PROPOSITIONAL AND EXISTENTIAL TRUTH IN EDMUND HUSSERL'S *LOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS*

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This essay explores questions first posed by Ernst Tugendhat: Can Edmund Husserl's conception of truth help philosophers connect the concept of propositional truth with a more comprehensive and life-oriented idea of truth? Can it do so without short-circuiting either side? If so, to what extent? I focus on the conception of truth in Husserl's path breaking Logical Investigations, *originally published in 1900–01. First, I review critical interpretations of Husserl by three influential post-Heideggerian philosophers: Emmanuel Levinas, Theodor Adorno, and Jacques Derrida. Next, I examine selected passages in the Logical Investigations. Finally, I initiate a critical retrieval of early Husserl's conception of truth, one that not only evaluates his contribution in light of influential assessments by Levinas, Adorno, and Derrida but also proposes revisions to it.*

Ernst Tugendhat has claimed that Edmund Husserl's conception of truth offers an important alternative to two divergent tendencies in recent philosophy. On the one hand, many analytic philosophers are content with a minimalist notion of propositional truth along the lines of Alfred Tarski's formula "'p' is true *iff* p." According to Tugendhat, formulae like this are "precise and pertinent [*zutreffend*], but trivial." They do not explicate the correspondence between proposition and fact that they nonetheless assume. As a result, they obstruct any inquiry into "a possible expansion of the concept of truth beyond the narrower domain of propositional truth [*Aussagewahrheit*]."[1]

On the other hand, continental philosophers who expand the concept of truth beyond the propositional end up with such vague and indeterminate conceptions that they cannot adequately account for

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[1] Ernst Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (1967), 2nd ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970), 2–3. Unfortunately, this book has never appeared in English translation. The translations in this article are my own.

the usual notion of propositional truth. Martin Heidegger, for example, with his conceptions of disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) and unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*), expands the concept of truth to encompass all of human comportment (*Verhalten*), making truth "practical, historical, existentiell."[2] But he never gives a satisfactory answer to the question: how, precisely, does this expanded concept relate to propositional truth?

Hence contemporary truth theory separates into two divergent tendencies: a precise and pertinent specification of propositional truth that is constricted, trivial, and tautological; and a properly expansive approach to truth that is vague and insufficiently specific about propositional truth. Tugendhat considers both tendencies highly problematic. Each in its own way surrenders "the idea of critical responsibility," he claims.[3] And this idea is central to philosophy itself: "'Philosophy,' in the broadest and…most original sense of the word, stands for the idea of orienting human life as a whole toward truth, *i.e.*, for the idea of living in critical responsibility."[4]

Tugendhat thinks Husserl's phenomenological conception of truth has the potential to take us past this impasse. For Husserl's explication of propositional truth makes possible "a deliberate [*schrittweise*] and critically testable [*kontrollierbare*] expansion" toward existential truth, toward truth as it is lived in true friendships and truthful conduct, for example, and not simply as it is asserted. Even though Husserl does not really account for the relationships among truth, history, and human practices [*Praxis*], "for the first time since German idealism" Husserl understands human life in its entirety as "oriented to truth," and he regards philosophy as "the radicalization of this relation to truth [*Wahrheitsbezug*]."[5]

Tugendhat first published his study in 1967, having successfully submitted it one year earlier as a *Habilitationsschrift* at Tübingen's Faculty of Philosophy. Although the divergence he noted then has not disappeared, a similar description today would need to be more complicated. For 1960s minimalism about truth in analytic philosophy diversified into deflationism and pluralism, and Heideggerian expansionism gave way to Derridean deconstruction and Habermasian critical theory. Moreover, the revival of pragmatism and the development of feminism, postcolonialism, and other forms of liberatory theory make the contemporary "truthscape" much more colour-

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[2] *Ibid.*, 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, 4.
[4] *Ibid.*, 1.
[5] *Ibid.*, 5–6.

ful than the one Tugendhat described. Nevertheless, the challenge he posed has not gone away. Perhaps, likewise, Husserl's phenomenological conception of truth has retained its potential as a way to address this challenge.

That, at least, is what this essay explores. I plan to ask whether, and to what extent, Husserl's conception of truth can help philosophers connect the concept of propositional truth with a more comprehensive, life-oriented idea of truth, without short-circuiting either side.

My focus is on the account Husserl gives in his early two-volume work *Logical Investigations* (1900/1901).[6] Despite the refinements, revisions, and rearticulations Husserl offers in subsequent writings such as *Ideas I* (1913) and *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929), the account of truth in the *Logical Investigations* provides the core to his conception.[7] This account is also a crucial source for Heidegger's expansive conception of truth, as has been pointed out not only by

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[6] Citations from Edmund Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* use the abbreviation LU and are from volumes 18 and 19 of *Husserliana*, Husserl's collected works, published by Martinus Nijhoff. *Husserliana* volume 18, published in 1975, contains the text to both the first and the second, revised editions of LU volume I, titled *Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*, and is cited here as LU I. *Husserliana* volume 19, published in 1984, contains the text to both editions of LU volume II, titled *Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*. Like the original editions, this volume is divided into two parts. Part I of *Husserliana* volume 19 contains Investigations One through Five and is cited as LU II.1. Part II contains Investigation Six and is cited as LU II.2. Volume I of LU originally appeared in 1900. Volume II originally appeared in 1901. The revised edition of volumes I and II.1 appeared in 1913. The "partially revised" edition of volume II.2 appeared in 1921. The revised edition of 1913/1921 is translated by J. N. Findlay as *Logical Investigations*, with a new Preface by Michael Dummett, edited with a new Introduction by Dermot Moran (London: Routledge, 1970, 2001), and cited as LI. Citations provide first the German and then the English volume and pagination, thus: LU II.1, 32/LI 1, 184; "tm" after a citation indicates that I have modified the translation.

[7] This is not to deny that Husserl made significant revisions as he later took up questions of transcendental constitution, intersubjectivity, and the lifeworld or that these revisions are relevant to the critical retrieval initiated in this essay. To take up these revisions, however, would require a detailed and separate discussion. Husserl's most important later writings on the concept of truth are *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929), (tr.) Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), and the posthumous *Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic* (1948), (ed. and rev.) Ludwig Landgrebe, (tr.) James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973). In my judgment, Tugendhat's *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*, which considers the entire range of Husserl's early and later writings, remains the best comprehensive account of his conception of truth.

Tugendhat but also by more recent commentators such as Daniel Dahlstrom.[8]

I do not intend merely to exegete Husserl's text, however. I try to begin a critical retrieval. To explain what I mean by "critical retrieval," and to position my interpretation within a wider field of reception, I first summarize critical readings of Husserl by three influential post-Heideggerian philosophers: Levinas, Adorno, and Derrida.[9] Then, I examine selected passages in Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. Finally, based on this examination, I discuss the contributions and limitations of early Husserl's conception of truth.

1. Post-Heideggerian Criticisms

Strikingly, three of the most influential post-Heideggerian philosophers have taken up the conception of truth in the *Logical Investigations* in the broader context of engagements with Husserl that helped establish their respective philosophical programs. Shortly after studying with Husserl and Heidegger in Freiburg, Emmanuel Levinas published *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology* in 1930 and reissued it in 1963. His short monograph was one of the first systematic interpretations of Husserl's published writings in France at the time.[10] Theodor Adorno, who had completed a Frankfurt University doctoral dissertation on Husserl in 1924[11], began a new

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[8] "In Heidegger's eyes, Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and the analysis of truth it contains are not merely the high point of philosophical reflection on logic in the early twentieth century. They represent a genuine 'breakthrough'…. Husserl's breakthrough is precisely the recognition that western philosophical conceptions of truth and being are ultimately matters of intuition or perception, and not of judgment." See Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 49–50.

[9] Here "post-Heideggerian" indicates not only that each author develops a reading subsequent to Heidegger's highly influential appropriation of Husserl in *Sein und Zeit* but also that each reads Husserl with an eye to Heidegger's appropriation. I regard my own approach to Husserl as post-Heideggerian in this sense.

[10] For historical details, see the "Translator's Foreword" by André Orianne in Emmanuel Levinas, *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), xi–xxviii, especially xxiv–xxvii; originally published as *Théorie de l'intuition dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (Paris: Alcan, 1930) and republished by Vrin in 1963. Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as TIH.

[11] Theodor W. Adorno, "Die Transzendenz des Dinglichen und Noematischen in Husserls Phänomenologie," in Adorno's *Gesammelte Schriften* 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), 7–77.

monograph in the mid-1930s on the "antinomies" in Husserlian phenomenology. Intended as a doctoral dissertation to be submitted at Oxford University under the direction of Gilbert Ryle, it was completed and published in 1956, under the title *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie: Studien über Husserl und die phänomenologischen Antinomien*, and later translated into English under the misleading title *Against Epistemology*.[12] Jacques Derrida published *Speech and Phenomena*, his critique of Husserl's theory of meaning, a decade later, in 1967[13], one year after Adorno's extensive critique of Heideggerian ontology in *Negative Dialectics* and in the same year as Derrida's *Of Grammatology*.[14] Each philosopher has his own angle of approach.

1.1 Emmanuel Levinas

Levinas offers the most sympathetic reading of Husserl, giving an immanent interpretation of his published writings[15] while also

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[12] Theodor W. Adorno, *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique; Studies in Husserl and the Phenomenological Antinomies*, (tr.) Willis Domingo (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983). The now standard German edition is in Adorno's *Gesammelte Schriften* 5 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), 7–245. Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as AE. Page references, separated by a slash, will be first to the German text, then to the English translation.

[13] Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, (tr.) David B. Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973); originally published as *La voix et le phénomène: introduction au problème du signe dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967). The same publisher issued a second, corrected edition in 1998.

[14] If we expand the list to include Gilbert Ryle, who published an essay on Husserlian thought titled simply "Phenomenology," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume* 11 (1932): 63–83, we can see that leading figures in four of the most influential strands of Western philosophical thought after World War II undertook a serious engagement with Husserl's work: ordinary language philosophy (Ryle), critical theory (Adorno), deconstruction (Derrida), and Levinasian ethics. Ryle wrote the following about *The Concept of Mind* (1949), his most influential book: "The book could be described as a sustained essay in phenomenology, if you are at home with that label." See Gilbert Ryle, *Collected Papers* (London: Hutchinson, 1971), 188. For reasons to include Ryle among the ordinary language philosophers, see Stephen P. Schwartz, *A Brief History of Analytic Philosophy from Russell to Rawls* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 119–59.

[15] In addition to *Logische Untersuchungen*, Levinas examines three writings: "Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft" (1910), "Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Forschung" (1913), and "Husserls Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstsein" (1928).

raising concerns along the way. Clearly indebted to Heidegger's work of the 1920s, especially *Sein und Zeit*, Levinas interprets Husserl's project as an attempt to understand the meaning of being and to uncover the ontological basis for both epistemology and the phenomenological method. As Levinas says with respect to Husserl's concern about the transcendental constitution of the world, "[k]nowledge of Heidegger's starting point may allow us to understand better Husserl's end point." Even Husserl's early attacks on psychologism and naturalism aim to arrive at "a new conception of being," Levinas claims. (TIH, xxxiv, xxxvi)

This implies, in turn, that the concept of truth presented in Husserl's *Logical Investigations* is not simply an epistemological or logical concept. Rather, it is at bottom an ontological concept. It pertains to the being of the intuited objects toward which judgments and other signitive acts are aimed: "Truth does not become possible with judgment; on the contrary, judgments presuppose the primary phenomenon of truth, which consists in facing being.... [M]aking a judgment about an object is only a new mode of facing it." According to Levinas, Husserl found this "primary phenomenon" in "intuition...as an intentionality which reaches being." (TIH, 89) In transforming the notion of truth, Husserl simultaneously transforms the notion of being, turning it into "nothing other than the correlate of our intuitive life." (TIH, 92)

Levinas's main reservation about this transformation is that Husserl continues to regard intuition as "a theoretical act," such that his concept of intuition—and, by implication, his concepts of being and truth—"is tainted with intellectualism and is possibly too narrow." This can give rise to a charge of logicism that Levinas considers misplaced. (TIH, 94)[16] In the book's "Conclusion," Levinas states that Husserl's purported logicism, or scientism, is not the source of such intellectualism. The problem is not that Husserl privileges logic or takes geometry and natural sciences as the model for philosophy inquiry, but rather that he makes philosophy seem "as independent of the historical situation of man [sic] as any theory that tries to consider everything *sub specie aeternitatis*." (TIH, 155; emphases in original)

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[16] Levinas devotes an entire chapter, titled "The Intuition of Essences" (97–119), to refuting the familiar charge, made by Victor Delbos and others, that Husserl's critique of psychologism, especially in Volume 1 of the *Logical Investigations*, falls prey to "logicism" and "Platonic realism." Yet here, too, Levinas suggests that "one can reproach Husserl for his intellectualism" (TIH, 119), explicitly appealing to Heidegger when he makes this suggestion.

1.2 Theodor W. Adorno

Adorno is among the critics who charge Husserl with logicism. His monograph on Husserl aims to uncover the antinomies in Husserl's thought in order to elicit the ideological character and societal role of philosophical idealism. As he says up front, "Husserl's philosophy is the occasion and not the point of this book." (AE, 9/1)[17] Rather, the point is to uncover and move beyond the antinomies of idealism that return in Husserl's phenomenology and remain under disguise in Heidegger's ontology. By "idealism" Adorno means a philosophy that affirms an identity between subject and object, thereby assigning constitutive priority to the epistemic subject. He regards idealism as the dominant philosophical ideology in capitalist society that traces its roots to Descartes, and he implicitly juxtaposes it to historical materialism as he understands and pursues it. Adorno sees Husserl's unfolding philosophical project as a dogged but failed attempt to transcend idealism idealistically.[18]

The first step along this path is what Adorno calls the "logical absolutism" of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. Noticing what Levinas describes as intellectualism, Adorno says that a philosophy like Husserl's, which regards science as the ideal for human thought, cannot avoid the tensions that arise when it tries to remain philosophical. These tensions give expression to underlying tensions in capitalist society. More specifically, Husserl absolutizes the products of formal logic and thereby inadvertently, yet effectively, both expresses and ratifies the larger societal process of reification that Georg Lukács, updating Marx's critique of commodity fetishism, diagnosed in the 1920s.[19] Like the bourgeois economist who treats commodities as free-standing things and forgets about their origins in human labour, Husserl turns highly formal propositions into

[17] Although the secondary literature has largely overlooked this work, one year before his death in 1969 Adorno still regarded it as his most important book alongside *Negative Dialectics*, according to Rolf Tiedemann. (AE, 386/241)

[18] See in this connection Theodor W. Adorno, "Husserl and the Problem of Idealism," *The Journal of Philosophy* vol. 37, no. 1 (1940): 5–18.

[19] See Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, (tr.) Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), especially the central and long essay "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," 83–222. Adorno cites a footnote in the Reification essay where Lukács says that, in Husserl's phenomenological method, "the whole terrain of logic is ultimately transformed into a 'system of facts' [*Faktizität*] of a higher order" (Lukács, 212n14)—see AE, 65/58. Lukács's note occurs in a section of the Reification essay titled "The Antinomies of Bourgeois Thought"—a clear precedent for Adorno's focus on the "idealist" antinomies in Husserlian phenomenology.

irreducible "states of affairs," ignoring their historical origins, social context, and existential meaning, and then treats all phenomena in a similar fashion: "Logical axioms, elevated to propositions in themselves, offer the model of fact-free, pure essences [*Wesenheiten*] whose grounding and description phenomenology as a whole chose as its task and equated with the concept of philosophy." (AE, 96/89; tm)

According to Adorno, Husserl's logical absolutism generates a highly problematic conception of truth.[20] On the one hand, Husserl formalizes and isolates the subject's contribution to truth, turning it into supposedly pure propositional "truths" that float free from any sociohistorically mediated experience and become ideal essences. On the other hand, the objectivity of truth, which Husserl labours mightily to preserve, gets reduced to the internal contents of consciousness. The sociohistorical mediations of both subject and object go missing, along with the dialectical character of their interrelation, making it impossible to conceive of truth as a "force field" (*Kraftfeld*) or "constellation." Husserl, he says, "sees only a rigid choice between the empirical, contingent subject and the absolutely necessary ideal law, purified of all facticity. He fails to see that truth does not emerge in either the one or the other, but it is a constellation of moments that cannot be reckoned as a 'residuum' of [either] the subjective or the objective side." (AE, 78–79/72; tm)

1.3 Jacques Derrida

Whereas Levinas applauds Husserl's emphasis on intuition but worries about his intellectualism, Adorno highlights and rejects Husserl's "logical absolutism," but mostly ignores his emphasis on sensuous intuition.[21] Derrida, by contrast, takes issue with the entire "metaphysics of presence" that, on his interpretation, permeates Husserl's phenomenology, including his accounts of intuition, logic, and truth. Husserl's concepts of "sense, ideality, objectivity, truth,

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[20] I should note, however, that Adorno does not actually discuss the concepts of truth laid out in that Husserl's Sixth Investigation, Chapter 5. Instead Adorno quotes extensively from Chapter 6 and aims his criticisms at the concept of categorial intuition, simultaneously taking aim at Husserl's (and, indirectly, Heidegger's) concept of being. See AE, 203–215/200–212.

[21] It is telling that the section titled "Concept of Intuition" (AE, 52–54/ 45–47) in Adorno's chapter on Husserl's logical absolutism does not take up Husserl's concept of sensory intuition—it is devoted entirely to a critique of Henri Bergson. Husserl could easily have endorsed the central claim in this critique: "Intuition is not a simple antithesis to logic." (AE 54/46)

intuition, perception, and expression" have a "common matrix,"
Derrida says, namely, "being as *presence*: the absolute proximity of
self-identity, the being-in-front of the object available for repetition,
the maintenance of the temporal present, whose ideal form is the
self-presence of transcendental *life*, whose ideal identity allows
idealiter of infinite repetition. The living present...is thus the concep-
tual foundation of phenomenology as metaphysics."[22] Accordingly,
contra Levinas, the intuitionist side to Husserl's conception of truth
is not to be celebrated, and, *contra* Adorno, the logicist side is not to
be highlighted. For Derrida, both Husserl's emphasis on intuition and
his apparent privileging of logic stem from his prior attachment to
the traditional Western metaphysical and epistemological project of
anchoring meaning, especially linguistic meaning, in the subject's
direct relation to an ever-present object. The guiding norm of Hus-
serl's phenomenology in general, and of his concept of truth in par-
ticular, is "knowledge, the intuition that is adequate to its object, the
evidence that is not only distinct but also 'clear.' It is the full pres-
ence of sense to a consciousness that is itself self-present in the
fullness of its life, its living present."[23] To uncover this norm, and to
show why it is deeply problematic, Derrida deconstructs Husserl's
theory of signs (*Zeichen*), tracing it back to the *Logical Investigations*,
the text where it first takes shape.[24]

Although, like Adorno, Derrida is critical of Husserl's conception
of truth, neither he nor Adorno actually discusses the Sixth Investiga-
tion's chapter on truth and evidence (Chapter 5). In fact, Derrida
never cites this Investigation, the longest of the six, where Husserl
offers "Elements of a Phenomenological Elucidation of Knowledge."
That omission points to an important difference between Adorno
and Derrida. Whereas Adorno criticizes Husserl's *Logical Investiga-
tions* for absolutizing the products of formal logic and thereby cut-
ting them off from actual subjects and objects, Derrida, referring
specifically to Husserl's later *Formal and Transcendental Logic*
(1929), suggests that Husserl's "pure logical grammar" is overly tied
to a subject/object relation: "The purification of the formal is guided
by a concept of *sense* which is itself determined on the basis of a
relation with an object.... Apparently independent from fulfilling
intuitions, the 'pure' forms of signification, as 'empty' or canceled
sense, are always governed by the epistemological criterion of the

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[22] Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 99.
[23] *Ibid.*, 98.
[24] Derrida's deconstruction of Husserl's theory of signs primarily focuses on
Husserl's First Investigation, titled "Expression and Meaning."

relation with objects."[25] Perhaps one can summarize the difference here between Derrida and Adorno as follows: Derrida appears to reject the epistemological project *tout court,* but Adorno wishes to transform it via a metacritique. In that sense, Adorno remains closer to Levinas, the only one who actually discusses Husserl's chapter on truth and evidence, and does so at some length.[26]

We see, then, that Levinas, Adorno, and Derrida provide three markedly different, indeed, three mutually incompatible interpretations of Husserl's conception of truth: as intuitionist, as logicist, and as outright metaphysical, respectively. Nor does any one of these prominent post-Heideggerian philosophers refer to the interpretations of the other two.[27] This history of reception complicates the task of someone who wishes to explore whether Husserl's conception of truth in the *Logical Investigations* can help us face the challenge posed by Tugendhat: to offer a precise and defensible conception of propositional truth in conjunction with a more comprehensive and life-oriented idea of truth that is neither disconnected from propositional truth nor impossibly vague. One needs not only to contend with conflicting interpretations by three prominent post-Heideggerian philosophers but also to take seriously the critical worry that unites all three, namely, that Husserl never really broke away from a primarily propositional conception of truth, and that he therefore either accepted the metaphysical underpinnings of propositional truth (Derrida) or failed to expand the concept of truth, in the direction of either historical human practices (Levinas) or socio-historical tendencies (Adorno).

Confronting this complex hermeneutical situation, I propose to initiate a critical retrieval. A "critical retrieval" is the attempt to reclaim crucial insights from a philosopher's thought by responding to legitimate criticisms raised by others. In the case of early Husserl's conception of truth, this involves closely reading the relevant texts and evaluating their contribution in light of others' assessments, but it also requires a critical evaluation of those assessments themselves.

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[25] Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 98.

[26] See TIH, 65–84—the first two thirds of Levinas's central Chapter 5, titled "Intuition." According to Levinas, Husserl does not regard intuition as "a mode of immediate knowledge" but rather as "the very course of thought toward truth" (TIH, 92).

[27] Of course, this was impossible in the case of Levinas, who first published his book in 1930, long before the other two books appeared in 1956 and 1967, respectively. One can safely assume that Levinas either did not know of the twenty-one-year-old Adorno's doctoral dissertation of 1924 or did not have access to it.

In what follows I take up representative passages from Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and partially respond to the readings by Levinas, Adorno, and Derrida already summarized. My wider purpose, however, is to work toward a redemptive critique of Husserl's conception of truth, a critique simultaneously indebted to his conception and critical of it, by sorting out the objections raised by other philosophers who share a similar debt.

2. Meaning, Intentional Experience, and Fulfillment

Husserl's conception of truth in the *Logical Investigations* implies criticisms of three tendencies that were prevalent in his context, especially among empiricists and neo-Kantians. First, the prevalent conceptions of truth restrict it to judgments and propositions. Second, they give a psychologizing account of judgments and do not understand the intentionality of human experience. Third, they ignore the truth of that which makes judgments and propositions true. To resist these prevalent tendencies, and to offer a more robust conception of truth, Husserl develops a multidimensional account of intentional acts, including nonjudgmental and nonpropositional acts of intuition. He ties the notion of propositional truth to the intentional experience of truth. And he insists that the object *meant* when one passes a judgment about it must also be *given* in the right way, a givenness that, in itself, is not propositional.

2.1 Meaning

As Derrida rightly points out, Husserl launches his phenomenological account of knowledge and truth from the discussion of "Expression and Meaning" in his First Investigation.[28] Husserl conceives of mean-

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[28] Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 3–4. Derrida also correctly notes that here Husserl assumes, but does not provide, a concept of "the *structure of the sign in general*." Instead, Husserl focuses on "the logical character of signification" and from the outset "is already resolutely engaged in one of the modifications of the general structure of the *Zeigen*: *Hinzeigen* and not *Anzeigen*" (23–24). Husserl himself points out that "absurd" attempts to understand purely symbolic mathematical procedures in terms of "imaginary" entities led him to consider "the signitive [*das Signative*]" and "the purely linguistic aspects" of thought and "forced [him] to carry out general 'investigations,' which concerned universal clarification of the sense, the proposed delimitation, and the unique accomplishment of formal logic." See Edmund Husserl, *Introduction to the Logical Investigations: A Draft of a Preface to the Logical Investigations (1913)*, (tr.) Philip J. Bossert and Curtis H. Peters (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 33.

ing as the ideal correlate to an intentional relation between a conscious act and its object. Expressions have meaning insofar as they function within such a relation. To say they "have meaning," however, can be ambiguous. For Husserl, this does not mean that an expression manifests the actual experience of the person who uses it, even though the use of an expression can do that. Rather, the meaning an expression expresses is its ideal content: what it says (*besagt*) regardless of who uses it and on what occasion. Moreover, by way of this meaning, this ideal content, an expression refers to the "objective correlate" (*Gegenständlichkeit*) that is meant in the meaning and is expressed by means of this meaning ("*die in der Bedeutung gemeinte und mittels ihrer ausgedrückte* Gegenständlichkeit"). (LU II.1, 52/LI 1, 197) So the meaning of an expression is the combination of what it says (its ideal content) and its referring to an objective correlate—roughly the combination of what Frege distinguished as "sense" and "reference."[29]

To further establish the meaning of "meaning," however, Husserl also distinguishes "meaning-intention" (*Bedeutungsintention*) from "meaning-fulfillment" (*Bedeutungserfüllung*).[30] We can use an expression to mean something, and in meaning something, we can refer to an object. Yet the expression's relation to an object can be unfulfilled—the expression can function in an act of mere meaning-intention. For this relation to be fulfilled, the expression must function within an act that gives it its object, and that can only be an intuitively based act of meaning-fulfillment. Everything in Husserl's account of meaning hangs on his distinguishing between meaning-intentions (*Bedeutungsintentionen*) that are intuitively empty (*anschauungsleer*) and those that are intuitively fulfilled, between meaning-conferring acts (*bedeutungsverleihende Akte*) and meaning-fulfilling acts (*bedeutungserfüllende Akte*), between meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment. It is, he says, a "fundamental distinction." (LU II.1, 44/LI 1, 192)

Applying such distinctions to the cognitive usage of language, one can summarize Husserl's preliminary account of meaning as follows. Although we often use words and grammatical constructions to gain

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[29] See Gottlob Frege, "Über Sinn und Bedeutung," *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, vol. 100 (1892): 25–50; tr. by Max Black as "On Sense and Reference," in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, (ed.) Peter Geach and Max Black, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 56–78.

[30] I use the American spellings for "fulfill(s)," "fulfillment," and "fullness" throughout this paper, even in direct citations from Findlay's translation, which employs the British spellings of "fulfil," "fulfilment," and "fulness."

knowledge about various matters, the use of language does not suffice. For the employment of language in acts of meaning-intention does not, in and of itself, provide cognitive access to the subject matter we wish to grasp. For this, we need intuitive acts of perception or imagination that can function in correlation with meaning-intentions within acts of meaning-fulfillment. Only in conjunction with intuitive, meaning-fulfilling acts can our use of linguistic expressions provide cognitive access to the referents of our language usage—synthetic linguistic-intuitive access, if you will, both to objects as actually perceived or imagined and to their ideal correlates. As we shall see, a coinciding of meaning-intention with meaning-fulfillment provides the core to Husserl's conception of truth. The background to this conception resides in his accounts of intentional experience, meaning-fulfillment, and intuitive fullness.

2.2 Intentional Experience

What Husserl calls "intentional experience" (*intentionales Erlebnis*) is the main topic of Investigation Five. Human experience is intentional, he says, insofar as it is an experience *of something* toward which it is *aimed or directed*. (LU II.1, 391–93/LI 2, 101–02) Our conscious experience of feeling or wishing or perceiving, for example, is directed toward some object. What we experience can be called intentional objects. How we experience them is in conscious acts such as feeling, wishing, and perceiving.

To account for such acts, Husserl introduces two specifications: the *quality* of an act and the *matter* of an act. Taken together the quality and matter of an act make up its intentional essence. The quality of an act is what distinguishes it as the type of act it is, whether, for example, it is an act of feeling or of wishing or of perceiving. Quality pertains to its "general act-character." (LU II.1, 425/LI 2, 119) The matter of an act pertains to its content or "mode of objective reference." (LU II.1, 427/LI 2, 120) The matter of an act is what both "gives it reference to an object" and determines "the precise way" in which the object is intended: "The matter…not only determines *that* [the act] grasps the object but also *as what* it grasps it." (LU II.1, 429–30/LI 2, 121) Hence, for example, the quality of the act of my seeing a green house would be its being an act of perception, not an act of imagination or judgment. The matter of this act would be its perceptual content—the way in which the house presents itself (*e.g.*, visually) and as what it is presented (as perceptually green not red, for example, and as a house not a car).

Employing the act/matter distinction, Husserl introduces two systems of classification that frame his discussion of knowledge and truth. In the first place, he distinguishes between objectifying acts and non-objectifying acts. *Objectifying* acts let an object be present to consciousness in a determinate fashion. Perception, imagination, and judgment are examples of objectifying acts. It does not matter whether what is perceived, imagined, or judged is an object or a state of affairs, and whether it is intended as actually existing or not. All such acts objectify objects—let them be present—and all have or can have what Husserl calls "an epistemic essence" (*erkenntnismässiges Wesen*) (LU II.2, 626/LI 2, 246). *Non-objectifying* acts, by contrast, such as "joys, wishes, [and] volitions [*Wollungen*]" (LU II.2 519/LI 2, 169), do not present objects even when they are directed at objects. Because of this, they lack a characteristic of objectifying acts that is essential for knowledge, namely, what Husserl will describe as "fulfillment-syntheses." Accordingly, early Husserl's phenomenology of knowledge and truth leaves aside all non-objectifying acts.

In the second place, Husserl distinguishes within the large class of objectifying acts between those which have a semantic essence and those which do not. All meaning-conferring acts that either do function or can function in conjunction with (*bei*) expressions have a "semantic essence" (*bedeutungsmässiges Wesen*). (LU II.1, 431/LI 2, 122–23) To judge something to be a green house and to assert this judgment would be to engage in an act that has a semantic essence. Objectifying acts that have a semantic essence are what Husserl calls signitive acts or acts of signification. All the rest—*i.e.*, objectifying acts that do not have a semantic essence—are what he calls intuitive acts or acts of intuition. So, for example, if I perceive a house as green without saying it is green (*i.e.*, without judging or asserting it to be green), then I engage in an act that lacks a semantic essence. It is an intuitive act. For Husserl, the two main sorts of intuitive acts are perception and imagination. These are objectifying acts, for they let the objects of perception and imagination be present to consciousness, but they are not signitive acts.

2.3 Fulfillment and Fullness

The objectifying/non-objectifying and signitive/intuitive distinctions are at work throughout the Sixth Investigation's "phenomenological elucidation of knowledge." There Husserl argues that knowledge arises from the coincidence between objectifying signitive acts and objectifying intuitive acts in synthetic acts of fulfillment (and frustration). Synthetic acts of fulfillment yield what he calls "the synthesis

of knowing [*Synthesis des Erkennens*]," and this cognitive synthesis is the "characteristic form of fulfillment" for objectifying acts in general. Indeed, all signitive and intuitive acts aim at a "unity of fulfillment" that has "the character of unity of identification" and possibly "the narrower character of a unity of knowledge, *i.e.*, of an act to which objective identity corresponds as the intentional correlate." (LU II.2, 582-6/LI 2, 216-18; tm, original italics removed) Although not every identification yields knowledge, knowledge—*i.e.*, the synthesis of knowing—is the overriding goal of objectifying acts.

Here we begin to see the epistemological implications to Husserl's earlier distinction between meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment. Take, for example (Husserl's example), the judgment of perception (*Wahrnehmungsurteil*) expressed in the words "There flies a blackbird!" The expressed meaning (*Bedeutung*) of this act does not lie in an intuitive act of perception *per se*, since the utterance and judgment can retain their meaning in the absence of any perception. (LU II.2, 550/LI 2, 195) Rather, the meaning resides in the signitive act of making this judgment. At most, the act of perception helps determine the meaning, and the act of judgment relies on the perception in order to have the intended meaning fulfilled: "The perception [*Wahrnehmung*] that gives [us] the object and the assertion [*Aussage*] that thinks and expresses the object by way of the judgment [*Urteil*]...must be kept completely separate, even though, in the case of the perceptual judgment under consideration, they stand in the most intimate interrelationship, in the relationship of mutual coincidence [*Deckung*], of the unity of fulfillment." (LU II.2, 556/LI 2, 199; tm, italics removed)

At the same time, however, Husserl insists that the signitive act itself would remain a mere meaning-intention, intuitively empty, if it were not rendered intuitive (*Veranschaulichung*) within a perceptually based act of meaning-fulfillment in which the object is intuitively given. That is why he argues for the importance of distinguishing the signitive act of meaning-intention from the "full act of cognition [*Erkenntnisakt*]." (LU II.2, 570/LI 2, 209; tm)[31] Signitive and intuitive acts, when they coincide, are parts of a larger whole, namely, of fulfillment or of knowledge as a complex act. When fulfillment and cognition occur, the "free" signitive part becomes "bound," so that it is no longer a mere meaning-intention. When, for example, I say

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[31] Findlay often translates "*Erkennen*," "*Erkenntnis*," and their derivatives as "recognition," thereby potentially obscuring Husserl's focus on knowledge throughout the Sixth Investigation. I use instead the standard English equivalents: knowing, knowledge, cognitive, and the like.

"This house is green," my "act of meaning-intention," which is con-
nected with an "empty symbolic presentation," can become "so
peculiarly inwrought or infused" into a complex act of cognition—for
example, knowing this house is green—that, although the meaning-
intention's "semantic essence" remains intact, the signitive act's
"character, in a certain sense, does undergo a modification." (LU II.2,
571/LI 2, 209; tm)

By the same token, there is more to the act of cognitive fulfillment
than mere meaning-fulfillment. For perceptual acts also seek fulfill-
ment. Unlike a signitive act, however, an act of perception fulfills
itself "through the *synthesis of thingly identity* [*sachliche Identität*]:
the thing [*Sache*] establishes itself through its 'self,' insofar as it
shows itself from various sides and, in this, is always one and the
same." Although any "external" object can be perceived in multiple
ways and in partial ways, the act of perception inherently aims to be
the "self-appearance" (*Selbsterscheinung*) of the object. Moreover, a
perception that intends an object seeks a perception that would
fulfill it, so that the act of perception aims at an "ideal synthesis," a
"complete coincidence," between the "purely perceptual contents" of
the intending and fulfilling perceptions. (LU II.2, 588–90/LI 2, 220–
21)

Accordingly, cognitive fulfillment requires both meaning-
fulfillment and perceptual fulfillment, and its goal is "absolute
knowledge," understood here as "the adequate self-presentation of
the object of knowledge [*die adäquaten Selbstdarstellung des
Erkenntnisobjeckts*]"—that is, of the thing itself (*die Sache selbst*). In
itself, a meaning-intention cannot approximate this goal. Only by
being rendered intuitive (*Veranschaulichung*)[32] can a meaning-
intention participate in synthetic fulfillment that sets the intended
objects more or less "directly before us [*direct vor uns hinstellt*]." (LU
II.2, 597–98/LI 2, 226–27; italics removed)

Certain acts of fulfillment are closer to the goal of knowledge than
others are, however. Husserl traces differences in degrees of fulfill-
ment—and in degrees of epistemic perfection—back to the relative
"fullness" (*Fülle*) of the intuitive act. What gives relative fullness to
acts of fulfillment is the extent to which the intuitive content of an
act of perception or imagination approximates the corresponding

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[32] Findlay usually translates "*Veranschaulichung*" as "intuitive illustration." To
capture the dynamic character of Husserl's account of fulfillment, I use the terms
"intuitioning," "render intuitive," and "intuitional rendering" as English equiva-
lents for "*Veranschaulichung*."

content of the intended object.[33] As an ideal, adequate perception would have maximal richness, liveliness, and substantiality—it would be "the self-apprehension [*Selbsterfassung*] of the full and whole object." (LU II.2, 83–84/LI 2, 238; tm)

Such degrees of fullness occur in conjunction with synthetic acts of identification in which intentions can find fulfillment. When a signitive act coincides with an intuitive act, "the intuitive act 'gives' its [relative] fullness to the signitive act," at least to the extent that the intuitive fullness coincides with "correlative parts of the signitive intention." (LU II.2, 615/LI 2, 239) Not every such synthesis involves an increase in fullness, however. That is why we must distinguish between acts of "mere identification" and acts of fulfillment.

3. Adequation, Truth, and Categorial Intuition

The coincidence between meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment provides the core to early Husserl's conception of truth. Truth has to do with a two-sided agreement involving both meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment. On one side, it pertains to the coinciding of two qualitatively distinct types of acts, one of which confers meaning and the other of which fulfills the intended meaning. This coinciding occurs in synthetic acts of identification. On the other side, truth pertains to the agreement of the object, as it is meant, with the object, as it is intuitively given. This agreement on the side of the object is the identity we experience as truth.

3.1 Adequation

What unites these two sides is the ideal of adequation, as the title to Chapter 5 in the Sixth Investigation indicates: "The Ideal of Adequation: [Evidence] and Truth." (LU II.2, 645–56/LI 2, 259–67) Reformulating the traditional conception of truth as the adequation between thing and thought (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*), Husserl regards adequation as the ideal of knowledge, which, as we have seen, arises in intentional experience via objectifying signitive and intuitive acts.

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[33] Differing degrees of fullness pertain to an intuition's *richness* (the relative completeness with which the content of the object gets presented or represented), its *liveliness* [how closely the presentation or representation approximates (*Annäherung*) the object's corresponding moments of content], and its *substantial reality* or *substantiality* (*Realitätsgehalt*) (the relative number of the presenting or representing contents). See LU II.2, 614/LI 2, 238.

The preceding discussion of fulfillment and fullness points toward two types of adequation: (1) between the act of intuition and the imagined or perceived object and (2) between the act of synthetic fulfillment, in which intuitive and signitive intentions coincide, and the objective identity this synthetic act intends. Strictly speaking, only an act of perception, and not an act of imagination, can live up to the first ideal of adequation: whereas imagination can give us only an image (*Bild*) of the object, perception can give us the object itself (*die Sache selbst*), making it directly present. (LU II.2, 646–47/LI 2, 260) Moreover, the second type of adequation depends on the first: whereas the ideal of synthetic fulfillment would be the complete or perfect adaptation (*vollkommene Anpassung*) of the signifying act to the fulfilling intuition, the ideal of the intuitive act would be its complete or perfect "adequation to the 'thing itself' [*Adäquation an die 'Sache selbst'*]." (LU II.2, 648/LI 2, 261; tm)

3.2 Concepts of Truth

From this understanding of adequation as an ideal, Husserl derives his first two concepts of truth. The first is the concept of objective identity. The second is the concept of evidence (*Evidenz*), which he also calls the "'experience' of truth" (*'Erlebnis' der Wahrheit*). (LU II.2, 652/LI 2, 263) Because, as I argue elsewhere, much of the literature on Husserl's concept of evidence confuses it with whatever can justify a propositional truth claim, I prefer to discuss this second concept as the ideal of inter-active coincidence.

Truth as objective identity concerns the objective correlate to acts of identification and fulfillment. Husserl distinguishes here between truth as a state of affairs (*Sachverhalt*) and truth as objective identity (*Identität*). As we shall see, the notion of truth as a state of affairs presupposes Husserl's subsequent account of categorial intuition. Setting this notion aside for now, we can say that truth as identity is the objective correlate to a synthetic, coinciding act of identification (*Correlate einer deckenden Identifizierung*). As an ideal, truth as objective identity would be the complete agreement (*Übereinstimmung*) between the meant object and the given object as such. (LU II.2, 652–53/LI 2, 263) This objective agreement, this identity, this truth is what one experiences when one successfully carries out a synthetic and fulfilled act of identification. For example, when I judge a house to be green on the basis of perceiving it as a green house and my judging and perceiving completely coincide, I can experience the objective agreement between the house as judged and the house as perceived. Moreover, I can experience this truth,

this objective identity, in a pre-reflective manner. I can experience it when I signitively-intuitively and truly know "this house is green" without needing to assert successfully "it is true that this house is green."[34]

As an ideal, truth as inter-active coincidence (what Husserl calls "evidence" in the strict sense) would be the act of "the most complete [*vollkommensten*] fulfillment-synthesis, which gives the intention, e.g. the intention of judgment, the absolute fullness of content, that of the object itself. The object is not merely meant, but rather it is in the strictest sense *given*, given just as it is meant and made one with the meaning [*in eins gesetzt mit dem Meinen*]." (LU II.2, 651/LI 2, 263; tm, italics partially removed) This is truth as the objectifying, identifying, and most complete synthesis of coincidence (*Deckungssynthesis*) between signitive and intuitive acts, and it has its objective correlate in "being [*Sein*] in the sense of truth" or, more simply, "truth" as objective identity. (LU II.2, 651/LI 2, 263; tm, italics removed) Truth as inter-active coincidence would occur to the extent that a synthetic act of identification lives up to the operative ideal of adequation, which involves both the relative fullness of intuition and the degree to which the signitive intention is intuitively fulfilled. The synthesis required, however, is not between the concrete acts but between their epistemic essences, for example between the semantic-epistemic essence of my signifying with words "this house is green" and the intuitive-epistemic essence of my act of perceiving the house as being green. The contingent synthetic act is governed by the ideal of truth as inter-active coincidence. To the extent that inter-active coincidence occurs, we can have an experience of truth as objective identity.

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[34] According to Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*, 67, Martin Heidegger is particularly drawn to this point and "stresses this conception of the originally unthematic experience of the truth not least because his own account of truth essentially builds upon it." See in this connection the following two excerpts from longer works by Heidegger: "My Way to Phenomenology" and "The Fundamental Discoveries of Phenomenology, Its Principle, and the Clarification of Its Name" in *The Phenomenology Reader*, (ed.) Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney (London: Routledge, 2002), 251–56 and 257–77, respectively. Implicitly appropriating Husserl's concept of truth as objective identity, Heidegger writes: "This act of bringing into coincidence is in touch with the subject matter; it is precisely through this particular intentionality of being-in-touch-with-the-subject-matter [*Bei-der-Sache-sein*] that this intentionality, itself unthematic in its performance, is immediately and transparently experienced as true. This is the phenomenological sense of saying that in evident perception I do not thematically study the truth of this perception itself, but rather live *in* the truth." (276)

The third and fourth concepts of truth introduced by Husserl pertain respectively to the fullness of the intuited object and the correctness of the signitive intention with respect to the object identified. There is a legitimate sense, Husserl claims, in which we can say the intuited object is true when it is given intuitively just as it is signitively meant. To the extent, for example, that a perceived object provides "ideal fullness" for my identifying the house as green, this object is true "as that which makes an intention true." (LU II.2, 652/LI 2, 264) Alternatively, we can say of our signitive intention that it is true with respect to the identified object. It is true "to its true object." Although broader than the usual notion of propositional truth, this concept explains what it means to say than an asserted proposition is true. It is true—*i.e.*, correct (*richtig*)—if it "'directs' itself to ['*richtet' sich nach*] the thing itself, it says that it is so, and it really is so." The ideal of truth as correctness is that a proposition can be completely fulfilled, finding "the most rigorous adequation" to its true object. (LU II.2, 653/LI 2, 264)

These four interrelated concepts of truth—as objective identity, inter-active coincidence, intuitive fullness, and propositional correctness—provide specific content to the claim that truth is the ideal of adequation that governs knowledge. The first and third concepts pertain to the truth of what contemporary philosophers call "truth makers," and the second and fourth concepts pertain to the truth of "truth bearers." According to Husserl, true knowledge requires an agreement between what I would call epistemic object functions (identity) and between what I would call epistemic subject functions (coincidence). It also requires the adequacy of the object as given for these subject functions (fullness) and the adequacy of the subject functions for the given object (correctness).

By distinguishing these four concepts and granting each its legitimacy, Husserl provides a robust alternative to the narrowness of the prevailing theories in his day, theories that restricted truth to propositions, misconstrued intentionality, and ignored the truth of so-called truth makers. His more expansive conception also challenges minimalist truth theories in our own day. Husserl's four-dimensional conception of truth is expansive enough to anchor propositional correctness in a broader truth, to highlight the intentional character of knowledge and its constitutive acts (including perception), and not only to recognize but also to emphasize object-sided truth (identity and fullness), with respect to which propositions can be true (correct) and cognitive acts can be fulfilled. Indeed, the remainder of §39 ("Evidence and Truth") secures these gains by offering three refinements to Husserl's conception of truth: he distinguishes and

relates propositional correctness and more expansive truth; he shows how his approach can accommodate narrower conceptions that restrict truth to judgments and propositions; and he indicates how his broader conception counters the relativism that all too easily undermines theories of propositional truth when these involve psychologizing accounts of judgments.

The first refinement is especially important as a response to theories that would restrict truth to propositional truth. For Husserl argues that the one-dimensional predicative identity syntactically posited in an assertion ("the house 'is' green") is not the same as the multidimensional objective identity synthetically posited in the multidimensional act of identification (the house-is-green meant coincides with the house perceived as green). Nevertheless, predicative identity is bound up in such objective identity and, in the absence of objective identity and of the synthetic act that identifies it, a correct proposition could not contribute to true knowledge. In directing itself (*sich nachrichten*) to its true object, a correct (*richtig*) proposition seeks intuitive fulfillment, as does the signitive act in which a proposition is asserted.

If propositions and assertions seek fulfillment by way of an act and object of intuition, however, how can an intuition serve to fulfill the "is" in a simple assertion of the form "x is y"? That, essentially, is the topic of the next chapter in the Sixth Investigation, the famous Chapter 6, titled "Sensuous and Categorial Intuition." Husserl's response expands the notion of intuition to include nonsensuous or supersensuous (*übersinnlich*) acts and objects, even as he insists that these, too, are genuine acts and objects of perception and imagination, not acts and objects of signification.

3.3 Categorial Intuition

As in his earlier discussion of meaning-fulfillment, Husserl begins with the simple judgment of perception and perceptual assertion (*Wahrnehmungsaussage*). If, for example, I successfully assert "The paper is yellow," do only the signified paper and its signified colour find fulfillment via the perception of the paper as yellow? Or does the "is" also find fulfillment, say, in a "predicative being" (*prädikatives Sein*)? If it does, how can this fulfillment be perceptual? To raise the question more generally, how can the formal moments in signitive acts reach fulfillment —moments expressed using words such as "a," "some," "not," "and," "or," including what Husserl labels "categorial forms" such as the copula ("is")? (LU II.2, 657–61/LI 2, 271–73)

Husserl claims that all fulfillment properly so called is intuitive. He also argues that the fulfillment of such formal moments cannot be sensuous. Nor can we explain it in a Lockean fashion by saying that predicative being and other logical categories such as unity, plurality, and totality arise from our reflecting on certain mental acts (*psychische Akte*) in which we combine, unify, or distinguish perceptions. No, if the "is" of an assertion is to find fulfillment, then the predicative being it expresses must itself be given, and the logical category of "being" must intend such a given object. Husserl calls such predicatively intended objects "states of affairs." To be given, a state of affairs, although it is not sensuously perceptible, must in some sense be intuitively given. (LU II.2, 669–70/LI 2, 279–80) Moreover, such a state of affairs can be "true" in the sense of Husserl's first concept of truth: true as true being or being true (*Wahrhaftsein*).

Husserl calls this mode of intuition "categorial."[35] Categorial intuition is not simply analogous to sensuous intuition, however. It is genuinely intuitive—*i.e.*, genuinely perceptual, imaginative, or both—and it occurs within every fulfillment in which formal meanings are intended. Husserl's primary reason for expanding the notion of intuition to include categorial intuition is the "essential homogeneity" (*wesentliche Gleichartigkeit*) of the function of fulfillment. The formal and supersensuous character of categorial intuition does not make it any less fulfilling than, or any different in this role from, stuff-like (*stoffliche*) and sensuous perception and imagination. Every fulfilling act in general is an intuition; the intentional correlate of any intuition is an object (*Gegenstand*); and every act that fulfills in the manner of "confirming self-presentation" (*bestätigende Selbstdarstellung*) is a perception. For it is characteristic of perception that something appears as "actual" ("*wirklich*") and "self-given" ("*selbst gegeben*"), unlike "essentially related acts" such as "imaginative making present" (*bildliche Vergegenwärtigen*) and "purely significative thinking of" (*rein signifikatives Darandenken*). Even universal states of affairs can rightly be said to be "perceived" (*wahrgenommen*): we have insight into them (they are "*eingesehen*"), and they can be intuitively detected (*erschaut*). (LU II.2, 670–73/LI 2, 280–81).

Nevertheless, Husserl says we need to distinguish between sensuous and categorial intuition and between their respective objects.

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[35] For a clear and succinct exposition of this concept, see Dieter Lohmar, "Categorial Intuition," in *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*, (ed.) Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 115–26.

Although every act of perception aims to grasp (*erfassen*) its object directly—to grasp the object itself—the sensuous objects of sensuous perception are "real" (*real*) objects of the "lowest level of intuition," and the categorial objects of categorial perception are "ideal" (*ideal*) objects of "higher levels" of intuition. Moreover, the objects of sensuous perception constitute themselves "in a straightforward (*schlichter*) manner." They are "immediately given" in a single-rayed act. The objects of categorial perception, by contrast, are based on such immediately given, sensuously perceptible objects. Categorial objects, which also appear as actual and self-given, are given in more complex acts. Such many-rayed, categorial acts either include or presuppose a basic and straightforward act of sensuous perception, and they allow something to appear that could not be given in the basic act of sensuous perception that founds them. Categorial objects—states of affairs and the like—"can come to appearance 'in person' ['*selbst*'] in such founded acts." Only due to founded acts of categorial intuition can expressed and assertoric thought (*das aussagende Denken, wo es als Ausdruck fungiert*) find fulfillment. The truth (*i.e.*, correctness) of an assertion aims at a "complete accord" (*vollkommene Anmessung*) with such acts of categorial intuition. (LU II.2, 674–75/LI 2, 282–83)

Elaborating the distinction between sensuous and categorial acts, Husserl argues that in sensuous perception the object "appears 'in one blow', as soon as our glance falls upon it." (LU II.2, 676/LI 2, 283) Sense perception is straightforward, does not require its own "synthetic acts," and is never founded in another act, even though it provides the foundation for many other acts, including acts of categorial intuition. Acts of categorial intuition, by contrast, are founded acts, and they are not straightforward. Instead they are articulating and relational acts (*gliedernde Akte*). They make explicit an object's parts, which we implicitly and straightforwardly perceive, and bring them "into relation, whether to one another or to the whole." This does not mean that first we perceive the object straightforwardly and then perceive it in an articulating fashion, however. Rather, we perceive the object within "overarching act-unities" within which the relations of the parts constitute themselves "as new objects." (LU II.2, 681/LI 2, 286–87; tm, italics removed) Thus, for example, the categorial perception of green as a feature of a house explicates, and relies upon (*i.e.*, is founded upon), the straightforward sensuous perception of a house as green. Similarly, the categorial perception of this house as standing to the right of that house explicates and relies upon the sensuous perception of both houses on a particular occasion. In both examples, the act of categorial intuition makes present a

specific state of affairs that can be identified in conjunction with a signifying act of assertion: "this house *is* green," "this house *is to the right of* that house."³⁶

Although Husserl goes into much greater detail about categorial intuition, including "universal intuition"—*i.e.*, the categorial intuition of universals such as kinds and properties (LU II.2, 690–93/LI 2, 292–94)—I have summarized enough of his theory of categorial intuition to uncover its primary motivation. As Husserl himself indicates, the theory is required in order to give a complete account of "knowledge as the unity of fulfillment" (*die Erkenntnis als Erfüllungseinheit*). (LU II.2, 695/LI 2, 295) Normally, he says, we achieve such unity of fulfillment on the basis not only of straightforward sensuous perception but also of categorial intuition. Hence, to account for the coincidence of signitive and intuitive acts and the identity of meant and intuited objects—loosely, to account for the relation between thought (*Denken*) and intuition (*Anschauen*)—we need to include categorial intuition within our account. (LU II.2, 695/LI 2, 295) Indeed, Husserl's conception of truth requires his theory of categorial intuition.

All of this implies that a true—*i.e.*, correct—proposition will be directed toward an intuited object, including a predicatively intended state of affairs that is categorially intuited. It also implies that, if the intended object in question is true—*i.e.*, if it provides ideal fullness—its categorial intuitive formation will be adequate to the predicative signifying act in which the proposition functions or can function, typically an act of assertion. The truth (correctness) of propositions cannot be divorced from relations between intentional acts and intentional objects, as some forms of alethic realism seem to hold. Neither, however, can it be reduced to the justifiability or warranted assertibility of propositional claims, as occurs in various epistemic conceptions of truth. Early Husserl anchors propositional correctness in a more expansive conception of truth. In this way, his conception of truth clears a path past the impasse between trivially minimalist and vaguely expansionist conceptions of truth.

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³⁶ My two examples attempt to render more intuitive Husserl's abstract discussion of (1) how we perceive α as a part of A and (2) how we perceive (that) A is to the right of B. See LU II.2, 681–84/LI 2, 287–88.

4. Critical Retrieval

Nevertheless, the post-Heideggerian concerns of Levinas, Adorno, and Derrida make one wonder whether the path Husserl has cleared is a viable path. Specifically, to what extent can early Husserl's conception of truth connect, without short-circuiting, a precise concept of propositional truth and a more comprehensive and life-oriented idea of truth? As was indicated earlier, Levinas applauds Husserl's emphasis on intuition as giving us access to true being, but he criticizes the "intellectualism" of Husserl's account, its distance from historical praxis. Adorno charges Husserl with a "logical absolutism" that, in its conception of truth, ignores the sociohistorical mediation and dialectical interrelation of subject and object. Derrida rejects the entire "metaphysics of presence" that he finds throughout Husserl's conceptions of meaning, intuition, and truth.

I think there is something to each of these criticisms. Early Husserl's conception of truth does rely on an insufficiently historical concept of intuition, both sensuous and categorial. It pays insufficient attention to the sociohistorical mediations of subject and object in their dialectical interrelation. And it assumes that the presence of the object and the subject's being present to the object are central to truth as such. Moreover, these concerns get registered in subsequent modifications that Husserl introduces to his phenomenology of knowledge, and each is addressed in Heidegger's conception of truth as authentic disclosedness.

It is one thing to identify these problematic tendencies, however, and quite another to provide a viable alternative. By viable alternative I mean a conception of truth that successfully explicates and links propositional and existential truth. So far as I can tell, Levinas, Adorno, and Derrida do not provide such an alternative, and Heidegger's conception is at best only potentially viable, insofar as he does not offer a sufficiently precise concept of propositional truth, as Tugendhat has argued.[37] Here, then, is the challenge we face: to undertake a critical retrieval of early Husserl's conception of truth,

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[37] For a summary of the criticisms raised in *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl and Heidegger*, see Ernst Tugendhat, "Heidegger's Idea of Truth," in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, (ed.) Richard Wolin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 245–63. I have taken up Tugendhat's criticisms elsewhere. See chapter 4, "Truth as Disclosure," in Lambert Zuidervaart, *Artistic Truth: Aesthetics, Discourse, and Imaginative Disclosure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 77–100, and chapter 3, "Heidegger and Adorno in Reverse," in Lambert Zuidervaart, *Social Philosophy after Adorno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 77–106.

one that reclaims important insights by responding to legitimate objections. I propose to begin such a critical retrieval by reconsidering three contested concepts within Husserl's conception: fulfillment, coincidence, and givenness.

4.1 Fulfillment

Like Heidegger, all three of our post-Heideggerian critics agree that the emphasis on intuition, including categorial intuition, is highly characteristic of Husserl's conception of truth, for better or worse. The context for this emphasis is Husserl's account of meaning-fulfillment. He begins with the premise that signitive acts and intuitive acts are not only intentional (*i.e.*, object-directed) but also fundamentally distinct. For Husserl, the question of truth revolves around the issue of whether and how signitive acts, including propositional assertions, can be intuitively fulfilled.

What is fundamentally right about Husserl's insistence on intuitive fulfillment, it seems to me, is the insight that, for the most part, linguistic and logical practices attain truth only in conjunction with other practices and on their basis. Further, that toward which we direct our linguistic and logical practices, and in relationship to which such practices are meaningful, is inherently multidimensional. Hence, for us to achieve true knowledge of practical objects (*i.e.*, the objects toward which we direct our practices) and to do so via language and logic, such objects need to be available to us in nonlinguistic and nonlogical ways.

The problematic aspects to Husserl's emphasis on intuitive fulfillment arise for three reasons. First, as Hans-Georg Gadamer has suggested, Husserl employs an epistemologically restricted notion of intuition, reducing it in the first instance to immediate sensuous perception and imagination and then expanding it to include categorial intuition, which he nevertheless models along the lines of sensuous intuition.[38] Second, Husserl ignores an entire range of object-

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[38] Gadamer's comment on some of Husserl's later writings could also apply to *Logical Investigations*: "To me, however, he still seems dominated by the one-sidedness [of the scientific idealization of experience] that he criticizes, for he projects the idealized world of exact scientific experience into the original experience of the world, in that he makes perception, as something directed toward merely external physical appearances [*Körperlichkeit*], the basis of all other experience." Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, 4th ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1975), 330, tr. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall as *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 347.

related practices that are neither perceptual nor imaginative in his sense but are not simply linguistic or logical either—the practices, for example, that help constitute political interactions, economic transactions, and ethical relations. Third, and in conjunction with the first two problems, early Husserl fails to acknowledge the sociohistorically situated and sociohistorically active character of human experience in all its dimensions, including what he describes as intuitive and signitive acts. This failure goes to the heart of his conception of intentional experience, as both Levinas and Adorno recognize.

If my observations are on the right track, then the Husserlian account of intuitive fulfillment requires significant reformulation. It needs to be expanded to include a much wider range of human practices and practical objects. On this reformulation, the required fulfillment of "signification" in many cases could be based on "intuition" in Husserl's sense. But the fulfillment often would include practices and objects that are neither intuitive nor signitive but instead involve ways in which objects are available for various other social practices, in a broad sense. This would mean, for example, that my asserting "That is a dastardly deed" would find fulfillment not simply in my perception of the deed (which might barely exist if the deed were reported rather than observed) but in relationship to a moral stance and moral practices that I share with other people.

4.2 Inter-Active Coincidence

As this example suggests, Husserl's concept of subject-sided truth as inter-active coincidence also merits further reflection. Husserl regards such coincidence as a synthetic act of identification in which the meaning-intention of signitive acts is completely and intuitively fulfilled. Husserl's account correctly describes such synthetic coincidence as something we accomplish in relationship to multidimensional objects and with regard to the identity these objects display across at least two of their interrelated dimensions. If I assert "this house is green," for example, my act of asserting this can be borne out as being correct if my interlocutor and I not only perceive the house as green but also predicatively posit it (or regard it, in the interlocutor's case) as being green, and we find our predication sustained by our perception.

Notice, however, that my example inserts an interlocutor, while Husserl's account of subject-sided truth is notably silent about the interlocutor's role. This difference points to a significant gap in Husserl's account, one that weakens Husserlian responses to psycho-

logical relativism in his own day and cultural and social relativism today. In most cases when signification occurs—specifically, when assertoric practices occur—we are communicating with others, and our signitive practices must be intersubjective. Simply insisting that multidimensional coincidence is a synthetic act of objectification, accomplished in principle by a single epistemic subject, ignores this communicative context. Nor does Husserl's turning coincidence into an *ideal* remove the problem. For the ideal as he understands it remains one that in principle holds for an epistemic subject and not for communicative agents in practical interaction.

In response to this problem, I propose to regard inter-active coincidence not as a single-subject *act* but as an *intersubjective process*. Coincidence is, as Husserl partially suggests, a process in which shared linguistic and logical practices dynamically correlate with relevant nonsignitive practices and with respect to a commonly available practical object in its relevant signitive and nonsignitive dimensions. Typically, however, it is not a process carried out by a single agent. It involves at least two agents in communicative inter-action, both of whom participate in the same signitive and nonsignitive practices, and both of whom find the object disclosing itself in the same dynamically correlated signitive and nonsignitive ways. Hence, for example, when I assert "This house is green" or "That is a dastardly deed," I do so expecting that you share my perception or assessment, that you can make the same assertion in these circumstances with respect to the same object, that the point of my making the assertion is for you either to agree or disagree, and that your agreement or disagreement will be relevant for the correctness of this assertion. When these expectations are met and you agree with the assertion, the communicative interaction within which the assertion occurs is such that the correctness of the assertion can be borne out.[39] This proposed account does not make the asserted truth relative. Rather, it undercuts the move toward relativism by building intersubjectivity and relevance into the very structure of subject-sided truth.

4.3 Givenness

Husserl's ultimate defense against relativism, and against skepticism too, lies in his insisting on the intuitive givenness of the object. The

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[39] Subject-sided truth in this sense is not the same as discursive justification, nor is it the same as authentication, the larger process of bearing witness to truth to which justification belongs.

object is given, he says, to our sensuous and categorial perception and imagination, with greater and lesser degrees of fullness; the truth of our signitive acts ultimately means that they are adequate to what is intuitively given. Conversely, the object as intuited must be true in order for our linguistic and logical practices to be true.

Tugendhat claims that Heidegger loses track of this Husserlian insight and, as a result, ends up with a vague and expansive idea of truth that no longer explicates propositional truth. If Tugendhat is right—and I think he is—then an appropriation of Husserl's "intuitive givenness" is fundamental for a response to the challenge Tugendhat poses. Adorno is most keenly aware of this, as is apparent from his own insistence on the "priority of the object."[40] Derrida, by contrast, regards this Husserlian emphasis as hopelessly mired in the metaphysics of presence, and Levinas seems to soften it by reading Husserl as a proto-Heideggerian.

The issue comes down to this: do practical objects in their relation to human practices always already have their own identity, and is this identity such that how they function in our experience impinges on our practices and in some sense makes it possible for our practices to be true toward them? With Husserl, I want to answer yes. Yet I would not restrict the scope of such "givenness" to perceptual and imaginative functions. Indeed, the very notion of "givenness" is insufficiently dynamic, insufficiently attuned to the sociohistorical character of both practical objects and human practices. Moreover, the notion presupposes an ideal of adequation that is itself an insufficient model of truth, as all three of our post-Heideggerian critics would agree.

Having said all that, however, one still needs to develop an illuminating account of how practical objects can "be true" or "truly be" ("*Wahrhaft-sein*," in Husserl's terminology), such that the relations we sustain with them enable human practices, including assertoric practices, to be true with respect to them. Let me suggest that, despite Tugendhat's criticisms, the notion of intuitive givenness needs to be recast along the lines of Heidegger's "handiness" or "readiness to hand" (*Zuhandenheit*) or practical availability, in my own terms. The modification of two Husserlian claims is crucial in this regard, provided we extend them beyond merely intuited objects. First, the identity of practical objects consists in a dynamic coherence among their various functions in relation to human practices of identification. Such practices will always include linguistic and logical practic-

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[40] See, for example, Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, (tr.) E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 183–86.

es of the sort Husserl labels "signitive acts." Second, the identity of practical objects is not given to them by our identifying them, nor is it made possible by the linguistic and logical practices that are a necessary part of such identification. Rather, their identity is what makes it possible for us to identify them, and this identity discloses itself when our identifications, necessarily including relevant linguistic and logical practices, are successful—*i.e.*, when they are true.[41]

Applying these modified claims to the topic of propositional truth, we can say Husserl is right to insist that predicative identity is not the same as synthetic identity, even though synthetic identity usually includes predicative identity. I would put this point as follows. When we make assertions about a practical object, we engage in predicative identification, and the object's predicative availability makes this possible. To the extent that such assertions are true, however, the object must also be available in non-predicative ways in non-predicative dimensions of our practical experience. Moreover, such non-predicative ways of availability—at least those that are relevant with respect to the assertion—must align with the object's predicative identity. I call this "objective" alignment on the occasion of a predicative identification "predicative self-disclosure." Predicative self-disclosure is what the practical object to which we refer allows us to specify on such an occasion with respect to non-predicative ways in which the object is available to us. Rather than talk of the object's "presence" and "givenness," we can speak of its availability and self-disclosure. And rather than restrict its availability to intuitive givenness, we can acknowledge the many practical ways in which objects function in relation to human practices. That will allow us to index assertoric correctness concerning practical objects to the dynamic coherence between their predicative and non-predicative functions as well as between our own predicative and non-predicative practices.

Hence I propose to begin a retrieval of Husserl's insights by expanding "fulfillment" to include a much wider range of practices and practical objects; by reformulating "coincidence" as an intersubjective process; and by replacing "intuitive givenness" with the notion

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[41] I leave aside the question whether identification is the only type of synthetic practice that can be true with respect to objects. I also leave aside the question whether the truth of identification provides a sufficiently ample basis for generating a more expansive, life-oriented conception of truth. My concern right now is to reframe Husserl's conception of truth in such a way that it does not preclude generating an existential conception of truth and yet does justice to propositional correctness.

of predicative self-disclosure. Although such revisions respond to the legitimate objections of Levinas, Adorno, and Derrida, they also imply criticisms of these post-Heideggerian critiques.

My proposed revisions point to an expanded idea of truth that replaces the ideal of adequation with a dynamic correlation between sociohistorical practices and what these practices disclose. Achieving propositional truth as assertoric correctness is only one part of this disclosive correlation, as Husserl recognized in his own fashion. Yet, as he also recognized, in a society such as ours, multidimensional and dynamic disclosure seldom occurs in the absence of correct assertions about practical objects that are available to us in more than predicative ways. When worked out in greater detail, perhaps this account of truth can help meet the challenge Tugendhat posed. Perhaps it will connect a precise concept of propositional correctness with an expansive and life-oriented idea of truth.

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