Chapter 6

Husserl: Intentionality and Indexical Context in the Life-world

With Edmund Husserl we reach a kind of culmination of the discussion of the logical and experiential aspects of reference which Mill initiated and to which Frege, Russell and Peirce made important and complementary contributions. In Husserl, as in these others, indexicality makes an appearance as a crucial aspect of the theory of reference, required by natural language reference to objects of immediate experience; and once again it provokes positions which play a significant role in the overall development of a theory of language and meaning. Husserl, like Frege, views Mill as both the initiator of a new era of logical rigor and as a prime example of the dangers of psychologism for the foundational security of logic (including, in particular, the logical theory of mathematics). Mill's thoughts on the name relation, including the denotation/connotation distinction, provided a starting point for finer grained analyses which led both Frege and Husserl to propose new and more informative distinctions. But Husserl's interest in aspects of meaning outside of mathematical and scientific contexts, and his appreciation for the social aspects of language and meaning, led him to views of natural language which have much more in common with Peirce's than is usually recognized.1 Certainly Husserl is as concerned as Russell with the link between referential meaning and the kind of direct experience which Russell called

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1 There is some evidence of both direct and indirect influence of Peirce on Husserl. Ernst Schröder's Lectures on the Algebra of Logic (Exact Logic) Vol. I (1890), which takes its impetus as well from Peirce's logic papers of the 1880s, was well known to Husserl; his 1891 review of Schröder's first volume, mentions Peirce several times. In a published 1893 exchange with Andreas Voigt, Husserl compares his own views on "Content Logic" with those contained in Peirce's "On the Algebra of Logic" of 1880 (CW 3.154ff). Peircean influences are also visible in Husserl's "On the Logic of Signs (Semiotic)" written sometime in the 1890s (these writings of Husserl's are collected in Early Writings in the Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics, Dallas Willard, tr.; Willard takes note of Peirce's influence on p. xxiv of his "Translator's Introduction"). Striking examples of influence are apparent; e.g., at Logical Investigations, I, §16, Husserl uses "index" in an exactly Peircean sense: "It is the essence of an index to point to a fact, an existence." Herman Philipspe (in Cambridge Companion to Husserl, Barry Smith and David W. Smith, eds., p. 317) has noted the similarity between Husserl's notion of "the world in itself" in Logical Investigations, of 1901 and Peirce's notion of "reality" as an ideal limit of agreement among a community of scientific investigators, as described, e.g. in his "Cognition Series" of 1868 (quoted above in Ch. 5), and in the just mentioned 1880 paper which was definitely known to Husserl by 1893. This notion of "the world in itself" as Peircean asymptote is very important to Husserl's late views and will be discussed in detail below.
"acquaintance," but Husserl's appreciation of the social dimension of meaning saved him from the solipsistic phenomenalism which proved a stumbling block for Russell.

Husserl's views on indexical reference provide clear examples of points of harmony and contrast with these other thinkers. In his *Logical Investigations*, for example, he provides an explicit and surprisingly contemporary sounding account of indexicality which grows smoothly out of the logical and epistemological concerns of his own period—a period which was so fertile for analytic philosophy. In this way he provides a bridge between long-standing philosophical issues and current debates.

But Husserl's work provides more than just an opportunity for summing up the views which lay the groundwork for the problems concerning, and approaches to, indexical reference; Husserl, in his later work on the "life-world" of meaningful everyday experience, proves to be a rich source of insights into the structure of context. The central project of this dissertation—using indexicality as a proving-ground for developing a robust theory of context—finds its natural home in Husserl's explication of meaning in terms of the life-world.

In this chapter, a discussion of Husserl's views on the place of the theory of linguistic meaning in the overall project of freeing logic from psychologism leads to an examination of his explicit account of indexicality in the first and sixth of the *Logical Investigations*. There are certain problems with this account, which Husserl himself soon recognized. In particular, he tied the meaning of indexical expressions to a dubious notion of "truths-in-themselves" which had played an important role in his early arguments against psychologism. The problems indexicality raises for this key notion (problems which closely parallel the ones which indexicals raise for Frege's Platonistic "Senses" and "Thoughts") could not be solved until Husserl had undertaken a thorough investigation of the relation between conscious human experience and the meaning-contents of human thought and language. This investigation leads, in Husserl later works, to a revised notion of truths-in-themselves and to the concept of the "life-world." Although Husserl never explicitly revised his account of indexical meaning in the light of these developments, the later writings provide the material for a reconstruction of what a life-world account of indexicality and context would need to look like. In such an account, it becomes clear that indexical context can be viewed as a dynamic substructure of the life-world, sharing many of its structural characteristics. The chapter ends with an assessment of the advantages and deficiencies of such an account of context.

**Logical Aspects of the Language of Mathematics and Science**
Husserl's early analysis of language and meaning, compactly presented in the first of the *Logical Investigations*, was motivated by considerations very similar to those behind Frege's account—a desire to clarify the use of language in scientific/theoretical and particularly mathematical discourse.\(^2\) Husserl, like Frege, takes as obvious the existence of a "treasure" of human knowledge accessible to all and accumulating from generation to generation. Such a treasure is only achievable and transmittable through language, and so, understanding the nature of knowledge involves understanding how language functions in this expression and communication. Thus, when Husserl seeks to describe the "content" or "import" of language, what he is ultimately interested in is not the concrete momentary contents of individual minds to which individual events of language use are linked. What he is after is something that is common to many language events of a given individual over time, common to various individuals who use a single language, and eventually, common to individuals separated by both time and language.

He seeks to describe a content which is common to many language events: "the identical asserted meaning"\(^3\)—to use Frege's example, the Pythagorean Theorem asserted both by ancient Greeks and contemporary Germans. Husserl characterizes this content as an "ideal unity", that is, the "logical judgement" which is one, in contrast to multiple concrete "judgement experiences" which differ markedly from one occasion to another.\(^4\) He observes that, although they are conceptually distinct from any concrete mental and linguistic acts, these ideal meanings (the concepts and propositions of which logic speaks), are intimately linked to those acts. In human knowledge, these ideal meaning can display a

\(^2\) Although Husserl's interest in language and meaning begins in the same theoretical project as Frege's (grounding a non-psychologistic theory of Arithmetic), he deliberately and explicitly broadens his focus to include empirical scientific and everyday uses of language, embracing complexities of natural language which Frege consistently sought to avoid. This greater willingness on Husserl's part to explore the roots of meaning in non-formal discourse leads, I will argue, to a more satisfactory account of indexicality and context. The following sketch of the place of semantic theory in Husserl's overall program is based on his "Introduction to Volume II", located in vol. I of the English version of *Logical Investigations*, translated by J. N. Findlay, pp. 248-266.

\(^3\) *Logical Investigations*, v. I, p. 251.

\(^4\) This, of course, is the same distinction Frege makes between "thinking" and "the thought"—Twardowski's distinction between a concrete action and its abstract product. Twardowski's important paper "Actions and Products" (in Kasimir Twardowski—Selected Writings) makes clear both the substance of the distinction, and also its widespread application by fellow members of the Brentano tradition to precisely the thinking/thought contrast which both Frege and Husserl rely on.
kind of "self evidence", but one which "depends on the verbal meanings which come alive in the actual passing of judgement." This link between concrete mental acts and the intersubjectively available, transmittable contents of knowledge, a link mediated by verbal meaning, is a central object of phenomenological investigation. Husserl's phenomenological analysis aims to "bring the Ideas of logic—the logical concepts and laws—to epistemological clarity and definiteness" while making it clear that what mathematics and logic are about is not the psychological states of individuals.

All of this has much in common with Frege's program. But when it comes to actually describing the mind/meaning link, Frege is satisfied just to name it "grasping", to note that it is a particular faculty which separates humans from animals, and to leave it at that. What is distinctive and original in Husserl's account of meaning is his determination to find and fully describe a foundation for timeless objective truth within the particularities of concrete experience—to delve into the origin and nature of the mind/meaning link, beginning from the side of individual conscious experience. Husserl explicitly provides the beginning of a more satisfying analysis of what it means to 'grasp' the meaning of a word (which is, for him, *eo ipso*, to grasp a concept) in the first *Logical Investigation*, §23. The elaboration of that analysis occupies much of the sixth *Investigation*, as well as later works.

Husserl notes the dependence of any theory of knowing on a theory of meaning. In so far as knowledge is communicable, it is tied to the meanings of expressions. What logic calls "concepts" and "propositions" are intimately related (though sometimes in complicated ways) to linguistic terms and sentences. But knowledge is also tied to experience. We may know something through deduction from other previous pieces of knowledge, but ultimately deductive knowledge must "bottom out" on something which is "self-evident"—known directly from perception or some other form of "intuition." The

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5 The danger of falling back into psychologism, which seems to have deterred Frege from saying much about the concrete psychological aspects of "grasping Senses," was also a crucial methodological influence on Husserl; but this danger must (and, Husserl thought, could) be overcome on the way to an adequate philosophical semantics and epistemology. Psychologism, Husserl believes, results from confusing the unavoidable epistemological need to describe and understand concrete intuiting acts with the distinct—and misguided—project of reducing facts about meaning (the intentional links of minds and words to objects) to facts about mental states (cf. *Logical Investigations*, v. I, p. 253). For Husserl's assessment of the incompleteness of "dogmatic" treatments of formal logic which ignore the phenomenological investigation of the ideal meanings in which logical relations are embodied, see *Ideas I*, §147. It is interesting to note that a form of the psychologism which was the common target of the seminal work of Frege and Husserl has reappeared in certain (reductivist and eliminativist) strands of contemporary cognitive science.
challenge is to describe those experiences and their link to knowledge, and to the meanings of sentences which express that knowledge, in a way that does justice both to the concrete, subjective singularity of those experiences and to the abstract, objective generality (the "ideality") of knowledge. From a semantic point of view, this is the challenge to do justice both to Mill's principle of objective reference and to Russell's emphasis on the crucial role of subjective acquaintance. To begin with, Husserl sees that our connections to ideal concepts, which are the common content (meaning) of a variety of concrete intuitions, must have their origin in those intuitions. And since the ideal quality of concepts derives from their "unshakeable sameness" in the face of changing details of experience, in order to intuit the "sameness" we must first experience multiple individual intuitions which have it in common. Our confidence in that ideality comes from repeated successful applications of concepts to varying experienced examples—we need to be able to "measure them sufficiently often against the mark set by reproducible intuitions." To know what a horse is (which is presupposed in knowing what 'horse' means) is to have had experiences such that you can recognize a horse when you meet one.\footnote{This account requires only that there be a finite stock of simple meanings; one can, of course, understand the meaning of 'the golden mountain' without having experienced golden mountains, but not without having experienced golden things and mountains.} The ideal meaning linked to a concept is experienced as a kind of expectation, which future experiences either "fulfill" or fail to fulfill. It is in the context of explaining this connection between ideal concepts and concrete intuitions of the objects to which those concepts pertain that Husserl invokes the battle cry of Phenomenological Realism: "back to the the things themselves!"\footnote{Logical Investigations, p. 254.}

Husserl claims that what applies to empirical concepts like 'horse', in their relation to sensory experience, also applies to non-empirical concepts, the ones which are basic to logic—concepts such as truth, proposition, object, fact, law, and indeed, concept. Our confidence about having a firm grasp of these concepts, on which our knowledge of logic depends, must come from holding them up against concrete intuitions to which they pertain. The concepts and propositions of logic become visible ("self evident") in careful reflective consideration of instances of understanding and of validation of non-logical propositions. Not only do we have the ability to recognize specific sentences as true, but we can reflect on their truth and come to recognize (higher order) truths about their being true, i.e. logical truths. Thus the concern to clarify logical concepts is linked with epistemological questions about the correspondence of minds to the world—what the Medieval called aequatio intellectus et rei—which Husserl's contemporaries of the...
Brentano school singled out as the formula which best captures the logically relevant notion of truth.  

Husserl's concern to clarify the relation between the individual mind and "things themselves"—the relation which constitutes epistemic grasping of objective truths—is summarized in the "Introduction to Volume II" of the *Logical Investigations*:

How are we to understand the fact that the "in itself" of the objectivity comes to "representation"—indeed, that in knowledge it falls within our "grasp"—and so ends up by becoming subjective after all? What does it mean to say that the object is both "in itself" and is "given" in knowledge? How can the Ideality of the universal, in the form of concepts or laws, enter the flux of real psychical Experiences and turn into a knowledge possession of the one thinking? What does the *adaequatio rei et intellectus* involved in knowing signify in the various types of cases, depending on whether the knowing grasp takes in an individual or universal, a fact or a law, etc.?

In the final chapter of the "Prolegomena to Pure Logic" (the anti-psychologistic opening volume of the *Logical Investigations*), Husserl describes a systematic correspondence between the structures of things and the structures of truths—a correspondence which is the basis for the very conceptual possibility of true scientific statements.

What makes science science . . . is a certain objective or ideal interconnection which gives [acts of thinking] a unitary objective relevance, and in such a unitary relevance, an ideal validity. . . . Two meanings can be attached to this objective interconnection which ideally pervades scientific thought; . . . it can be understood as an *interconnection of things* to which our thought-experiences (actual or possible) are intentionally directed, or, on the other hand, as an *interconnection of truths*, in which this unity of things comes to count objectively as being what it is. These two things

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8 In the "Prolegomena" to *Logical Investigations*, §15, Husserl characterizes truth as something ideal "*whose particular case is an actual experience in the inwardly evident judgement.*" This experience consists in an "adequate perception" which completely fulfills what is meant by a particular concept or proposition. "The experience of the agreement between meaning and what is itself present, meant, between the actual *sense of an assertion* and the self-given *state of affairs*, is inward evidence: the *Idea* of this agreement is truth, whose ideality is also its objectivity" ("Prolegomena," §50, p. 192, quoted more extensively below; Husserl's emphasis). Cf. Twardowski's treatment of truth (e.g. in his lectures on "Theory of Knowledge", Lecture V: "The Concept of Truth" in *Kasimir Twardowski—Selected Writings*).

9 Op. cit., §2 (p. 254 in the Findley translation). This translation is Dallas Willard's, from "Knowledge" in the *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, p. 150. I will generally cite Husserl's section numbers, to aid cross reference to various translations and the original text.
are given together *a priori*, and are mutually inseparable. Nothing can be without being thus or thus determined, and that it is, and that it is thus and thus determined, is the self-subsistent truth which is the necessary correlate of the self-subsistent being.\(^\text{10}\)

On this account, truth has a structure precisely parallel to whatever there is that exists. In so far as science seeks to know things, not as they are relative to a subjective perceiver, but as they are *in themselves* (in their "self-subsistent being"), to that extent science is seeking the corresponding self-subsistent truths-in-themselves. It is experience of the *things* which provides access to the *truths*. It is the aim of scientific judgements and statements to have these truths as their contents—their meanings.

Thus, truth is something we can come to know through the experiences of the correspondence ("adequacy") of objects as they are given in perceptions to the meanings of intentional acts (e.g., of judgement). So the next indispensable question in the investigation is: what is it for an object—in the broadest sense of 'object'—to be given in subjective experience?\(^\text{11}\) As in the passage quoted above, Husserl prefers to speak of "objectivities" to make it clear that he is concerned as much with the mind's intuitive encounter with entities such as numbers, geometric shapes, abstract properties, abstract and concrete states of affairs, and imaginary creations, as with the narrower domain of ordinary physical objects of sensory experience. An explanation of the nature of knowledge is to be sought in the epistemic possession of objective facts and laws by concrete individual persons.\(^\text{12}\)

What makes such an explanation tricky is that the objectivity of knowledge derives from the ideality of its objects; but this ideality is encountered as a uniformity across subjective and concrete mental acts.

There is an obvious and unavoidable two-sidedness to the meaning relation; because it is the link between ideal objective unities and concrete subjective mental states it requires a treatment that does justice to both of these components. The ideal unities are closely associated with the linguistic expressions in which they are expressed, so the kind of analytic phenomenology which Husserl seeks cannot avoid dealing with the "grammatical

\(^{10}\) "Prolegomena", §62, pp. 225-6.

\(^{11}\) Frege consideration of how objects are "given," of course, led him to the conclusion that the "modes of givenness" (Gegebenheitsweisen—"modes of presentation") of objects must be contained in independently existing Senses, thus leaving their connection to concrete subjective states a mystery.

\(^{12}\) Husserl realizes that Phenomenology thus faces the challenge of being self-grounding; questions of the nature of knowledge in general are *eo ipso* questions of the nature of phenomenological and logical knowledge.
side" of logical experience—the syntactic forms and other linguistic structures through which we encounter concepts and propositions. At the same time he, like Frege and Russell, realizes that the surface forms of language can conceal and obscure underlying logical structure. But he thinks that the best way to defend against being misled by these superficial features of language is to diligently analyze the subjective side of the relation—the connection with the concrete mental acts with which actual instances of words are associated.

Husserl thinks that the best cases to begin with, the ones where the crucial relations are clearest, are cases where the use of a word or sentence accompanies a simultaneous sensory intuition of the objectivity being referred to or expressed. In Husserl's terminology, the relation between verbal expressions and their meanings can be "clarified" by going back to the "clear, articulate [act of meaning] saturated with the fullness of exemplary intuition in which their meaning is fulfilled." In the case of referential expressions, this means focusing on cases of reference to objects present in simultaneous sensory experience; Husserl designates this sort of object of reference as a "this here," explicitly taking as his guide Aristotle's indexical term tode ti. Here, as with Mill and Russell, the paradigm case of direct reference to experientially presented objects is signaled by the use of indexical expressions. Although Husserl is not as emphatic about it as Peirce, it is clear that he both appreciates the importance of indexicals for formulating a theory of language, and is also prepared to give a theoretical treatment of indexicality itself. This treatment is to be

13 For this, Husserl has been repeatedly criticized for falling back into the psychologism he so consistently attacks. Husserl seems never to have made clear to his contemporaries that there is a fundamental difference between the phenomenological analysis of conscious experience and the analysis of thinking undertaken by the "special science" of psychology. A cogent defense of Husserl's position is to be found in Peirce's attack on psychologism (in his review of the logic text by Ernst Schröder mentioned in note 1 above—CP 3.425) in which Peirce distinguishes between the study of cognition which psychology undertakes, and which presupposes a whole canon of logical justification for relations of evidence and inference, and the distinct study of cognition which philosophy is called upon to undertake to justify that presupposed canon. Peirce there gives reasons why this second study must not, on pain of circularity, be mistaken for what is properly called psychology. The substance of this argument is to be found in various places in Husserl, but never so clearly stated as in Peirce.

14 Another telling example of theoretically crucial use of indexicals occurs in the treatment of the experiential form of intersubjective physical space at Ideas II, §18f, where 'here' and 'there' play the indispensable role.

15 The parallels between Husserl's theory of linguistic meaning and Peirce's are considerable, concerned as they both were with the same foundational problems in
found in Chapter 3 of the first *Investigation*, (with further details and applications in the sixth) and will be summarized below. But first a few remarks about how this account of indexicals fits into the overall development of Husserl's philosophical project may be of use.

**Ideal Meanings and the Logic of Knowledge**

Programmatically, the *Logical Investigations* (hereafter: LI) mark the transition between Husserl's early studies in the philosophy of mathematics and his ground-breaking development of Phenomenology as a broad-based philosophical position. The first volume of LI consists of the "Prolegomena to Pure Logic" which attacks psychologistic accounts of logic and sets out the task of the six investigations to follow: to articulate a theory of scientific knowledge on the basis of an understanding of the logical structures of human thought, purified of the dangerous circularity which psychologism represented. Science cannot proceed without presupposing the validity of arguments from evidence to conclusions, the meaningfulness of linguistic statements of facts, and the objectivity of the relation between such statements and the matters of fact which are the subject matter of that science; these presuppositions apply to psychology as much as to any other empirical science. This is why it is circular reasoning to claim that the study of basic logical relations is part of the subject matter of psychology.

The key to avoiding this mistake, thinks Husserl, is to keep in mind the distinction between the real physical events of thinking, meaning, knowing, etc. (which it is the legitimate business of psychology to investigate), and the *significance* for conscious experience that those events have for the minds which experience them. It is characteristic of these experiencing events, as they are experienced, that they have a content which is not exhausted by the event itself, but which points beyond the experiencing to an object being experienced which is distinct from that event—the mental event "intends" an object. It is this *intentional* aspect of knowledge and meaning which is unavailable to an outside observer, and thus is missing from an external scientific description of those events. And it is to the details of this intentional relation that Husserl thinks we need to look for the underlying logical relations which the empirical sciences necessarily presuppose. The mathematics, logic and semiotic theory. The similarities are unfortunately masked by the unfamiliar terminology which they both employ. I attempt, where possible, to compare and clarify their technical terms. Important similarities will become apparent as we explore the development of Husserl's increasingly sophisticated treatment of linguistic reference to perceptually given objects.
theory of knowledge must be based on the study of this meaningfulness, starting from the inside; this is the study which begins with the first Investigation (LI, I), titled "Expression and Meaning."

Husserl thinks that, viewed from the perspective of a conscious experiencer of meaning and knowledge, it is possible to say what the external psychological description of mental events is missing. Viewed from the outside, what is characteristic of an event is its place in the causal order of relations with other physical things and events—its spatial and temporal specificity (what Husserl calls its "reality"). But viewed from the inside, what makes a mental event a case of meaning (and thus possibly of knowledge) is that it is related to other mental events which intend a common object or state of affairs, and which thus have a common content—which mean the same thing.\(^{16}\) My thinking of the number five is a real event, describable in terms of a time, place, and physical states of my body. But the fact that I experience that event as being a thought "about the number five" is something I judge without any reference to my location or physical state.\(^{17}\) What does enter into my experiencing it as a thought about the number five is its relation to other thoughts which are of that same number—which have that same meaning. These other events (which may take place in the same individual at another time or in different individuals) form a group based only on their common meaning—their place in the spatio-temporal order is irrelevant to their membership. The characteristic which binds these events together defies description in terms of the descriptive categories of the special sciences. Although these events do have something in common, something that binds them together in a relation of synonymy, it is not something which is "real"\(^{18}\) in Husserl's sense—it must be, he says, something ideal. The failure to distinguish between the ideal and the real characteristics of mental

\(^{16}\) Husserl recognizes the important distinction between propositional knowledge of states of affairs (knowing that S is P) and non-propositional knowledge of individuals and concepts (knowing S; knowing what a P is); he also recognizes the dependence relations which hold between them, e.g. that knowing that S is P depends on knowing S and knowing what it is to be P. For our purposes, however, we can safely elide this distinction.

\(^{17}\) The contrast, mentioned above in note 4, between the act of thinking, and the thought which is the product of this act is absolutely crucial to the sense of Husserl's argument; this contrast is often lost in Findley's translation of LI because "thought" is used for both Denken (thinking) and for Gedanke (thought).

\(^{18}\) It is important to note the difference between Husserl's technical use of "real" to mean "that which has a place in the spatiotemporal order" and both the vague colloquial senses of that word and also Peirce's very different technical sense, described above in Chapter 5. Failure to keep these different senses separate leads to difficulty understanding Husserl's theory and also obscures important similarities between his theory and Peirce's.
events is the root of much of the misunderstanding which leads to psychologism, and clearing up the problem involves careful investigation of these ideal features which link one mental event with others.

Thus LI, I opens with a discussion of the distinctions which are required to give an adequate description of the most general features of linguistic meaning. Linguistic expressions must first be distinguished from other signs (e.g., smoke—a sign of fire; blushing—a sign of embarrassment), which, although they carry information, are not produced with the intention of carrying a meaning. Assuming that we know what it is to use language expressively, he defines meaning as what we experience in an expression above and beyond the physical perception of the material sign itself and the physical process from which it arises. Thus the meaning is distinct from, and therefore not a property of, the physical expression; it is also distinct from the human act which produces that expression.

Clearly, as Husserl points out, the expression carries a great deal of information besides its meaning—in particular, information about the mental states of the person using it. It is essential that this information, which the act of expression is said to "intimate," be distinguished from the meaning which it "expresses." Next, if the meaning is ideal—unshakably one in the expressive acts of many speakers—it must be distinct even from that particular mental state of the user which has it as its content. Finally, since many different expressions, with different ideal meaning can be used to name the same object (or mean, or "intend" the same state of affairs), and since the objects named are often real—not ideal—the meaning must be distinct from the object named. These distinctions correct what Husserl considers Mill's overly simple analysis of meaning into connotation and denotation. Even Frege's more sophisticated distinction between Sinn and Bedeutung...
does not provide enough conceptual articulation to do justice to the complexity of the meaning relation.\textsuperscript{21} Husserl agrees with Frege that meaning (Sense) determines reference, and that a given object can be presented by any number of meanings.\textsuperscript{22} But he makes the further distinction between meaning—the relation of an expression to an object—and the attributive (connotative) content which those meanings may or may not carry; he explicitly states, in contrast to Frege, that proper names (and, as we shall see, indexicals) can have non-attributive meanings.\textsuperscript{23} At the center of these distinctions is the structure of act-content-object which characterizes the intentional relation for Husserl (as it does for Twardowski, Meinong, Ingarden, etc.).

Given these distinctions, Husserl thinks he can characterize what it means for a linguistic meaning to be the unwavering ideal unity which is common to a variety of meaningful acts, and the stuff of which knowledge is made. In LI he conceives of this unity as that of a species under which a variety of individual instances fall.

**Why Indexicals Pose a Problem for the Theory of Ideal Meanings**

If logic is to provide a foundation for scientific knowledge, it must identify objective components of discourse; components which enter into logical (e.g. truth bearing and inferential) relations, and which can serve as content for scientific statements—statements with objective reference. Husserl provides these components in the form of ideal meanings. His intention is not just to develop an account that applies to the formal discourse of logic itself, even extended to include mathematics and other formal sciences, nor even extended to include the "exact" portions of empirical science (e.g. theoretical physics); rather, because he recognizes the importance of sensory experience, and reports of that experience, for the development and application of scientific propositions, he sees that such an account must cover the full range of meaningful human discourse. But if this is what his ideal meanings are supposed to do, indexicality presents for Husserl, as it did for Frege, a prima facie counterexample. As Peter Simons points out, "the most serious threat to Husserl's view of the ideality of meanings is posed by expressions whose meaning varies according to their context."\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} LI, I, §15.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., §13.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., §16.
\textsuperscript{24} "Meaning and Language," in *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, p. 117.
Ordinary equivocal expressions might seem to pose a problem, since they express different meaning on different occasions. But the meanings associated with such expressions are normally clearly limited in number, and each of these meanings is common to many (just not all) uses of that expression. Thus ordinary ambiguous expressions (including proper names which belong to many individuals) present, in principle, no special obstacle to learning and understanding a single ideal unity which is common to the members of a given subset of those uses. The mere fact that more than one ideal meaning may be associated with a given word is not, in itself, a threat to the ideal character of those meanings.

But, as we know, the situation is different with indexicals. The meaning of 'you' on a given occasion can provide determinate reference to a particular individual whom the speaker may never have met or heard of before. The understanding of this meaning cannot depend on its ideal identity with the meanings of any other acts in the speakers experience. On the other hand, what knowing the meaning of a particular use of 'you' does seem to require is knowing specific concrete facts about where, when and why it was used in a particular instance. The case of 'now' is even more dramatic. Many uses of 'now' refer to times to which no other expression ever will refer—times which both speaker and hearer often have no other way of thinking about if not via the meaning of 'now' at that very time. The understanding and meaningful use of 'now' cannot depend on any ideal unity which it shares with other acts with fully the same meaning, if what Husserl has been calling meaning is all that is required for providing reference. It seems that at least part of the meaningfulness of the use of an indexical on a given occasion is not shared with any other use; it is peculiar to the spatiotemporal occasion—in Husserl's terms, it is real, not ideal.

Husserl wonders whether acknowledging indexicality forces us to give up on a uniform account of meanings as ideal, objective entities:

Do meanings themselves divide into objective and subjective, into meanings fixed and meanings changeable on occasion? . . . Is the difference that the one presents ideal unities, fixed species untouched by the flux of our subjective picturing and thinking, while the others are submerged in the flux of subjective mental experience, as transitory events, existing one moment and at the next moment not?26

25 The selection from among these distinct possible meanings on a given occasion, while not indexical in our most narrow sense, is, as mentioned in previous chapters, clearly a case of context-sensitivity, and represents one of the contextual functions which a completed theory of context should explain.

26 LI, I, §28 (with translation changes).
But if this is the case, and if the meanings of scientific propositions depend on observation-statements containing indexicals for their knowability and application (a dependence which Husserl already must have suspected, and later explicitly affirmed), then any threat to the ideality of the meanings of indexical expression is a threat to the ideality of the content of science, and to Husserl's whole project of providing logical clarity to our understanding of scientific knowledge. This explains the importance Husserl obviously attaches to indexical reference, discussing it in detail in LI, I and returning to it in LI, VI. What is important for our investigation of context is that Husserl's struggle with indexical meaning led him to articulate an account of what "grasping a meaning" involves which applies as well to indexicals as it does to concept words with stable meanings. In doing this he uncovers important distinctions and structures of meaning which were invisible to Russell, Mill and Frege, and which, although noticed by Peirce, were not clearly characterized in his writings. These features of meaning—its intentional, intersubjective, social and practical dimensions—turn out to be central to our final picture of context.

Husserl's Account of Indexicality

Husserl's defense of ideal meanings in LI is based on the following strategy: Taking ideal meanings as species, of which the contents of individual mental acts are instances, he can apply the traditional genus plus differentia schema for species identity. With non-indexical expressions (what Husserl calls "objective expressions"), both genus and differentia are determined attributively, and so are independent of occasions of use. But indexicals (what Husserl calls "essentially occasional and subjective expressions") operate somewhat differently. Each indexical seems to come equipped with a genus—'here' and 'there' always designate places; 'now' and 'then', times; 'I', 'you', 'he', and 'she', persons, etc.—but lacking a determinate differentium. What requires explanation is how the utterance or use of the indexical provides the genus with its 'specific difference' without compromising its ideality. But carrying out this strategy led Husserl, as we shall see, to take on the metaphysical burden of an implausible notion of "truths-in-themselves."

David W. Smith has provided a formulation of Husserl's theory of "essentially occasional expressions" which makes clear how it differs from that of Frege and from those

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of recent philosophers of language such as Kaplan and Perry. Drawing on LI, I, §26 and LI, IV, §3-5, Smith summarizes Husserl's view in the following theses, formulated as it applies to the demonstrative 'this'. The first thesis is very basic:

1. The referent of 'this' depends on the occasion of utterance.

This obvious starting point is sharpened with the Millian observation that

2. Demonstrative reference is "direct" in that the object referred to by 'this' on a particular occasion of utterance is not determined attributively, i.e., by appeal solely to properties of the object.

This claim is the point of Mill's connotation/denotation distinction, and was affirmed by Russell; it was apparently doubted or ignored by Frege.

But now a cloud appears on the horizon. Isn't our aim supposed to be to get "to the things themselves," to their "self-subsistent identity," to their being "so and so determined" so that we can express "self subsistent truths" about them? But what does it mean to be "so and so determined," if not that the things in question has certain properties? And the relevant properties of the self-subsistent thing would seem to exclude the relational properties of 'being perceived or thought about by so and so'. Isn't this just the kind of subjective, psychological determination to which the talk of "self-subsistence" and "things themselves" is intended to alert us? Husserl sees this issue and unflinchingly makes it explicit in the following theses:

3. A person's uttering 'this' [meaningfully] presupposes his perceiving a certain object and his wanting to speak about it.

4. The referent of 'this' on a particular occasion of utterance is the object of the speaker's underlying perception.

Thesis 1 follows from 3 and 4. But it is far from clear how 3 and 4 can be compatible with 2 without threatening the ideality of meaning.

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Recall here what we said about what might have motivated Frege to deny non-descriptive reference. Frege, like Husserl, was seeking to isolate and describe an entity which could serve as the objective, communicable content for scientific statements. This seems to require contents that are accessible to different speakers of different languages living in widely separated times and places. Access to these meanings cannot depend on specific facts of experience which are unavailable to different speakers. Concepts of properties, for their part, have an ideal identity independent of their instances. They are thus graspable apart from any particular instance. In addition, the meanings of many statements (e.g. mathematical ones) are purely conceptual—the concepts which are relevant to them can be enumerated and explicitly stated. Extending a conceptual notion of meaning from mathematics to other sciences would provide a logically perspicuous account of shareable contents for the statements of those sciences—if such an extension could be achieved. But here the difference between the Fregean descriptivist approach and Husserl's becomes apparent. While "being the object pointed to by N.N. at time $t$, in place $p$" might plausibly be thought of as the first step toward an objective conceptual description of an identifying property, one which could be understood without knowledge of any particular concrete event, it seems implausible that "being the object thought of by the speaker of 'this' on a particular occasion, and about which that speaker intended to speak" could lead to any such description. The explicit appeal to the concrete thoughts and intentions of a single individual seems to leave no room for objective paraphrase. Showing how an ideal meaning can depend for its identity on such concrete subjective acts and yet be objective is the challenge Husserl takes up.

To get to the direct reference of thesis 2, from the intentional reference of theses 3 and 4 requires Husserl, as Smith points out, to develop a phenomenological analysis of perception—one which links the intentionality of perception with the intentionality of linguistic expression in a way that still allows linguistic meanings to be ideal unities common to different acts. The goal for Husserl must be to show "that 'this' does refer by way of a meaning, and it is a non-descriptive meaning" but still one which can be the content of distinct expressive acts, and thus can be ideal and objective.

Husserl begins down the road to a solution by making yet another distinction—beyond those made by Mill and Frege, beyond even those made in the "Prolegomena" and the opening section of LI, I—a distinction within the total meaning of a given indexical:

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29 Ibid., p. 196.
5. 'This' has two types of meaning: a generic meaning that does not depend on or vary with occasion of utterance, and a particular meaning that depends on and so may vary with the occasion of utterance.

Husserl calls the generic component the "indicating meaning" and the particular component the "indicated meaning." As Smith points out, this distinction has much in common with Kaplan's distinction between the character and the content of demonstratives, and also with Perry's distinction between the role of, and the information conveyed by, a sentence.\textsuperscript{30} The unchanging component, Husserl's "indicating meaning" is what one learns, during the process of language acquisition, when one learns to use an indexical.

6. The generic meaning of 'this' is the sense that embodies the general phenomenological character of having directly in mind an object one sees.

Although this thesis incorporates the Russelian insight that attending to an object—having it directly in mind—plays a role in selecting an indexical referent, it also incorporates the Peircean insight that the relevant acts of attending are ones which can be judged and influenced by other, and so can play a role in language learning. The persistent and intersubjective nature of this 'sense' makes this a good candidate for ideality. Once a person has learned to use 'this' they use it in a uniform and predictable way—in the same way as other people in their language community—so it corresponds to a regularity across many expressive acts. The real challenge is to explain the changeable "indicated meaning" and then the link between these two components. The indicated meaning clinches the reference to a determinate object, but is distinct from that object. The object to which it refers is, in a typical case, the same as the object intended by one of the speaker's concurrent perception;\textsuperscript{31} in fact, Husserl wants to identify it with the accompanying perceptual intention.

7) The [indicated] meaning of 'this' on a given occasion of utterance is that constituent of the sense of the speaker's underlying perception which presents the object perceived "itself".


\textsuperscript{31} Besides perceptual cases, Husserl also recognized the anaphoric uses of indexicals (what Peirce called "degenerate indices"), and traces their meanings back to earlier perceptual or conceptual contents. See, e.g., LI, I, §26, where he notes that 'this' can be used "in a mathematical context" to point to "something determined in a conceptually fixed manner."
This is where Husserl makes his nearest approach to psychologism. He thinks he can avoid falling into this error, however, by showing that, although the act of perception is something concrete and psychological, the content—the intention—of that act is not. He has already argued earlier in LI, I, (§14) that each act of perception has a content which is fully as ideal as the meanings of stable conceptually fixed terms. Just as a single number or property can be the content of various acts of thought of various people, so a single object may be intended by various acts of perception, acts which thus have the same content.32

This is the identical content which, in perception, pertains to the totality of possible acts of perception which intend the same object perceptually, and intend it actually as the same object. This content is therefore the ideal correlate of this single object.

An "Illegitimate Act of Violence" in Defense of This Account

At the time LI was first published Husserl thought this was enough to finish the job. The indicating meaning of 'this' specifies that it will refer to the object of the contemporaneous perception (or, in other cases, that of a contemporaneous non-perceptual intuition). Thus the indicated meaning will just be the content of the underlying intuitional intention. Although the object is fixed by a concrete ("real") psychological act, the content of that act, viewed as a species, is ideal. The meaning of the indexical inherits the ideality of the intentional content of the intuitive act.

In LI, I, § 28 Husserl considers a possible objection to this account. The thesis that the meaning of an indexical on a given occasion is an ideal unity is, he says, equivalent to the thesis that it can be replaced by an expression with stable meaning. "Ideally speaking, each subjective expression is replaceable by an objective expression which will preserve the identity of each momentary meaning-intention." This is what we have in previous chapters called the "eliminability thesis." But what reason do we have to think that this is always possible? Husserl admits that this appears to be a serious problem:

32 This ideal content of acts of perception Husserl, in LI, calls "fulfilling meaning." It is related to one aspect of Frege's notion of the Senses of an object as he first introduced that notion in connection with our ability to re-identify an object which is perceptually presented in different ways. What counts as a difference of presentation in Frege's examples, however, is not as fine-grained as the differences Husserl considers.
We shall have to concede that such replacement is not only impracticable, for reasons of complexity, but that it cannot in the vast majority of cases, be carried out at all—will, in fact never be so capable.\footnote{LI, I, §28.}

But although the thesis of actual eliminability is indefensible, Husserl think that the ideal possibility of elimination is enough to sustain his account, and this he thinks is defensible.

Clearly, in fact, to say that each subjective expression could be replaced by an objective [i.e., non-indexical] expression is no more than to assert the unbounded range of objective reason.\footnote{Ibid. Cf. Max Weber's articulation of this thesis, cited above in Ch. 4, note 24 in connection with Frege's apparently similar belief. Weber's statement seconds Husserl's idea that what really matters is the "ideal possibility" of a complete description of the world.}

Now he invokes the Prolegomena notion of truths-in-themselves:

Everything that is, can be known 'in itself'. Its being is a being definite in content, and documented in such and such 'truths-in-themselves'. Whatever is has its intrinsically definite properties and relations, and if it has natural, thinglike reality, then it has also its quite definite extension and position in space and time, its quite definite ways of persisting and changing. But what is objectively quite definite, must permit objective determination, and what permits objective determination, must, ideally speaking, permit expression through wholly determinate word-meanings. To being-in-itself correspond truths-in-themselves, and to these last, fixed, unambiguous assertions.\footnote{Ibid.}

Husserl recognizes that this is only an ideal possibility, from which we are, in actuality "infinitely removed." He cites the fact, previously pointed out by Peirce, that our customary time and place specifications always contain, or depend upon, indexical expressions. "Strike out the essentially occasional expressions from one's language, try to describe any subjective experience in unambiguous, objectively fixed fashion: every such attempt is plainly in vain\footnote{Ibid., translation changes.}"

So again we face the actual ineliminability of indexicals; but Husserl has an argument meant to salvage their ideal eliminability.

Nonetheless, it seems to me that, e.g., even every place and time determination, from the perspective of ideal possibility, can become the referent [Substrat] of a meaning which belongs to it alone. In itself, each place must be distinct from every other, just as...
each color quality is. And just as it is a priori possible that there be a presentation which directly intends that self-identical [color] quality (and not in a roundabout way, such as in relation to a pre-established unit)—and further, since it is thereafter also possible to repeat this presentation with repeated re-identification of its meaning—it is accordingly, a priori conceivable that this identical intention can be connected to an expression as its meaning. Thus, the same must also hold for the individualizing determinations [of time and place], no matter how much they differ in other respects from these other determinations.

Husserl takes this to be a sufficiently convincing argument:

This ideal possibility, which we have just considered, and which provides an a priori and self-evidently secure foundation for the theory of knowledge, makes the following clear: that considered in itself, no essential difference exists between various kinds of meanings.

Husserl declares the problem solved; the threat posed by indexicals to the ideality of meaning has been dispersed.

Rightly seen, . . . change in meanings is really change in the act of meaning. In other words, the subjective acts which confer meaning on expressions are variable, . . . but the meanings themselves do not alter.

But there is the air of bluster and dogmatism here. The glaring clash between the ideal eliminability thesis and the practical ineliminability of indexical expressions should cause deep concern. The supporting argument from analogy with color qualities seems ill-suited to the enormous task of providing "a priori and self-evident foundations for the theory of knowledge." The color example does not stand up to scrutiny. Because our experience of a given color can vary from one circumstance to another it is just not true that a single objective meaning can be reliably attached to any arbitrarily selected color via a sequence of experiences. As we will see in detail below, the designation of colors is plagued with the same contextual uncertainties as the indexical designation of objects. Husserl apparently became aware of these problems, and so his sense of self-assurance did not last long. Soon after the first edition appeared, he began to have second thoughts about this account of indexicality, and by the time of the second edition (1913) he knew it could not be defended. He deleted the entire paragraph about color-qualities quoted above, and made the following

37 Ibid. My translation. This paragraph was eliminated by Husserl in the second edition (see below), and so is not contained in Findlay's translation.
38 Ibid., my translation.
comment in the "Forward" to the second edition, expressing both the feeling that his
treatment of indexicals was impaired by a defect in his conception of truths-in-themselves,
and simultaneously broadening the range he recognized for indexicality:

The manner in which [the first edition account] deals with occasional meanings (to
which, however, on close inspection, all empirical predications belong) is a
illegitimate act of violence [Gewaltstreich]—the enforced consequence of the
imperfect conception of the essence of "truth in itself" in the Prolegomena.39

Earlier in that "Forward" he had said that the Prolegomena conception of truths-in-
themselves was "too one-sidedly oriented to vèritès de raison."40

Husserl thus had recognized two serious problems for his account. First, he realized
that an account of indexicality, even if it begins with prototypic indexicals such as 'I', 'here'
and 'this', must be capable of being extended to explain indexical features of many other
"empirical predications." We have already seen, in Peirce, the opinion that indexicality is a
fundamental and ubiquitous aspect of natural language, and we can, for now, just take
Husserl's remark as a confirmation of this opinion. We will have occasion to return to the
question of the range of indexicality later (Chapter 9) when we assess whether the theory
of context there proposed is adequate to explain such generalized indexical effects. The
second problem, on the other hand, requires immediate attention. Husserl saw that even the
restricted account of LI, I had to be modified to reflect a more developed notion of what
gives the "indicated meaning" of an indexical its objectivity. An important change in his
philosophical program is reflected in his rejection of one notion of truths and objects 'in-
themselves' and his struggles to develop a new notion.

Truths-in-Themselves and Things "An Sich"

As early as his Philosophy of Arithmetic of 1891 Husserl's arguments against
psychologism focused on the systematic links between thought and language on the one
hand, and on the other hand, independently existing truths and objects as they are "in
themselves" (an sich). In the background of all these arguments is the principle of semantic
objectivity which Mill had enunciated: linguistic expressions generally refer, not to our

39 LI, v. I, p. 48 (translation changes). Findlay renders Gewaltstreich as tour de force which
clashes with Husserl's implication in the next sentence that it is a Mangel—a deficiency—in
his presentation. My reading is confirmed by Kevin Mulligan and Barry Smith, in "A
ideas of objects but to those objects themselves; in particular, factual scientific assertions are about, and are made true by, objects and states of affairs whose identity and existence are independent of subjective experience. Although this principle makes good sense in regard to ordinary physical objects, psychologistic theories of logic and mathematics lost sight of it when it came to explaining our dealings with abstract objects, claiming that mathematical and logical relations are to be understood as relations among (e.g., causal regularities across) concrete psychological states. One way that Husserl aimed to correct this error was by giving a non-reductionist account of our knowledge of "objectivities"—both physical and abstract—as they are in themselves.

In Philosophy of Arithmetic he tried to explain the objectivity of mathematical concepts by pointing to the human ability to abstract the general features of experience (mathematical, as well as physical features) by selectively focusing attention on certain aspects of experience while ignoring others. This form of 'abstraction' (what Peirce had called "prescission") was immediately attacked by Frege and others as itself covertly psychologistic, since it makes the nature of general concepts dependent on particular contingent human mental faculties. Husserl soon responded to this criticism by abandoning this account of abstraction and, in fact, attacking it himself in LI, II, § 13-14.

In the "Prolegomena" Husserl takes a new tack. There, as we have seen, his arguments against psychologism focus on the failure of psychologistic theories of logic to appreciate the distinction between the real and the ideal. People, and their parts, states, and acts are clearly "real" in Husserl's technical sense that they admit of spatial and temporal localization. But is the number three or the Pythagorean Theorem real in this sense? One might think that the Pythagorean Theorem does have temporal properties such as 'having been discovered at a certain time', 'having been thought of by so-and-so on such-and-such day', etc. These are certainly things which can be truly predicated of the Theorem, but they are not properties which the Theorem has "in itself." What is essential to the existence and identity of a number or of a theorem is what determines what it is in itself, and this is unaffected by any temporal or spatial determination, and is thus ideal. The "self-identical" ideal objectivity may be the object of many distinct real acts of thinking, just as a physical object has an identity "in itself" while being the object of distinct perceptual acts. The ideal number three is not a concrete property of any particular thought-event nor of particular triples of objects; rather it is something that is related in common to all of these—the number in itself, which would be exactly as it is whether or not anyone ever though of it and whether or not any concrete triples ever existed.
The number Three, the Truth named after Pythagoras, etc., are . . . neither empirical
singulars nor classes of singulars: they are ideal objects ideationally apprehended in
the correlates of our acts of counting, of inwardly evident judging, etc.41

It is in this sense that Husserl speaks of mathematical and geometric propositions as
"truths in themselves" and suggests a way of understanding their objectivity while
integrating them into his background understanding of truth as correspondence—as
adaequatio intellectus et rei.

The experience of the agreement between meaning and what is itself present, meant,
between the actual sense of an assertion and the self-given state of affairs, is inward
evidence; The Idea of the agreement is truth, whose ideality is also its objectivity. It is
not a chance fact that a propositional thought, occurring here and now, agrees with a
given state of affairs; the agreement rather holds between a self-identical propositional
meaning, and a self-identical state of affairs. 'Validity' or 'objectivity', and their
opposites, do not pertain to an assertion as a particular temporal experience, but to the
assertion in specie, to the pure, self-identical assertion 2x2=4 etc.42

Here we can see Husserl's attempt to integrate the correspondence picture of truth into
his nascent semantic theory. He describes what might be called a 'nexus of
correspondences.' At its core is the structural parallelism between propositional meanings
and states of affairs, both considered as having ideal existence, independent of any human
acts of thought or perception—what he here characterizes as being "self-identical" and
elsewhere as being what they are "in themselves." It is in the agreement between these an
sich entities that Husserl locates truth. The nexus also includes a correspondence between
meaningful mental and linguistic acts and the propositional meanings which they express
(In LI this is the relation of a species to one of its instances); this is the relation of
"grasping a meaning" or "having a meaning as content." Finally, the nexus includes a
correspondence between the states of affairs which are "meant" and the acts of perception
or intuition through which they can become known (this is the basis for the relation of
"fulfilling," in which an assertion or intention can be fulfilled by a perception). The whole
nexus is a four part chain of relations linking intentional acts, their contents, their objects,
and intuitions of those objects (see table below). Individual utterances about intuited states
of affairs can be "true" in an indirect, derivative sense, if the judgement expressed and the

41 LI, "Prolegomena," §50, p. 192. Cf., LI, I, § 35, where the analogy between "numbers-in-themselves" and "truths- and meanings-in-themselves" is made explicit. They are all
"ideally closed sets of general objects."
intuition are related in the right way to an ideal meaning and a state of affairs which themselves have the primary correspondence relation which constitutes "truth-in-itself."

Notice that the examples Husserl gives are mathematical ones, for which the notion of an ideal object or state of affairs is most transparent. My saying "2+2=4" expresses the timeless truth that 2+2=4. Doubts arise, however, when this scheme is applied to statements about physical objects. What, one might ask, is wrong with saying that an assertion as a particular temporal event is objectively true without the intervention of any timeless entity? For instance, if I hold a red object in my hand and say "this is red" is what I say not true simply in virtue of the relation between my spoken words and the contingent character and location of the object I hold? The differences between the mathematical case and the physical one are sufficient to require a separate argument for the ideality of the truth-bearing aspect of the latter. What is relevant here to our current theoretical concerns is that prime examples of physical-object-oriented meanings are, like the one just mentioned, assertions about objects of concurrent perceptual experiences—assertions typically made with indexicals. In fact the key mistake in Husserl's account of indexicals in LI. I, the Gewaltstreich, or act of violence which he later rejects, seems to be the following: to make the unwarranted move, from the mathematical examples that show how the objectivity of an proposition can derive from its correspondence to an ideal object, to the conclusion that this is what the objectivity of all contents consists it. By overlooking the dramatic differences between logical and mathematical truths on the one hand and empirical truths on the other he puts himself in the position of having to come up with ideal correlates for ordinary perceptual contents. This need is felt most strongly in the case of reference to objects of immediate perception using "essentially occasional expressions." An attempt to satisfy this need within the constraints of the underlying theory of the "Prolegomena" thus lies behind the rejected account of indexicality in LI.I.
To understand the change provoked by Husserl's realization of the inadequacy of this conception of the relation among experience, meaning, and truth, we need to look first at the historical source of the notion of truths-in-themselves, and then at Husserl's adaptation of the notion and the changes in his explanation of the expression-meaning-truth-object-experience nexus which appear in his later writings. Although Husserl never again attempted to formulate an explicit account of indexicality, the developments in his views with regard to the relation between meaning and the \textit{an sich} make it possible to work out what a later account could have been like.

The clearest direct ancestor to Husserl's Prolegomena notion of truth-in-itself is Bolzano's idea of the \textit{Satz an sich}. In his \textit{Wissenschaftslehre} (which Husserl acknowledges as having "crucially stimulated" his own work in LI), Bolzano had criticized Kant, and the prevailing Kantianism, for confusedly mixing the subjective and the objective in the notion of the 'presentation' or 'idea' (\textit{Vorstellung}). Bolzano insisted on distinguishing the psychological event of entertaining a presentation from the objective "presentation in itself" (\textit{Vorstellung-an-sich}). From these objective presentations are constructed "propositions-in-themselves" (\textit{Sätze an sich}), which correspond to, but have identity and existence independent of, psychological acts of judgement. The relation between these ideal meanings and truths and the meanings of the concrete acts which express them is the

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\textsuperscript{43} There are, however, gestures toward such an account, e.g. in his "Lectures on the Theory of Meaning," of 1908 and in isolated examples elsewhere. While these do not present the kind of unified account we see in LI, they nonetheless indicate how changes in his general philosophical views were interacting with his views on indexicality.

\textsuperscript{44} See, Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith, "Introduction," \textit{Cambridge Companion to Husserl}, p. 16-17. There is an obvious strategic parallel with Frege's positing Platonistic Senses to serve as objective content for expressions, and distinguishing them strictly from the subjective \textit{Vorstellungen} with which those same expressions might be associated.

Peter Simons (in \textit{Cambridge Companion to Husserl}, p. 126) characterizes the shift which occurred in Husserl's thinking about objectivity between LI and Ideas as follows: "The theory of ideal meanings anchoring the objectivity of logic in the fashion of Bolzano gives way to a more Kantian view, in which the structure and function of consciousness are to account for this objectivity." This shift is accompanied by another shift: in LI the meanings have absolute and independent existence, on a par with the \textit{an sich} objects with which they are correlated; in Ideas, and later works, they have a necessary correlation, not with the "things themselves" but with regularities within consciousness. Epistemologically this position is better, since we could only become aware of ideal meanings through regularities in successive acts of consciousness anyway. The question then arises, can these new meaning of Ideas fill the role for which the ideal meanings of LI were created? And if so, for our purposes, can they serve as indicated meanings for indexical expressions? These questions will be treated below, after examining the shift itself.
relation of species to instance. Husserl early on adopted from Bolzano this semantic strategy of positing an sich entities to serve as objective contents for mental acts.

Husserl employed the notion of a "number-in-itself" already in 1887 in "On the Concept of Number" and again in Philosophy of Arithmetic of 1891. As his interests broadened under the realization that an account of mathematical concepts and objects could not be grounded without a theory that would apply to concepts in general, and ultimately to all "objectivities" of human thought, the notion of abstract truths-in-themselves began to play an ever more important role in Husserl's thought. In the "Prolegomena" he makes clear the importance of truths-in-themselves for his defense of the objectivity of scientific knowledge. As we have seen, in his explicit version of the correspondence theory of truth scientific thought is characterized by an objective interconnection which gives it an objective relevance. This interconnection can be understood either as an interconnection of things (the objects or subject matter of the science) or as an interconnection of truths (the judgements of facts and laws which the science asserts).

He emphasizes that these two—the things and the truths—although inseparable are not identical; the interconnections of things are expressed in the interconnections of truths, but predicates which apply to truths do not apply to objects, and vice versa. An important case in point is the timeless independent existence which distinguishes truths from any spatiotemporal objects which they may be truths about. Whether or not truths are ever known, they have an independent, ideal identity; each truth "remains in itself what it is, it retains its ideal being; it does not hang somewhere in the void, but is a case of validity in the timeless realm of Ideas."

So when Husserl undertakes the explanation of indexical meaning in LI, I, §§ 26-8 the whole drift of his thought impels him to find truths-in-themselves for true sentences containing indexicals to express. This, in turn, requires finding meanings-in-themselves for indexical expressions. There are a number of problems with this strategy that Husserl seems to have noticed fairly quickly. As we saw with Frege, a semantic theory crafted for the special case of mathematical meanings is bound to require adjustments in order to accommodate ordinary language. The notions of mathematical truths-in-themselves and numbers-in-themselves gain plausibility from the obvious compatibility between the timeless truths of mathematics and the purely conceptual nature of mathematical objects. Mathematical objects have a purely conceptual identity; mathematical terms and propositions have objective senses which are "determined in a conceptually fixed way."
But Husserl's characterization of truths-in-themselves as "an ideally closed set of general objects," while it applies well to most mathematical truths, is not a plausible description of contingent empirical truths.

Truths about empirical objects, by contrast (and in particular, truths expressed using indexicals), display certain peculiarities which make it difficult to suppose that they comprise such an "ideally closed set." It is not obvious how conceptual structure alone could suffice to identify objects and properties about which we ordinarily seem to make true statements. If I say something true by pointing to an object and saying "that is a black bird," your understanding my meaning and judging its truth requires, beyond certain obvious conceptual abilities, your having experience of a specific object in a specific spatiotemporal connection to my act of speaking. Certainly there is the "self-subsistent fact" that some object x is or is not a black bird. But this is not all of what I am asserting with my statement. I'm also asserting that this is that object. There are ways of saying true things about objects which are not being perceived at the time (e.g. using names or descriptions), and so it ought to be possible to say of the object x that it was a blackbird in one of these ways. Suppose its name were 'Schwarz'. I could say "Schwarz is a blackbird." But, as our consideration of Frege's theory showed, such statement could be doubted by a person who still agreed with me when I said "That is a black bird." Similar peculiarities arise with predicates, such as color expressions. If I point to a color sample and say "Iron oxide is this shade of red," understanding what I said and judging its truth requires seeing the sample under specific lighting conditions and in a specific spatiotemporal connection to my act of speaking. Access to these perceptual conditions cannot be replaced by any non-indexical specifications of the light-reflective qualities of the sample. As we saw in the last chapter, Peirce had already argued that exact specifications of colors no less than of places and times, require indexical anchors, either in the form of ostensive samples, or for example, in the case of wavelength specifications, indexically anchored standards of calibration for measuring instruments. These sorts of problem seems to lie behind Husserl's decision to strike the color-quality example from the second edition of LI.

Clearly spatial and temporal locations are key cases if Husserl is to extend the mathematical account of ideal meanings to cover "real" objects, in his special sense (all real objects—by definition, for Husserl—have unique locations, which could be used to identify them). But locations are also obviously difficult cases, since as he himself points out, all our customary ways of referring to them are indexically anchored. Remember, the color

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47 LI, I, § 35.
example was supposed to clinch the case for indexicals having ideally fixed meaning by showing that, in the ideal case, even demonstrative reference to times and places could be replaced by nonindexical expressions by following a procedure parallel to the procedure by which color qualities were to be given exact designations. But a thoughtful examination of the analogy with color specification—especially in light of Peirce's critique—shows that that example hurts rather than helps Husserl's case. What the analogy shows, if anything, is that indexical reference to color qualities is just as much in need of explanation as reference to times and places. Husserl is left without an argument for the ideality of the meaning of indexical assertions. He must either deny that 'That is a blackbird' can express a truth which is distinct from any ideal truth-in-itself, or he must concede that some expressions can have objective meaning which are inextricably bound to specific perceptions, and thus are not "ideal" in the way that the meanings of mathematical theorems are.

Not until Ideas II did Husserl find a way to describe this interaction between the mathematical and theoretical descriptions characteristic of much of empirical science and the perceptual, indexical experiences which "anchor" them to real objects of the perceived world. By that time his notion of truths-in-themselves had undergone important changes which we will now examine.

**Toward a New An Sich**

In the "Forward" to the second edition of LI, Husserl excuses his decision to reprint the first Investigation in more or less its original form in spite of its flaws because much of the damage done by the "imperfect notion of truths-in-themselves" would be corrected in a revised version of the sixth Investigation. Although those promised revisions were never carried out, even in the first edition version of the sixth Investigation, it is clear that the problems cited above had led Husserl to new attempts to explain the relation of meaning to experience. There is, for example, no mention of truths- or things-in-themselves in the treatment of indexicality at LI, VI, § 5. He *does* describe the constraints on a theory of meaning which consideration of indexicals brings to light, constraints contained in the seven theses stated above. When, for example, I say "This is a blackbird" and use 'this' to refer to

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48 Kevin Mulligan and Barry Smith report (in "A Husserlian Theory of Indexicality," p. 142) that Husserl, at §80 of his Formal and Transcendental Logic (1929) recognized the "problem of the recoverability of meanings (species): "Admitting that he was not able to deal completely with occasional judgements, Husserl refers to the way the senses of occasional judgement are essentially determined in a way which goes beyond what is or could ever be expressed determinately in words."
an object of my current experience, the full meaning of my words has a definite dependence upon perception. Without perception of the object, a hearer would not know what object I was talking about, could not judge whether what I said was true, would not know what I meant. But given the required perceptions, the (ideal, self-identical) meaning which I express and my hearer understands is nonetheless not contained in either of our perceptions; an infinite number of different perceptions could form the basis for understanding the indicated meaning; there is no common real part of these perceptions which could be identified with the meaning which is expressed. There is, however, something which all of these perceptions do have in common—indeed must have in common in order to play the required role in expressing meaning: they are all perceptions of, as Husserl says, "recognizably the same object." It is characteristic of indexical reference (and this it has in common with directly referential uses of proper names) that it aims at "the direct intending of the object in question." Perception plays an indispensable role in carrying out this referential aim, since what direct reference means is that (a use of) an expression refers to its object "not attributively, as the bearer of these and those properties, but without such 'conceptual' mediation, as what it itself (selbst) is, just as perception might set it before our eyes." This way of putting things is helpful because it focuses attention on the way objects are made available for reference in the contingent flow of experience. We could only think about and know about physical objects as they exist "in themselves" (an sich) to the extent that they, or similar objects, have been given to us in perception. But in perception the single complete entity, the thing itself (selbst), is set before us in a myriad of different views, all of which are prima facie incomplete and inadequate, always restricted to a point of view, an exterior surface, a narrow spectrum of perceivable features. This relation between the object as it presents itself in perception and the object as it is "in itself" is more complex than Husserl's treatment of indexicals in LI, I can accommodate. That account required that perception provide the basis, in the ideal case, for the replacement of the indexical elements with attributive expressions, allowing us to reach the object in itself through the corresponding truths-in-themselves in which it figured. In LI, VI no such ideal replacement is in view. Instead reference is to be achieved in spite of the inadequacy of any actual or possible perceptions to the object they present. Here we see a recapitulation of the movement from Mill's insistence on the semantic goal of objective reference, through Russell's insistence that our merely subjective access to objects leaves us without the means to reach that goal, to Peirce's contention that in spite of the limitations on our subjective means, the pursuit of objective reference is nonetheless coherent and even inescapable. We shall soon see how Husserl contributes to the further
substantiation of this Peircean thesis. For now, what is important to note is that this frank admission of the inadequacy or our perceptual resources leads to the formulation of the new notion of a thing-in-itself presented in Chapter 3 of LI, VI.
Some Hints of Contextual Structure (a Brief Aside)

But before examining this new notion, we should note the appearance in the early part of LI, VI of what will eventually become elements in the Husserlian picture of indexical context. In the preliminary sketch of contextual structure which was offered above, at the end of Chapter 5, we began to characterize the kinds of agents and agent capacities which indexical meaning seems to require. We can now detect in Husserl an appeal to another such agent capacity—an ability which all language users must have in order to understand language in general, and indexicals in particular. It is a primitive, phenomenologically apparent capacity for "recognition" of experienced objectivities. This capacity appears at several places in the account of direct reference: Humans have (and share with most other animals) the ability to recognize a series of intuitions as being of the same object, making it a potential object of reference. This recognition occurs at two distinct levels. Elements of the stream of sensation are selected and unified ("synthesized," Husserl says) to constitute the perception of a single object. A higher level recognition (a re-identification, to use Strawson's term) requires unifying two temporally disjoint recognitions as being of the same object. The sounds of words are a special case of this general capacity. Humans (and a few other animals) recognize streams of sounds (or visual patterns) as words, and recognize distinct occurrences of a single word in separate sensory occurrences. A linguistic agent, we could say, must have the capacity to recognized words both as tokens and as types. Still higher orders of recognition (these, apparently restricted to humans) are required to come to know the relation between an object or object type and a word type, a relation which is constitutive of meaning.

Other contextual elements appear when Husserl considers the fact that the actual distinction between indicating meaning and indicated meaning looks different depending on whether it is viewed from the hearers point of view (where it is possible for the indicating meaning to temporally precede the perception in which the indicated meaning is fixed) and from the speaker's point of view (where both parts of the meaning occur simultaneously). Thus points of view, which different agents can occupy, would seem to enter into the context which determines the complete meaning of indexicals.

Related to these communicative points of view are perceptual points of view—the perspectives from which objects are experienced. The importance of these comes to light in Husserl's careful attempt to characterize the relation between expressions used to refer to objects of contemporaneous experience and the objects to which they refer. This is the

49 Cf. the end of LI, VI, §5.
"direct" reference which occurs with indexicals and with proper names in their "authentic" or "characteristic" uses. He speaks of these objects not as existing in themselves (an sich) but as they are themselves (selbst) given in intuition. An indexical or proper name refers to an object "as what it itself is, just as perception might set it before our eyes." His thesis in LI, VI, §5 is that the meaning of such directly referential expressions is fixed or determined by the accompanying perceptual event, but is not contained therein. The reason is that the meaning is object-directed, and the object perceived is not a component of any one perception of it. A single object can show itself in infinitely many differing perceptual events, which vary according to perspective, lighting conditions, etc.—in other words, according to perceptual point of view. There need be no single entity which occurs as a part of all these perceptions. What they have in common is that they are all of the same and "recognizably the same object." It is in this act of recognition that the object itself is constituted as an object of perception, available to become an object of reference. The perceptions which fix the meanings of indexicals are tied to specific points of view, but the intentional contents of those perceptions must somehow transcend those points of view. Both the points of view and the transcending mechanism will need to figure in the structure of context. Although it raises more questions than it answers, the new level of analysis apparent in LI, VI begins to fill in the details of the practical process of carrying out communicative intentions which Husserl had only hinted at in this strikingly Grice-like passage at LI, I, §7:

Expressions were originally framed to fulfill a communicative function. . . . The . . . sign . . . first becomes a spoken word or communicative bit of speech, when a speaker produces it with the intention of "expressing himself about something" through its means; he must endow it with a sense in certain acts of mind, a sense he desires to share with his auditors. Such sharing becomes a possibility if the auditors also understands the speaker's intention. He does this inasmuch as he takes the speaker to be a person who is not merely uttering sounds but speaking to him, who is accompanying those sounds with certain sense giving acts, which the sounds reveal to the hearer, or whose sense they seek to communicate to him.  

But even with the detail given in LI, VI, Husserl does not yet make explicit the crucial fact, implied in the recognition of mutual communicative intention, that the roles and points of view of speaker and hearer are essentially reciprocal—to succeed as a speaker requires understanding what it is to be a hearer, and vice versa. This insight must wait be fully developed in his later writings on empathy.

50 Peter Simons notes the similarity to Grice in *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, p. 109.
A final contextual feature, to which Husserl makes passing mention is the "language community" (*Sprachgemeinschaft*); he points out the contingent variability which it introduces into linguistic phenomena. What also awaits later explanation is the fact that, although the effects of a given language community on the surface details of language are variable and non-essential, *that there be a language community* is essential to the meaningfulness of language in any form. It is in the language community that the reciprocal roles of speaker and hearer are learned and perpetuated.

All of these themes, which will have important consequences for the structure of context, make their appearance in the early sections of LI, VI, and represent a breakthrough to an understanding of the importance of empathy and intersubjectivity in the determination of linguistic meaning.

**Things- and Truths-in-Themselves as Peircean Asymptotic "Realities"**

Chapter 3 of LI, VI is where Husserl develops the dramatically new notion of the *an sich* which paves the way for important later developments in his thought, including his eventual repudiation of the account of indexicality of LI. I. The job of the sixth *Investigation* is to show the role of experience as a source and justification for knowledge. In the course of LI, VI Husserl deals directly with the fact that the relation between experience and meaning is dramatically different depending on whether the objects known are mathematical ones or empirical ones. This difference must be reflected in the account of the ideal nature of those meanings and of knowledge of the objects to which they refer.

While mathematical objects can typically be known *fully* on the basis of a limited number of concepts and axioms which govern their "closed ideal realm," ordinary sensory objects come to be known *only bit by bit*, in successive experiences, which can continue indefinitely, revealing more and more about the object, but never exhausting it. These successive experiences of a physical object, what Husserl called 'adumbrations' (*Abschattungen*) are the experiential basis for reference to and knowledge about these objects. Is it even possible, on this basis, to understand linguistic meaning as referring to a thing-in-itself in the Prolegomena sense—i.e., something with an identity unconnected to the changing contents of perception? If so, we would be referring to something which could never, in principle, be experienced. Such a claim would face the same objections as Kant's *Ding an sich*, the transcendent object which is paradoxically supposed to be *known* to be *unknowable*.

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51 In this section I have drawn extensively on the detailed account of the development of Husserl's concept of the *an sich* in H. Philipse, "Transcendental Idealism", in *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, esp. p. 273ff.
Herman Philipse explains how Husserl uses this problem to introduce a new notion of what it means to refer to something "in itself":

We may order the adumbrations of a spatial object, for instance, in series of ever greater completeness, adequacy, and richness. These series point to a limit, which Husserl calls adequate perception. In adequate perception, the object itself would be wholly and fully given. Now Husserl defines a "Ding an sich" in his new sense as the objective intentional correlate of such an adequate perception. In other words, we would perceive an object an sich if we perceived it completely and adequately.\(^5\)

We can have complete ("adequate") intuitions ("inner perceptions") about mathematical and geometric objects since their whole identities are exhausted by a limited number of actually graspable concepts—we thus can have actual knowledge of "numbers-in-themselves," and "triangles-in-themselves." But what are we to say about our less than complete perception of a sensory object? Philipse continues:

In the case of outer perception, such an adequate perception is impossible because of the essentially adumbrative character of outer perception. Accordingly, the limit of adequate perception is an ideal limit, as Husserl says.\(^5\)

Here 'ideal' is being used in a distinctly new sense. The meaning of a word had previously been called ideal in the sense that it was supposed to be a single species of which actual meaningful acts are instances. Many distinct concrete utterances fall under a single ideal (abstract) meaning, which is realized equally in all of them. But here we have an object conceived of as an ideal limit of a series of actual perceptions, but not realized in any of them. The species-instance relation between meaningful utterances and their ideal meanings is a relation which is fully and equally present in each concrete occurrence. The ideal limit notion only makes sense in relation to a series of concrete events and is not present in any of them. Thus an individual perception can be related to such an ideal limit—can be a perception of this new kind of thing-in-itself—only relative to a context of other perceptions with which it forms such a series.

Philipse notes that Husserl carries this notion of a contextualized ideal limit even further: "In the first edition, Husserl applies this definition also to the notion of a world in itself: the world in itself is the intentional correlate of the ideal community of scientists

\(^{5\text{a}}\) Ibid., p. 274.
\(^{5\text{b}}\) Ibid.
which possesses a complete science." The similarity with Peirce's notion of the "real world" as the asymptotic limit of scientific inquiry is clear and striking.

The consequences of this view for the theory of indexical reference, although not as obvious as in Peirce, are important and traceable. As we have seen, on Husserl's LI, I account, the indicated meaning of an indexical on a given occasion is the intentional object of an accompanying perception—the object-in-itself which the perception is of. But now the things-in-themselves of LI, I look like an awkward hybrid collection of two very different kinds of things; the objective correlates of mathematical and purely conceptual expressions have a timeless Platonic existence; those of proper names and indexicals are Kantian Ding an sich, in principle beyond the range of ordinary perception. Under the new conception of LI, VI we get a different, more defensible account. The new empirical things-in-themselves are still ideal, in the Prolegomena sense that they, like mathematical objects, are the identical correlates of multiple acts of meaning, but they are no longer necessarily ideal in the Platonistic sense of having a timeless independent existence. They are, in fact, ideal in a third sense of being a goal, a normative limit of knowledge-giving experience. This goal is sometimes fully achieved—e.g., in mathematical cases—but it is always only partially achieved in empirical cases.

This new notion, presented but not yet fully worked out in LI, VI, is a first step toward an improved account of direct reference; further refinements are achieved in Husserl's ongoing study of the relation between meaning and experience, specifically in his theory of the "constitution" of objects.55

In Ideas I (1913)56 he explores a way of expressing the contrast between mathematical and empirical truths by distinguishing, at §137a, between the quality of knowledge or

54 Ibid., p. 274-5.
55 In fact the whole development of the theory of the noesis/noema relationship can be read as the struggle to first describe and then explain the objectivity of indexical reference to perceptually given objects—to answer the question of how an objective sense which is common to many acts of thought and speech (the noema) can be carried by concrete acts of thinking, tied to concrete acts of perceiving in which it can never be fully realized (the noeses). (See Ronald McIntyre and David W. Smith, Husserl and Intentionality, and David W. Smith, Circle of Acquaintance for such a reading.) An implication of the view to be defended here is that the solution to this struggle lies in the careful description of the contextual structures which fill out and inform the isolated mental acts; many of these contextual structures, as we shall see, come to light in Husserl’s continuing work.
56 The full title is Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Book One: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, Quotations are from the English ed. Ideas; General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, W. R. Boyce Gibson, tr.
"insight" we can have into each: adequate, essential, insight into '2+1=2+1' vs. inadequate, individual insight into a visual landscape. He then distinguishes three different kinds of truth: theoretical, axiological (i.e., evaluative and ethical), and practical. Mathematical and geometric axioms and theorems, and other "truths relative to a definite manifold" described at §72c (the conceptually closed sets of ideal objects mentioned in LI) easily fit into the category of theoretical truths. Empirical statements about physical objects may also have a theoretical content in the factual claims they make, but the making of such claims depends in important ways on other kinds of truths. Consider, e.g., assertions which predicate a property, name, or natural kind term of an experienced object—"This is red," "She is Mary," "That is a blackbird," etc. In the flawed original account of indexicality in LI, I, these indexically expressed truths were viewed as uniform in structure with "truths of reason"—ideally eliminable in favor of non-indexical expressions which picked out the objects of reference in virtue of the truths-in-themselves in which those objects figured (the theoretical truths about the object "being so-and-so-determined"). But with the more detailed notion of "the constitution of natural objects" of Ideas I the implausibility of the ideal eliminability thesis can be avoided.

Every real [spatiotemporal] natural thing is represented by all the meanings and significant propositions with their fluctuating [intuitive] fulfilling, through which, as so and so determined and further to be determined, it figures as the correlate of possible intentional experiences; represented thus . . . by the system of all possible "subjective modes of appearing" in which it can be noetically constituted as self-identical. But this constituting relates in the first instance to an essentially possible individual consciousness, then also to a possible community-consciousness, i.e., to an essentially possible plurality of personal centers of consciousness and streams of consciousness enjoying mutual intercourse, and for whom one thing as the self-same objective real entity must be given and identified intersubjectively.57

The recognition and re-identification of objects is here viewed as part of a social project, one which makes specific demands on those who participate. The "plurality of centers of consciousness enjoying mutual intercourse" are the linguistic agents with interlocking communicative intentions described above in the Grice-like passage from LI, I. Just as certain solitary intentions require for their fulfillment the ability to recognize or re-identify an object, so social intentions require the shared ability to recognize and refer to common objects. As we saw above, the general notion of "a recognizable objectivity" applies to three categories of things which come into the mechanism of reference: 1) things (including

57 Ideas I, §135a (translation changes).
agents—fellow language users—words, and objects of possible reference; 2) types of things—object types, including word types; and 3) relations among things and types, and higher order relations among relations. An agent using a word to refer to an object seems to involve shared recognition of all three of these kinds of objectivities.

Now, if we focus on the communicative intentions which lie behind the social use of language we can see how there can be some practical truths involved as presuppositions for the possibility of expressing theoretical truths. Just as theoretical truth is the correlate of assertive acts and judgements, so there are practical truths which are the correlates of practical intentions; specifically there are referential facts (e.g. that 'Mary' refers to her, that 'red' means what it does, that 'this' on a given occasion refers to some particular object) which are correlates of practical intentions to communicate something about specific physical things. Husserl's analysis of the link between perception and reference gives us a structure in which to examine and describe this practical dimension of meaning. We have already noted Husserl's recognition of the language-community as a force influencing the development of particularities of language. At §152 he adds more detail by describing human communities of various kinds as "higher order objectivities," "hard realities which determine our natural life," and grouping them with other objects of value, and practical objects, which cannot be reduced to mere factual, theoretical relations among physical objects. In fact, at §151 intersubjectivity and empathy are introduced as "strata" of the very nature of "thinghood"—what it means to be a physical thing involves somehow the ability of different minds to perceive, and to share an understanding of an object as something jointly meant. These themes are left to be fully developed in Ideas II.

This radical analysis leaves no room for empirical truths-in-themselves, as understood in the "Prolegomena." Truth is the objective correlate of certain meaningful acts, the ones which can be intuitively fulfilled. To say that a proposition is true is equivalent to saying that the corresponding belief or judgement has the required rational relation (self-evidence) to conscious experience—for empirical truths, this means the relation of being adequately fulfilled in perception. Thus, "truth can be actually given only where there is an actual

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58 The claim that some truths about meanings are practical, not theoretical truths obviously runs counter to the contemporary practice of distinguishing semantics from pragmatics. Husserl's point here seems to amount to the plausible claim that it is impossible to eliminate pragmatic features from the basic semantic relation of reference in natural language. François Recanati has recently endorsed similar claims which will be considered in detail below, in Ch. 9.

59 This amounts to a new, more sophisticated statement of the anti-reduction argument against psychologism and naturalism.
This rules out, among other things, specification of identifying spatio-temporal location of physical objects from a non-perspectival "view from nowhere." There is no God's eye view from which "an object's being so and so determined" can constitute a truth which would ground indexical meanings as unchanging ideal unities on a par with the stable meanings, for example, of geometric concepts.

Contingencies of spatial perception which are foreign to the "true," "objective" space, reveal themselves down to the most trivial empirical specificities as essential necessities. Thus we see that not only for us human beings, but also for God—as ideal representative of absolute knowledge—whatever has the character of a spatial thing, is intuitable only through appearances, wherein it is given, and indeed must be given, as changing "perspectivally" in varied yet determined ways, and thereby presented in changing "orientations".61

Here we have the complete repudiation of the ideal eliminability argument of LI, I, § 28. Spatial and temporal locations are irreducibly indexical, and so the expression of truths about them are irreducibly indexical.

Husserl's letting go of even the 'ideal' possibility of empirical truths-in-themselves of the Prolegomena type—expressed with non-perspectival, non-indexical specification of spatiotemporal objects—runs parallel to further development of the new notion of a "thing-in-itself" as ideal limit of perceptions of a physical object. The deep meaning of "being a (spatiotemporal) thing" essentially involves irremediably incomplete, inadequate perceptions being attributed to an underlying, unifying "something." This underlying "determinable X" is the refined version of the unifying substratum of the perceived object introduced at Ideas I, §2 as a "this-there" (Dies-da) and identified with Aristotle's tode ti at §13 and called the "empty X" at §40. At the very core of what it means to be an object of perception is being a possible object of demonstrative reference.

But isn't the notion of a unification of an endless series of perceptions fundamentally paradoxical? "Being a thing" contains the Idea—the ontological form—of the possibility of adequately fulfilling perceptions: spatial, temporal, material, and so forth. The "perceptual filling" which this Idea prescribes is, indeed, infinite, and thus unattainable, but the Idea of this unattainable infinity is not, itself, infinite. It is not contradictory that the finite, fully graspable meaning of "being a thing" should contain within itself (as a dependent part) an Idea of unattainable infinite fulfillment.62 After all, the idea of a number contains within it

60 Ideas I, §139.
61 Ibid., §150.
62 Ibid., §138. Cf, §143.
the idea that each number has a successor, and thus the idea that there are infinitely many; this is no obstacle to grasping what a number is.

With this articulation of the notion of the "thinghood" of the perceived object and its relation to the ideal thing-in-itself, Husserl has resolved the arbitrariness of the "Gewalstreich," the illegitimate act of violence, of the LI, I account of indexical meaning. The thing itself (selbst), as it is presented in finite concrete perception, under the Idea of "a physical thing," is what we refer to and "really" know; the thing's meaning—what reference to it contributes to a statement—contains within it the sense of its being infinitely determinable in experience as something fully determinate "in itself" (an sich).

"Object" as we everywhere understand it is a title for essential connections of consciousness; it first comes forward as a noematic X, the subject bearer of different essential types of meanings and propositions. It appears further as the title for certain connexions of the reason, eidentically considered, in which the contained X that unifies in terms of meaning receives its rational placing.63

There are many difficult questions raised by Ideas I: How is being a possible object of perspectival intersubjective reference in a concrete human language community connected with an object's figuring in expressible empirical truths? How can the theoretical truth-content of a statement depend on practical truth-contents about its referring parts? How are practical intentions (e.g. the intention to refer to x) implicated in the intentionality of meaningful acts such as assertions? Answering these questions becomes easier with the details provided in Ideas II. For example a discussion of the notion of a "color in itself" suggests Husserl's revised approach to the color-quality example of the first edition version of LI, I:

Certain conditions prove to be the "normal" ones: seeing in sunlight, on a clear day, without the influence of other bodies which might affect the color-appearance. The "optimum" which is thereby attained then counts as the color itself. . . . "In itself" there belongs to a body a color as being in itself.64

The notion of a concrete, contingent and perspectival "optimum" as the standard for a property "in itself" applies, not just to colors, but to perceivable properties generally:

63 Ibid., §145. This unifying "X" plays a theoretical role parallel to Peirce's "hecceity."
64 Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Book Two: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution (hereafter referred to as Ideas II), translated by R. Rojewicz and A. Schuwer, p. 59.
In the constitution of a thing . . . we must first of all distinguish . . . the thing itself (as it itself is) with its constitutive features as they themselves are, versus the different modes of givenness, more perfect or less perfect, as the case may be. The features which pertain to the thing "itself" are then the "optimal" ones.\(^6\)

The notions of optimal perceptions and optimal features are normative; they are independent of any individual perception, but are relative to the possible range of human perception. The case of spatiotemporal location is specifically recognized as requiring reference to actual perceiving subjects as anchors or points of reference. Barry Smith puts it this way: "Only subjects can provide a point of orientation in relation to which the framework of time, space and motion can acquire a necessary anchor."\(^6\) He cites this passage from Ideas II:

What distinguishes two things that are alike is the real-causal nexus, which presupposes the here and now. And with that we are led back necessarily to an individual subjectivity, whether a solitary or an intersubjective one, with respect to which alone determinateness is constituted in the positing of location and of time.\(^6\)

We will meet with other important items from Ideas II as we draw a detailed Husserlian picture of context. But first we should finish tracing the evolution of the notion of the \textit{an sich} in his late work.

In \textit{Crisis} (written in 1936)\(^6\) Husserl attempts a reconstruction of the origin of the concept of "truth in itself" as a step toward understanding its limitations as an explanatory concept in the phenomenological description of meaning. As Husserl tells the story, mathematical science, particularly Geometry, found itself propounding a special kind of truth—"not tradition-bound, every-day truth, but an identical truth which is valid for all who are no longer blinded by traditions, a truth-in-itself."\(^6\) The continued development of

\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 77.
\(^{67}\) \textit{Ideas II}, p. 299. These three passages—on the subject-relative essence of color-qualities, qualities in general, and spatiotemporal location—viewed in the present context of their relation to indexical reference, should make clear the reasons for Husserl's excising the crucial first edition color-quality argument and for his attributing the illegitimacy of the account of indexicality to an incomplete notion of truths in themselves—questions which Kevin Mulligan and Barry Smith say have never yet been satisfactorily answered—see their "A Husserlian Theory of Indexicality." p. 134, n. 4.
\(^{68}\) 'Crisis' is used herein to refer to \textit{The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy}, David Carr, tr.
physical science led, from the time of Galileo, Descartes and Newton onward, to a progressive "mathematization of nature" in which the objects of physical science are seen as inhabiting a uniform world of clearly defined locations and properties, devoid of secondary qualities, a "world-in-itself," unperturbed by the peculiarities of human experience. Mathematics and Geometry do indeed deal in just these kinds of objects—no ordinary hand-drawn or cut-out circle, but the "circle-in-itself" which is the ideal limit of all round artifacts, is the object of geometric statements. The problems with this concept come to light, however, just as Husserl had found, in trying to explain how mathematized scientific statements about the perfectly general, non-locatable objects of theoretical physics can be established through, and have application to, the experienced objects of daily life, which are always encountered "in the here and now" as "this something." As noted in Ideas II, the abstract mathematized space of science seems to be empty of reality and without application until anchored relative to the "here" of an experiencing subject. This claim will become especially relevant when, in Chapter 7, we consider whether an extensional theory of context—one which takes the "domain" or world of possible referents and reference-affecting situations as being fixed independently of the conscious subjectivities of the language users—can give an adequate account of the meanings of indexicals.

The reformed version of the thing-in-itself of LI, VI and Ideas issues in a reformed version of truth-in-itself at the time of Crisis. In the "Vienna Lecture," Husserl makes explicit the Peircean notion of an ideal asymptote of scientific investigation exactly parallel with that of the "ideal thing" as the perfect limit of imperfect perceptions.

Science seeks "unconditioned truth." This involves an infinity which gives to each factual confirmation and truth the character of being merely relative, of being a mere approach in relation precisely to that infinite horizon in which the truth in itself counts, so to speak, as an infinitely distant point.70

Philosophy itself is just an instance of this infinite quest. Philosophy has infinite goals—unreachable "practical ideals"—so it meets with merely "relative success" which may lead to "premature satisfaction." This can lead, in turn, to subsequent contradictions, renewed questioning, and new relative success. Frustrating as this may be, it is the unavoidable "straight and necessary path" to knowledge that will stand in the long-run. "No line of knowledge, no single truth may be absolutized and isolated."71

70 "Vienna Lecture," Crisis. p. 278.
71 Cf. ibid, p. 291.
Yet reference to objects and the grasping and communicating of everyday practical truths does not wait on the final outcome of this never-ending process. We succeed at a practical level in spite of the receding horizon of objects- and truths-in-themselves. The mechanism by which this occurs should be visible in indexical reference. The practical truths of reference do not aspire to the ideal standards of theoretical truth; they function exclusively within the "horizon" of always incomplete, though intersubjectively confirmed perception.

Richard Tieszen contrasts Husserl's *Crisis* notion of "truth within its horizons" with Tarski's notion of truth in a formal language or truth within a model. The Tarskian notion arises historically out of the same Brentanian problematic, enunciated by Tarski's teacher Twardowski, about how best to interpret the *adaequatio rei et intellectus* which they all agreed is the best explication of the Aristotelian notion of truth as correspondence. But where Husserl's notion of "truth within a horizon" clearly expresses the limitations of human knowledge, its perspectival quality and the varying degrees of evidence on which it is based, Tarski's notion of "truth within a model" deals, as Tieszen says, "with a dead or frozen relationship between a formal language and mathematical objects." What it presents, in place of the living truth of our ordinary experience is a highly idealized "truth" which is "abstracted from the horizons of subjects who know about truth" or which is "detached from the 'living intentionality' of human subjects."72

There is, perhaps, a more sympathetic way to describe this contrast: Tarski's notion of Formal Truth displays the fundamental structure of our epistemic goal—the full, transparent correspondence between a statement and a fact in the world. Husserl's notion of truth within a horizon better characterizes the tentative, fallible *means* by which we approach that goal. This contrast is suggestive, and points toward development of a notion of truth which draws on both of these views but which avoids both the static abstractness of Tarski's account while improving on the vague generality of Husserl's. The notion of "truth in a context," which will be discussed below in Chapter 7 is intended as a step toward such an improved account. At this point, however we must return to the detailed examination of the structures of consciousness set down in *Ideas II* and what they reveal about the relation between meaning and experience.

Our task here is to build up a picture of the elements of context which are implicit in Husserl's later works. Since the referent of an indexical is an *object* in the broad sense—in the paradigm case an object of contemporaneous perception—the theory of the

constitution of objects provides a major part of the picture. But since the referent (again in the paradigm case) is an *intersubjective* object—one available for common perception by both a speaker and a hearer—it may be helpful to begin with development of the crucial notion of *intersubjectivity*.

**Through Empathy to Intersubjectivity**

In keeping with the fact that Husserl's motivation for the study of meaning was epistemological—to provide secure understanding of how objective, communicable scientific knowledge is possible—his account of the nature and importance of intersubjectivity begins, in *Ideas I*, §66, with the intersubjective dynamics of the practice of science.

Science is possible only when the results of thought can be preserved in the form of knowledge and remain available for further thinking as a system of propositions distinctly stated in accordance with logical requirements but lacking the clear support of presentations, and so, understood without insight, or else actualized after the manner of a judgement. It requires, of course, special provisions, both subjective and objective, for setting up at will (and on an intersubjective basis) the appropriate grounds and the actual insight.

The bare verbal propositions of science have a kind of freeze-dried sterility, waiting to be rehydrated into living truth through a public process of observation and identification. And though Husserl postpones consideration of the ways science is "shaped through intersubjective intercourse" these remarks serves as harbingers of significant changes in Husserl's view of how words come to be attached to meanings, thus becoming genuine expressions. A central feature of this new, more process-oriented view is that aspect of meaning which intrudes on the individual consciousness from its awareness of other conscious beings; the importance of this awareness is first spelled out in Husserl's account of *empathy*.

Empathy as a distinctive form of intuition is mentioned in the very first section of *Ideas I*, where it is contrasted with the "primordial experience" one has of one's own mind and body. While lacking the immediacy of perception of a physical thing, the experience we have of another living being as a center of subjective experiences nonetheless comes to us with the character of "something given"—in Husserl's terminology it is 'dator'.

We behold the living experiences of others through the perception of their bodily behavior. This beholding in the case of empathy is indeed intuitive dator, yet no longer a primordially dator act. The other man and his psychical life is indeed
apprehended as "there in person," and in union with his body, but unlike the body, it is not given to our consciousness as primordial.

Later, at _Ideas II_, §§43-45, we get the detailed account of how this empathic intuition works. He describes the perceivable peculiarity which marks living creatures (and humans in particular) as objects of a special kind; careful attention to the details of such perceptions reveals, he says, that distinguishing this special genus—"living thing"—is based on another underlying distinction, the distinction between two classes of perceptual objects which are given "with primal presence" to the individual consciousness. First, there are the public, external objects which "make up a domain of common primal presence for all communicating subjects, as spatial-temporal-material nature." Second, there are the private, internal, subjective objectivities—the memories, feelings, and fantasies—"which can be given to only one subject [i.e. oneself] in primal presence." The peculiarity of the way we perceive living creatures lies in the fact that along with a "primal perception" of a natural object—a body—one _apperceives_ it as a center of a subjectivity like one's own.

In my physical surrounding world I encounter Bodies, i.e., material things of the same type as the material thing constituted in solipsistic experience, "my Body," and I apprehend them as Bodies, that is, I feel by empathy that in them there is an Ego-subject . . . . Transferred over to the other Bodies thereby is first of all that "localization" I accomplish in various sense fields . . . and then there is a transfer of my indirect localization of mental activities.73

This "localization" of physical and mental activity has immediate application to indexical meaning:

To the compass of that which is appresented with the seen Body [i.e., its subjective center] pertain also the systems of appearances in which an external world is given to these subjects. Because we grasp them in empathy as analogons of ourselves, their place is given to us as a "here," in opposition to which everything else is "there." . . . But from that "here" I can then consider even my own Body as a natural Object, i.e., from that "here" my body is "there," just as the other's Body is "there" from my "here."

The location here referred to as "here" and "there" is _objective_; it exists as a place in natural space; it can be occupied, experienced and talked about as the self-same object of multiple acts of expression by multiple speakers. Yet, at the same time, that objectivity is

73 _Ideas II_, §45, translation changes.
irreducibly indexical; it is an objectivity anchored in the perspectival nature of spatial experience from a shareable point of view. In addition to an empathic anchoring of common public space, this sharing of a point of view anchors the physical objects which occupy that space:

The things posited by others are also mine: in empathy I participate in the other's positing. E.g., I identify the thing I have over and against me in the mode of appearance \( \alpha \) with the thing posited by others in the mode of appearance \( \beta \). To this belongs the possibility of substitution by means of trading places. Each person has, at the same place in space, "the same" appearances of the same thing—if, as we might suppose, all have the same sensibility. And on this account, even the "view" of the thing is Objectified. . . . I place myself at the standpoint of the other, any other whatever, and I acknowledge that each encounters every other as the natural being, man and that I then have to identify myself with the man seen from the standpoint of external intuition.\(^7\)

Here we have a more detailed development of the notion on an "objective perspective" which Frege identified with the Sense of an object in his analogy of the telescope image—perspectival, but available to many viewers. Both Frege and Husserl appeal to the "modes of givenness" of objects to explain how expressions with different meanings can yet refer to the same object. In Frege, the mode of presentation is contained in the Sense, and thus, in his official account, assigned a mind-independent existence in the "Third Realm." Husserl, by contrast, has been led to ground his objective meanings in the specificities of concrete public experience—modes of presentation become shareable points of view on public objects, but points of view which are grounded in the empathic sharing of an object of attention. And the capacity to share such a point of view eventually becomes the defining trait of the human being, as such.

It is only with empathy and the constant orientation of empirical reflection onto the mental life which is appresented along with the other's body and which is continually taken objectively . . . that the closed unity, man, is constituted and I transfer this unity subsequently to myself.\(^7\)

Husserl thus finds as a primitive characteristic of human consciousness the ability to identify with the objective point of view of other subjective agents with whom it is, by that very fact, possible to share (and, given language, communicate about) a common objective

\(^{74}\) Ibid., §46.
\(^{75}\) Ibid., §46.
world. My aim is to make a different, though closely related claim—one which is typical of the components of the theory of context I will be presenting in Chapter 9. It is the claim that what Husserl describes here as "empathy"—especially in its connection to the intersubjective meaningfulness of public space and objects—is a fundamental component of indexical context.

Since this is the first of a series of such claims, now is a good time to think about how claims of this kind might be established. Husserl, in the passages we have been considering, follows Descartes' methodological lead and presents the notion of empathy in the form of a first person reflection or meditation, in which the reader is implicitly invited to join. Whether or not this form of participatory persuasion is convincing, I think more can be said in favor of the claims I will be making. For example, in Chapter 9, I will cite scientific studies of newborns which indicate that the ability to recognize human faces, and even to imitate facial expressions, is present in human infants from birth. I will argue that this amounts to having the ability to participate in a motivated interaction which requires identifying a newly perceived object, first as a living creature and then "as an analogon of oneself," and then, based on that identification, to take on the behavior of that other person. The fact that this ability is present at birth, I would argue, justifies taking it as a universal presupposition for linguistic reference. The important methodological question of whether such an appeal to preestablished scientific results is not, once again, circular psychologism will also be addressed at that time. But for now, I will continue to use Husserl's descriptive presentation to introduce several other elements which will eventually find a place, along with their separate justifications, in the proposed theory of context.

By the time of Ideas II Husserl held that there are two undeniable data for any theory of experience. The first is that there exist unities of experience (noema) in which temporally extended objectivities are presented to us, objectivities which have existence relative to a perceiver and along with these, corresponding "relative and subjective truths." The second is that the defining aim of science is not subjective truth but objective truths, understandable to all and valid for all. Again we hear a familiar theme—an objective goal to be accomplished by subjective means. Although this aim is pursued by individual subjects, constrained by their individual subjectivities, the collective nature of science allows it to aspire to timeless objectivity.

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76 Peirce also adopts this strategy for establishing his basic phenomenological claims, e.g., at CP 1.290.
The positing, accomplished by empathy, of an intersubjective world in the form of natural science allows that which is intersubjectively posited to be determined "theoretically" in such a way that the content of the determinations becomes independent of the individual subjects . . . and with a sense that is identically the same for every subject involved in scientific research. 77

This scientific research, as he now conceives it, is a social project, historically situated and carried on within a language community empathically bound together, through its investigative activities, in a structure of common time, space and objects.

Here we see Husserl's solution to the original worry which had motivated his and Frege's antipsychologism—nailing down an objective content for science in the face of solipsistic skepticism. But this dynamic picture of meaning—that it develops out of actual investigative and communicative practices involving subjects joined in empathic interaction—contrasts strongly with the static picture presented in the "Prolegomena" to LI (as it does with Frege's Senses—existing timelessly in their "Third Realm"). In LI the meanings of all expressions are supposed to have the self-subsistent nature of Aristotelian species. Individual acts of consciousness are involved in attaching those meaning to expressions, but play no role in their formation or identity.

What is important in Husserl's later dynamic account is that it gives explicit details about the processes through which intersubjective validity functions in ordinary experiences of language users. For example, in the "Vienna Lecture" he uses Twardowski's action/product distinction to explain the relation between transitory acts of scientific thinking and the persisting (or identically recurring) products of those acts—their objective thought contents:

> Scientific acquisitions . . . are not used up . . . Repeated production . . . produces, in any number of acts, in any number of persons, something identically the same, identical in sense and validity. Persons bound together in direct mutual understanding cannot help experiencing what has been produced by their fellows in similar acts of production as being identically the same as what they themselves produce . . . not something real, but something ideal. 78

Here we have an explanation of the ideality which has always been for Husserl the key to the objectivity of reference and of knowledge, and it it an ideality which is dependent on the existence of a context of a particular kind. The ideality and objectivity of knowledge is

77 Ideas II, § 47.
78 Crisis, p. 277f.
anchored in the practical interchange of communicative activity among "persons bound together in direct mutual understanding." Husserl expresses the outcome of this intersubjective process on producing ideal common realities in his notion of the life-world:

Each of us has his Lifeworld, meant as the world for all. Each has it with the sense of a polar unity of subjectivity, relatively meant worlds which, in the course of correction, are transformed into mere appearances of the world, the Lifeworld for all, the intentional unity which always persists.

In Husserl's descriptive development of the intersubjective life-world we find more elements which will turn out to play indispensable roles in the operation of indexical context.

**Context as an Intersubjective, Intentional, Value-Laden Structure**

One of the chief characteristics of the life-world which distinguishes it from the world of nature described by physical science is that it is everywhere imbued with the character of value. Barry Smith explains the inescapable way that human beings are bound to a value-laden world by what Husserl calls a "web of motivations."

As subjects of [the common-sense] world, . . . we are not merely perceiving, but also acting beings and are constantly subject to corresponding motivations. This means that under normal circumstances we automatically effect evaluations of the objects by which we are confronted in a way which amounts to a sort of value-perception: "the value-character itself is given in original intuition."

The objects available as starting points for scientific investigation are the things of the common-sense world which already bring along with them their perceived value-character.

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79 Richard Tieszen explains how this revised notion of ideality applies even in the case of mathematical objects. He suggests that, on Husserl's post 1910 view, mathematical objects can be treated as "invariants that persist across acts carried out by different mathematicians at different times and places." See "Mathematics" in *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, p. 451.

80 *Crisis* p. 245f. Here we should note another significant parallel with Peirce's arguments for the intersubjective nature of reality—the role of illusion and perceptual error and of the public process of correction in the development of the sense of the subjective/objective contrast, and thus the concept of an objective world. See, C. P. 5.311, quoted above. Cf., *Ideas I*, §151.

In ordinary life, we have nothing whatever to do with [mere] nature-objects [posited by natural science]. What we take as things are pictures, statues, gardens, houses, tables, clothes, tools, etc. These are all value-Objects, practical Objects. They are not objects which can be found in natural science.  

Even words, when they serve as expressions, have their identity relative to their communicative purpose; they are meaningful only insofar as they serve this purpose; if two sound patterns can be used for the same communicative purpose they "count as" instances of the same word. As we noted above, the expression of theoretical truths presupposes the practical truths that the words used in their expression are able to fulfill the users' referential intentions. Although this presupposition of practical value is easy to overlook in the effortless flow of daily conversation, it becomes visible in the struggle to express novel thoughts; Husserl's own difficulties in making himself understood provide a case in point. His philosophical project, insofar as it could ever become a shareable path to knowledge, involved the creation of meanings for its words in an ongoing interplay between the experiences of the writer and of the reader, engaged in a common communicative effort. Thus he explains at Ideas I, §66

The words we use may be derived from ordinary language, being ambiguous and vague in their changing meaning. [But] as soon as they 'coincide' in the manner of immediate expression with what is given intuitively, they take on a definite sense which is their immediate and clear sense hic et nunc.  

Such a cobbling together of meaning in ongoing discourse—using some words in their pre-established senses to set up novel intuitions which can then provide made-to-order meanings for newly minted expressions, or for old words used in new senses—is indispensable for the progress of intersubjectively conceived science. The process is fundamentally indexical: creating an experience in the hic et nunc which can become the means of ostensive introduction of a new term: "this is what I mean by 'Φ'." And what is true for innovative scientific uses of language is no less true for all growth and change in natural language. 

The motivated work of science—to describe and express the facts of the world—takes place against a normative background by which success and failure are to be judged. The ability of scientific expressions to express truths depends on the practical fulfillment of

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82 Ideas II, §11.
83 Translation from Crisis, "Translator's Introduction" by David Carr, p. xxii.
referential intentions, which in turn depends on practical success in setting up the intersubjective context required for ostensive definition and other forms of concrete communicative interaction. This, Husserl warns, has important consequences for the self-knowledge of science, if it should fall into what he calls "naive objectivism":

No objective science can do justice to the [very] subjectivity which accomplishes science. . . . The constant fundament of [the scientist's]—after all subjective—work of thought is the surrounding life-world; it is always presupposed as the ground, as the field of work upon which alone his questions, his methods of thought, make sense.\textsuperscript{84}

And insofar as science aims to establish truths which will stand "in the long run," and such truths are identified with the ideal of "truth-in-itself" the whole notion of scientific objectivity is fundamentally \textit{normative}. Scientists as "naive objectivists"

\begin{quote}
do not notice that they necessarily presuppose themselves in advance as communalized men in their surrounding world and their historical time, even by the very fact that they seek to attain truth-in-itself, as truth valid for anyone at all. . . . What is completely overlooked is the fact that that objectivism, as a genuine accomplishment of an investigation oriented toward true norms, presupposes precisely those norms.\textsuperscript{85}
\end{quote}

The antidote to this scientistic objectivism, Husserl goes on to explain, is a grounding of the normativity of fundamental concepts such as "truth-in-itself" in the critical subjectivity of phenomenological investigation. What this phenomenological reflection on our own experiences of our investigative practices is supposed to show is that "truth in itself" cannot be presupposed as a basis for the meanings of any of our expressions, since it functions as a never-quite-reached goal of intersubjective discourse among agents who already know the meanings of the words they are using.

\textbf{A Life-World Account of Indexical Reference}

It is now possible to return to the account of indexicality of LI, I and VI and reconstruct what it would look like if this new notion of "truth-in-itself" took the place of the defective notion drawn from the "Prolegomena." Remember, the meaning of an indexical has two components: the \textit{indicating meaning}, which is the same on all occasions, and the \textit{indicated meaning}, which receives its specificity from the content of an accompanying perception.

\footnote{84} "Vienna Lecture" p. 295.
\footnote{85} Ibid, p. 269.
Husserl's problem in LI was to explain how the indicated meaning, while dependent on an actual, spatiotemporal event of perception could still be ideal and thus objective—a possible content for scientific knowledge. The answer in LI was that the indexical could always be replaced, in the ideal case, by a term with fixed meaning; the reason for believing this was that every object is fully determinate, is the subject of self-subsistent truths-in-themselves, and because of the "unbounded range of human reason," these truths could be known, and through them, the object specified. But careful consideration of the nature of our actual perceptual encounters with physical objects raised doubts. In particular the realization of the always-incomplete nature of the series of perceptions, in which a single external object is nonetheless intended—and intended not just as an object for me, but as a public object for all—together with the realization that being perceived and intended in this way is precisely what it means to be a physical object, led to a new notion of truth-in-itself as an ideal norm of public inquiry. In relation to this new notion, we can reapply the notion of an indicated meaning, but now the object indicated is the ideal limit of public perception within a community of empathically bonded perceivers who share a communicative intent to speak with each other about a common set of external things. The statements we make using indexicals aim at (though they perhaps never achieve) the expression of truths-in-themselves which will stand in the long-run of public inquiry. What we do achieve with these statements is the expression of "truths within the horizon" of the participants and their current experiences—truths embedded in the context of immediate communication and subject to direct intersubjective verification.

The old notion of indicated meaning required for its explanation only an extensional context—a universe of self-subsistent objects identified by self-subsistent truths, to which the human intellect somehow has access. The problem with that notion was explaining that access; in the case of objects of perception, that access is out of our reach. The new indicated meaning, on the other hand, requires a much more complex context, made up of elements which can be traced back to primitive structures accessible to individual conscious experience, but which form a structure of common public objects available to

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86 There is a slight complication about the notion of "community" here. In a typical case of indexical reference, the community in question may consist of only the speaker and the hearer. At the same time, the indicating meaning—which includes the notion of attending to a public object available to anyone at all in the proper context—has reference to a much larger community of perceiving co-communicators. The nature of the relation between this indefinitely large community which occupies a special place in the life-world and the small immediate "community" of speaker and hearer which enters into the concrete context of the utterance will be addressed below, in Chapter 9.
communicating agents, and possessing an objective value for the fulfillment of those agents communicative and practical intentions. One of the payoffs for the additional complexity of such an intentional contextual structure is its ability to explain some of the experienced features of natural language indexicality.

Recall the x-ray example of Chapter 1 and the problems it raised for the Peircean model of context in Chapter 5. The doctor points to an x-ray film and uses one word—'that'—to refer to two very different things: a bone fracture and the results of a photo developing process. The two referring acts take place in the same environment, extensionally described. What makes the difference, we said as a first approximation, is that in the two cases different aspects of the situation were relevant, and it was relevance that somehow determined the reference of 'that.' Now we at least have a set of descriptive terms to flesh out what relevance amounts to in such a case. We have agents (speaker and hearers), who share general orientation to a world of public objectivities (things, groups of things, properties of things, etc.) constituted by their common access through perception. They also share certain common projects, motivated patterns of actions, which endow certain of those objects with value; for one thing, they share the project of communication about common objects which brings with it its own value structures. In addition, the physician shares with the technician and with the other doctor distinct practical projects connected with the day-to-day business of the clinic. Different values attach to these projects. These communicative and practical values can be combined to provide a scale of relevance which is then available for disambiguating reference. Thus in the x-ray example although the extensional context of the two utterances of 'this' were identical, the two hearers had different non-linguistic projects in common with the speaker. As a result, the intentional contexts, since they contained different practical values and thus different relevance structure, were different. This contextual difference, then, explains the difference in reference. The details of such an explanation will be worked out in Chapter 9. In the next chapter I will argue that in contrast to such value-laden intentional contexts, extensional models of context always prove inadequate to the complexity of natural language, and that an extensional theory of indexical context can never capture the fundamentally intersubjective, normative structure of the life-world in which reference takes place.

At this point, we can return to the chart presented in Chapter 5 and add some contextual features found in Husserl's work (new items are in italics).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- experience themselves and each other as empathically bonded, and engaged in interaction with a common external world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- fill reciprocal <strong>Roles</strong> with interchangeable,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>role-specific points of view</strong>: (e.g., Speaker, Interpreter).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- are members of a <strong>language community</strong>, engaged in shared investigation and mutual correction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- have common <strong>Characteristics</strong>:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- they have purposes (communicative and <strong>practical</strong>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- they care what other agents perceive and think</td>
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<tr>
<td>- they aspire to share beliefs with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>- have certain <strong>Abilities</strong>:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Recognition/reidentification</strong> of objects variously presented</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Focus attention on particular regularities of experience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- <strong>Empathy</strong> (primitive apperception of other subjects.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>makes it possible to:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>switch roles and points of view with other agents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>project the point of view of another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>judge and influence the attending focus of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <strong>Value perception</strong> (linked to projects and motivation).</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- comprise a range of recognizable &quot;objectivities&quot;:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>things, types, relations, including socially dependent</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e.g., linguistic) objectivities.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- physical things are &quot;constituted&quot; from series of experienced</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>views according to an underlying <strong>Idea of objectivity/objecthood.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- occupy a place in a common &quot;universe of discourse&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these are <strong>linked to communities</strong> and their projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a number of these &quot;universes&quot; combine to form the real world)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- have (directly or indirectly) perceivable characteristics,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including <strong>values</strong>; perceptual properties are grounded in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiences of &quot;optimums.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- can be the <strong>focus of attention</strong>, and can be (empathically)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>known to be such</td>
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<tr>
<td>- points of view on objects are empathically experienced as</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>shareable, and thus as <strong>objective</strong>.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- are potential referents of indexical expressions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- include Signs, Symbols, and <strong>Words</strong>—<strong>Tokens</strong> and <strong>Types</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(as in Peirce).</td>
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Context and the Life-world

A few closing remarks are needed to avoid a possible misunderstanding: context and the life-world are not the same thing. Indexical context shares many features with what Husserl called the life-world, but there are also many features which distinguish the two. There is certainly an informal sense in which one might say that the life-world forms or provides the context for natural language. Remember one of the jobs that context is supposed to do for a language user is to provide possible objects of reference for indexicals—this the life-world does. Everything 'this' or 'that' can be used to refer to, whether color patches, trees, fictional characters or languages, are to be found in the life-world. But there are other jobs required of context which the life-world is just too big to perform the functions of context. For example, besides providing a universe of possible objects of reference, context also must quickly and efficiently narrow down those possibilities, must allow language users to focus on a small set of objects to quantify over or a single object in order to achieve determinate reference. The life-world as Husserl describes it really is an enormous entity—it literally contains everything that humans ever have anything to do with. If we follow our preliminary definition of context as a collection of features of an occasion of language use which are responsible for changes of meaning, only a small part of the life-world is ever involved as context on any given occasion.

But though the whole life-world is too big to be a plausible candidate for indexical context, it is not an amorphous entity; it has certain structural features which might lead to a description of context as a specific kind of part or sub-structure within the life-world. One such sub-dividing structure, noted by Husserl, is connected with the social complexities of the life-world. As noted above, the life-world contains value-objects linked to the various associations and activities of the human community. But of course "the human community" is itself a complicated thing with a complex ongoing history. This history can be seen as a series of communicative events between conscious individuals in which various distinct organizational units grow out of the operation of a common underlying interactive process.

Sociality is constituted by specifically social, communicative acts, acts in which the Ego is conscious of these others as ones toward which it is turning, and ones which, furthermore, understand this turning, perhaps adjust their behavior to it, and reciprocate by turning toward that Ego in acts of agreement or disagreement, etc. It is these acts, between persons who already "know" each other, which foster a higher unity of Consciousness and which include in this unity the surrounding world of
things as the surrounding world common to the persons who take a position in regard to it.\textsuperscript{87}

Thoughtful examination of the ubiquitous results of this process reveal patterns, such as familiar social groups of different sizes and kinds.

The members of the community, of a marriage and of a family, of the social class, of the union, of the borough, of the state, of the church, etc., "know" themselves as their members, find themselves dependent upon them in their consciousness and affect them in their consciousness in turn.\textsuperscript{88}

It is in these social sub-groupings, through the mutual influence of consciousness upon consciousness that many of the typical value-objects of the life world develop and have their place. As Barry Smith says:

There are . . . different sorts of normal institutional groups and associated normal attitudes, which involve also a corresponding relation to a precisely suited world of objects—of mathematical or legal objects, of financial instruments, folk tales, chess, and so on. Each such realm of objects is an interpersonal, cultural accomplishment, presupposing a certain association of human beings.\textsuperscript{89}

A given individual typically belongs to a number of these associations, and so inhabits a world rich in objects pertaining to those many "realms." But the same ability to focus on an object within one of these realms allows us to focus on the realm itself as distinct from the others which we may also inhabit. Our physician in the x-ray example may be an American citizen, a family member, a jazz fan, and an orthopedist all at once and all the time, but she is conscious of being involved in specific activities in which she act primarily as an orthopedist, and while engaged in such activities she is focused on a specific portion of the life-world, with its special objects and value structures; this fact about her and her current focus is available to others who may be interacting with her as medical technicians or as diagnostic colleagues. Thus a narrowing of the life-world to a more manageable size can be achieved by an iterated application of the ability to focus one's attention and to influence the attentive focus of others based on common knowledge of life-world structure. Focus on a particular life-world object is facilitated by first focusing on a particular socially structured realm of action in which that object has its home. In Chapter 9 we will see that

\textsuperscript{87} Ideas II, p. 194 .
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 182.
\textsuperscript{89} "Common Sense," in Cambridge Companion to Husserl, p. 424.
this use of life-world structure to facilitate the specification of reference is just one example of the dynamic processes through which contexts are formed and used.

For now it is enough to note a couple of basic contrasts between context and the Husserlian life-world. First of all, it is part of the very meaning of the life-world that there is only one, that it is the world for us all, that it encompasses everything that there can be for us as experiencing beings. Contexts, on the other hand are many; we slip in and out of them; we can discover that we were operating in one and someone else was operating in another; we can then correct the situation with a few well chosen words or gestures and then have a common context within which to continue. The life-world has an essential persistence while a context can be ad hoc, seemingly built up within a conversation and then disposed of.

At the same time there are systematic dependences between context and the life-world. For example, it is the life-world background of objects, values, activities, social articulations, etc., which provides many of the resources for the construction of contexts.

There is one other important dependence to note. In Husserl's description of the way that the specificity of the social sub-divisions of the life-world are formed, he speaks of "a mutual turning toward objects in common action" which is itself indexical. At some early stage of forming a social bond of common action, values, and surrounding objects, individuals must be able to co-focus on a particular object for the first time. This kind of innovative indexical reference must itself take place in a context, but it cannot be a context which relies on the social structure which is just then in the process of being formed or transformed. Just as in some instances context is dependent for its formation on pre-existing features of the life-world, in other circumstances features of the life-world seem to be dependent on pre-existing contextual formations. Whether one is ultimately more primitive than the other or whether context and the life-world will eventually turn out to be interdependent and necessarily co-evolving structures can be left an open question for now. Some steps toward a fuller understanding of the relation between the two will emerge with the discussion in Chapter 9 of the dynamics of context formation and context change.
Fossils

**Broadening the Range of Indexicality**

Returning now to the range of indexicality in language, the first edition account of 1901 says that essentially occasional expressions include///; but not///. But in the second edition of 1913 he inserts the qualifying word///

In examining his own use of words to express specific meaning in Ideas I he says:

> The words we use may be derived from ordinary language, being ambiguous and vague in their changing meaning. [But] as soon as they "coincide" in the manner of immediate expression with what is given intuitively, they take on a definite sense which is their immediate and clear sense *hic et nunc*. ⁹⁰

His job as a scientific writer is to provoke in the reader the intuitive experiences which fix the meanings of his expressions. It is by linking words with intuitive acts that precise and innovative scientific expression becomes possible.

> Science is possible only when the results of thought can be preserved in the form of knowledge and remain available for further thinking. . . It requires, of course, special provision, both subjective and objective, for setting up at will (and on an intersubjective basis) the appropriate grounds and the actual insight"⁹¹

Here we see the significance of the second edition change in the range of occasional meaning. The meaning attached to a word or sentence is always susceptible to change under the influence of specific aspects of the situation of its use. Demonstratives are obvious examples, but other "empirical expressions" show the same influence from accompanying perceptions/intuitions. I can use "the green one" in a context to refer to a specific object, and in doing so, I can simultaneously use the word "green" to mean the the exact shade of green that object has. That "green" in this perceptual context can carry that meaning is clear from the fact that I can then express something quite specific by saying "I want a shirt that color." In ideas 66 Husserl is talking about how a scientist (or "scientific philosopher") can

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⁹¹ Ibid. Findlay's translation, p. 176. At the end of this section he hints at the generalization of these requirements "as relate to science as shaped through intersubjective intercourse" which are an important theme in Ideas III???. 
give an ordinary word a specific theoretic meaning by creating a context in which the reader shares the writers intuition of that which the word is to mean. It is the writer's task to structure the context in a way that brings the reader to "grasp" the meaning which the word is intended thereafter, and in the context of that discourse, to express.

Grasping a meaning (noema)

constitution / synthesis

The fact that early results were modified is to be looked upon as a mark of success for the phenomenological method—it was able to detect and correct errors through continued reflection.

focus: essences to actual practices of scientists / speakers

conscious experience //social experience

objectivity//

Platonic independence to intersubjective/noematic dependence

Frege's senses vs. noemata//"grasping" explained pt. 1.

//It is obvious that humans think about and talk about both real and ideal objects and truths. Psychologism errs by conflating real properties of thinking beings, and of events of thought, with (ideal) truths about relations among the ideal objects of thought, for examples when it claims that variability in human thought processes implies variability among the logical "laws of thought."

Talk of variable laws of thought only becomes absurd when we are referring to the laws of pure logic, . . . number theory, set theory, etc. These . . . are purely theoretical truths, ideal in character, rooted in their own semantic content [Bedeutungsgehalt] and not straying
beyond it. They can, accordingly, not be affected by any actual or imagined change in the world of matter of fact.\textsuperscript{92}

// In the mean time, Husserl may have begun to heed his own advice, that to find out what scientists mean by their expressions, one should pay more attention to their actual communicative practices than to their theoretical pronouncements of that subject. (LI, I, §29) cf. Peirce

\textsuperscript{92} Prolegomena, §40, p. 164.