

# INTRODUCTION

Denis Fisette

*Université du Québec à Montréal*

The twelve original studies collected in this volume examine different aspects of Edmund Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. They are authored by scholars and specialists internationally recognized for their expertise in the fields of phenomenology, logic, history of philosophy and philosophy of mind. They approach Husserl's groundwork from different angles and perspectives and shed new light on a number of issues such as meaning, intentionality, ontology, logic, etc. They also explore questions such as the place of the *Logical Investigations* within the whole of Husserl's work, its sources in 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophy and in particular in the philosophical work of Franz Brentano and Bernard Bolzano, its reception amongst the so called members of the Munich Circle and its influence on contemporary philosophy. In short, this volume constitutes a "companion" to Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.

These studies were, for the most part, originally presented as contributions to an international conference held in Montreal in May 2001: "Husserl's *Logical Investigations*: origins and posterity of phenomenology". The conference aimed at commemorating the centenary of phenomenology's seminal work by initiating a reflection on its significance, its historical origins and its impact on post-Husserlian phenomenology. I thank Sandra Lapointe, who assisted me in the coordination of the event. My thanks, also, to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, to the Faculté des Sciences Humaines at Université du Québec à Montréal, to the Department of

Philosophy at McGill University and Philip Buckley, to Montreal's Instituto Italiano di Cultura, to the Ministère québécois des relations internationales, to the Austrian Embassy in Ottawa, to the Consulat Général de France au Québec as well as to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) for their support. I am also obliged to Jimmy Plourde and Gaétan Piché who assisted me in the material preparation of this publication.

\*  
\*\*

Commemoration is certainly not the sole nor the most important reason why one should take interest in the *Logical Investigations* today. The *Logical Investigations* are comparable, as to the magnitude of their philosophical contribution, to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* or to Quine's *Word and Object*. In this work, Husserl introduced a philosophical project which was to prevail throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>. There is still however no consensus as to the significance and unity of Husserl's *Opus Magnum*, nor as to its place within the history of philosophy. One need not wonder: this work of more than one thousand pages stands out not only in view of its unusual style and complexity, but also on account of the originality of its subject matter and complex network of references, all of which inevitably renders any exhaustive interpretation precarious. Adding to these difficulties is the *Investigations'* transitory status. The *Investigations* represent Husserl's *interim* position between his first book, *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (Hua XII)<sup>2</sup>, published in 1891, and the first book of *Ideas* (Hua III), which appeared in 1913, and represents the first systematic account of his transcendental phenomenology. On the one hand, as Husserl himself pointed out in the *Foreword* to the first edition, the *Logical Investigations* are the result of a series of vast and ambitious researches which Husserl undertook in view of the realisation of the second volume to *Philosophy of Arithmetic* which, as we know, never appeared: important changes which occurred in the middle of the 1890s and which deeply affected Husserl's position in logic and psychology forced him to abandon the programme put forward in *Philosophy of Arithmetics* and to

1. In his Preface to the new edition of J. N. Findlay 1970 translation of the *Logical Investigations*, Michael Dummett emphasizes this point: "Any analytical philosopher interested in how philosophy arrived at its present state thus needs to study the *Logical Investigations* to discover how the philosophical traditions that stemmed from the work of these two innovators came to diverge so widely".(p. xvii).

2. "Hua" refers to the Husserliana edition of Husserl's complete work (see references). It is followed by the volume number, pagination of the latter edition and pagination of the English translation. All references in this volume have been placed in the general bibliography at the end of the book.

adopt the one that led to the *Logical Investigations*. On the other hand, the publication of the *Investigations* in 1900/1901 marked the end of the so-called Halle period (1886-1901) and the beginning of his teaching in Göttingen (1901-16). During this second period, in 1913 more exactly, Husserl published a second edition of the *Logical Investigations*, the one on which J. N. Findlay's English translation is based. The modifications which were made to this second edition gauge the distance from Göttingen to Halle. Many papers dated from that period attest to the importance of the changes and criticisms phenomenology underwent, the most significant of which is the draft of an extensive *Foreword* intended for the second edition of the *Investigations* but published only posthumously<sup>1</sup>. These modifications affected several concepts, namely those of meaning and intentionality, and had a dramatic bearing on the philosophical perspective Husserl adopts in *Ideas I*. Several commentators see in these changes the sign of a revolution in Husserl's thought, a "turn" some have attempted to explain in suggesting that the Göttingen philosopher converted to a variety of idealism not in principle distinct from classical idealism<sup>2</sup>. In any case, the adoption of a transcendental perspective called for a re-assessment of the phenomenology put forward in the *Investigations*. According to Husserl, the latter constitutes a breakthrough (*Werk des Durchbruchs*). It is, in the first place, a work in which he managed to settle a number of issues with which he had been concerned since his *Habilitationschrift* (1887), and in particular logico-mathematical and epistemological difficulties that are the subject of several papers in the present volume. What's more, the "ideas" of *Ideas I* and of subsequent books and working manuscripts would be mere speculations without, for instance, the significant logical and psychological developments of the *Investigations*. It is in this sense that the *Investigations* constitute a breakthrough. And one should bear in mind that *Ideas I* is far from being the last stage in the development of Husserl's thought. This breakthrough opened several ways into phenomenology, a fact to

1. See *A Draft of a Preface to the Logical Investigations*. During Husserl's lifetime, four editions of the *Logical Investigations* appeared: a revised second edition of the *Prolegomena* and the first five *Investigations* in 1913; the revised edition of the sixth *Investigations* only appeared in 1921 with minor changes; a third edition with minor changes in 1922; and finally a fourth edition in 1928. The manuscripts containing the important modifications to the sixth *Logical Investigations* for the 1921 edition have been gathered by Ullrich Melle and will soon be published in the *Husserliana*. As to the important modifications of the 1913 edition I just mentioned, they concern first of all the definition of phenomenology as a descriptive psychology, Husserl's doctrine of the ego, the theory of meaning (namely of indexicals), the theory of intentionality in the fifth *Investigation* and the introduction of the expression "formal ontology" to designate the domain of the third *Investigation* (not to mention of course the many occurrences of the new word "rein" which indicates Husserl's philosophical stance in 1913).

2. On that question, Føllesdal and Willard (in this volume) propose a slightly different interpretation of Husserl's idealism.

which several manuscripts and lectures held during the 1920s – and in particular the introduction to the 1925 lectures on intentional psychology (Hua IX) which offers a different perspective on the book dedicated to Carl Stumpf.

At first glance – and indeed as the very title suggests – the main concern of the *Logical Investigations* does not seem to be phenomenology as such, but logic. A closer look at its content however shows that things are not so simple. This work is in fact divided into two parts: the main function of the first book – the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, published by Niemeyer in 1900 – is apparently to introduce and to prepare the researches that form the body of the second book. The latter, which was published in two volumes a year later, bears the title: *Investigations in Phenomenology and Knowledge* and includes six studies on subjects which are supposed to be directly connected to the idea of a pure logic.

The titles as such give a meagre idea of the rich and original analyses developed by Husserl in a little more than one thousand pages. They indicate however two of the chief concerns of the *Investigations*: pure logic which, in the first volume, is understood as a theory or doctrine of science (*Wissenschaftslehre*), and the theory of knowledge. The *Prolegomena* put forward a very broad sketch of this theory of science while the six *Investigations* of the second volume pertain to epistemology and aim at the clarification of the fundamental concepts of logic and at the justification of knowledge. We may indeed call Husserl's presentation of his pure logic a sketch since, as we mentioned earlier, the major part of the *Prolegomena* deals neither with logic, nor with the theory of science, but, contrary to what the title announces, with a radical criticism of what Husserl calls "logical psychologism". Psychologism, which Husserl imputes to many philosophers of the nineteenth century and apparently to the position he himself espoused in *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, is the thesis according to which the laws, principles, propositions, etc., of logic are reducible to the laws, principles, etc. of psychology understood as a natural science. In other terms, psychologism is the epistemological thesis according to which psychology, understood as a natural science, is first philosophy. Understood in this rather narrow sense, psychologism is akin to a radical form of philosophical naturalism which is a flourishing branch of contemporary – post-Quinean – epistemology. The *Prolegomena* worked out numerous arguments against logical psychologism. The most important of these relies on the thesis according to which the laws of logic are "ideal". These arguments all stem from Husserl's conception of pure logic which, as he clearly explains in the last chapter of the *Prolegomena*, is directly inspired by Leibniz's *mathesis universalis* and Bolzano's idea of a *Wissenschaftslehre*. The project of a theory of science sketched in the *Prolegomena* represents one of the main tenets of the *Investigations* and the role which ensues to this theory in the development of Husserl's philosophical

programme up to *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and *The Crisis of European Sciences* (§9) can hardly be underrated.

The six *Investigations* of the second book aim at fulfilling the first task assigned to the theory of knowledge, and more precisely to phenomenology, namely the clarification of the fundamental concepts of logic. The task of the first *Investigation* entitled “Expression and Meaning” consists in carrying out the preliminary analyses whose purpose it is to delimit the subject matter of logic proper, i.e. meaning, conceived in this work as an ideal entity comparable to Frege’s *Gedanken* or to Bolzano’s *Sätze an sich*. The specificity of Husserl’s analysis is to conceive the ideal logical meaning as an act’s essence or *species*, a concept which is examined in the second *Investigation* (“The ideal Unity of the Species and Modern Theories of abstraction”) in relation to the classical conception of abstraction found in British empiricism (in Berkeley and Hume in particular). *Investigations* III (“The Theory of Wholes and Parts”) and IV (“The Distinction between Dependent and Independent Meanings and the Idea of Pure Grammar”) concern respectively the theory of wholes and parts and the morphology of meaning or logical grammar which represents the basic level of pure logic. These two studies are intimately connected. Indeed, according to Husserl, the distinction between dependent and independent meanings that founds universal grammar – that is the distinction between a meaning which requires a complement and one which constitutes “the full and complete meaning” of a concrete act of intention such as for example, proper name and proposition – ultimately rests on the distinction made in the third *Investigation* between dependent and independent contents. The fifth (On Intentional Experiences and their Contents) and sixth (“Elemente einer phänomenologischen Aufklärung der Erkenntnis”) *Logical Investigations* represent, as Husserl indicated in the presentation of the work, the *Hauptuntersuchungen* of the second book. They take in charge the analysis of the fundamental distinctions in which “the most primitive logical differences originate.” The fifth *Investigation* elaborates a theory of acts which Husserl conceived as intentional experience while the sixth, the most voluminous of the *Investigations*, sketches the elements of a phenomenological clarification of knowledge. The question of the relation of these two main *Investigations* with the rest of the work raises two difficulties that gave rise to many debates among Husserlian commentators. The first concerns the role of phenomenology in this work and the second raises the question as to whether there is a conflict between the *Prolegomena*’s antipsychologistic position and the phenomenology of the last two *Investigations* which Husserl characterises as “descriptive psychology”. We can get rid of the first difficulty by considering that phenomenology is at any rate responsible for the different tasks traditionally assigned to the theory of knowledge, those, in particular, that concern conceptual analysis and the