic or inauthentic” presentations (1970a: 193, ET: 2003a: 205) relies instead on Stumpf’s, for whom “symbolic presentations” are “those presentations which occur only as signs for others by replacing them for the usage of judgement” (Ms. Husserl Q 12 / 31; ET: Rollinger 1999: 301). The main difference between these two conceptions is that, for Brentano, inauthentic presenting is an anomaly of the use of names (e.g., the presentation of trillion, analogical presentation of God, or the presentation of colours by the visually impaired), while for Stumpf it is the pervasive normal case.⁸ Stumpf himself described “the algebraical and arithmetical systems of signs” as an instance of symbolic presenting, and marvelled at our ability “to run a business with surrogates” (Ms. Husserl Q 11 II / 506-507). Husserl refined Stumpf’s definition by distinguishing between symbolic and general presentations (1970a: 193, n. 1), emphasising that number literals are general names for the corresponding aggregates, rather than singular names of abstract concepts of the corresponding numbers (182–3, cf. Rollinger 1993: 87–88). He relied on his proto-phenomenological understanding of the “psychical process” that originates numbers (cf. Section 2.1) to reject Frege’s definition (Husserl 1970a: 163), and developed a highly sophisticated theory of the sensuous grasp of *symbolically presented* aggregates by virtue of figural moments, which anticipates his later theory of pre-predicative constitution of collections (Lohmar 1998: 187).

⁸ This ambiguity is the source of Husserl’s obscure distinction between psychological and logical symbolisation (1970a: 194).

The really intriguing part of Husserl's book, however, is where it failed. "I had already gone beyond it as I published it," he later remarked (1984c: 442, ET: 1994a: 490). Willard (1984: 110) maintained that "the conceptualisation which had guided [Husserl's] entire enterprise whose development is expressed in that book is in fact abandoned in its final chapter." He also pointed to Husserl's letter to Stumpf, allegedly written in early 1891 (the letter itself was already highlighted by Biemel 1959: 195), where Husserl explicitly renounced the "opinion by which I was still guided in the elaboration of my *Habilitatonsschrift*," namely, "that the concept of cardinal number forms the foundation of general arithmetic." "By no clever devices, by no 'inauthentic presenting,' can one derive negative, rational, irrational, and the various sorts of complex numbers from the concept of the cardinal number" (1994b: I, 158, ET [mod.]: 1994a: 13). Willard's dating for the letter is historically untenable,⁹ and Husserl's recognition antedated the finalisation of his book. In fact, Husserl already occupied himself with the "most general arithmetical operations" in his original habilitation manuscripts (cf. Gerlach and Sepp [eds.] 1994: 173), following in the footsteps of Hermann Hankel's theory of the successive extension of the number domains, to which Husserl had already referred in his sixth habilitation thesis.¹⁰

Husserl's own solution was based on the notion of calculus (*Kalkül*). A calculus is, for him, a special method of symbolic derivations, namely, one which, "through an appropriate symbolization [*Signierung*] of thoughts, substitutes a calculation process – i.e., a rule-governed process of transposing and replacing signs with signs – for actual inferring; and then, by means of the assignment of symbols and thoughts set up at the outset, it derives the desired judgements from the resultant end-formulae" (1979: 21, ET [mod.]: 1994a: 69). The symbolisation (*Signierung*) involved differs fundamentally from both Brentano's improper presenting and Stumpf's symbolic presentations, "for the function of the sign here absolutely is not to accompany the *thought as its expression*" (ibid., ET: 70).¹¹ The computational symbol-manipulation takes place without regard to the original assignment of thoughts, and they are only taken into account when the results are decoded at the end of the computation. Importantly, there are two different kinds of calculi, as Husserl explained in his drafts for the planned second volume of the *Philosophie der Arithmetik*, which was intended to provide the

⁹ Since Husserl referred to lectures by other professors (1994b: I, 163), Willard's dating (also upheld in Husserl 1994a: 12, supported by Schuhmann 1977: 29) could be refuted by the independent printed evidence of the course catalogue of the University of Halle-Wittenberg.

¹⁰ 1970a: 339. In Leipzig in WS 1876/77, Husserl studied at the physicist Wilhelm Gottlieb Hankel, rather than Hermann Hankel.

¹¹ The distinction between semantic and non-semantic signs recurred when in 1913, during the reworking of his original theory of signs from the *First Investigation*, Husserl distinguished between between categorial and non-categorial signs (so-called signals; 2005a: 52 ff.)

“full logical clarification [*Aufklärung*] of the true sense of general arithmetic” (1970a: 7, ET: 2003a: 7): In the first case, every computational step can be fully decoded, i.e., “there would be a direct parallelism between this algorithm and the domain of general arithmetical judgements” (1983: 28). Algorithms for the manual addition of large numbers in decimal notation, e.g., only contain intermediary steps that can be fully converted into valid arithmetic equations containing merely cardinal numbers. Husserl was more interested in calculi which do not exhibit this property: The initial assignment of the symbols in such calculi are “founded conceptually” (28), but they may contain intermediary products that “are lacking any conceptual content beyond the algorithmic” (43). In this way, Husserl was capable of accounting for the origins of “‘impossible’ concepts” (1994b: I, 160, ET: 1994a: 15, cf. 2011a), i.e., negative, imaginary or fraction numbers that are lacking intuitively fulfillable conceptual content on the basis of corresponding aggregates. In the wake of the refinement of his phenomenological apparatus, Husserl called these algorithmically founded concepts objectless (1983: 56; written around 1894) and in SS 1895 he called the computational rules “rules of the game” and the algorithmic meaning “meaning according to the game” (61 = 2001a: 310).¹²

In an occasional piece of writing from early 1891, Husserl already drew a crucial epistemological conclusion from his notion of calculus: “calculational disciplines” are capable of applying and even inventing their “algorithmical methods” independently “of insight into their essence and into the grounds of their value for knowledge” (1979: 22, ET: 1994a: 70). This is neither a superficial critique of them by philosophy, nor a manifestation of their contingent imperfection, but it is rather due to their very nature, namely, that a majority of the calculational disciplines are non-parallel algorithms only the inner nucleus of which is conceptually founded and capable of providing an insight into the “true conceptual substrates.” “Thus we have the curious spectacle of a science which does not know what it is really dealing with” (ibid.).

Husserl explicitly declared that his aim was not “the formation of a new technique,” but rather “the explanation and understanding of the already established technique” (1983: 40). This declaration, which is epitomized by the contrast frequently mentioned by Husserl between the roles of the “logician” and the “technician” (1979: 9, 468, 1984c: 163), clearly anticipates his later conception of transcendental phenomenology as an elucidation (*Aufklärung*) of scientific and life-world knowledge,¹³ as well as his diagnosis in the *Krisis* of a “surreptitious substitution [*Unterschiebung*]

¹² Husserl’s more technical attempts to spell out the completeness conditions of the relation between conceptually founded inferring (semantic) and computational (syntactic) calculations, especially his attempt in 1901 in Göttingen (2001b), made him vulnerable to objections against the Hilbert Programme. This is not necessarily so, though Husserl (and others at that time) were lacking the explicit notion of metalogic that is required in order to formulate the appropriate conditions (see Hartimo 2007: esp. 289, 304 ff.).

¹³ As Luft has argued, Husserl’s mature phenomenology exemplifies the transcendental flavour of

of the mathematically substructured world of idealities for the only real world” (1962: 49, ET: 1970b: 48–49). Besides working on the planned second volume of the *Philosophie der Arithmetik*, Husserl also devoted his efforts to a book project dedicated to the “psychological,” “logical,” and “metaphysical investigations” of the presentation of space (1983: 404–405), which is another question that continued to preoccupy him during his later career.

These overlapping follow-up projects remained on Husserl’s agenda until as late as 1895, but he was disrupted by two events that significantly widened his philosophical horizon: He chronicled in his diary, in November 1893, that the elaboration of his projected book on space had gotten stranded due to “difficulty” with more encompassing questions of descriptive psychology (1979: 452). A half year later, Husserl stumbled upon the habilitation thesis of Kazimierz Twardowski (1894), a later-generation heterodox disciple of Brentano, which introduced Husserl to the controversy over interpreting Brentano’s notion of intentionality. Finally, in Summer-Autumn 1896 Husserl started preparing a publication based on the manuscript of his lecture course on logic taught during the previous semester, which resulted in the *Logische Untersuchungen*.

3 The Phenomenological Breakthrough: The *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900-1901) and its Incubation

3.1 Intentional Acts and Their Objects

It was Alois Höfler who, probably after having independently discovered the true philosophical significance of Bolzano, ignited the debate among Brentano’s later-generation heterodox Viennese disciples over an ambiguity in Brentano’s notion of intentionality: The object of an intentional act is either “that which is subsisting in itself” and “at which our presenting or judging is directed” or its “psychical, more or less approximate ‘image,’ which subsists ‘in’ us” (1890: 7). For Höfler, this distinction was brought to the fore by the possibility of compound presentations with incompatible parts, having empty logical extension (e.g. round square) or empty empirical extension (dirigible airship).¹⁴ Curiously, neither Brentano nor Husserl seems to have bothered with this anomaly beforehand, insofar as they were content with either a double-object theory or the disjunctive solution (i.e., simply denying that such problematic presentations have an object at all; cf. Varga 2014: 91 ff.). Husserl, e.g., wrote in early 1891: “‘Meaningless’ names in the strict sense are names without a

Aufklärungsphilosophie (2012: 7–8, 24 ff.).

¹⁴ Höfler’s latter, own example was probably a cultural reference to the failed Vienna project of the inventor Paul Haenlein (despite the technical progress in the meantime). The traces of Höfler’s independent early interest in Bolzano are already visible in an educational pamphlet (Höfler 1884: 53, n.), which antedates Benno Kerry’s series of articles that is usually regarded as the first reference to Bolzano by Brentano’s disciples (cf. Kühne 1997: 32).

meaning – pseudo names, such as ‘Abracadabra.’ But ‘round square’ is a univocal common noun to which, however, nothing can in truth correspond” (1979: 12, ET: 1994a: 60). In a text penned in 1894 as a “reaction against Twardowski” (1994b: I, 144), Husserl is no more willing to accept such solutions, because of a “new consideration:” It is “correct for us to say ‘»a round square« presents an object which is at the same time round and square, but there is certainly no such object” (1990: 142; ET: Rollinger 1999: 251).

Husserl’s new position in the debate was based on the firm belief in the *priority of the phenomenological access* that reveals no descriptive difference between different objects: What “the sense of the apparently or really contradictory statements discussed above” implies is precisely “that it is in each case the *same* object which is presented and exists or does not exist. The same Berlin that I present also exists, and the same would no longer exist if judgement were brought down as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrha.” (1990: 144; ET: Rollinger 1999: 252–253) To this extent, Husserl’s involvement in the controversy in 1894 not only marks the onset of his interest in the notion of intentionality as such (Schuhmann 2004: 119–120), but it can justly be regarded as the *terminus a quo* of Husserl’s mature phenomenology (simultaneously, Husserl’s pre-phenomenological explanation could help to dispel the myth of Frege’s alleged decisive influence on him).¹⁵

In a spin-off text written in 1898 during his work on the *Logische Untersuchungen*, Husserl elaborated

¹⁵ Since Frege’s infamous letter to Husserl in 1891 (Husserl 1994b: 107–110) is an acknowledgement of receiving from Husserl, amongst others, the occasional writing in which the above disjunctive analysis was propounded, it is beyond question that Husserl arrived at the “distinction between meaning and object of an expression” “independently of Frege” (Mohanty 1982: 2; cf. Ortiz Hill and Rosado Haddock 2000: 32–33). It must also be noted that the mere distinction between content (*Inhalt*) and extension (*Umfang*) of (conceptual) presentations – including, e.g., the possibility of special presentations (*Wechselvorstellungen*) having different content but sharing the same extension (e.g., Bolzano 1837: I, 445 ff.; annotated by Husserl) – was a commonplace in post-Hegelian philosophical logic (on the Herbartian logic to which Husserl was exposed already in the secondary school, see: Varga 2015: 105 ff.). Furthermore, Frege’s critique in his review of Husserl’s *Philosophie der Arithmetik* that Husserl cleanses “the objects of their particularities” “in a psychological wash-tub,” resulting in a property-less “wraith” that blurs the “boundary between the subjective and the objective” (1894: 316–317, ET: 1972: 323–325), definitely overlooked Husserl’s deeper intentions (cf. Section 2.1), even if it could be supported by certain passages (e.g., Husserl 1970a: 80). On the other hand, it must be admitted that Husserl failed to recognize the mathematical-philosophical innovations of Frege, e.g. that Frege’s “introduction of the function-argument structure to analyse the content of a judgement provided a unique alternative to the whole traditional approach, also Husserl’s, in terms of a subject and a predicate” (Atten 2005: 146). This requires a certain qualification, insofar as Husserl, when he later developed a comparable theory, explicitly related it to Frege (cf. 1996: 180). But he believed to have superseded Frege in this respect; and, furthermore, Husserl obviously remained committed to traditional (non-functional) logic. Subsequently, Frege’s possible relevance for him receded into oblivion, and in 1936 he remembered Frege as a “fruitless oddball both as a philosopher and a mathematician” (1994b: VI, 369).

on the above striking claim: “When a philosopher degrades the perception of an external object to an illusion, supposing [...] a thing in itself behind it, the external perception does not change into a new perception (namely that of the thing in itself), but it rather loses of significant portion of its perceptual character ([...], the perception [*Wahrnehmung*] turns into a misception [*Falschnehmung*])” and a conceptual correction becomes attached to it (2004: 129). At this point, Husserl still conceived his phenomenological priority criterion within the framework of a scientific-realist ontology. In the printed text of the *Logische Untersuchungen*, Husserl disregarded this framework: “[N]othing becomes psychologically different,” he wrote, except for the “various possible assertive characters that imply [*implizieren*] the conviction of the being of what is presented.”¹⁶ In the first edition of 1900–1901, when Husserl did not yet conceive of phenomenology as a full-fledged philosophical position (see, e.g., 1984a: 401; cf. Section 4), his solution might simply rest on the conviction that it is an *irreducible, but descriptively accessible* feature of certain experiences to present an object: If such an “experience is present, in its concrete psychical fullness, then, *eo ipso* [= by that very act], the intentional ‘relation’ to an object is achieved, and an object is, *eo ipso*, ‘intentionally present.’”¹⁷ In the second edition of 1913, Husserl then changed “psychologically” to “phenomenologically” and “imply” to “constitute [*ausmachen*],” mirroring his transition from descriptive psychology to transcendental-phenomenological idealism that allowed him to build up a full-fledged transcendental-philosophical position around the constitutive achievements of intentionality. At each stage, however, Husserl’s claim of the lack of phenomenological “difference between a veridical perception and a non-veridical perception” – “[o]ne of the striking features of Husserl’s analysis of intentionality in *Logical Investigations*” (Zahavi 2002: 106) – helps to designate phenomenology’s position vis-à-vis other theories of mind: intentionality cannot be explained away by reducing it to a real relation either between two immanent parts of a conscious experience or between the consciousness and a real thing (cf. Zahavi 1992: 62 ff.). In other words, any difference between the intentional givenness of the real object and that of the non-real object must exhibit itself phenomenologically in the course of the perception and other intentional achievements. This phenomenological criterion itself remained constant during the development of Husserl’s thinking, but initially it was conceived as a descriptive psychological feature compatible with the external framework of a scientific ontology, while later it became embedded into a transcendental-phenomenological philosophy that assumed the function of grounding every scientific and life-world ontology.

The *pars destruens* of Husserl’s 1894 treatise against Twardowski already contains a series of further demarcations which lay the groundworks for Husserl’s mature phenomenology of intentional acts (cf.

¹⁶ Husserl 1984a: 387 (variant of the first edition), ET (mod.): 2001c: II, 99, 353.

¹⁷ Husserl 1984a: 386 (variant of the first edition), ET (mod.): 2001c: II, 98.

1984a: 436 ff.). Initially, in his juvenilia, Husserl had subscribed to a phenomenologically naïve account (see Section 2.1), and even Höfler's above distinction is plagued by a pictorial theory of representation. By 1894, Husserl argued that such theories are not only inconsistent with the phenomena ("I would like to know," Husserl commented on this popular position with irony, "what 'mental pictures' supposedly inhere in the concepts 'art,' 'literature,' 'science' and the like," 1990: 143; ET: Rollinger 1999: 252), but they also beg the question: "One overlooks that the [pictorial] phantasy content must first become the representative image of something, and that this pointing-beyond-itself of the image" is already a higher level intentional achievement that presupposes the basic case of intentional directedness (144; ET: 253). Husserl believes that the notion of immanent objects, as proposed by other heterodox disciples, suffers from the same "false duplication" (146; ET: 255); though he undeniably misunderstood them (cf. 1979: 458), especially their leaning towards Meinong's *Gegenstandstheorie*, the aim of which was precisely to create a rich but consistent ontology.

Husserl's positive solution in the text of 1894 – the identity of the object is an identity "under hypothesis [*unter einer Hypothese*]" (1990: 151), i.e., the presentation of Zeus is implicitly conditional upon the validity of Greek mythology – provoked a plethora of diverse interpretations, exemplifying the various general attitudes towards Husserl's early philosophy (cf. Section 1): It was praised for not "succumbing to immanentism, Platonism, or (what is worse) transcendentalism" (Rollinger 1999: 208, cf. 151 ff.). For Schuhmann, Husserl anticipated Kuhn's notion of paradigms (2004: 127), for Künne, the "story operator approach" (2011: 88). Rang, on the other hand, saw a continuity with Husserl's philosophy in the 1930s (Husserl 1979: xli). Heffernan (2015: 81) rightly pointed to the subtle evolution in Husserl's thinking on intentional objects between 1894 and the *Logische Untersuchungen*. Historically, Husserl's proposal is closely aligned with the prevalent Herbartian notion, first encountered by Husserl during secondary school (Lindner 1872: 40; cf. Varga 2015), according to which categorial judgements about non-existing objects are actually hypothetical judgements (rather than existential judgements with an improper presentation, as Brentano preferred: 1874a: 286–288, n.). Besides its affinity with Lotze's understanding of the mode of being of ideal objects as a conditional validity (the influence of which – rather than Bolzano – on the *Logische Untersuchungen* Husserl repeatedly emphasised, e.g. 1979: 156, 2002a: 297), the Herbartian background and its organic connection between psychology and logic is closer to the general trajectory of Husserl's development in the 1890s: Husserl tried to establish the sphere of objective meanings besides the *already characterized* sphere of subjective acts and intentional correlates,¹⁸

¹⁸ The changes by Husserl to his lecture text in 2001a: 44–45, e.g., nicely illustrate his objective theory of meaning *in statu nascendi*.

unlike the trajectory of the logical objectivism of Bolzano, whom Husserl recurrently accused of not giving “the faintest intimation that these phenomenological relationships [...] had been noticed by him” (1979: 157, cf. 1994b: I, 29, 39; VII, 98, ET: 1994a: 202).¹⁹

His approach enabled Husserl to develop a rich and sophisticated variant of the traditional philosophical logic and psychology in the *Logische Untersuchungen*. Instead of the Brentanian psychical phenomenon, the building block of Husserl’s descriptive psychology is experience (*Erlebnis*), which is an “immanent [*reell*], constitutive part or moment in the unity of the psychical individual.”²⁰ Intentional experiences (also called “acts”) are those experiences which intend objects or states of affairs in the manner of presentations or other analogous fashion. Contrary to Brentano, Husserl thus did not confine the objectifying function to presentations alone, even though emotive and volitional acts are said to be incapable of autonomously presenting an object (the latter restriction was subsequently lifted by Husserl, which gave way to formal and material axiology and praxiology, cf.: Melle 1990). Two independently variable abstract components of the act are its matter (*Materie*), which gives the act its “reference to an object” – also determining “as what it grasps it, the properties, forms relations that it attributes to it” –, and its quality (*Qualität*), which “determines whether what is already presented in definite fashion is intentionally present as wished, asked, posited in judgement etc.”²¹ In accordance with the aforementioned phenomenological criterion laid down in 1894, “[a]ll differences in mode of reference are descriptive differences in intentional experiences” (1984a: 427, ET: 2001c: II, 120). The quality and matter of an act constitute its intentional essence (*intentionales Wesen*), or, in case of meaning-bestowing acts, its signification essence (*bedeutungsmäßiges Wesen*), the abstraction of which results in the meaning (*Bedeutung*) of the act. Acts can be compounded or nested (e.g., a judgement about a judgement), and it is possible to transform an act by modifying its matter while preserving its quality, as well as by modifying its quality only (e.g., transforming a judgement, i.e., a positing propositional act, into a merely presentative, non-positing propositional act of the same matter). The ultimate underlying acts of complex acts are, however, always “straightforward combination[s] of a simple quality with simple matter” (518; ET: II, 169). The link between these concepts and the traditional philosophical logic has been rightly highlighted

¹⁹ It must also be taken into account that, despite Husserl’s very early encounter with Bolzano’s *mathematical* writings (see Section 2.1) and the mediation through the (posthumous) writings of Benno Kerry (cf. Rollinger 1999: 71), Husserl’s discovery of Bolzano’s *Wissenschaftslehre* (1837) appears to have been a *separate event by chance* (Schuhmann 1977: 463; consider Husserl’s vivid memories of the pricing of Bolzano’s book in second-hand bookstores: Husserl 1994b: VII, 97, 2002a: 298, n.), and, furthermore, Bolzano’s book was studied by Husserl in a very unsystematic way (Husserl 2002a: 298, n.; cf. note 27 below).

²⁰ 1984a: 392; deleted from the subsequent editions.

²¹ 1984a: 429–430 (variant of the first edition), ET (mod.): 2001c: II, 121–122.

(Künne 2011: 79–80). Yet Bolzano, for example, regarded “vivacity [*Lebhaftigkeit*]” and other features of presentations as being philosophically irrelevant, which are precisely those that are going to assume a fundamental role in Husserl’s reconfiguration of his descriptive analysis of acts for the purposes of the “epistemological elucidation [*Aufklärung*] of pure logic” (Husserl 1984b: 783) in the last investigation of the *Logische Untersuchungen* (see Section 3.3).

Yet it is not only Husserl’s descriptive analysis of acts that is rooted in the mid-1890s. As early as in 1896, Husserl presented the outlines of the Cartesian way to the phenomenological reduction, employed to dispel epistemological scepticism (2001a: 7–8), and the first edition of the *Logische Untersuchungen* already contained a detailed, though unsatisfactory, attempt at implementation (Lohmar 2011). Similarly, his preoccupation with Lotze was also instrumental for Husserl’s understanding of the self-referential character of logic and the architectonic of his mature phenomenological philosophy (Varga 2013).

3.2 Husserl’s Critique of Psychologism and his Academic Success

The first volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen* (finished by November 1899, first published in mid-1900; 1975, ET: 2001c: I, 9–161) was called “the most convincing volume of philosophical literature” (Lévinas 1998: 114), which is not at all an overstatement with regard to its influence on the German academic philosophy of the time — even though Natorp privately described it as “an already obsolete thing” that was necessary merely due to the “schools of thought prevailing in Germany” (Holzhey (ed.) 1986: 261). In less than a decade, Husserl was already complaining that “the polemic against psychologism came into fashion” (Husserl 1984c: 143), and his newly found fame resulted in a one-sided public perception of his *Logische Untersuchungen* that haunted him even as late as 1929 (e.g., 1994b: VI, 311).

The core of Husserl’s anti-psychologism, which simultaneously manifests its connection with the program of the second volume, was already formulated in the manuscript of a lecture in 1898: The proper founding of logic is an epistemological one that is “rooted not in empirical psychology but in the purely descriptive phenomenology of the lived experiences of thought and cognition” (2002b: 304, n. 3; ET: 305, n. 3). As early as his lecture course on logic in 1896, Husserl renounced his previous, Brentanian conception of logic as a “practical discipline (that of a technique [*Kunstlehre*] of judging correctly)” (1887: 4, ET: 2003a: 307) and opted for the early neo-Kantian understanding of logic as a second-order science (cf. Trendelenburg 1870: I, iv): It is the “science of science” or “theory of science [*Wissenschaftslehre*],” which investigates “whatever makes sciences into sciences.”²²

²² Husserl 1975: 27, ET: 2001c: I, 16; adopted almost verbatim from 2001a: 6 (Husserl correspondingly modified his definition of metaphysics, too). It must be noted that for Bolzano, whom Husserl owned terminologically and in the details of his conception, *Wissenschaftslehre* was, as highlighted by Husserl (1975: 43), in the end, the science of

There are, obviously, practical-technical functions of logic, but “every practical discipline relies on one or more theoretical disciplines and takes the theoretical knowledge from them that accords with its normative interests.”²³ The decisive question is, then, whether these disciplines belong to empirical psychology or not, given that logic is apparently concerned with mental occurrences. Husserl believed that he had found a major loophole in the arguments of the psychologistic camp, which falsely assumed that psychology’s undeniable involvement “in the founding of logic” is the same as the “psychologistic thesis that psychology alone is involved or that it provides the essential foundation of logical technique” (2002b: 312; ET: 313, cf. 1975: 71).

In 1897, Husserl reported that he “rejects both parties’ arguments” (1994b: V, 52), and later, in the printed first volume, refuted hasty anti-psychologistic arguments, including the one according to which psychologism is circular, since psychology as a science presupposes logic (1975: 69–70). Husserl had good reasons to follow Bolzano (cf. 1837: I, 8) in this regard, since the establishment of full-fledged transcendental phenomenology – i.e., what Husserl in the early 1920s started to call a “system” of phenomenological philosophy (e.g., 1994: III, 20) – itself is only possible in a zigzag fashion.²⁴

The backbone of the anti-psychologistic arguments that Husserl deemed conclusive is a series of *reductio ad absurdum* arguments: the laws of a logic essentially founded on empirical psychology were, akin to psychological laws themselves, vague (*vage*), probabilistic-inductive (prone to falsification) and having ‘matter of fact’ implications. There must be a distinction made between “causal laws, according to which thought must proceed in a manner which the ideal norms of logic might justify,” and those norms themselves (1975: 79, ET: 2001c: I, 50). What could render a thinking machine (*Denkmaschine*) possible, e.g., are not the causal laws of nature as such, but “the insight into the logical laws brought forward” by its constructor (79). Similarly, even though “the basic notions of logic” and their “purely conceptual relations” “are abstracted from psychological experience” (85; ET: 54), they “begin with experience” but do not “arise [*entspringen*]” from it (as Husserl said in allusion to Kant): the psychological circumstances of discovery are not necessarily the same as the laws discovered. That Husserl’s anti-psychologistic argumentation in the end rests on a (proto)phenomenology is best demonstrated by his “direct proof” (cf. 2002b: 314): psychologistic theories of logic violate the conditions of the possibility of theory as such, which consists in both

presenting sciences in appropriate textbooks (Bolzano 1837: I, 7 [marked in Husserl’s copy], 56–57). Bolzano, together with Friedrich Schleiermacher, was once classified by Husserl as a proponent of logic as *Kunstlehre* (2002b: 324).

²³ 2002b: 308; ET: 309; compare 1975: 59–60; in a more rudimentary form: 2001a: 36.

²⁴ E.g. 1962: 59; cf. already: 1984a: 22–23, 1984b: 552.

acknowledging the objective components of pure theory (truths, propositions, objects, properties etc.), as well as its equally ideal noetic components, “whose roots lie in the form of subjectivity as such, and in its relation to knowledge” (1975: 119, ET: 2001c: I, 76). Reducing logical laws to empirical psychological ones thus amounts to a bad phenomenology that conflates real mental occurrences with atemporal objectivities and their corresponding ideal noetic conditions.

The one-sided focus on the first volume of Husserl’s *Logische Untersuchungen* usually went hand in hand with the question, already formulated by Leonard Nelson (Husserl’s erstwhile student and later rival in Göttingen), with regard to Husserl’s descriptive psychology that was propounded in the second volume, subtitled *Investigations in Phenomenology and Theory of Knowledge*: “Why is it not a ‘psychologism?’” (1908: 130). This frequent objection, however, not only overlooks the aforementioned (proto)phenomenological facet of the first volume but also the second volume’s detailed explanation of the difference between empirical psychology and “descriptive psychology” (or rather, “phenomenology”) “which underlies the fundamental abstractions” that embody Husserl’s project of elucidating logic and epistemology (1984a: 24). In the process of his transition to transcendental phenomenology as a full-fledged philosophy (see Section 4), Husserl was going to repeatedly revise the details of this explanation (1979: 206–207, 1984b: 793, 1984a: 23). But, as his above references to “abstraction” illustrate, his inability to methodically account for the position that he occupied in the *Logische Untersuchungen* is rooted in one particular aspect of his admitted lack of a “systematically closed theory of conceptual cognition” in 1900/1901, namely, the insufficiency of his account of the “various ‘forms of universality-consciousness.’”²⁵ The latter gap was not going to be filled until Husserl arrived at the theory of eidetic variation in 1912 (cf. 2012: 57).

3.3 Husserl’s Theory of Judgements and Its Background

The second volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen* (1984a, 1984b, ET: 2001c: I, 163 ff.) was published only in April 1901, after a last-minute reworking of its latter part (cf. 1994b: IX, 20 ff.), which probably affected the sections on Husserl’s theory of judgements. Yet it was precisely this topic that captured the interest of Johannes Daubert in Munich (cf. Schuhmann 2004: 201), who was instrumental in converting Lipps’ students to phenomenology and thereby initiating the

²⁵ 1994b: I, 169. Husserl’s insufficient *species* theory of meaning and its strict separation from his theory of evidence in the *Logische Untersuchungen*, e.g., also prevented a phenomenological analysis of the way in which meaning itself is given (cf. Heffernan 1983: 104–105). Furthermore, Husserl was probably unaware of the real extent of the Brentanian theories of abstraction he criticized (cf. Fréchette 2015: 289). The other side of the same coin is, however, that Brentano and Anton Marty tried to account for the synthetic achievements of consciousness *within* the framework of their theories of abstraction (hence their sophistications), while Husserl was arguably aiming to develop his own theory of constitution from the ground up.

Phenomenological Movement. For Daubert (2002: 362), the most instructive specific element was Husserl's distinction between states of affairs (*Sachverhalte*) as correlates of judgement acts and logical judgements (significations that are true or false in virtue of the corresponding states of affairs) as intentional contents of judgement acts. The former was, however, already anticipated by Brentano and expounded by Stumpf (as highlighted by Stumpf himself: 1907: 29–30). Furthermore, Adolf Reinach, who refined Husserl's notion of states of affairs with regard to positive-negative polarity and its applicability at optatives and volatives, believed that the above distinction had been unclear in most of the *Logische Untersuchungen* (1911: 223, n. 2); even though Husserl must be credited with having made this distinction possible by his refutation of psychologism, by his sophisticated philosophical logic (see Section 3.1), and especially by his explicit rejection of Brentano's thesis that confined objectifying function to presentations alone (Brentano 1874a: 266).

It has been rightly emphasised (Bernet 1981: 60) that Husserl's "original contribution" was to link the justification of judgements to the synthetic process of (partial) intuitive fulfilment that takes place when epistemic acts of the same signification essence coincide (e.g., an intending by virtue of an empty linguistic sign coincides with the corresponding perception). In one of the sections in which Husserl temporarily lifted the self-imposed methodological restriction on genetic analyses, he described how the common "phenomenological roots" of these two acts are revealed in the experience of transition (*Übergangserlebnis*; 1984b: 566, cf. already 1984a: 421, ET: 2001c: II, 206), and later he claimed that what is experienced in self-evidence (*Evidenz*) – the correlate of which is truth (*Wahrheit*) – is precisely this agreement "of what is meant with what is given as such" (652; ET: II, 263); yet, self-evidence is far from being an indexical feeling "contingently attaching to the act of judgement" (656; ET: II, 266).

In order to better understand this process, Husserl refined his descriptive analysis of intentional experiences by introducing the notion of *epistemic essence* (*erkenntnismäßiges Wesen*), which consists in not only the quality and the matter, but also the fulness (*Fülle*), the liveliness (*Lebendigkeit*) of the presentation. Since the representation inherent in an intentional experience is, Husserl believed at the time of writing, the result of a complex interplay of intuitive and non-intuitive act-contents, animated according to an interpretative form and sense (*Auffassungsform*, *Auffassungsmaterie*), the really distinct components of the epistemic essence are the quality, the matter, and the intuitively representing contents. The other kinds of contents, e.g., the partial perceptions pertaining to the reverse sides of a spatial object, were conceived by Husserl as higher-level achievements akin to the consciousness of signs. This model of intentional experiences is prone to bring Husserl's criterion of truth into the vicinity of a total intuitive givenness (cf. Bernet 2003: 160 ff.); and Husserl's conception quickly underwent a further development, motivated partly by his growing recognition of the inadequacy of the underlying model of signs (cf. 2004: 36, n. 1, 1973: 55),

which, in turn, led to a more phenomenological understanding of empty intentions (*Leerintentionen*) during Husserl's reworking of the *Logische Untersuchungen* in 1913 and the following years (2002a: 91 ff.). The fact that the representation rests on intuitive contents – and ultimately on self-presenting (*selbstdarstellende*) ones that are characteristic of perceptions – testifies to the phenomenological primacy of perception for Husserl's otherwise highly-technical edifice of act analysis in the *Logische Untersuchungen*.

Husserl's theory implies that compound acts of predicate form are in need of intuitive fulfillment that are structured accordingly: When I say, "This paper is white," the partial perceptual intention aiming at the white "colour-aspect" itself does not suffice as a fulfilling element, "a surplus of meaning remains over, a form which finds nothing in the appearance itself to confirm it. White, i.e., being-white paper [*weiß seiendes Papier*]." (1984b: 659–660, ET [mod.]: 2001c: 272–273.) To this end, Husserl developed an account of the role that sensuous intuition plays in the form of categorial intuition (*kategoriale Anschauung*). Husserl's attempt was considered controversial, and he himself renounced its first implementation (cf. 1984b: 535). Yet, it is undeniably possible for such a higher-level fulfilling intuition to emerge, starting from the straightforward perception (a unitary perceptual intention, the partial intentions of which are not articulated explicitly), followed by an articulating act based on the same act-contents (e.g., the specific perception of the paper 'through' its whiteness), which coincides with the continuously operating total perception. The unity constituted by the coincidental synthesis itself, however, takes on a representative role, namely, as the fulfilling element of the categorial apprehension (i.e., the paper appears as being white). It is important to note that, since the categorial fulfilling elements are rooted in the synthetic unity itself rather than in the intuitive fulfillment of its founding acts, systems of non-intuitive judgements, too, can exhibit their own form of evidence (Lohmar 1998: 202), even though they ultimately rest on sensuous intuition. Thus Husserl's phenomenology is capable of accounting for the possibility of formal sciences, adding descriptive depth to his earlier philosophical claims about them (see Section 2.2).

The categorial intuition was once listed by Martin Heidegger as one of phenomenology's three "decisive discoveries" (1985: 27). The unsaid reverse side of such claims is that the bulk of Husserl's theory of judgements is rooted more deeply in nineteenth-century philosophical logic than usually assumed. In particular, Christoph Sigwart's theory of denominative judgements (*Benennungsurtheil*) and their two-fold synthesis could have provided important building-blocks for Husserl's analysis: The basic case of denominative judgements, according to Sigwart, consists in "the simple coincidence [*Coincidenz*] between the present intuition and the remembered presentation," in which the subject presentation and the "predicate presentation, which is inwardly reproduced by the corresponding

word,” are “consciously unified” in “the act of judgement.”²⁶ Husserl undeniably reconfigured and refined these building-blocks with the aid of his sophisticated act analysis; on the other hand, Sigwart’s reliance of the “corresponding word” hints at a surplus knowledge resting on the linguistic sign itself, the possibility of which was explored in new material written by Husserl in spring 1914 for the planned revised second edition of the *Logische Untersuchungen* (2002a: 296 ff., esp. 302). These influences and affinities further corroborate Husserl’s indebtedness to nineteenth-century philosophical logic and psychology besides Bolzano and the School of Brentano.

In hindsight, Husserl complained of the one-sidedly noetic nature of his *Logische Untersuchungen*, which he ascribed to the misleading influence of Bolzano.²⁷ The principle of noetic-noematic correlation, together with Husserl’s breakthrough to genetic phenomenology around the same time, made Husserl’s phenomenological logic both more powerful and simple: The distinction in 1909–1911 of a noematic sense of meaning (*Bedeutung*) besides the noetical sense of meaning *in specie*, e.g., allowed him to find simpler alternatives to the complex structural analyses developed in the *Fifth Logical Investigation* (cf., e.g., 1987b: 143), as illustrated by his explanation in 1910/11 of this distinction using the turn of gaze (*Blick*) from constituted objects back to the “ego and its acts” (1996: 42). The lift of the self-imposed and untenable ban on horizontal, genetic investigations – as early as in 1912–1913 (cf. Sakakibara 1997: 22) – further helped him move away from the complex, static vertical investigations of consciousness, without relinquishing the transcendental-phenomenological attitude and relapsing to empirical psychology.

4 Outlook: Realism, Metaphysical Neutralism and Transcendental Phenomenology

Ever since the young early phenomenologists in Göttingen, who, according to the influential and picturesque recollections of Edith Stein, were “all [...] confirmed realists,” became astounded by Husserl’s next book publication in 1913 (Husserl 1976), which “included some expressions which sounded very much as though their Master wished to return to idealism” (1986: 250), the controversy has been raging about whether the standpoint of transcendental-phenomenological idealism,²⁸ which Husserl already demonstrably adopted in 1908 (cf. 2003b: 12 ff.) and defended through the rest of his life (though with growing reservations about the label and its traditional connotations, cf. 1994b: VII, 16), amounted to Husserl’s renouncement of the initial realism of his *Logische Untersuchungen*

²⁶ Sigwart 1889: 63, 67, cf. 70 ff. (heavily annotated by Husserl). Compare, furthermore, the examples at Sigwart 1889: 26 and Husserl 2009: 34.

²⁷ 1976: 217 ff. A research note from 1899 (2009: 138–139) recorded Husserl’s difficulties in his isolated reading of Bolzano that in fact anticipate the distinction between “the specific essence of the judging process (the noetic idea) and the noematic idea correlative to the noetic idea” (1976: 218, n. 1, ET: 1982: 230, n. 38).

²⁸ For a concise exposition of the strong interpretation of Husserl’s idealism, see Moran 2003.

or, rather, the Phenomenological Movement came into being merely due to a creative misunderstanding on the part of Husserl's readers. The appraisal of the merits of contemporaneous realist interpretations of Husserl adds a further complicating dimension to the historiographic controversies over Husserl's early phenomenology (cf. Section 1). Lavigne (2005), e.g., believed that subjective idealism was already lurking in the *Logische Untersuchungen*; while Willard recently offered an informed defence of the thesis that, at least one possible reading suggests, Husserl "in fact never adopted idealism" (2012: 24). Zahavi rightly pointed to the way out from the dilemma: Husserl's "criticism of representationalism" in the *Logische Untersuchungen* can be seen as "a criticism of both realism and idealism" (to this extent, Husserl's early phenomenology could rightly be called metaphysically neutral); yet, "problems inherent in his descriptive phenomenology" forced Husserl "to adopt a transcendental standpoint" during the subsequent years (2002: 98, 102).²⁹ I believe that the relation between Husserl's philosophical beginnings and his mature transcendental phenomenology, which is ultimately at stake in reconstructing his early phenomenology (cf. Section 1), could be characterised by the following three theses: (1) A realist reading of the *Logische Untersuchungen* is not consistent with Husserl's own intentions at the time of writing (as far as it is possible to establish them), even though it is compelling to read the book in such a way. (2) In the early phase of his philosophical career, Husserl *a fortiori* did not adopt a full-fledged philosophical position (as opposed to specific descriptive psychological and epistemological investigations, as Husserl described his enterprise in the bipartite subtitle of the second volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen*). As a corollary to these first two theses, Husserl's position in and around the *Logische Untersuchungen* could be called metaphysically neutral. (3) The transcendental-philosophical position he would already occupy in the latter half of the next decade represents a logically coherent, and maybe compelling, way to augment his specific investigations into a full-fledged philosophical position, i.e., to augment them with a philosophically reflected and justified methodology. This applies both to his understand of his endeavour as a disciple that is merely characterized by its field of research and its method of research (i.e., along the lines of the famous collective announcement of the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, see 1987a: 25), as well as to Husserl's mature attempt at establishing a system of transcendental-

²⁹ The historical fact that in July-August 1913 Husserl was forced to rewrite the fourth chapter of the sixth logical investigation (2002a: 171 ff.) in order to turn it "into an argument for a radical form of idealism regarding real being" (Melle 2002: 122) also speaks against the hypothesis that, from the outset, Husserl was committed to a full-fledged idealism (on the perspectives of the resulting flavour of transcendental idealism, see Bernet 2004). Moreover, the philological fact that Husserl started with piecemeal alterations to the old text he had believed could suffice to "raise" the *Logische Untersuchungen* "to the level of the latest stage of his philosophical thinking" (Melle 2002: 112) seems to confirm that the first edition was not yet meant to embody any full-fledged philosophical position.

phenomenological philosophy. Consequently, I believe that, to settle this issue in a satisfactory fashion, it is necessary to identify the elements and sources of Husserl's idea of philosophy (as opposed to his idea of mere phenomenology) and to examine the extent to which Husserl's phenomenology gradually assumed philosophical functions over time. Ultimately, it is only by virtue of the latter distinctions that the results of a historical-developmental reconstruction can be made consistent with Husserl's later autobiographical overgeneralizations about the origins of his mature phenomenology, e.g., with the following statement from 1935–1936: “The first breakthrough of this universal a priori of correlation between experienced object and manners of givenness (which occurred during work on my *Logical Investigations* around 1898) affected me so deeply that my whole subsequent life-work has been dominated by the task of systematically elaborating on” it (1962: 169, n. 1, ET: 1970b: 166, n.)

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