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# THE WORLD AS NOEMA AND AS REFERENT

GUIDO KUNG

A major stumbling block in the way of a dialogue between phenomenology and logistic philosophy is the fact that the semantical terminology of the two movements has developed in opposite directions. In logistic philosophy Frege's 3-levelled semantics of sign, sense and referent soon gave way to Russell's 2-levelled semantics of sign and referent. In Husserlian phenomenology, on the other hand, the notion of sense was not abandoned but broadened, especially through the elaboration of the notion of the noema. A closer look at the contemporary discussions in logistic philosophy shows however that the 3-levelled semantical framework is reappearing in a new form. The straightforward realism of Russell has given way to a more Kantian position where the universe of discourse is no longer simply identified with absolute reality. This means that the logistic philosophers are discovering the noematic character of their universes of discourse.

This new logistic distinction between universes of discourse and absolute reality, which parallels the phenomenological distinction between the world as noema and the absolute real world (if there is any), brings with it a distinction between ontology and metaphysics: the description of different universes of discourse, respectively of different noematic worlds, can be called the ontological task, and the question as to which universe of discourse, respectively which noematic world (if any), is the best map of absolute reality is the concern of metaphysics.

The parallelism between the semantics of contemporary logistic philosophy and phenomenology is obscured by a terminological discrepancy due to the above mentioned divergent historical development: in logistic philosophy the signs are said to *refer* to the entities in the universe of discourse, whereas in phenomenology the noemata are not properly speaking the *referents* of noetic acts, but are said to belong on the level of *sense*. However, the phenomenological way of distinguishing noematic world and absolute reality in terms of sense and referent is very important, because it provides the most adequate way of conceiving the puzzling relationship between appearance and reality, and avoids the shortcomings of the causal and the picture theory, the identity theory and the adverbial theory.

It is the aim of this paper to establish a correlation between the basic semantical frameworks of the phenomenology of Husserl and Ingarden on the one hand, and of the logistic philosophy of Carnap, Goodman and Quine on the other hand.<sup>1</sup> I hope that this will not only help bridge the gap

between phenomenology and analytic philosophy, but that it will also shed a clearer light on the classical distinction between appearance and reality and on the status of ontology and metaphysics.

In order to compare the logistic and the phenomenological semantical frameworks we have to go back to their common origin in a Fregean type of semantics. Unfortunately the development of the semantical concepts after Frege went into two different directions and thus led to the well-known profound split between logistic and phenomenological thinking. However, a closer look at the contemporary views has led me to the conclusion that logistic and phenomenological semantics, though travelling in opposite directions, are actually arriving at a common endpoint. Let me therefore try to sketch the journey completed by each of them.

## 1. From Frege to the semantical framework of contemporary logistic philosophy

### a. From Frege to Russell

Our journey starts with Frege's basic distinction between *Zeichen* (sign, expression), *Sinn* (sense, meaning), and *Bedeutung* (reference, denotation). I do not intend to go into the fine points of Fregean semantics, such as the question of saturated and unsaturated entities or the question whether facts or the truth values should be taken as the referents of sentences. I only ask to recall the basic 3-fold distinction (Cf. framework I in the schema on p. 16).

In this general framework it is the *senses* which many philosophers find hard to accept. A philosopher who treats senses (meanings) as a kind of namable entities encounters many serious difficult-

1. Earlier versions of this paper have been read at the philosophical colloquia of the University of Iowa (on October 10, 1969) and of the University of Rochester (on February 6, 1970). Cf. also my paper "Ingarden on language and ontology" read at the International Conference on Husserl and the Idea of Phenomenology, held at the University of Waterloo (Ontario, Canada) on April 10-13, 1969. The Proceedings will appear as vol. 2 of *Analecta Husserliana. The Husserl Yearbook for Phenomenological Research*, Dordrecht: D. Reidel.



ies, conceptual as well as technical ones. What kind of creatures are these meanings? There seems to be no exact way of determining where one meaning ends and another meaning begins. And once one starts naming meanings, then one is led to introduce an infinite hierarchy of meanings, meanings of meanings, etc. It is therefore understandable that Russell was glad when his theory of descriptions allowed him to avoid those troublesome entities; when it seemed that he could get along without an intermediary level between signs and things. (Cf. framework *II* in our schema).

It has to be stressed, however, that there is also a powerful *positive* concern which favours the adoption of the Russellian framework, namely the concern for a referential notion of truth. A realist like Russell is more interested to correlate the expressions with counterparts in reality than to assign them beings of reason as their senses. He will, for instance, stress that predicate expressions must refer to (or designate) properties or relations in reality, rather than worry about the conceptual meanings which are their senses.<sup>2</sup>

The example just given shows that it would be wrong to think that *nominalism* is the decisive motive for preferring framework *II* over framework *I*: for Russell the properties and relations referred to are no less universals than meanings or concepts are.<sup>3</sup> Actually the shift towards framework *II* is not merely due to economy-minded logistic philosophers, but has its

roots in Brentano and Meinong,<sup>4</sup> the latter of which is notorious for his liberality in multiplying entities. But Meinong too had a strong allegiance to a referential conception of truth, and it is because of this that he maintained his curious view that there are not only existing and subsisting objects, but that there must even be objects which have no kind of existence (*Dasein*) at all. As a matter of fact he believed that certain *true* statements were talking *about* the non-existing golden mountain and *about* non-existing and non-subsisting square circles; and he grounded the truth of these statements not in their meanings, but felt obliged to assume non-existing and non-subsisting objects as their *referents*.

Russell agreed with Meinong on the fundamental importance of the referential conception of truth; of truth as a correspondence, as an isomorphism between the words of a statement and what the statement is *about*. This correspondence theory of truth had been the cornerstone in Russell's refutation of Bradley's monistic idealism: if to the multiplicity of components of a true statement there must correspond a multiplicity of elements in reality, then monism is wrong. It was the great achievement of Russell's theory of descriptions that it strengthened the position of this correspondence theory of truth by showing how the Meinongian statements, which are seemingly about non-existing objects, might be transformed into equivalent statements which are

2. In strictly Fregean terms *Begriff* (concept) and *Wertverlauf* (value distribution) are both on the level of *Bedeutung* (reference); cf. G. Frege "Begriff und Gegenstand" *Vierteljahrsschrift fuer wissenschaftliche Philosophie* vol. 16 (1892) p. 198. But A. Church uses the term "concept" for the sense of a predicate expression; cf. A. Church *Introduction to Mathematical Logic* vol. 1, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1956, p. 6.

3. Concerning the rare notion of a concrete property which is not a universal cf. my paper "Concrete and abstract properties" *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* vol. 5 (1964) pp. 31-36.

4. For the views of Brentano and Meinong cf. R. M. Chisholm "Brentano on descriptive psychology and the intentional" in E. N. Lee and M. Mandelbaum, eds., *Phenomenology and Existentialism* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press 1969, pp. 1-23; J. N. Findlay *Meinong's Theory of Objects and Values* Oxford: Clarendon Press 1963, ch. 2; R. M. Chisholm "Jenseits von Sein und Nichtsein" in K. S. Guthke, ed., *Dichtung und Deutung. Gedächtnisschrift fuer Hans M. Wolff* Bern-Muenchen: Francke 1961, pp. 23-31; F. Kröner "Zu Meinong's 'unmoeglichen Gegenstaenden'" in K. Radakovic, S. Tarouca and F. Weinhandl, eds., *Meinong-Gedenkschrift*. Schriften der Universitaet Graz vol. 1, Graz: "Styria" Steirische Verlagsanstalt 1952, pp. 67-79.

In my paper "Noema und Gegenstand", to appear in R. Haller, ed., *Jenseits von Sein und Nichtsein: Beitrage zur Meinong-Forschung, Int. Meinong-Kolloquium an der Universitaet Graz 1.-4. Oktober 1970* Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, I have pointed out how the semantics of Meinong, Russell and Husserl can be related to the different kinds of logical quantifiers of R. Routley (Monash University, Australia). Russell and St. Lesniewski, respectively

clearly no longer about any mysterious non-existing entities.<sup>5</sup> “

*b. From Russell to the semantical framework of contemporary logistic philosophy*

The development of logistic philosophy from Russell to the generation of Carnap, Quine and Goodman is characterized by the fact that the straightforward realism of Russell has given way to a more Kantian position: the universe of discourse (respectively the range of designata) is no longer simply identified with reality as it is in itself. Instead contemporary logistic philosophers have found that absolute reality, “the world”, can be described in different systems whose universes of discourse are articulated differently. This means that the 2-levelled Russellian framework has been supplemented by a third level. (Cf. framework *III* in our schema.)

At first logistic philosophers had tried to articulate their criticism of “naive” realism within the 2-levelled Russellian framework. Taking their clue from the British Empiricists, they restricted the universe of discourse to sense-data and tried to identify all other entities with certain classes of sense-data.<sup>7</sup> But this task proved to be too difficult. Neither the things of ordinary experience nor the entities postulated by physical theory could be defined in terms of sense-data. Physical entities had to be accepted as basic individuals of the universe of discourse. The conviction that physical reality-in-itself is quite different from

how it appears in our ordinary experience or in our scientific models had to be expressed in another way, namely by relativizing the universe of discourse and distinguishing it from absolute reality-in-itself.

This distinction between the universe of discourse and reality-in-itself brings with it a distinction between “ontology” and “metaphysics”. It has become customary to call the general categories of a universe of discourse “an ontology”; and since each semantically developed system has to specify its ontology, it is said to carry an “ontological commitment”. On the other hand, questions concerning reality-in-itself are clearly metaphysical. I propose therefore that the second level of framework *III* be called the ontological level and that the third level be called the metaphysical level. The task of *describing* different ontological commitments is an ontological task; but notice that the task of *deciding* which ontological commitment to adopt can be called a metaphysical task: it can be viewed not merely as the pragmatic task of deciding which ontological commitment is best for some immediate purpose, but also as the task of deciding which ontological commitment is best for the most comprehensive purpose, i.e. which ontological commitment fits reality-in-itself best.

Actually logistic philosophers differ somewhat in their views with respect to metaphysical questions. Carnap holds that all metaphysical questions concerning the nature of reality-in-itself

5. Furthermore, Russell the logician was happy that the transformed statements did no longer violate the logical laws of non-contradiction and of the excluded middle. Cf. Russell “On denoting” *Mind* vol. 14 (1905) pp. 479-493. For Meinong’s reply and Russell’s rejoinder see Meinong *Ueber die Stellung der Gegenstandstheorie im System der Wissenschaften* Leipzig: R. Voigtlaender 1907, pp. 14-18 and Russell’s review of this work in *Mind* vol. 16 (1907) p. 439. Meinong also rejected a suggestion of G. Heymans *Gesetze und Elemente des wissenschaftlichen Denkens*, Z. ed., Leipzig 1905, p. 44f. which was similar to that of Russell’s theory of descriptions, cf. *Ueber die Stellung . . .* p. 37f.
6. Most logicians after Russell have accepted the Russellian framework. Even Carnap’s logic of intension and extension (cf. *Meaning and Necessity* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2nd ed. 1956) is *not* a return to the Fregean semantics of sense and reference: in Carnap’s intensional logic the intension of a term is the referent and not the sense of this term. This is clearly shown by the fact that Carnap uses referential quantification and that in his logic the values of the quantified variables must be intensions and not extensions.

For a long time A. Church has been the only defender of the Fregean approach; cf. “A formulation of the logic of sense and denotation” in *Structure, Meaning and Method: Essays in Honor of Henry M. Sheffer* New York: The Liberal Arts Press 1951, pp. 3-24. But recently David B. Kaplan, a disciple of Carnap, Church and Richard Montague, has given a further clarification and improved formulation of the logic of sense and denotation; cf. his dissertation *Foundations of Intensional Logic* University of California-Los Angeles 1964. (Professor Rolf Eberle of the University of Rochester has drawn my attention to these new developments.)

7. Cf. B. Russell *Our Knowledge of the External World* London 1914; R. Carnap *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* Berlin 1928.

are meaningless. The question which ontological commitment to adopt is for him a so-called “external question” where the answer is never a matter of truth but only one of expediency.<sup>8</sup> Other analytic philosophers are less agnostic. Wilfrid Sellars, for instance, does not think that it is meaningless to speak of the structure of reality-in-itself. He does not claim to know what this structure is like, but as a scientific realist he makes the metaphysical statement that it must exist, and like Peirce he says that the structure of reality-in-itself is what the ultimate scientific image (if ever it could be arrived at) would depict.<sup>9</sup>

Nelson Goodman’s metaphysical position is highly original: he holds that the world is not one way but *many ways*. This is not the agnostic view of Carnap who, from the fact that many systems “work”, draws the conclusion that metaphysical affirmations can have no truth claim. For Goodman it is not meaningless to say of a system that it *does fit* reality. And he emphatically rejects the view that the structure of reality-in-itself is unknown or hidden from us. But he thinks that many different systems do fit reality. By this he means not only that some systems capture the world in a finer network than others. It seems that for Goodman it is even possible that two different systems give an equally detailed map of the world. This may sound puzzling, but one must remember that, for instance, one and the same Euclidean geometry can be formulated in different constructional systems with different ontologies. It is in such a sense that Goodman claims that the world is many ways.<sup>10</sup>

Quine’s position is somewhat unclear. He still wants to defend a Humean kind of naturalism

(“science is second to none”) and is reluctant to accept even a Kantian kind of metaphysics. But the critical distinction between the world of appearance, the changing models of science, and absolute noumenal reality seems to be inescapable, and if pressed even Quine will have to accept the 3-levelled semantical framework. If this is admitted, then Quine’s view is quite similar to that of Carnap for whom all metaphysical questions are pragmatical questions. But Quine is a more thorough pragmatist than Carnap. For Quine not even an ontology as such can be an absolute given. Quine had been very much impressed by Russell’s theory of descriptions and he had thought that it made the assumption of any introspective “mental museum” henceforth obsolete. But at first he had taken it for granted that only intentional entities were candidates for such a “museum”. He had assumed that the divisions of physical reality into extensional entities could be specified by non-introspective criteria, namely by public ostension. To his astonishment, however, he found that not even an extensional ontology could be uniquely determined by behaviouristic criteria: the behaviour of the speakers of any language *L* can support *different* hypotheses concerning the extensional ontology of that language *L*. To an intuitionist this discovery of Quine shows that there must be some natural “mental musea” after all: supposedly the speakers of *L* know quite well what they are talking about; i.e. it would seem that often (though not always) they know absolutely in what way they have mentally divided up the world. But Quine’s reaction is different. He refuses categorically to accept any non-behaviouristic intuitions as a

8. R. Carnap “Empiricism, semantics and ontology” *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* vol. 4 (1950) pp. 20-40.

9. W. Sellars *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes* New York: Humanities Press 1968. p. 50.

Sellars insists like Husserl on a realistic interpretation of science and rejects instrumentalism: man in everyday life and the scientist are talking about the *same* world. Cf. E. Husserl *Ideen zu einer reinen Phaenomenologie und phaenomenologischen Philosophie* vol. 1. 1. ed. Halle 1913, Husserliana edition The Hague: M. Nijhoff 1950, §52.

10. N. Goodman “The way the world is” *Review of Metaphysics* vol. 14 (1960) pp. 48-56.

Actually Goodman agrees with Carnap and Quine that to ask for *the* structure of reality-in-itself is meaningless. But Carnap and Quine merely express their skepticism with respect to non-pragmatical metaphysical answers, whereas Goodman gives a metaphysical explanation why certain metaphysical questions are meaningless.

Notice also that Goodman’s view seems compatible with the phenomenological conception that the experience of an evident truth is the experience of a fulfilment of a meaning intention and *not* the experience of a correspondence between a meaning and reality-in-itself.

source of knowledge, and he prefers instead to abandon the view that it makes sense to say what the ontology of a language is, absolutely speaking. He accepts a basic *inscrutability of reference* and proclaims the principle of *ontological relativity* according to which (1) the elucidation of the ontology of a language  $L^1$  is always relative to the ontology of a background language  $L^2$  which is not questioned; and (2) the interpretation of the ontology of  $L^1$  in the ontology of  $L^2$  is never uniquely determined, but always a matter of an only pragmatically justifiable choice.<sup>11</sup> Thus Quine is a pragmatist not only with respect to the metaphysical task of deciding which ontology to adopt, but also with respect to the ontological task of analysing and describing an ontology as such. He holds the latter view even in the case where the ontology to be described is the analyst's own ontology.

But let us now return to Frege and travel in the other direction.

## 2. From Frege to the semantical framework of phenomenology

Husserl and Frege had much in common, partly because they belonged to a common tradition and partly because Frege had a direct influence on Husserl. Frege's review of Husserl's *Philosophie der Arithmetik*, for instance, has had an important influence on Husserl's rejection of psychologism.<sup>12</sup> In his semantics Husserl distinguishes like Frege the three levels of the expressions, the meanings and the referents. Husserl calls a meaning a *Sinn* or a *Bedeutung* (thus using the word *Bedeutung* not in Frege's sense), and a referent he simply calls a *Gegenstand*, i.e. an object. I do not claim that Husserl got the overall distinction of these three levels from Frege. Actually it is rather due to the tradition common to both Frege and Husserl which includes, for

instance, Bolzano; and Husserl did not adopt Frege's peculiar doctrine concerning the sense and reference of expressions in oblique contexts. But there are other features in Husserl's doctrine which suggest that Frege's paper *Ueber Sinn und Bedeutung* had nevertheless some direct influence.<sup>13</sup> The whole question would seem worth a more detailed investigation.

One point which distinguishes the phenomenological from the logistic approach is that in phenomenology the linguistic expressions are not studied for their own sake, independently of the acts of thinking. On the contrary, the focus of interest is rather on the noetic acts. When a phenomenologist studies signs, then he wants to understand how our thinking gives meaning to material symbols, how so to speak, thinking gets incarnated in material expressions. Logistic philosophers, on the other hand, do not start with these questions, even if in the end they also become interested in them.

Now it is just because of its concern with a meticulous description of our noetic experience and its content that phenomenological semantics includes an important new notion: the notion of the intentional object as such, i.e. the notion of the *noema*. It is a difficult notion, but it plays such a crucial role that without a good grasp of it an adequate understanding of phenomenology seems impossible. The main difficulty is to see that the noema is *not* the same as the referent. For Husserl the noema still belongs on the general level of *Sinn* (sense). Dagfinn Føllesdal has documented this very clearly with texts from Husserl's *Ideen* and from an as yet unpublished Husserlian manuscript entitled *Noema und Sinn*.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the noema of a noetic act (of a noesis) is not the referent, but only the *intended* referent *qua intended*; the noema is not the object referred to.

11. W. V. Quine *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* New York: Columbia University Press 1969, cf. esp. p. 50.

12. Cf. H. Spiegelberg *The Phenomenological Movement* vol. 1, The Hague: M. Nijhoff 1965 (second edition) p. 93.

13. See notes 19 and 24 below.

14. D. Føllesdal "Husserl's notion of noema" *Journal of Philosophy* vol. 66 (1969) pp. 680-687.

but only the *intentional object qua intentional*.<sup>15</sup> The best way to clarify this distinction is to give an example where there is a noema, an *intended referent qua intended*, but no referent as such, no actual referent. Let us assume that there is a certain Mr. X who sincerely believes that he has seen live centaurs grazing on the lawns of the University of Notre Dame, and who therefore believes that there are live centaurs on the lawns of this university. In such a case the noetic acts of Mr. X would have centaurs as their *intended referents*. But there are, I guess, no actual centaurs corresponding to those *intended referents*.

A Meinongian philosopher might say that Mr. X's belief was concerned with non-existing centaurs. But Husserl, I trust, would agree with me that this belief cannot be concerned with non-existing centaurs. And this for two reasons: first, because there simply is no such thing as a non-existing centaur; and second, because Mr. X does not want to make any claims concerning *non-existing* centaurs; he claims that *existing* centaurs are grazing on the lawns of the University of Notre Dame, i.e. the centaurs are intended as having real physical existence. Thus in this case there is no referent, only an *intended referent qua intended*, an *apparent referent*; but an apparent referent is not a referent at all. In the case of a true belief or of genuine knowledge, on the other hand, there is both an intended referent qua intended and an actual referent, the intention is in agreement with what exists in actual fact.

Notice also that Mr. X's belief is not *about* a noema. The noema cannot take the place of a missing referent. Mr. X does not claim that there are noemata on the lawns of the University of Notre Dame. Rather his belief is "*through*" a noema *about* physical reality. The noema is so to speak the tip of the arrow of sense which points to a certain "point" in physical reality, but in the

case of Mr. X's belief *nothing* can be found at this "coordinate point". In a case of true knowledge, on the other hand, the noema, i.e. the tip of the arrow of sense, and that which exists at the "point" pinpointed by the arrow do "coincide"; that is, the noema "fits" the actual referent.

Because of the distinction between noema and referent a phenomenologist can make a distinction between two different tasks which parallels the distinction in contemporary logistic philosophy: there is the ontological task of *describing* different noemata and there is the metaphysical task of *deciding* whether a noema "coincides with", "fits" metaphysical reality. Actually I first learned about the distinction between ontology and metaphysics from a phenomenologist, namely Roman Ingarden.<sup>16</sup>

But one might ask, how can this apply to transcendental phenomenology? Does the transcendental reduction not exclude the possibility of a metaphysical world "beyond" the noematic world? To this I would say that the transcendental reduction is indeed nothing else than the bracketing of the question whether there is a metaphysical world "beyond" the noematic world or not. Thus the transcendental reduction does bracket the whole metaphysical controversy between realism and idealism and allows only for the description of the *intended world as intended* i.e. as noematic. However, it is not the aim of phenomenology to keep this bracket forever and never to answer metaphysical questions concerning the world. As a matter of fact Husserl himself had finally taken a metaphysical stand when he opted for idealism and denied the existence of a metaphysical real world. But because a negative metaphysical claim posits nothing beyond the noema it seems that Husserl was not aware that he did in fact remove the brackets of the transcendental reduction.

15. Unfortunately the often used term "intentional object" is ambiguous. It can be used to designate the *intentional object qua intentional*, i.e. the noema; but in the case of an intentional act which has an actual referent it can also be used to designate the referent, since the referent can be described as the object which is successfully intended. This ambiguity often obscures the important distinction discussed here. For a passage where Husserl identifies the intentional object with the referent cf. *Logische Untersuchungen* vol. 2 part 1, Halle: M. Niemeyer 1. ed. 1901 p. 398, 2. ed. 1913 p. 425. For the distinction between noema and referent cf. e.g. *Ideen I* §97, Husserliana edition p. 242 line 23-31.
16. R. Ingarden *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt* vol. 1 *Existentialontologie* Tuebingen: M. Niemeyer 1964, p. 33. Actually Ingarden's definition of ontology refers to ideas and not to noemata, but there is a systematic relationship between ideas and noemata which have a consistent content.



However, Ingarden (who is a realist) has made it clear that even a negative metaphysical assertion goes beyond the transcendental reduction.<sup>17</sup>

In order to explain how a phenomenologist may go about in deciding the metaphysical question of realism versus idealism, there is another subtlety concerning idealism which has to be pointed out. The noematic world normally described in transcendental phenomenology is the noematic world of everyday experience, of the "natural attitude"; and this attitude is a realistic attitude which ascribes to the world a kind of autonomous existence. Now my point is that when a philosopher undergoes a conversion to transcendental idealism, then his outlook on the world changes. Such a philosopher lives no longer in the "natural attitude" but in an idealistic attitude with a different noesis and a different noema. His attitude towards the world is now in many respects similar to the attitude which a poet has towards fictional characters which he has created and of which he knows that they have no autonomous existence:

noesis: idealist's noetic acts  
 |  
 noema: idealist's noematic world=  
 =noema of a so-called real world=  
 =noema of an entity with  
 non-autonomous existence  
 |  
 referent: the so-called real world=  
 =an entity with non-autonomous  
 existence

As a matter of fact there is not only *one* idealistic position, but there are as many different ones as there are different ways in which an entity created by the mind can be understood as depending on that mind. Nor is the "naive" realism of the "natural attitude" the only thinkable realistic position. If therefore a phenomenologist wants to decide the controversy between realism and idealism, then he should examine not only the noematic world of the "natural attitude," but also all the other possible idealistic and realistic conceptions of the world. This amounts

to a very extensive project of ontological description. Hopefully many of the initially possible worlds will upon closer examination prove to be incoherent and drop out. Other candidates may become eliminated on factual grounds, because they cannot be harmonized with our factual human experience. In this way the field for the metaphysical decision can be narrowed.

The procedure just outlined corresponds to the procedure of Roman Ingarden in his monumental and still unfinished work *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt*. Ingarden distinguishes there initially no less than 64 different positions!<sup>18</sup>

### 3. Comparison of the phenomenological and the logistic semantical framework and appraisal of the noema doctrine

It has by now become obvious how the semantical frameworks of contemporary logistic philosophy (framework III) and of phenomenology (framework V) have to be correlated. Both of them have an ontological level (the level of the universe of discourse and of the noematic world respectively) and both have a metaphysical level. Our schema should make it clear how both movements are concerned with the same basic philosophical problems.

With their distinction between ontology and metaphysics both movements have arrived at a Leibnizian strategy of surveying possible worlds in order to determine which is the actual world. But the contemporary strategy is a new one because Leibniz, unlike the contemporary philosophers, did not consider alternative possibilities of logical and ontological truths, he only considered alternative possibilities of factual truth within one pre-given logical and ontological framework.

The comparison also shows that there is a discrepancy with respect to the notion of reference. In the logistic framework signs are said to refer to entities in the universe of discourse, respectively in the ranges of designata. In phenomenology on the other hand the noetic acts are

17. R. Ingarden "Główne fazy rozwoju filozofii E. Husserla" (The principal stages in the development of the philosophy of E. Husserl), a monograph reprinted in R. Ingarden *Z badań nad filozofia współczesna* (Investigations on Contemporary Philosophy) Warszawa: PWN 1963, pp. 383-450.  
 18. *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt* vol. 1, p. 188.

rather said to refer to (or to purport to refer to) metaphysical reality. The noemata properly belong on the level of sense. The phenomenologist can, of course, refer to (i.e. talk *about*) a noema, but only in philosophical reflection; and in that case there will be another higher level noema "through" which he pinpoints the noema to which he is referring.<sup>19</sup>

As far as labels are concerned, one can simply mark the difference by adding subscripts, i.e. by distinguishing between the logistic term "referent<sub>t</sub>" and the phenomenological term "referent<sub>p</sub>". But it is important that the logistic philosopher realizes that with the switch from framework II to framework III the meaning of the word "referent" has undergone a change, and that it now plays a role very similar to that of the phenomenological term "noema". Quine's discovery of the behaviouristic inscrutability of reference, shows the significance of this change.

The phenomenological way of speaking in terms of "noema" and "referent<sub>p</sub>" is very important because it seems to provide the most adequate way of conceiving the puzzling relationship between appearance and reality. As a matter of fact this relationship can neither be viewed as simply a relation between two different *things*, namely two different *referents*, nor can it be viewed as a strict identity. It seems that already Kant was groping to overcome this predicament, and that some of his shortcomings were due to the fact that he did not have the semantical distinction between sense and referent at his disposal. He was forced either to identify noumenal and phenomenal things or to distinguish them according to the model of cause/effect or pictured-thing/picture where an appearance is too much

treated as a *thing*. Husserl very strongly criticized the conception that the world of everyday experience is an effect or a picture; i.e. that it is a sign, a *primary referent*, behind which another thing, a second referent, is hidden.<sup>20</sup>

If on the other hand the things of the phenomenal world are simply identified with the noumenal things, then all what is said concerning appearances must be expressed by means of *predicates* which treat the appearings as a special kind of properties of the noumenal things. This is not only unwieldy, but it seems to be clearly inappropriate insofar as there are not only apparent *properties* but also apparent *things*. For instance, if I seem to see two palm trees, then to these appearing palm trees there may correspond any number of things in reality: there may indeed be two things; or I may be seeing double; or I may even have a hallucination in which case there would be *no* external object at all of which this appearance could be predicated.

Sophisticated contemporary analytic philosophers, who rightly shy away from treating appearances as things which are the primary referents of our noetic acts, often take refuge in an adverbial account.<sup>21</sup> According to this doctrine the appearance of centaurs to Mr. X means that Mr. X "has been appeared to *centaurily*". Actually this amounts to the conception that an appearance is a *property of a noetic act*. This is not very far removed from the phenomenological account since "having a certain noema" is indeed a kind of property of noetic acts. But I believe that the peculiar nature of this property cannot be brought out without the peculiar notion of a noema. The property in question is not simply an *internal* property of a particular mental process but it is a

19. D. Føllesdal has pointed out that Husserl was aware of this regress of noemata which is analogous to the Fregean regress of senses; cf. "Husserl's notion of noema" p. 686.

20. Cf. Husserl *Logische Untersuchungen* vol. 2 part 1, 2. ed. pp. 421-425; *Zur Kritik der "Bildtheorie" und der Lehre von den "immanenten" Gegenständen der Akte* (Criticism of the "picture theory" and of the doctrine of "immanent" objects of the acts); and *Ideen I* §43: *Aufklärung eines prinzipiellen Irrtums* (Clearing up of a basic error).

Husserl rejects here the picture theory and the sign theory which had been proposed, e.g. by Helmholz. But he does not establish the connection between this rejection and the noema doctrine. On the contrary, he rejects here also the terminology according to which what is given in everyday experience is said to be only an appearance (*Erscheinung*). But I believe that this means only a rejection of the appearance doctrine insofar as "appearance" is understood in terms of the picture theory. See also footnote 15.

21. Cf. R. M. Chisholm *Theory of Knowledge* Englewood Cliffs N.J.: Prentice-Hall 1966, p. 95 f.

relational property<sup>22</sup> which points “outward” toward a certain “point” in reality, even if there may be nothing at this “coordinate point”. Furthermore, two successive noetic acts can be directed toward identically the same “point”, and this identity cannot be accounted for in terms of internal properties which would be two distinct entities.<sup>23</sup> The adverbial formulation has also the disadvantage of being very artificial and unwieldy, since descriptions of the most complex appearances have to be compressed into an adverb. By contrast the noema doctrine claims that this artificial reduction is unnecessary since another more convenient way of avoiding the mistakes of the causal theory and the picture theory can be offered.

The acceptability of the phenomenological account depends of course on whether one finds the notion of the noema intelligible. If it is hard to understand what Fregean senses are, then it is also hard to understand what kind of entities noemata are. Actually the noemata of noetic acts resemble very much the Fregean senses of individual descriptions. Where Frege spoke of *die Art des Gegebenseins des Bezeichneten* (“the mode of givenness of the referent”), Husserl speaks of *der Gegenstand im Wie seiner Bestimmtheiten* (“the object in the mode of its determination”).<sup>24</sup> However the noema of a noetic act usually contains more than what can be expressed in one description. Much of what has been experienced in past noetic acts remains as a determining and

integral part in what is experienced at present. Because of this the noemata are really very much like the entities in the universe of discourse of a logistic system. One has only to consider a logistic system as a map of all our knowledge at a certain time *t*. Then the entities of the universe of discourse will indeed be conceived as having all the determinations which according to our experience up to time *t* they are supposed to have.

But what about the centaurs of Mr. X which were mentioned above? Are centaur-noemata not as nonsensical as non-existing centaurs? Not quite. The centaur-noemata, unlike non-existing centaurs, are said to exist. And unlike Meinongian square circles noemata never have contradictory properties, if only one is careful enough to distinguish between their actual properties on the one hand and the “characteristics” in their “content” on the other. The noema of a square circle is not a round and square entity; “round” and “square” are not properties of this noema because noemata are not extended things at all. “Round” and “square” are merely two contradictory characteristics in the content of this noema. The same precaution has to be taken in talking about their mode of existence: the actual mode of existence of the noema of a live centaur is not autonomous physical existence but heteronomous noematic existence. Physical existence occurs only in the content of this noema. A doctrine of entities with a similar two-sided ontological makeup can already be found in Frege who distinguished

22. The intentionality of a mental process is not an ordinary relation. A relation in the ordinary sense holds always between two or more terms which belong on the same level of being. But we have seen that as far as the referent is concerned, there may be no referent at all; and with respect to the noema one has to insist that it does not belong on the same level of being as the mental act.

That intentionality is not a relation in the ordinary sense has been stressed by J. Rehmke and F. Brentano. Rehmke spoke of “a non-relational kind of having” (*ein beziehungsloses Haben*). And Brentano who had first said that intentionality was “a mental relation” (*eine seelische Relation*) to an immanent object, insisted later that it was only “a relation-like something (*etwas in gewissem Betracht einem Relativen Aehnliches; etwas “Relativliches”*); notice, however, that even in this later reistic period, where Brentano no longer accepted immanent objects having “mental inexistence”, he still felt that intentionality was something relation-like. Cf. Brentano *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* Bd. 2 Leipzig: F. Meiner 1925, p. 134; O. Kraus in Brentano *Wahrheit und Evidenz* Leipzig: F. Meiner 1930, pp. 194-195.

23. Cf. A. Gurwitsch “Husserl’s theory on the intentionality of consciousness in historical perspective” in E. N. Lee and M. Mandelbaum, eds., *Phenomenology and Existentialism* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press 1967, pp. 25-57, esp. p. 43.
24. G. Frege “Ueber Sinn und Bedeutung” *Zeitschrift fuer Philosophie und philosophische Kritik* vol. 100 (1892) p. 26. — Husserl *Ideen I* §131.

between the properties (*Eigenschaften*) and the characteristics (*Merkmale*) of what he called concepts (*Begriffe*).<sup>25</sup>

Many analytic philosophers will probably argue that to accept the noema doctrine is to indulge too much in a multiplication of namable entities. But they have to be reminded that the entities in their universes of discourse *are* appearances, i.e. noemata. Maybe one should not be so afraid of assuming *that* entities of a certain kind exist. To say *that* they exist does not mean much. The more risky thing is to spell out *how* they exist, i.e. to describe exactly their mode of existence. There is nothing wrong in accepting very "far-out" entities, provided that one specifies that they have a very "far-out" mode of existence. To say *that* entities of a certain kind exist, presupposes only that one is able to use names for them, i.e. that one is able to focus one's attention on such an entity, that one can remember or recognize it; that one can distinguish it from other entities, etc. It is true that this means that at least in principle it should be possible to *count* such entities. But one cannot only count cats and dogs, but also colours and possibilities, ghosts and noemata, etc.

Phenomenologists do not subscribe to a principle of economy but on the contrary advocate the principle of non-miserliness,<sup>26</sup> because their aim is to account for all the richness and the subtle nuances in what is intuitively given. Reality is so complex that it seems safe to follow the rule: why should it be simple if it can be complicated?

Actually I do not mean that logistic semantics should abandon its principle of economy. The goal of a logistic philosopher is different from that of a phenomenologist. The logistic philosopher wants to clarify and to test the coherence of a certain

body of knowledge by constructing a formal system where everything follows strictly from a small basis of primitive terms and axioms. His universe of discourse must be as simple as possible, and his first principle must indeed be a principle of economy.

Despite their difference in aim phenomenological ontology and logistic ontology are essentially comparable and complement each other. Phenomenological ontology could be of interest to a logistic philosopher in three ways: (1) phenomenology could enrich his understanding of what he is doing, namely mapping noematic worlds; (2) the descriptions of phenomenological ontology could enrich the logistic philosopher's understanding of the particular categories of entities which he has already admitted into his universe of discourse: he could, e.g., learn more about the nature and the mode of existence of things, classes, properties, etc.; (3) material for phenomenological ontology might contribute some inspirations for further logistic system-building: there are new logics to be developed, there are new domains of entities to be mapped into constructional systems, and this task presupposes some intuitive inspirations.

The phenomenologist, on the other hand, will find that the formal systems are tools which can help to strengthen his intuition, to sharpen his vision. Formal systems help detect inconsistencies and muddled thinking. Remember how difficult it was to develop mathematical intuitions without the help of formulas and constructional systems. How primitive would geography be if it refused to draw maps. Of course geographers should not abandon the study of the earth and restrict themselves to the study of maps, but wherever we

25. G. Frege *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* Breslau 1884, p. 64. Notice however that according to Frege's terminology *Begriffe* (concepts) are not noemata, but the unsaturated platonistic referents of predicate expressions.

The doctrine of ontologically two-sided entities has been elaborated in detail by Ingarden. Cf. *Das literarische Kunstwerk: Eine Untersuchung aus dem Grenzgebiet der Ontologie, Logik und Literaturwissenschaft* 1. ed. Halle 1931, 3. ed. Tuebingen: M. Niemeyer 1965 §20; *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt* vol. 2 part 1 *Formalontologie: Form und Wesen* Tuebingen: M. Niemeyer 1965 §47, §50.

26. Karl Menger has introduced the "Law against Miserliness" as a counterpart to Ockham's "Law of Parsimony". Cf. K. Menger "A counterpart of Occam's razor in pure and applied mathematics: ontological uses" in *Logic and Language: Studies Dedicated to Professor Rudolf Carnap on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* Dordrecht: D. Reidel 1962, p. 104.

intuitively grasp a structure, wherever there is some order and not chaos, there it makes sense to develop maps, to construct formal systems.<sup>27</sup>  
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27. Notice that even a false map can be useful. It directs us what to look for at a certain place, and even in the case where we find something else than what the map predicts, the map has been instrumental in furthering our awareness.

Cf. N. Goodman "The revision of philosophy" in S. Hook, ed., *American Philosophers at Work* New York: Criterion Books 1956, pp. 75-92, on the complementarity of constructionalism (logistic philosophy) and ordinary language philosophy ("linguistic phenomenology" as Austin has called it).