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THE PROBLEM OF OCCASIONAL EXPRESSIONS IN EDMUND HUSSERL'S *LOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS*.[1]

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1. *Introduction*

Many philosophers educated either in an analytical or in a phenomenological tradition have come to feel that a confrontation between Husserlian and analytic philosophy might be fruitful. Most of them, however, are not satisfied with the form which this confrontation often assumes, especially if only the results rather than background problems and motivations of the two traditions are compared. They recognise that a comparison is bound to be very superficial if it cannot be shown that phenomenological and analytical theories are somehow distinct answers to the same or closely related questions and problems.

The present paper has two purposes. It is intended in the first place to elucidate a problem in the theory of meaning of the *Logical Investigations* which is left untouched by nearly all existing commentaries.[2] As far as I know, no one up to the present has thoroughly analysed the problem of occasional expressions in Husserl's first investigation, even though the problem was crucial for Husserl himself. Yet at the same time it is not easy to understand why Husserl raised it at all.

In the second place my paper can be read as a contribution to the confrontation between Husserlian phenomenology and the analytical tradition. For, as I shall try to show, the importance to Husserl of the problem of occasional expressions can only be understood in a wider context of difficulties concerning the concept of proposition, difficulties which Husserl does not handle thematically in the *Logical Investigations*. The concept of a proposition has on the other hand, been a favourite subject in the analytical tradition.

In order to introduce the problem of occasional expressions, I shall first sketch Husserl's theory of meaning as defended in the *Logical Investigations*.[3] After a description of the way in which the problem is raised in the text of the first investigation, I shall provide a *rational reconstruction of the problem in order to trace its hidden presuppositions. A second reconstruction will show the relevance of the problem for the concept of proposition.*

2. *The theory of meaning in the* Logical Investigations.

In the *Logical Investigations* Husserl combines all the often compet-

ing vices of classical theories of meaning: his theory is ideational, referential, and it says that the meaning of an expression is some kind of object. Nevertheless, the amalgam of these vices yields a virtue. The theory of meaning of the *Logical Investigations* is in fact more elaborate and subtle than most of its contemporaries as well as many modern contributions to the subject.

a. *The Ideational Aspect.*

Husserl's motive in proposing an ideational theory of meaning was to offer an explanation of the difference between signs (mainly conventional signs) and physical objects. In the important article *Psychologische Studien zur elementaren Logik* of 1894,[4] Husserl asks what the difference is between a perceived physical object and a perceived sign (p. 182).[5] Since it is possible that we first perceive a physical object without recognising it as a sign, and afterwards perceive the very same physical object as a sign, the difference cannot consist in some physical quality of the object. Still under the spell of the Cartesian mind-body dualism which he inherited from Brentano, Husserl draws the conclusion that the difference lies in the various modes of consciousness in which one and the same physical object is apprehended: perceiving an object simply as a physical object and perceiving it as a sign are, in the language of the *Logical Investigations*, heterogeneous *acts*. On the other hand, the difference between signs and the physical objects of the same shape and physical nature as these signs is usually called the meaning of the signs.[6] Consequently, Husserl looks for the meaning of signs in mental acts of a particular kind.

What distinguishes Husserl's theory from other mentalist theories of meaning is the care with which he investigates the nature of the mental acts to which signs owe their meaning. In respect to linguistic signs we have to distinguish at least three different mental acts: 1. The acts in which we perceive the physical objects used as signs. These acts are perceptual in the case for example of reading or listening to spoken words. But they can be acts of imagination too: when we think without reading or hearing physical word-signs, we have visual or acoustical word-images. 2. Acts in which perceived or imagined physical objects are apprehended as signs and through which they acquire meaning. Husserl calls these acts *meaning-intentions*. They presuppose acts of the first kind, and are interwoven with these. 3. Acts in which objects or states or affairs to which signs refer are perceived or imagined.

Husserl devotes a whole chapter to the refutation of the view, now out of fashion, to the effect that mental images are the acts bestowing meaning on the physical objects used as signs. Mental images can at best function as illustrations of the meaning of signs, in which case they are acts of the third kind. Mental images then enter into a particular relation with the corresponding meaning-intentions, a relation which Husserl calls *fulfilment*. A mental image fulfils a meaning-intention if it repre-

sents the state of affairs or situation to which certain signs refer on account of this meaning-intention. When a meaning-intention is fulfilled by an act of perception, the perception functions as verification of the meaning-intention. The concept of fulfilment plays a central role in the analysis of truth and obviousness (*Evidenz*) in the sixth investigation.

b. *The Referential Aspect.*

Another legacy which Husserl accepted from Brentano was the conception of mental acts as object-directed or intentional. According to this conception — which Husserl considerably modified[7] — the ideational character of Husserl's theory of meaning implies that it is also referential. But it is not referential in the sense that it identifies the meaning and the referent of an expression; on the contrary, Husserl warns emphatically against this view, which he considers a mistake. Nor does it mean that each expression refers to some existing object. Intentionality, says Husserl, is not a real relation presupposing the existence of the relata, but an inner characteristic of certain mental experiences.[8] Here we come once again across the problem of reference to non-existent objects, a problem which bothered Meinong and Russell so much. Husserl's solution of the problem in the *Logical Investigations* is very elegant: referring in itself, he says, is not a relation at all, and if we (mean to) refer, using certain expressions to which in fact nothing corresponds, the referring mental acts may be said to exist, though there is no referent.[9] Nevertheless, the object-directedness of all meaning-intentions implies a rather rich ontology. We can, by using substantives, refer to concrete or abstract entities ('dog', 'brotherhood', 'redness'); while by using adjectives, we can refer to particular moments of individuals ('red', 'loud'); prepositions such as 'upon' refer to particular relations between things or phenomena, and by means of logical constants we can refer to certain *categorical* (non-real) aspects of states of affairs.

c. *Meanings as objects.*

This last aspect of the theory of meaning of the *Logical Investigations* was without doubt considered most important by Husserl (df. sec. 28-29). In order to understand a philosophical theory of meaning one should always detect the function which the theory is intended to fulfil. After the refutation of the psychologistic epistemology of logic contained in the *Prolegomena*, Husserl tried to explain the objectivity of logical laws, in the second volume of the *Logical Investigations*, by means of a theory of meaning. The objective validity of logic is understood, by analogy with the validity of empirical sciences, as a validity conditional on the existence of certain objects existing independently of ourselves. The *a priori* validity of formal-logical laws is then accounted for by the specific non-empirical (timeless, ideal) character of these objects. This requirement disqualifies sentence-tokens of particular languages or mental acts as the objects of logical investigation. Bolzano, whose *Wissenschaftslehre* Husserl claims to have rediscovered, had said that logical laws were about

Sätze an sich or propositions. But the ontological nature of propositions had to remain obscure for Husserl as long as their relation to sentence-tokens and meaning-intentions was not clarified. In the *Logical Investigations* Husserl solves the problem by identifying propositions with the supposedly ideal meanings of sentences and by explaining these ideal meanings as *species* of the meaning-intentions bestowing meaning on these sentences.[10] The existence of ideal species accounts for the *a priori* validity of logical laws, whereas the fact that these species are species of meaning-intentions is meant to explain the further fact that logical laws can be applied to actual reasoning.[11] The way in which ideal species do exist, finally, should not be confused with the mode of existence of objects perceptible by the sense, a point already made by Lotze in his interpretation of Plato's Theory of Ideas. Husserl's reading of Lotze enabled him to overcome his empiricist aversion to ideal entities.[12] The ideal species of the meaning-intentions belonging to an expression is called the *objective meaning* of this expression, though we should note that Husserl uses the term 'objective' to form yet another compound expression, as we shall see below.

3. *The problem of occasional expressions*

In section 26 of the first investigation, Husserl draws a distinction between *subjective or occasional* and *objective* expressions. Occasional expressions are expression-types, the tokens of which we cannot understand without some knowledge of the context of utterance. In order to understand, for instance, an expression of the same type as 'I wish you good luck', we should need to know who is speaking and who is addressed. An expression is objective, on the other hand, if the mere reading or hearing of its tokens by a competent speaker of the language is sufficient for him to understand its meaning. We understand objective expressions without any knowledge of the situation of utterance. The expression '2 + 5 = 7' is objective.

Husserl justifies his rather extensive treatment of occasional expressions by arguing that occasional expressions endanger his distinction between meaning-intentions and ideal meanings or the species of meaning-intentions. Occasional expressions, he claims initially, lack an objective meaning (sec. 26, p. 82; cf. sec. 24).

It is easy to see that this claim, if true, would very seriously undermine Husserl's philosophy of logic. For objective meanings are the real objects of formal-logical laws (Prol., passim; 1st inv. sec. 29). If occasional expressions lacked objective meanings, formal logic would not apply to them. But this consequence would surrender our practical life to complete irrationality, because almost all expressions used in this practical life are occasional (cf. 1st inv. p. 81). The scope of formal logic, an indispensible means to rationality, would be confined to abstract sciences like pure mathematics.

It is less easy, and this constitutes the problem of occasional ex-

pressions for us, to understand why Husserl made this claim. Why do occasional expressions according to Husserl lack (or seem to lack) an objective meaning? His line of argument may be reconstructed as follows:

1. Different tokens of occasional expressions refer to different objects.
2. If different tokens of occasional expressions refer to different objects, there must be essentially different meaning-intentions associated with these tokens (first inv. p. 79-80).
3. The objective meaning of an expression is the ideal species of the meaning-intentions normally associated with tokens of that expression.
4. As essentially different objects cannot be instances of the same lowest common species, 2 and 3 entail that there must be different objective meanings or species of meaning-intentions associated with occasional expressions. For objective meanings are the lowest common species of meaning intentions.[13]
5. 4 entails that all occasional expressions are ambiguous, an ambiguous expression being an expression with which different objective meanings are associated (cf. p. 79-80).
6. But we do not call all occasional expressions ambiguous. In consequence, the different ideal species of meaning-intentions associated with occasional expressions cannot be the objective meaning(s) of these expressions. Should we then say that occasional expressions do not have any objective meaning at all?

This is Husserl's initial claim which, conflicting with his general view on logic and the possible rationality of human life, constitutes the problem of occasional expressions. Since 6 in part expresses an unquestionable fact (namely that occasional expressions are not ambiguous *per se*), and in part follows from this fact and (1—5), this statement (6) can be considered as a *reductio ad absurdum* of at least one of the first five statements. Thus, in order to solve his problem, Husserl has to drop one of these statements. But the truth of 1 cannot be denied, while Husserl takes 4 and 5 for granted. 3 constitutes one of the central points of his philosophy of logic in the *Logical Investigations:* without 3, Husserl is not able to explain that formal-logical laws, though they concern in the first place ideal objects, can nevertheless be applied to real processes of reasoning. So the most easily disputed statement is 2. I shall first consider the reasons Husserl has for asserting 2, and then the manner in which he shortly afterwards, drops it in order to solve his problem of occasional expressions.

A first obstacle for the reader of the *Logical Investigations* in understanding why Husserl ever held 2 is that 2, together with the unquestioned statements 3 and 4, yields the conclusion that different

tokens of occasional expressions can only refer to different objects on the assumption that occasional expressions have in each case more than one objective meaning. But this conclusion clearly contradicts a thesis Husserl defended in section 12, namely that:

7. two tokens of an expression can have different referents, though they have one and the same meaning.

The latter thesis is rather crucial, because it is one of Husserl's (two) arguments for drawing the distinction between the meaning and the referent of an expression. Husserl's example here is the expression 'a horse'. If we say "Bucephalus is a horse", the expression 'a horse' refers, says Husserl,[14] to another object than that referred to when we say "this old crock is a horse". Nevertheless the meaning of 'a horse' is the same in both sentences (sec. 12, p. 47-48). And one cannot save Husserl from this contradiction between 2 + 3 + 4 and 7 by arguing that the first three statements concern occasional expressions, whereas 7 does not. For Husserl himself admits that 'a horse' is an occasional expression too (sec. 26, p. 85, and Preface to the second edition, LU I, xiv).

Considering that 2, being the most problematical statement, must be held responsible for this contradiction, we should expect Husserl to supply strong arguments in its defence, even if we assume that he was not acutely aware of the inconsistency. But the contrary is the case. He derives his only explicit argument mainly from an analysis of the personal pronoun 'I', a pronoun which seems to offer its own special difficulties for philosophical analysis, as suggested by the recent controversy concerning a lecture of Miss Anscombe.[15] A generalisation from statements about the pronoun 'I' to all occasional expressions including 'a horse' is anyhow rather adventurous.

In spite of considerable differences in their respective treatments of 'I', Miss Anscombe and Husserl start from a common presupposition. They both assume that:

8. in order to be available for use as a referring expression, an expression should have a meaning which can be expressed in other words in such a way that

9. these words can be substituted for all the tokens of the original expression *salva veritate*.[16]

Both Miss Anscombe and Husserl go on to argue that such words cannot be found or, (in the case of Miss Anscombe) if they can be found, that they do not "explain 'I' as a 'referring expression' ". But they part company in their conclusions. Miss Anscombe expects a solution of all (her) problems to follow from the thesis that 'I' is not a referring expression at all, though she admits the rule "If X asserts something with 'I' as subject, this assertion will be true if and only if what he asserts is true of X".[17] This sounds rather paradoxical, but perhaps Miss Anscombe intends only to reject 8 and 9.

Husserl, however, not being able to find one expression satisfying conditions 8 and 9 for tokens of 'I' (I will not consider the question of whether he looked hard enough or whether his strict requirements for synonymy are tenable; cf. note 16), first drew the conclusion that there must be more than one meaning associated with 'I' and with occasional expressions in general, namely one for each referent (4, implying 2 *via* 3). Then, on the ground that occasional expressions are not ambiguous *per se*, he rejected 4 and took up the thesis that occasional expressions do not have an objective meaning at all (6). But this, as I argued, would involve a surrender to irrationality, an outcome somewhat incongruous with Husserl's rationalistic ideal of the philosophical life.[18] Besides, it would also destroy the possibility of most scientific activity. We shall see that Husserl finally abandoned 9.

It might be illuminating to draw attention to another possible reason for the fact that Husserl held 2 and 4, a reason not expressly argued in the text but all the more important because it lies, so to say, in the conceptual substructure of his theory of meaning. As explained above, the physical expression derives its meaning according to Husserl from a special kind of act, the meaning-intention. This meaning-intention is *qua* mental act, always object-directed (sec. 12).

Husserl distinguishes in mental acts two aspects which are essential to every act, *quality* and *matter* (5th investigation, sec. 20). His definitions of the quality of an act are not always in conformity with each other (cf. sec. 20 of the 5th inv. with sec. 27 of the 6th), but that is not important for us. For us, only the matter matters. The matter of an act is defined as that aspect in the act which is (or confers on the act) its directedness to a determinate object (5th inv. sec. 20, p. 415).

Within the matter of an act, Husserl draws yet another distinction. The matter of an act not only determines *upon which* object the act bears, but also *as what* this object is apprehended by the act (ibid., 415-416). We could paraphrase this latter distinction as a distinction between a referent-determining aspect and a sense-determining aspect of the matter of an act. It implies, as Husserl remarks explicitly, that two acts with the same matter cannot have different referents (p. 416).

But, and this is the crucial point, he identifies the objective meaning of an expression with the species of (the essence of) the meaning-intentions associated with it, while the essence of a meaning-intention includes *the whole matter* (cf. 5th inv., sec. 21; 6th inv. sec. 25). In other words: each objective meaning includes a reference to one particular referent, so that expressions the tokens of which can be used to refer to different objects must have different objective meanings (cf. 2 and 4). The origin of the problem of occasional expressions turns out to be a fundamental difficulty in Husserl's conceptual substructure, a difficulty which tends to blur the distinction between sense and reference.

I turn now to Husserl's solution of the problem of occasional expressions in the *Logical Investigations*. As the problem arises upon the

presupposition that there is *only one* meaning-intention which determines *both* the meaning of an expression-token *and* the particular referent, while the objective meaning is the species of this meaning-intention (cf. 2, 4), the *prima facie* solution of the problem is to split the meaning-intention into two different acts, one of which determines the particular referent, the other serving as an instance of the species which is the relevant objective meaning (= partial rejection of 2). In that case there would be one objective meaning belonging to an occasional expression, while tokens of the expression can still be used to refer to different objects. And this is exactly the solution Husserl proposes:

> We have to admit that here two meaning-intentions are built upon each other in a peculiar way. The first concerns the general function. It is associated with the word in such a way that a referring function will be possible in actual consciousness. This function supports, in its turn, the other, singular representation, and characterizes its object as the *hic et nunc* meant object . . . (1st inv. sec. 26, p. 83).[19]

This distinction between two kinds of meaning-intentions — one very general function which indicates that a reference of some kind is made, and one particular meaning-intention determining the particular object referred to by each token of the expression — seems to allow Husserl on the one hand to escape the conclusion that occasional expressions are hopelessly ambiguous, having as many objective meanings as possible referents, and on the other hand to maintain the distinction, with regard to occasional expressions, between meaning-intentions as instances and objective meanings as species. To each occasional expression(-type) corresponds: one general objective meaning, being the ideal species of the general meaning-intentions, and an open class of particular meaning-intentions, determining the reference of each particular token of the expression. The objective meaning can be described ('I' means: the speaker or author of the moment, referring to himself), but this description cannot be substituted for 'I' in each expression-token *salve veritate*. Husserl maintains 8, but rejects his strong version 9 (ibid., p. 82; cf. note 16).

Nevertheless, this cleavage of the meaning-intentions connected with occasional expressions does not get Husserl out of trouble. If, as his statement (3) says, an objective meaning is the ideal species of all essentially similar meaning-intentions (a unity in the manifold, as Husserl explains the meaning of 'ideal'), it follows that all particular meaning-intentions connected with occasional expression-tokens having one and the same referent would be instances of an ideal or objective meaning. Consequently, each occasional expression would have an infinite set of objective meanings apart from its general objective meaning, because tokens of the expression can be used to refer to infinitely many objects. Consistent application of 3 to Husserl's solution of the problem of occasional expressions would thus regenerate the original problem. Each meaning-intention must be an instance of a lowest common species embracing all essentially similar meaning-intentions, and all particular meaning-intentions having the same object are essentially similar to each

other and essentially different from meaning-intentions having another object. Therefore an occasional expression has infinitely many ideal species of particular meaning-intentions connected with it and is, as a consequence of 3, hopelessly ambiguous.

The problem of occasional expressions is, it appears, insoluble as long as one holds on to 3. This suggests a very important conclusion of my analysis: *that the problem of occasional expressions might have been one of the major reasons leading Husserl to abandon 3, the thesis that ideal meanings are species of meaning-intentions*, a thesis, as we have seen, which is crucial to the philosophy of logic in the *Logical Investigations*.

To complete the present section, I will adduce some additional support for this conclusion. First, Husserl himself relates the problem of occasional expressions to the rejection of the species-theory of meaning (3; the theory that ideal meanings are species) in the preface to the second edition of the *Logical Investigations*. There he calls his solution to the problem an *act of violence* and adds that it resulted of necessity from his inadequate conception of the essence of *truths-in-themselves* in the *Prolegomena* (LU I, p. xiv). It is very plausible that Husserl is using the expression 'inadequate conception of the essence of *truths-in-themselves*' to refer to his 3, namely that *truths-in-themselves* or (true) propositions, being objective meanings of (true) declarative sentences, are *species* of the meaning-intentions associated with these sentences.[20] For we saw that the persistency of the problem of occasional expressions was due to 3.

A second and very strong reason for accepting my conclusion lies in the fact that Husserl rejects the species-theory of meaning in two steps. In 1908 he rejects the thesis that *empirical meanings* are species of meaning-intentions, although he maintains 3 for propositions concerning essences or *a priori meanings*. But in 1920 he has rejected 3 for all kinds of meanings.[21] Empirical meanings (of declarative sentences) are defined as meanings, whose truth-value varies according to whether they are meant to concern reality or fancy.[22] The truth-value of an *a priori* meaning such as '$2 < 3$' is however the same in both cases.[23] Now, it is easy to see that the class of the meanings of occasional statements coincides with the class of empirical meanings, while all objective expressions have *a priori* meanings. For an expression can be objective in Husserl's sense solely if all its tokens must have the same referent, and this is, according to his interpretation of mathematical and formal-logical propositions, only the case in those "abstract" sciences which are *a priori*. The truth-value of occasional statements on the other hand varies with the referent and is dependent on the existence of the referent in reality. This implies that the meanings of occasional statements are *empirical*. Husserl therefore rejects the species-theory of meaning first for occasional expressions, and only later for objective expressions.[24]

The fact that Husserl rejects his species-theory of meaning in two stages cannot be explained by the official, *phenomenological* reasons by which he justifies this rejection in his published works:[25] these reasons

apply equally well to objective expressions as to occasional expressions. His first reason is that, though propositions are ideal — because many speakers are able to express one and the same proposition by means of many different meaning-intentions — this ideality of propositions should not be explained as the unity of a *species* in opposition to the plurality of its instances. This is because we do not know propositions or the meanings of expressions by *Wesensschau*. *Wesensschau* presupposes comparison of the instances of the species and abstraction of the common essence of the instances from their individual differences. But in order to know the meaning of an expression, it is not necessary to reflect on and to compare various meaning-intentions associated with this expression, as the species-theory of the *Logical Investigations* implied. Secondly, Husserl argues that ideal meanings do not have instances at all. Each meaning-intention belonging to an expression-type "means" one and the same identical proposition, the ideal meaning of the expression. There is no counterpart in reality to these ideal meanings, as Husserl thought in the *Logical Investigations*.[25]

Of course one could question the force of these arguments. The second argument presupposes Husserl's later *noematical* theory of meaning and consequently cannot be an independent argument in its favour. In the language of the *Logical Investigations* it would be plainly false to say that a meaning-intention *means* the ideal meaning: the meaning-intention means the referent of an expression, not its ideal meaning (cf. 1st inv., sec. 13). Only after *Ideas I*, where intentionality becomes an object-directedness to and through a *noema* or meaning, is it possible to say that a meaning-intention means its meaning. Needless to say, in this noematical theory of meaning the distinction between meaning and referent becomes even more difficult to maintain than in the *Logical Investigations*.[26]

Nor is the first argument very convincing. This is not so much because Husserl in the *Logical Investigations* thought that a *Wesensschau* was possible on the basis of one instance and without comparison. But the noematical theory of meaning implies that we should have to practise noematical reflection in order to know meanings or noemas. And does not noematical reflection require the whole cumbersome apparatus of phenomenological reductions, which no one except Husserl could manage? Thus, the noematical theory of meaning implies that it is nearly impossible to know the meaning of an expression, an embarrassment which was absent for the Husserl of the *Logical Investigations*, who claimed that everyone practises *Wesensschau* wittingly or unwittingly.

The upshot of my argument might be that the problem of occasional expressions not only was one of Husserl's major motives in rejecting the species-theory of meaning in relation to occasional expressions in 1908, but was the inducement to reject it with respect to objective expressions too, his official reasons being not altogether convincing. Even if the last part of this conclusion is over-daring, it seems that Husserl must have had other reasons to reject the species-theory of meaning and to accept the

noematical theory than the official reasons summarized above, in part because these reasons already presuppose the new theory and in part because they are no less problematic than the motives for the species-theory.

Lastly, I want to draw attention to the restricted scope of my conclusion. One should not confuse reasons for rejecting the species-theory with reasons for accepting the noematical theory. The problem of occasional expressions was such a reason for the former type, but this does not imply that it is one for the latter, other alternatives for the species-theory being possible.

4. *Propositions and formal logic*

The equivalence of occasional expressions used to make declarative statements with *empirical meanings*, and the fact that Husserl defines empirical meaning in his unedited manuscripts on logic[27] in terms of truth-values, suggests another reconstruction of the problem of occasional expressions. This second reconstruction is not supported by the text of the first investigation, but some problem of this kind may have lurked behind the scenes. It runs as follows:

10. Propositions (*Sätze an sich*) are the objective meanings of declarative sentences.
11. Formal logic seems to require that a particular proposition always has one and the same truth-value (either true or false). For propositions are conceived as the values of propositional variables, while each substitution-instance of a determinate propositional variable should have one and the same truth-value (within a single chain of argument).
12. Different tokens of one and the same occasional expression can be used to make both true and false statements, depending on the accidental referent and other circumstances.
13. From 11 and 12 it follows that occasional expressions may express different propositions.
14. And from 10 and 13 that they are ambiguous *per se*.
15. But, as he does not want to accept that all occasional expressions are ambiguous *per se*, Husserl first denies that occasional expressions have any objective meaning whatsoever (cf. 6 and 1st. inv., sec. 26). This implies however, that they do not express propositions (*via* 10) and that formal logic does not apply to them (*via* 11), clearly an unacceptable conclusion.

Husserl's way out of the problem of occasional expressions in the first investigation consisted in a fission of the meaning-intentions associated with the tokens of occasional expressions. The objective meaning of an occasional expression would be the ideal species of the

general meaning-intention, while the reference-determining meaning-intentions did not contribute to the objective meaning at all. Translated into the terms of our second reconstruction, this solution amounts to excluding from the constituents of objective meanings all elements that might force us to consider objective meanings as the expression of a plurality of propositions (of course, the reference-determining aspect is only one of these elements!). In this way, Husserl might have hoped, the identity of objective meanings and propositions (10) could be saved. For without this identity and the species-theory of meaning, Husserl was not able to understand the particular nature of propositions at the time of the *Logical Investigations*.[28]

But this hope is in vain. In excluding the referent-determining aspect from the propositions expressed by occasional expressions, one deprives these propositions not only of unstable truth-values, but of truth-values altogether! And this cannot have been Husserl's intention, because propositions without potential truth-values are useless for logic.

In order to solve the problem of occasional expressions reconstructed in the last way, Husserl could have simply rejected 10, the identification of propositions with the objective meanings of declarative sentences. But I don't think he did. Neither the rejection of the species-theory of meaning, nor the acceptance of the noematic theory could have helped him here. The noematic theory of meaning, moreover, does not solve the problem of occasional expressions in the first reconstruction either. The problem was a motive for abandoning the species-theory, but it did not constitute a reason for accepting the noematical theory.

In fact, Husserl went in another direction. It is commonplace in the analytical tradition to consider ontologically queer objects (e.g., propositions) as *logical constructions*. Such logical constructions are harmless as long as one keeps in mind the principles of construction. But as soon as one forgets these principles, the precise sense in which it can be said that these entities "exist" tends to be assimilated to other uses of the verb "to exist", and a lot of insoluble metaphysical problems will arise. The philosophical remedy for this kind of metaphysics is to retrace by means of *logical reconstruction* the way in which the entity was constructed.

What I want to suggest now, is that Husserl's concept of constitution can be seen as the expression of a similar insight. All the difficulties bound up with Platonic realism for instance, including theological and other metaphysical interpretations of Platonic Ideas, are due for Husserl to the fact that the insight into the way in which geometrical and other kinds of ideal objects were originally constituted was lost in Plato's times. Husserl even invented a special name for this kind of oblivion: *Sinnentleerung*.[29] The main problems of modern European epistemology are, according to him, caused by such a *Sinnentleerung:* by interpreting the mathematical formulae of physics as truths about a colourless and geometrical world-in-itself and thus devaluing the world of the senses, the scientific method

became an insoluble riddle. The scientific hypothesis about the "real" world-in-itself had to be verified by the "illusionary" world of the senses. The metaphysical constructions from Descartes to Kant were meant as solutions to this riddle. But they were unsuccessful, because they failed to grasp that the whole complex of epistemological problems was conditioned by a *Sinnentleerung* of the scientific method. As opposed to what these modern epistemologists believed, the mathematical world is not the cause of the world of the senses, but a veil of ideas as it were, constituted on the basis of the world of the senses.[30]

What the philosopher should do in cases like these, is to restore the original constitutive sense of the ontologically queer entities by an analysis of their original constitution, delivering them as a result from their queerness. This programme for philosophy is rather similar to the programme for logical reconstruction of the analytical tradition. Insight into this similarity is hampered, however, by the fact that the concept of constitution has so many other uses in Husserl's philosophy, uses that we should no longer accept. Owing to Husserl's rather subtle but still representational theory of perception, the concept of constitution gets idealistic resonances, and it is central to his *transcendental idealism*. Furthermore, he sometimes seemed to think that constitutional analysis could give us an amount of certainty we think nowadays to be unattainable.[31] In Husserl, as everywhere in the philosophies of past and present, we have to distinguish the fruitful from the untenable elements.

The relation of all this to the problem of occasional expressions consists in the possibility of reading a chapter of *Formale und Transzendentale Logik* (FTL)[32] as a (rather programmatic) solution to the problem of occasional expressions as formulated in my second reconstruction, a solution effected by means of *constitutional criticism* of the concept of a proposition. The chapter in question is centered around the idea that the concept of a proposition of formal logic is the product of several idealisations or idealising presuppositions. These suppositions should be identified in order to determine the precise scope of formal logic. Formal logicians take it for granted, for example, that several occurrences of a propositional variable always stand for one and the same proposition. This presupposes the possibility of identifying the meanings of what are in principle indefinitely many expression-tokens as one and the same. But these logicians do not ask how such an identification is possible (FTL, sec. 73). Furthermore, the principles of contradiction and of *tertium non datur* presuppose, in conjunction, that the truth-value of each proposition is somehow determined, that it is true or false *an sich*. These presuppositions (paraphrasing Husserl) are constitutive for propositions in the way in which these are often conceived (cf. 1 above). Or in other words: propositions are constituted as ideal objects according to two rules of constitution or construction: a proposition is conceived of as the identical meaning-entity of all possible tokens of synonymous ex-

pressions and, in order to be a suitable value of a propositional variable, as an object always having a determinate and unchanging truth-value.

It is important to stress that Husserl calls these two rules or presuppositions *idealisations*. This leaves open the possibility that the conditions which they express cannot be entirely fulfilled in certain cases. And as these conditions are presuppositions of formal logic, this entails that formal logic does not apply to such cases, or that it does apply, but only within certain limits.

Occasional expressions are a good example here, and it is not by accident that Husserl returns to the problem of occasional expressions in section 80 of FTL. For the constitution according to the first rule of a proposition belonging to an occasional expression does not render an ideal entity which can satisfy the second rule too. Different tokens of an occasional expression, in other words, can have the same meaning but nevertheless a different truth-value. The problem of occasional expressions arose in the *Logical Investigations*, so one might extrapolate from the arguments of section 80 of FTL, because Husserl hypostatized propositions, disregarding the rules of their constitution. This explains Husserl's fork in the *Logical Investigations:* either an expression has an objective meaning, being a proposition with a determinate and unchanging truth-value (10, 11), or an expression has no objective meaning at all. Alternatively: either all tokens of an expression always express the same proposition with the same truth-value, and formal logic applies to them, or the tokens of an expression do not express a proposition and consequently fall outside the scope of formal logic.

Occasional expressions resisted this fork. Tokens of occasional expressions do not always express one and the same proposition. Nevertheless, it seems that formal logic can be applied to them. Neither Husserl's first solution (fission of meaning-intentions) nor his second (rejection of the species-theory of meaning) could account for this fact.

Perhaps Husserl already in the first edition of the *Logical Investigations* felt the inadequacy of his solution for the problem of occasional expressions. For he advances a kind of supplementary solution in section 28 of the first investigation. Ideally, each token of an occasional expression can, he claims, be substituted by a token of an objective expression (LU II/1, p. 90). Because all tokens of objective expressions must have, by definition, the same referent and the same truth-value, they all express one and the same proposition. It is this ideal of universal substitution of objective for occasional expressions that guarantees the universal scope of formal logic and the "universality of objective reason" (ibid.). But Husserl himself appears to recognise that even this ideal does not solve the problem. For it is unattainable, not only in fact, but even in principle (ibid., p. 90-91).

I hope the reader perceives the similarity between Husserl's problems and well-known puzzles of the analytical tradition. Many logicians have in fact accepted Husserl's 10 and 11. This should have induced them to pose the problem of occasional expressions. Equally, the concept of an

ideal language is well known in the analytical tradition, and has been criticised along lines similar to Husserl's. But finally, the reader will want to know how this constitutive analysis solves the problem of occasional expressions. But here we meet with a difficulty: for Husserl does not tell.

Where the text remains silent, the commentator may be allowed to make his own proposal. The fundamental rule of all constitution is that the constituted object is a unity or identity in a given manifold. Thus all constituted objects are *ideal* in the broadest sense: a unity in a manifold. Out of the manifold of concrete tokens of an expression, the ideal expression is constituted as the ideal type of these tokens. Out of the manifold of synonymous expressions, the objective meaning is constituted, and the objective meaning of a declarative sentence is called a proposition. According to this first line of constitution, a proposition can be defined as the identical meaning of an open class of synonymous declarative sentences ('synonymous' keeping the common and rather vague sense of 'having the same meaning').

But there was still another rule for the constitution of propositions. This second rule is motivated by the needs of formal logic. The logician, looking for a class of objects appropriate as the values of propositional variables, defined propositions as objects always having the same truth-value.

I summarised these two lines of constitution in 10 and 11. The problem of occasional expressions arose because the two rules for constitution of propositions may conflict in the case of occasional expressions. What should one do in the event of such a conflict? Husserl would probably not have accepted the proposal which follows, because his constitutional analysis has a rather conservative flavour. What I want to suggest is that the conflict shows the incoherence of Husserl's concept of a proposition and that we should in consequence drop it altogether. Husserl's propositions are, one might say, misleading hypostatizations of two conditions for the application of laws of the propositional calculus to declarative sentences: that all sentence-tokens substituted for tokens of the same variable in one argument-scheme should have the same meaning and the same truth-value. The hypostatization of these conditions prevented Husserl from seeing that these conditions might be fulfilled for certain chains of reasoning incorporating tokens of occasional expressions, though other tokens of the expressions in use might be used to make statements with another truth-value than that of the statements of this chain of reasoning. Thus, the application of formal logic to occasional expressions does not require that these expressions be replaced by objective expressions. It requires only special care in ascertaining whether the two conditions are fulfilled. Such care may be more easily taken if one states these conditions without hypostatizing them into a theory of propositions.[33]

To conclude by referring to an insight of Husserl himself: I want to stress the importance of his view that the second condition for application of formal logic contains an idealisation. It holds that each statement of an argument should have a determinate truth-value: true or false. This

condition is all-important in the propositional calculus. It is presupposed by the principle of the excluded middle and by the use of two-valued truth-tables. Now, if this condition is an idealisation, it is possible that it cannot in principle be satisfied in some cases, namely if the truth-value of a statement cannot be determined at all. This would prohibit the application of two-valued logic to these cases. Husserl does not consider the question of how to distinguish these cases in which the truth-value of a statement cannot in principle be determined, a question central to the debate around intuitionism in mathematics. But his theory of idealising presuppositions of formal logic might be seen as a generalisation and philosophical justification of the intuitionistic criticism of two-valued logic.

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References

1. Paper read at a conference of The British Society for Phenomenology, St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, April 1980. All references are to the second German edition of 1913/1921, abbreviated as LU. The considerable differences between the second edition and the first of 1900/1901 do not affect the problem of occasional expressions. In order to enable the English reader to find references in the English translation of J. N. Findlay (Routledge 1970), I will also refer to section numbers. Section numbers without further indication refer to sections of the first investigation of the second volume. I should like to thank Dr. B. Smith for his stimulating criticism of an earlier draft of this paper, and Dr. Grahame Lock of Leiden University for correctig many mistakes in English, the remaining ones being for my account, of course.
2. E.g., J. Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène*, PUF 1967, 1972; R. Schérer, *La Phénoménologie des "Recherches Logiques" de Husserl*, PUF 1967. An exception is J. N. Mohanty, who treats the problem in his book *Edmund Husserl's Theory of Meaning*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1964, p. 77-80. But he only gives a summary of the text, adding a comparison with Russell and some criticism of his own. For a bibliography, see J. N. Mohanty, ed., *Readings on Edmund Husserl's 'Logical Investigations'*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1977.
3. It is important to stress that Husserl produced at least three different theories of meaning: one at the time of the *Philosophie der Arithmetik* of 1891, cf. *Husserliana*, Band XII, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1970, p. 340-373; one in the *Logical Investigations*; and the later *noematical* theory of meaning, in the *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* of 1913 and later works.
4. *Philosophische Monatshefte* 30 (1894), 159-191. Reprinted in B. Rang, ed., *Edmund Husserl, Aufsätze und Rezensionen (1890-1910)*, *Husserliana* XXII, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1979, 92-123. An English translation by D. Willard will be found in *The Personalist* 58 (1977), 295-320.
5. Cf. LU II/1, p. 40 and 66.
6. Also by opponents of the ideational theory, who prefer to conceive the difference between signs and (other) physical objects or events in terms of rules. Cf. e.g., H. Reichenbach, *Experience and Prediction*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1938, 1976, p. 17 and 18.
7. Cf. Th. De Boer, *De Ontwikkelingsgang in het denken van Husserl*, Assen 1966, p. 4-67 and p. 168-171. Translated by Th. Plantinga as *The Development of Husserl's Thought*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1978.
8. 5th Investigation, section 11. As Husserl solved the problem of reference to non-existing entities satisfactorily in the *Logical Investigations*, it seems unlikely that he introduced his later noematical theory of meaning as a solution for this problem. Cf. D. Føllesdal, 'Husserl's Notion of Noema', *Journ. Philos.* 66 (1969), 680-687 and 'An Introduction to Phenomenology for Analytic Philosophers' in: R. E. Olson and A. M. Paul eds., *Contemporary Philosophy in Scandanavia*, London 1972, 417-429; W. Stegmüller, *Hauptströmungen der Gegenwartsphilosophie*, Bd. II, Kröner 1975, 86-103.

9. Ibid., LU II/1, p. 373. Cf. p. 425.
10. Cf. Husserl, 'Melchior Palágyi, Der Streit der Psychologisten und Formalisten in der modernen Logik', in: *Zeits. f. Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane* 31 (1903), reprinted in B. Rang, ed., *Edmund Husserl, Aufsätze und Rezensionen (1890-1910)* (cf. note 4), p. 151-161. Husserl's *Bedeutung* is equivalent to Frege's *Sinn* (cf. first inv. sec. 15). But it is important to note that Husserl's use of Bedeutung is ambiguous: sometimes he means the *ideal* or *objective* meaning, sometimes the instances of the ideal meaning: the meaning-intentions. Cf. note 19.
11. LU I, 100-101. Cf. D. Willard, 'The Paradox of Logical Psychologism: Husserl's Way Out', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 9 (1972), 94-100. Husserl makes a curious presupposition here: that laws about ideal species are *eo ipso* valid for the instances of these species.
12. Cf. the review of Palágyi mentioned in note 10. The influence of Lotze seems to have been far more important than that of Frege, stressed by analytically trained authors. Cf. Husserl's 'Entwurf einer "Vorrede" zu den "Logischen Untersuchungen" ' of 1913, in: *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* I (1939), especially pp. 128-129 (Engl. translation by P. J. Bossert, *Outline of a 'Preface' to the Logical Investigations*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1975), and *Formale und transzendentale Logik, Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft, Husserliana* Bd. XVII, Nijhoff, The Hague 1974, p. 271, section 100 (English transl. by D. Cairns, Nijhoff 1969). The influence of Frege is stressed by D. Føllesdal, *Husserl und Frege*, Oslo 1958, and many other authors following in his wake. It is disputed on good grounds, however, by J. N. Mohanty, 'Husserl and Frege: A New Look at their Relationship' in: *Research in Phenomenology* IV (1974), 51-62.

    For a bibliography on Husserl-Frege studies, see B. Smith, 'Frege and Husserl: The Ontology of Reference', appendix, in: *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 9 (1978), p. 125. One might add to this list R. C. Solomon, 'Husserl's Concept of the Noema', in: F. A. Elliston and P. McCormick eds., *Husserl, Expositions and Appraisals*, Notre Dame and London, 1977, p. 168-181.
13. The concept of lowest common species is treated in Husserl's *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie* etc., I, (1913), section 12. Translated into English by W. R. Boyce Gibson, London and New York 1931, 1974.
14. Husserl clearly has a different concept of reference (*objektive Beziehung*) from us today. According to the modern use of the term, predicative expressions do not refer (= identify the referent) but characterise the referent in a certain way.
15. G. E. M. Anscombe, 'The First Person', one of the Wolfson College Lectures, delivered at the University of Oxford in Hilary term 1974. Published in S. Guttenplan ed., *Mind and Language*, Oxf. Univ. Press, 1975, p. 45-65.
16. Husserl, in fact, is more demanding: he requires identity of meaning. I will not go into this point here. Husserl's distinction between equivalence and identity of meaning plays an important role in his *Philosophie der Arithmetik*, but it is rather obscure and would call for a treatment of its own.
17. G. E. M. Anscombe, o.c., p. 60.
18. Husserl's ideal of the philosophical life is best expressed in his later works. Cf. E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der Europaischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1962, section 1-7.
19. For my rendering of 'Bedeutung' as 'meaning-intention', see note 10, second half.
20. Cf. E. Husserl, *Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1968, p. 10 and 63; 'Brief an Ingarden' d.d. 5. IV. 1918, *Zeits. f. Philos. Forschung* XIII (1959), p. 349; *Formale und transzendentale Logik, Husserliana* XVII, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1974, p. 163, footnote.
21. Cf. R. Bernet, 'Bedeutung und intentionales Bewusstsein. Husserls Begriff des Bedeutungsphänomens', in: *Phänomenologische Forschungen* 8, München 1979, 31-64; pp. 50-51 and 55-56.
22. Bernet o.c. p. 51.
23. Cf. for this definition Descartes, first Meditation: " . . . car soit que je veille ou que je dorme, deux et trois joints ensemble formeront toujours le nombre de cinq . . . ".
24. Cf. Bernet, o.c. p. 52-58.
25. E. Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, Untersuchungen zur Genealogie der Logik (1939), 5th edition, Felix Meiner, Hamburg, 1976. English translation by J. S. Churchill and K. Ameriks, Evanston: North-western University Press, 1973. I am referring to section 64d.
26. Cf. Bernet, o.c. p. 59-63.
27. Cf. Bernet, o.c. p. 51, footnote 4.

28. Cf. the review of Palágyi mentioned in note 10.
29. *Die Krisis* etc. (cf. note 18) section 9g.
30. *Die Krisis* etc., section 8-34.
31. Husserl himself criticised this belief in an absolute and incorrigible certainty in *Formale und transzendentale Logik*, section 59 and 60. So one should be careful not to conceive Husserl as unambiguously engaged in a Quest for Certainty, as L. Kolakowsky does in *Husserl and the Search for Certitude*, Yale University Press 1975. A much more subtle analysis of this point is given by E. Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1967, section 9 and 10.
32. See note 12. I am referring to Chapter 3 of the second *Abschnitt*, section 73-81.
33. These conditions might be stated in a more refined way. Cf. S. Haack, *Philosophy of Logics*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979, p. 83-85.