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Edmund Husserl's Semantics
and the Critical Theses of Late Structuralism

Abstract:

The article contains a review of the main arguments proposed by the philosophers of late structuralism (including the so-called post-structuralism) against Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, particularly, his theses on semantics. Polemics against the Husserlian conception of semantics are grounded in the structuralists' opposition to the various theses of Husserl's phenomenologies (both the transcendental constitutive and the genetic). Initially (particularly in the 1950s), it was an attempt at combining the logical and linguistic theses of Husserlian phenomenology with the structuralist theses proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure, as known from late works by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In the 1960s, it was an attempt at challenging the status of subjectivity – the subject, including the transcendental ego and the role of consciousness. Simultaneously, it is a polemic against essentialism, in regard to ontological, epistemological and anthropological theses. In the article, I focus on the polemics of the thinkers (i.a. Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard) that reformulated Saussure's theses, against Husserlian semantics which they considered in reference to the broad understanding of a sign, exceeding the sign of language.

Keywords:

phenomenon, language, essence, sign, meaning, sense, structure.

Introduction

The article contains a review of the main arguments proposed by the philosophers of late structuralism (including the so-called post-structuralism) against Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, particularly, his theses on semantics. Polemics against the Husserlian conception of semantics are grounded in the structuralists' opposition to the various theses of Husserl's phenomenologies (both the transcendental constitutive and the genetic). Initially (particularly in the 1950s), it was an attempt at combining the logical and linguistic theses of Husserlian phenomenology with the structuralist theses proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure, as known from late works by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In the 1960s, it was an attempt at challenging the status of subjectivity – the subject, including the transcendental ego and the role of consciousness. Simultaneously, it is a polemic against essentialism, in regard to ontological, epistemological and anthropological theses. Additionally, philosophical speculation concerning language is transferred (following Ludwig Wittgenstein, structuralism, and John L. Austin's theory of speech acts) from logic to grammar and the rhetoric of colloquial language. Late structuralism, along with the so-called post-structuralism (Jacques Derrida), postulates, among others: 1) the decline of authorship (Roland Barthes); 2) the secondary character of subjective structures in comparison to semiotic and semantic structures, considered contextually, according to the assumptions of cultural and social relativism (Michel Foucault and the subject as a result of the "formation of enunciative modalities"); 3) the exhaustion of former anthropological definitions ("the ends of human being" according to Jacques Derrida).

However, paradoxically, the above critical theses responded to new solutions that draw upon Husserl's phenomenological assumptions – either inscribed *implicite* in the proposed, new philosophical solutions (e.g. transcendental and essential references of Gilles Deleuze, despite the expressed distancing from phenomenology, for the sake of phenomenalism, and Derrida's conception of the "transcendental signified"), or reinterpreted by Husserl's successors (Jean-François Lyotard's references to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theses – corporeality and subjective gesture as conditions of revealing sense and bestowing meaning). Additionally, the thinkers of late structuralism (post-structuralism) adopt Husserl's assumption concerning the internal structures of consciousness, accepting its mutability. They (e.g. Derrida and Foucault) underline the constitutive activity of consciousness but also its selective character. However, above all, according to their culturalist assumptions, these thinkers refer to the Husserlian conception of "transcendental intersubjectivity" as determined by the structures of transcendental subjectivity. *The complicated references to Husserl's phenomenology provided context to the polemics against his semantics – primarily, with his conception of ideal meaning (Bedeutung) and the conception of the constitution of object-sense.*

In the article, I focus on the polemics of the thinkers who reformulated Saussure's theses (beginning in the 1950s) against Husserlian semantics, which they considered in reference to the broad understanding of a sign, exceeding the sign of language. How do the polemics and references relate to Husserl's semantics? One of the answers may lie in indicating the semantic entanglements, known from scholastic debates on universals, including semantic issues, that may be found in Husserl's theses. In my overview of the polemics, I refer to scholastic distinctions that organize the semiotic and semantic issues of the following: sign and language (Roger Bacon), the sign of language as a privileged form of a sign (sign as an element of a logical proposition, according to William of Ockham), and mental representation as a type of sign (a concept as a mental content, and a term as an element of a language). *Such distinctions may be easily found within Husserl's semantics, and they also appear in structuralist and post-structuralist polemics against his conceptions.*

Specifically, the primacy put on spoken language, in comparison to other sign systems, is found in the theses proposed by Merleau-Ponty, who combined the theses of Husserl's phenomenology (particularly from the 1930s) with the theses of structuralism (as well as of gestalt psychology). The primacy put on spoken language

became the object of polemics and critique by late structuralists, particularly Derrida and Lyotard, however, both Jacques Lacan and Gilles Deleuze assumed this primacy within their own conceptions of semiotic and semantic structures. The structuralist thinkers, who, within their own conceptions, would pursue structures more discreet and complicated than the binary structures proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure[1] and Claude Lévi-Strauss,[2] would respond negatively to Husserl's assumptions, particularly, to the cognitively privileged role of logical propositions. The German phenomenologist, while searching for the sources and the validity of truth uttered in a language, would reduce the meanings of colloquial language to the meanings of logical propositions.

The Main Theses of Husserl's Semantics

Edmund Husserl indicates the privileged role of predicative propositions (beginning with his *Logical Investigations*[3], *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology…*[4], and *Formal and Transcendantal Logic*[5] to *Experience and Judgment*[6]). He premises the assumption concerning the empty semantic intention of utterances, indicating the validity of the structures of logical propositions – initially, as structures taken functionally (*Logical Investigations*), and later taken eidetically and transcendentally. Formal logic would eventually constitute the culmination of other aspects of natural language – transcendental logic, that would, among others, serve the purpose of a transcendental apprehension of experience data, as well as, of the colloquial language being an expression of colloquial reasoning (the natural attitude stance). In his work titled *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl modifies his theses, highlighting the role of existential judgments. Additionally, in the 1930s, Husserl advances his conception of intersubjectivity as an aspect of transcendental subjectivity (the monadological transcendental intersubjectivity), viewing colloquial language and colloquial reasoning not as a plane of a natural attitude, unthinkingly accepted by the subject, but rather as a plane of meanings and senses, collectively created by the participants of social and cultural communication (*Lebenswelt*).

Within the two volumes of his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl indicates the specific nature of phenomenology in comparison to psychologistic theses and considers logic as the basis for formulating judgments within the framework of phenomenology, as well as, within the framework of the sciences in their aprioristic mode. *Using the above means, Husserl combines the methodological tasks of logic with the tasks of phenomenology.* His phenomenological method is wider, as presented in his *Five Lectures*, given in 1907 (*The Idea of Phenomenology*)

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1) Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, eds. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Roy Harris (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court. 1983 [1916]).

2) Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York : Doubleday, 1967 [1958]); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology. Volume II*, trans. Monique Layton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978 [1973]). Claude Lévi-Strauss's conception of sign and language implies a different consideration of the aspect of *logos* – language, and the aspect of *mythos* – concerning sign mostly as visual signs. Barthes, however, who also directed important attention to myth, strictly binds the sign and the language, considering spoken and written language (natural language as for example French) as the proper form of a system of signs. Barthes accepts such an assumption, following Saussure, and one must add that it is most common in the investigations of structuralism and late structuralism, as well as in the analyses of iconic signs, that structural organisation was considered as secondary in comparison to the structures of the spoken language (for example the film theory proposed by Christian Metz).

3) Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. I, trans. John N. Findlay (London and New York: Routledge, 2001 [1970]).

4) Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy – First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. Fred Kersten (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-7445-6.

5) Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1969), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-4900-8.

6) Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgement*, trans. James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (London: Routledge, 1973).

– they provide a more comprehensive outline of the phenomenological method, along with the primary postulate: to be clear about the general sense of the problem of the phenomenology of cognition. In other words, he articulates the constitution of the object of cognition within cognition, and indicates the subsequent steps of that constitution, as well as defines the role of reduction:[7]

> Phenomenology: this denotes a science, a system of scientific disciplines. But it also and above all denotes a method and an attitude of mind, the specifically *philosophical attitude* of mind, the specifically *philosophical method*.[8]
> *Phenomenology proceeds by "seeing," clarifying, and determining meaning, and by distinguishing meanings*. It compares, it distinguishes, it forms connections, it puts into relation, divides into parts, or distinguishes abstract aspects.[9]

And,

> the logical procedures that give the sciences of a natural sort unity have a unitary character in principle in spite of the special methods which change from one science to another: while the methodological procedures of philosophy have by contrast and in principle a new unity – of "*pure* philosophy."[10]

The "methodological procedures" mentioned, regard, among others, the conclusions and rules of formal logic, the logic *universalis*. The methodological role of formal logic and the specifics of transcendental logic are further specified by Husserl in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929–1931). Here, Husserl defines logic as the science "of logos in a pregnant sense: as the science of logos in the form of science, or as the science of the essential parts that make up genuine science, as genuine.... As a theory of science concerned with principles, logic intends to bring out 'pure' universalities, 'apriori' universalities."[11] And so, the apprehension of essential a priori universalities is organized; articulating the normative rules pertaining to cognitive activity and judgement (apophantic logic), is the primary task of logic – ranging from the *Logical Investigations* up to *Experience and Judgment*.

Husserl somewhat differentiates his semantic position, which, however – as he highlights particularly in his polemics against John Locke's and John Stuart Mill's nominalism, presented within the *Logical Investigations* – is consequently realistic. That is, it is located within the scope of conceptual and semantic realism. In the second volume of the work, Husserl underlines that a "certain ideality" is necessary, while attempting to reach a certain, trans-subjective objectivity of meaning. As is known, Husserl, assuming the subjective view and judgment, as the starting point, is searching to exceed the individual (real or imagined, comprehended in a strictly psychic aspect) object of a subjective act of cognition, as well as, to exceed the individual act of naming**.** Therefore, Husserl distinguishes between that which refers to thought – the mental semantic content, and that which refers to language and the signitive, for "expressions [words and symbols] are contingent, and... the thought, the ideally

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7) Cf. Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964), 33, 46.

8) Ibid., 18–19.

9) Ibid., 46.

10) Ibid., 19.

11) Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 28.

selfsame meaning, is what is essential."[12] For the subject realizes that "he does not make the objective validity of thoughts and thought-connections, of concepts and truths, as if he were concerned with contingencies of his own or of the general human mind, but that he sees them, discovers them."[13] The individual subject is aware of the fact that "their ideal being does not amount to a psychological 'being in the mind': the authentic objectivity of the true, and of the ideal in general, suspends all reality, including such as is subjective."[14] Husserl defines here signitive acts as pure thought acts (therefore, the acts of non-visual reasoning), related to apprehending meaning and bestowing sense.

In his work titled *Voice and Phenomenon*, dedicated to Husserl's conception of a sign, Jacques Derrida highlights: "In contrast to Frege, Husserl, as we know, does not distinguish, in the *Logical Investigations*, between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*", as Husserl stated that meaning and sense are synonymous: "On the one hand, it is very convenient, especially in the case of this concept, to have at one's disposal parallel, interchangeable terms." Derrida argues: "In *Ideas I,* the dissociation that intervenes between the two terms does not at all have the same function as in Frege, and it confirms our reading: *Bedeutung* is reserved for the ideal sense content of *verbal* expression, of spoken discourse, while sense (*Sinn*) covers the whole noematic sphere, including its non-expressive stratum."[15] Husserl's polemics against the primacy of psychologism are related to the indication of semiotic and semantic differences between the language of mathematics, logic and the colloquial languages which are accomplishments of the natural languages. Derrida notices that:

> Husserl's originality is to be recognized in that: (a) he distinguishes number from concept, that is, from a *constructum*, a psychological artifact; (b) he underlines that mathematical or logical synthesis is irreducible to the *order* [*l'ordre*] of psychological temporality; (c) he bases his entire psychological analysis on the *already given* possibility of an objective *etwas überhaupt*.[16]

Therefore, Husserl – in accordance with *the position of conceptual realism and ontological essentialism* – strictly combines the thought content pertaining to a particular being as that which is actual and subjective, submitted to objectivation, with the actual and objective being along with its actual existence. In other words, Husserl, due to the real existence of being to which the mental content refers, ascribes the feature of being real to what exists intentionally in the mind of a subject. The real character of meaning as mental content within this argumentation is motivated by the essential basis of real beings, the meaning of which, taken essentially, is apprehended in a logical proposition. In the *Logical Investigations*, and later in the *Formal and Transcendental Logic* Husserl goes as far as to assume, that it is in the colloquial utterance and in the colloquial description of experience, that this essentiality of meaning is already contained implicitly – the logical proposition, in a manner of speaking, extracts from it this essential, ideal meaning. Husserl underlines that all science, concerning that which is real, "consists, in its objective content, of one homogeneous stuff," that is, of logical propositions and in itself it is "an ideal fabric

12) Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. I, 226 (volume II, part I of the German editions, chapter *Fluctuation in meaning and the ideality of unities of meaning*).

13) Ibid.

14) Ibid.

15) Jacques Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon. Introduction to the Problem of the Sign in Husserl's Phenomenology*, trans. Leonard Lawlor (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 16. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène. Introduction au problème du signe dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (Paris: PUF, 1967).

16) Jacques Derrida, *"Genesis and Structure" and Phenomenology*, in *Writing and Difference*, trans. and introduction Alan Bass (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 197–198. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *L'Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967).

of meanings."[17] Therefore, Husserl investigates the issue regarding the ideality of meaning, assuming a coherence of various types of cognition within the context of broadly understood epistemology, however, particularly, he refers to the issues of the methodology of the sciences and to their logical foundations – to strictly logical issues, related to the sole possibility of predicating on an individual being and on being in general.

It is exactly Husserl's consistent theses pertaining to logic, and, above all, his semantic theses, somewhat differentiated – *from a functional-essentialist position, through a radical essentialist position, to the consideration of logical semantics in reference to the semantics of colloquial language and reasoning* –, that the structural thinkers refer to, arguing against his theses, while also formulating their own conceptions (e.g. the conception of the "transcendental signified" by Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes).

Structuralism and Phenomenology

Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic conceptions, containing certain philosophical assumptions, popularized primarily due to the publication of his lectures in his work entitled *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), had many interpreters – some attempted to reinterpret his theses in the context of semantic pragmatism (following Ludwig Wittgenstein and John L. Austin), but also in the spirit of Neo-Kantianism and Husserlian phenomenology. One should remember that, according to Saussure, the structures are primarily the rules of a phonetic system along with distinctive difference, that is, invariant; however, it is also, for example, the convention of the alphabet as a graphical depiction of language. Saussure conceived the sole system of language (*langue*) as an assortment of rules, present in various natural languages; rules that – however varying in particular languages – would appear universally. Therefore, the aforementioned rules are executed in an empirically varied way. However, the common source of the sole systemic arrangement and its rules remains indeterminate. This universal character of the valid rules encourages their essential apprehension along with the impact on the shaping of meanings, whereas, the empirically varied character of particular executions directs the attention of the interpreters to the conception of semantic pragmatism.

Both interpretations are quite radical. *Semantic pragmatism* would refer to the issue of the arbitrary nature of the act of speech and convention, that is, the conventionality of the rules of natural language assuming the form of culturally and socially accepted and executed rules. On the other hand, interpretations involving *the assumptions of Neo-Kantianism* allow us to apprehend the structure proposed by Saussure, within the categories of both function and construction. As is known, Ernst Cassirer proposed his own conception of function to replace the category of substance.[18] Additionally, structure was taken as a type of a schematic construction within the context of the redefined Kantian schematism. However, the reinterpretations that pursued phenomenological inspiration, would refer to the conceptions of *signatum*, *signifié*, the signified as a certain mental (conceptual) content, that finds its language expression due to coinciding with the content of the word (term). One should highlight that Ferdinand de Saussure and Edmund Husserl come in close proximity due to their assumption regarding the particularly semantically privileged role of language signs. Both of them accept, however, though not always explicitly, the assumption adopted by William of Ockham: that a language utterance (containing terms) and its particular type – a logical proposition – constitute an exceptional model type of a sign (or a sum of signs), as they cross-refer to the mental, that is, conceptual, content. However, they differed

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17) Cf. Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. I, 226 (volume II, part I of the German editions, chapter *Fluctuation in meaning and the ideality of unities of meaning*).

18) Ernst Cassirer, *Substance and Function*, trans. William C. Swabey and Marie C. Swabey (Chicago: Open Court and Dover Publications, 1923).

in assuming the object of investigation: either the utterances of natural language (Saussure), or logical propositions (Husserl). However, *Husserlian investigations assume a certain continuity between the colloquial language and the logical forms of propositions*, due to the belief concerning the reference of both types of language use to mental contents. Going beyond colloquial thinking of "natural attitude", suspending colloquial beliefs, we should reach essential contents, the essence that implicitly resides in the language utterance and in reasoning being its basis. As is known, Husserl apprehends the semantic intention of the speaker (and the listener) as an empty intention eligible for subjective, individual fulfilment. The form of a logical proposition remains perpetual and supra-individual. This way, Husserl may, among others, deal with the arguments that emphasize the mutability of the individual use of language, and of the comprehension of the contents of utterances – the mutability of the meaning of a language sign in everyday use.

Simultaneously, Husserl indicates the eidetic motivation of a concept as a thought content. The distinction between "*langue*" (a system of language along with its inscribed meanings) and "*parole*" (individual executions accomplished by individual subjects of utterances), highlighted by Saussure, appears to be crucial in the structuralists' polemics with Husserl's semantic theses. Additionally, it is an object of the polemics of the interpreters of Saussure's thought, as some investigators would ascribe an idealistic character to the signified, *signifié*. In other words, the meaning of a term can be understood to have its conceptual core in mental content (the sender and the receiver of the message of colloquial language). However, it would not be a source of essentiality. The Swiss linguist assumed that the meaning of a term is motivated by a contract, a communication convention of a given language, which partially (apart from empirical data) affects the shaping of mental (conceptual) contents. The assumption concerning the conventional character of the natural language was complemented – as is known – by the assumption regarding the arbitrary nature of individual use, which affects the modification of a term along with its meaning (a language use that affects the change of the language norm). Additionally, the late structuralists, or "post-structuralists", would redefine the conception of the system of language, that is "*langue*", as they accepted the premise, was concerned with mutability in time and the dynamic, historical, "diachronic" character of systemic arrangement. In other words, that which Saussure referred to as "synchronous" in contrast to diachronically mutable executions.

Particularly, the assumptions of Saussure's "general linguistics" were an initial point of structuralists' polemics against Husserl's essentialist semantics. Simultaneously, they referred to Claude Lévi-Strauss's conception of structural anthropology and his conception of sign and its related aspect of *mythos*, separated from the language along with its characteristic order of logos (of both language and thought). The references allowed the structuralists to *translate the linguistic speculation to a much broader area of the theory of sign*, and to investigate language acts as one of many types of signs. Such assumptions may be found in theses of Russian formalists (Yuri Tynyanov and Boris Eikhenbaum) and Prague structuralists (Roman Jakobson and Jan Mukařovský), who, in the 1920s, transferred the investigations regarding the structures of spoken and written language, to the analyses of other systems of signs (visual, sonic). Paradoxically, they separated the structures of natural language from the aspect of logic, and recognized a convergence, as well as, analogies between the signs of a language and of other semiotic systems. This is paradoxical – as William of Ockham's theses concerning the logical proposition and its elements as a certain privileged form of a sign, are considered as the culmination of scholastic semiotics and semantics. Edmund Husserl implicitly referred to such a particular conception of semiotics, however, he – contrary to Ockham the nominalist – accepted essentialist assumptions. On the other hand, structuralism and post-structuralism attempt to carry semiotic and semantic theses beyond the context of logic and of the logical proposition, considered as the culmination of argumentation accomplished in natural language. Regardless, they find certain forms of semantic ideality. Both these investigative tendencies were recognized and commented on by Derrida, who, in the 1960s, presented a critical thesis on the "logo-

centrism" of philosophy and of the language sciences (both phenomenology and structuralism), and critically highlighted the alleged elements of essentialism in the works by structuralists (a critical thesis concerning the "transcendental signified" uncritically employed by Roland Barthes).

Husserl's Semantics and Merleau-Ponty's "Alternative Structuralism"

As mentioned, the aim of the article is to present the post-structuralist polemics that were against the Husserlian semantics – still, while recognizing that the polemics adopted certain theses of Husserl's semantics. It is seen in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's linguistic and semiotic works, as he – according to himself – followed the path of Husserl, according to his 1930s works, scantily recognized at the time. However, simultaneously, he applied the investigative instruments of structuralism, analyzing various forms of verbal and visual messages. Merleau-Ponty would not declare himself as a "structuralist", and he applied the term "structure", primarily, in order to describe the internal structures of being and sign representation (see his early work titled *The Structure of Behavior*[19]). However, in the 1950s Saussure's theses allowed him to critically examine Husserl's semantics. Merleau-Ponty employed research measures, excluding the utterances of colloquial language, and with particular emphasis on artistic utterances (literature, particularly poetry – similar to Martin Heidegger's theses of the time – derived directly from everyday language use), drawn from the field of Husserl's essentialist semantics. Merleau-Ponty, in a manner of speaking, followed Husserl's footsteps on that matter, but, moreover, he reduced Husserl's semantic consideration not to logical propositions *sensu largo*, but to mathematical propositions: to algorithms of algebra and geometry. Additionally, he adopted the assumptions on a mixed account – both natural and conventional – of the character of the sign of language.

One may find the renewed theses of phenomenology in this particular assumption, as both the mental content and its corporal expression in the form of a corporeal gesture of an embodied, incarnated subject (body-subject) is considered by Merleau-Ponty as a kind of a natural sign – an indication of that which manifests itself. In Merleau-Ponty's speculation pertaining to language, sign and meaning, one may primarily find two sources of inspiration – Husserl's essentialist semantics and Saussure's nominalist linguistic theses. Merleau-Ponty attempted to combine both separate, differing conceptions; primarily in the works contained in the *Signs*[20] (1960) volume and in the *The Prose of the Wolrd*[21] collected works (1969). The indication of transcendental speech (internal and mental) as a condition for empirical language (executed socially and individually within the context of a given culture and its convention), serves the purpose of accomplishing such a difficult combination. The conception of transcendental, subjective and internalized speech, draws upon the issues of Husserl's formal and transcendental logic, particularly, upon his essentialist semantics. The theses concerning empirical language, in other words the language of everyday communication within social and cultural inter-subjectivity, are based on the assumptions adopted from Saussure's linguistics. One must remember that at the turn of the 1940s and the 1950s, Merleau-Ponty would prepare and give lectures on Saussure's conceptions.

According to the French philosopher, the hidden sense, revealed and expressed in the form of "meaning" always determined culturally and socially, is the object of manifestation. Therefore, Merleau-Ponty adopts an assumption concerning the primary character of the semantic source, however, it is not an ideal meaning (*Bedeutung*), but a sense, which was comparable to meaning in the *Logical Investigations*. One must add that Husserl linked sense (*Sinn*) primarily with object-sense and its constitution. *Sinn* is always individual, however

19) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden Fisher, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963 [1942]).

20) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. Richard McCleary, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

21) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, trans. John O'Neill (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

in the aspect of an anthropologically universal, genetic supra-individual (in transcendental and, particularly, genetic phenomenology). However, Merleau-Ponty expanded his conception of sense in the final section of his *Phenomenology of Perception*, where, for the first time, *a distinction is made between a source, inaccessible sense, and its expression in the form of a "sense effect."*[22] Later on, the French philosopher would develop this idea in his notes (published in the book *The Visible and the Invisible*[23]), – and even further, we find it in the conception of sense, interpretation, and the "sense effect" of Gilles Deleuze.

Deleuze, referring to structuralism but opposing phenomenological solutions (in favor of a transcendent and transcendental, in Kantian terms, empiricism), argues against Husserl's semantics, updating the assumptions and theses of essentialism. One should stress that it was Deleuze who, as the first successor of structuralism, presented a dynamic conception of structure in a coherent manner – of a structure in motion, submitted to change in time, instead of a static structure, as in both Ferdinand de Saussure's and Claude Lévi-Strauss's conceptions. In his 1967 work titled *À quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?*[24], he would define such a particular type of structure. Simultaneously, Jacques Derrida would publish his theses concerning "*différance*" as an alleged principle of structuration (and not static struck structure) – the continual generation of structure.

The Semantic Contextualism of Late Structuralism *versus* the Essentialism of Husserl's Semantics – "Constructed Essentialism"?

One should keep in mind that the conceptions of structure, both internal and relational, and external, were reinterpreted within the categories of constructivism – as a form of construction. In the Neo-Kantian investigations, the conception of schematic construction and of the redefined Kantian schematism was the focal point concerning such an understanding of structure. Structure, as defined by Ferdinand de Saussure, would refer to cultural and social conventions – contracts, that, in late structuralism, would be referred to as context. On the other hand, the investigative standpoints that would assume the determinants of cultural conventions and their related relativization would be defined as social and cultural "contextualism". Therefore, the investigative positions shifted – *from the conventionalism of early structuralism to the contextualism of late structuralism* (post-structuralism), emphasizing the aspect of relativism and the arbitrariness of both individual practices, as well as the shaping of normativity – the rules and models of action and of evaluation thereof. The shift towards contextualism is clearly visible in the works of late structuralism from the 1960s, particularly in Jacques Derrida (the conception of "*différance*", *la différance*) and Michel Foucault. The mutability of meaning and the relativization of its understanding, related to an openness to interpretation, was related to the pragmatic conception of meaning, which indicated the dependence of the meaning of a sign (particularly in its sound and written form)on individual executions, on the use of a language by individual users.

The *pragmatic conception of meaning* may be recognized within Foucault's theses from the 1960s (*The Order of Things*[25] and *The Archeology of Knowledge*[26]). However, his references to phenomenology would focus more on

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22) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (New York: Routledge, 2012).

23) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

24) Gilles Deleuze, *À quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?*, in *Histoire de la philosophie. Idées, doctrines*, vol. VIII, *Le XXe siècle*, ed. François Châtelet (Paris: Hachette, 1972–1973); reprinted in: Gilles Deleuze, *L'Île déserte. Textes et entretiens 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade (Paris: Minuit, 2002), 238–269.

25) Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1973).

26) Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

the theses of Martin Heidegger's existential phenomenology (particularly the thesis concerning being-in-the-world of *Dasein*), rather than on Edmund Husserl's essential phenomenology. Jean-François Lyotard, however, would refer to Husserlian phenomenology in his early investigations from the 1950s.[27] His parallel interest in structuralism, as well as in John L. Austin's theory of performative speech acts[28], allowed for his own theses regarding various semiotic aspects and semantics of language (*The Differend*[29]), and to combine the assumptions of these three investigative traditions. Therefore, language structures related to the aspects of language (i.a. descriptive, prescriptive and normative) refer to grammar rules, but additionally, to the semantic rules related to the theory of logical propositions. It is exactly in this conception, where one may find inspiration from Husserl's early theses taken from his *Logical Investigations*, along with the thesis on the empty semantic intention to be fulfilled by the language user, partially determined by the form of the proposition. The form of the judgment appears to be a certain constant determinant, related to the mental and cognitive equipment of the language user. This assumption leads to a certain kind of anthropological determinism, which, however, is not defined by Lyotard as "essential". This phenomenological inspiration is complemented by structuralist and pragmatic assumptions concerning the modification of the meaning of an individual term (word, language and expression) and of its changes.

Gilles Deleuze's semantic theses refer to essentialism directly, as he considers sign to be a certain form of a hidden sense, which "expands" during the interpretation of the sign, as sense is "implicated", and "explicated" in interpretation. However, the references to phenomenology are of secondary importance in comparison with the references to John Locke's phenomenal empiricism, and, particularly, to David Hume's phenomenalism and sensualism. Transcendental themes are to be traced back to Immanuel Kant's philosophy and, as such, mediated only by Edmund Husserl's phenomenology – are revealed in Deleuze's philosophy. Michał Herer writes that Deleuze is,

> moving around an area reserved for the followers of the Kantian-Husserlian paradigm. His theory or the "logic" of sense, is an attempt at accomplishing a non-critical analysis, i.e. one that does come from different assumptions, and, at the starting point, creates an entirely different overview of the examined discipline. At the most general level, the issue remains unchanged: to explain the mechanism of sense as a mechanism of the appearance of phenomena.[30]

However, Deleuze's "transcendental empiricism" and his "logic of sense is to lead beyond phenomenology and the classical transcendental philosophy,"[31] and,

> in order to avoid typical "platonism", the philosopher, in order to realise the sense effect, must invent some new conception of the ideal, the non-corporeal. Deleuze's first step, as he decided to take this particular path, consists of applying the prepared "structuralist categories" to the field of sense. Sense should be that, which is expressed in the motion of each explication or actualisation – the pure virtual.[32]

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27) Jean-François Lyotard, *Phenomenology*, trans. Brian Beakley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

28) John L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, Second Edition, ed. James O. Urmson and Marina Sbisá (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

29) Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

30) Michał Herer, *Gilles Deleuze. Struktury – maszyny – kreacje* (Kraków: Universitas, 2006), 77.

31) Ibid.

32) Ibid., 78.

The issue at hand is not universal sense, but "an actual sense, which one must extract," and which "regards to what actually occurs, and may be apprehended exclusively in a particular clause."[33] However, it can be reduced neither to structure, nor to the meaning of a sentence.

Therefore, Deleuze in his book titled *The Logic of Sense*[34] indicates two semantic terms: sense and meaning, however – differently from Maurice Merleau-Ponty – he establishes strictly logical speculation as the initial point, cross-referring the two aforementioned categories with logical propositions. Taking such an investigative path, Deleuze follows Husserl, as well as Gottlob Frege, as he combines the categories of sense and meaning with the logical proposition value (true – false). Additionally, in his many works, Deleuze accepts concept – both as mental content, and as an element of a logical proposition – as the culmination of philosophy which establishes empirical cognition as its initial point, and he calls this view "transcendent empiricism"[35], as we, in cognition, exceed beyond empirical data towards the concept.

One must underline that Deleuze simultaneously ties his conception of sense with the sign aspect and the character of various kinds of messages, and does so with a particular example, along with a careful analyses, in his work titled *Proust and Signs.*[36] There, Deleuze proposes his own conception of sign, exceeding the distinctions between verbal and visual signs, natural and conventional signs, and referring to the specifics of communicational use. Deleuze indicates three types of signs, with the last type divided into two subgroups. These are, the "worldly" signs (cultural representations, as an acknowledgement of the universality of meanings), signs of "love" being a specific type of the signs of dialogue (used for the communicational contract between partners), and "sensuous" signs (mental representations of perception data), expressed in the signs of art, or, in other words, signs as communicated in works of art. Therefore, they again enter the area of objectivity in widely prevalent "worldly" signs.

Here, Deleuze discusses the relations between sign and cognition, truth and work: "Learning is essentially concerned with signs. Signs are the object of a temporal apprenticeship, not of an abstract knowledge. To learn is first of all to consider a substance, an object, a being as if it emitted signs to be deciphered, interpreted."[37] The above words contain Deleuze's semiotic and semantic assumptions – he considered not verbal or visual signs, but the sign character of the world of nature and of the world of culture, created by men. His conception of sign considers as secondary the possibility of investigating the logical proposition as a certain semiotic structure. Instead of postulating it, however, he articulates logical propositions as vessels containing sense and meaning.

The conception of logical propositions and of the term containing a mental concept as primarily sign-based, semiotic – as postulated by Ockham and also assumed by Husserl in his *Logical Investigations* – should remain minor and secondary in comparison to the sign-based nature of the world and being. By adopting such an assumption, *Deleuze ventures beyond both Husserl's semantics and Saussure's semiotics* – semiotics focused on examining the signs of colloquial language. However, "what forces us to think is the sign. The sign is the object of an encounter, but it is precisely the contingency of the encounter that guarantees the necessity of what it leads us to think."[38] Deleuze writes: "Vocation is always predestination with regard to signs. Everything that teaches

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33) Ibid.

34) Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

35) Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

36) Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

37) Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, 4.

38) Ibid., 97.

us something emits signs; every act of learning is an interpretation of signs."[39] "Implication and explication, envelopment and development," are categories related to the extraction of sense from signs, along with their hidden Essence. "First of all, meaning is implicated in the sign; it is like one thing wrapped within another... For the sign develops, uncoils at the same time that it is interpreted."[40] Additionally: "Meaning itself is identified with this development of the sign as the sign was identified with the involution of meaning. So that Essence is finally the third term that dominates the other two, that presides over their movement: Essence complicates the sign and the meaning; it holds them in complication; it puts the one in the other."[41] Moreover, "there are only meanings implicated in signs; and if thought has the power to explicate the sign, to develop it in an Idea, this is because the Idea is already there in the sign, in the enveloped and involuted state, in the obscure state of what forces us to think."[42] Therefore, "Idea", as the content of thought, is located within the sign as the possibility of thinking, reaching sense due to the interpretative explication of the sign.

It is exactly Deleuze's conception of sign and its sense, as well as the "sense effect" (as a manifestation of sense), where one may recognize his complicated mixture of semantic essentialism and contextualism. Deleuze, as it seems, was aware that the sense, uncovered in his "explicated" interpretation, is revealed to us, depending on the construction of our own interpretation, and as such – it is dependent on the cognitive constructs of the subject and the cultural context – *it appears essential, but is constructed in its explication*.

In terms of Jacques Lacan's theory of sign,[43] along with the redefined categories of *signifié* and *signifiant*, as well as with the highlighted determinant role of the signifier – material, therefore, more lasting than the signified – three contexts of semiotic and semantic conclusions appear: "the Real," "the Symbolic" and "the Imaginary." The role of the imagination and the imagined in regard to Lacan's semantics – semantics with the *signifiant* determinant – departs from how the above mentioned were perceived in, among others, the philosophical tradition of the early modern period, in particular by René Descartes and Kant. It appears closer to colloquial associations of imagination and irrationality, and appears to be inspired by Husserl's conception of fantasy – fantasy as the supra-conscious (along with his conception of the imagination as a certain cognitive power). Marc Richir indicates,[44] both in Merleau-Ponty and in Lacan, "an entirely new type of 'eidetic' related to the 'worldly'" – with *qualia*, described by the Husserlian term *Wesen*, reformulated and slightly modified: "where the worldly beings or *qualia* (*Wesen*) come into play as 'rays' of time and world."[45] Essential *qualia*, taken as such, Lacan combines with the category of the Symbolic – it is named, but its meaning exceeds the plane of abstraction. "It is a being, both a unique, complex, perceptible quality, and the virtually autonomous power to radiate, whose being in the active or verbal sense *(Wesen)* owes nothing to the symbolic power of naming,"[46] which is expressed in the *signifiant* aspect of the sign. Lacan locates semantic essentialism – assumed and pursued within the sign of language – within the symbolic plane, and explains its establishment and construction using anthropological features.

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39) Ibid., 4.

40) Ibid., 89–90.

41) Ibid., 90.

42) Ibid., 97.

43) Jacques Lacan, *Usage de la parole et des structures de langage dans la conduite et dans le champ de la psychoanalyse* (Paris: PUF, 1956).

44) Marc Richir, "The Phenomenological Status of the Lacanian Signifier," *Analysis*, no. 1 (1989): 150–164.

45) Ibid., 158.

46) Ibid.

Derrida's Polemics Against Husserl's Semantics – the Context of Language and the Essence of Meaning

The initial point of Jacques Derrida's speculation, referring to the semantic theses of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, and referring to structuralism, is the recognition of the alleged "transcendental signified", in other words, the *signatum, signifié* – the meaning of a term as mental content of the user of a natural language – submitted to certain idealization, within the theses postulated by Ferdinand de Saussure (along with his successors). In his work titled *Writing and Difference*, Derrida presents a critique of the linguistic and semiotic theses of structuralism, indicating their internal incoherence and inconsistencies.[47] Primarily, it applies to the ambiguous investigative stance, which, as declared, becomes a nominalism regarding the theory of concept. Derrida, however (as well as other contemporary commentators on Saussure's conception), recognizes within those theses, presupposed essentialist assumptions concerning the assumed *meaning submitted to idealization*. According to Derrida, this *idealized signified* – in other words, the meaning of the term of the sign as a certain mental content – should be regarded as transcendental. The sign has its source and validity within the internal structure of transcendental subjectivity (transcendental ego). Simultaneously, Derrida adopts Husserl's understanding of time, as that which is constituted (the conception of internal time consciousness and its constitution). However, he places its constitution, not within the Husserlian internal consciousness, but in "writing" as that which belongs to intersubjectivity – as an intersubjective instrument of communication created culturally and socially. Edmund Husserl's phenomenology remains the point of reference for Derrida's complicated argument, as Husserl's works from the 1930s contained the understanding of intersubjectivity (intersubjective *Lebenswelt* juxtaposed and distinguished from the "world of the natural attitude") as collectively created by particular subjectivities, and transcendentally determined by structures of subjectivity as a "transcendental intersubjectivity". Derrida, in his argument concerning the role of writing, remains within the scope of Husserlian phenomenology, exactly in reference to such a conception of intersubjectivity as transcendental.

Another point of reference for the polemics, and simultaneously, a source of inspiration, is *Husserl's genetic phenomenology*, as well as his conception of historicity, contained in the commentaries to the *Origin of Geometry*.[48] Therefore, one may say that Derrida's references to Husserl's phenomenology are multifaceted. However, the theme of this article is on the issue of Derrida's polemics and commentaries. Derrida highlights the Husserlian location of the aspects of logical propositions within the field of colloquial language and the inclusion of grammar. Moreover, in his interpretation, Derrida underlines the insufficiently consistent "logocentrism" of the Husserlian theses:

> And, as Fink has indeed shown, Husserl never posed the question of the transcendental *logos*, of the inherited language in which phenomenology produces and exhibits the results of the workings of the reduction. The unity between ordinary language (or the language of traditional metaphysics) and the language of phenomenology is never broken despite all the precautions, quotation marks, renovations and innovations. The transformation of a traditional concept into an indicative or metaphorical concept does not absolve the heritage; it imposes questions which Husserl has never attempted to answer. This is due to the fact that, on the other hand, by being interested in language only within the horizon of rationality, by determining the *logos* on the basis of logic, Husserl has in fact, and in

47) Derrida, *'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology*, 193–211.

48) Edmund Husserl, *The Origin of Geometry*, trans. David Carr, in *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*; with an introduction by Jacques Derrida, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 155–180.

a traditional way, determined the essence of language by starting from logicity as the normalcy of its *telos*. What we would like to suggest here is that this *telos* is the *telos* of being as presence.[49]

Marc Richir proceeds accordingly,[50] as he does not sufficiently distinguish the theses from *Logical Investigations*, partially functionalist, from the consequent semantic idealism from *Ideas*. Furthermore, Richir places Husserlian rules of pure logic within the categories of discourse. Therefore, colloquial, everyday communication, as a certain practice of language, results in a certain "idealization" of meaning. Richir describes the idealist approach towards meaning, contained in *Logical Investiagtions*. However, he does not indicate the elements of the semantic functionalism present, and does not highlight the semantic idealism, as declared in *Ideen*. Both Derrida and Richir apply structuralist categories, as well as pragmatic categories, combining meaning with a socially and culturally defined practice of language, to the Husserlian conception of pure logic and its meanings. Additionally, in his analyses, Derrida relates the Husserlian issues concerning logical propositions, to the issues of discourse and its various forms:

> In this way, it will be very quickly confirmed that, for Husserl, the expressivity of the expression – which always assumes the ideality of a *Bedeutung* – has an irreducible link to the possibility of spoken discourse (*Rede*). Expression is a purely linguistic sign and, in the first analysis, this is precisely what distinguishes it from indication. Although spoken discourse is a very complex structure, involving always, *in fact,* an indicative layer which, as we shall see, we shall have the greatest trouble trying to hold within its limits, Husserl reserves for it the exclusivity of the right to expression and therefore the exclusivity of pure logicity. Without violating Husserl's intention, one could define, if not translate, "bedeuten" by "vouloir-dire" at once in the sense of a speaking subject that *wants to say,* "expressing himself," as Husserl says, "about something" – and in the sense of an expression that *means*. We can then be assured that the *Bedeutung* is always *what* someone or a discourse *means "veulent dire"*: always a sense of discourse, a discursive content.[51]

Therefore, *Husserl's semantic idealism appears to be a construction of the practices of language, and the idealized meaning would be defined contextually*. In the *Voice and Phenomenon*, Derrida refers to the unifying context of the practices of language, to investigate the Husserlian conception of sign. Therefore, he does not separate sign from term of language, but – similar to investigators dealing with semiotics after William of Ockham – considers the logical proposition in its various forms, as an assortment of signs (particularly general name, that is the subject of logical propositions as signs) or as a compound sign. This assumption allows Derrida to reconstruct, on the basis of the content of *Logische Untersuchungen*, and *Ideen*, the Husserlian conception of sign along with the idea of the "internal sign", a mental sign, which had already been considered by the scholastic investigators. Derrida writes:

> Now the First *Logical Investigation* (*Ausdruck und Bedeutung*) opens with a chapter devoted to the "essential distinctions" that rigorously order all the later analyses. And the coherence of this chapter owes everything to a distinction that is proposed in the first paragraph: the word "sign"

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49) Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon*, 7.

50) Cf. Marc Richir, "Le problème de la logique pure. De Husserl à une nouvelle position phénoménologique," *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, Quatrième série 82, no. 56 (1984): 500–522, https://doi.org/10.3406/phlou.1984.6315.

51) Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon*, 15–16.

(*Zeichen*) would have a "double sense" (*ein Doppelsinn*). The sign "sign" can mean "expression" (*Ausdruck*) or "indication" (*Anzeichen*)."[52]

Derrida presents himself with the following task:

> Therefore what would be at issue, on the basis of the privileged example of the sign, will be to see the phenomenological critique of metaphysics announce itself as a moment within the security that metaphysics provides. Better, what would be at issue will be to begin to verify that the resource of the phenomenological critique is the metaphysical project itself, in its historical completion and in the purity of its origin albeit restored.[53]

Additionally, Derrida attempts to reveal, according to Husserl's intentions, the *relations between logic and grammar*:

> Thus, for example, when what is at issue is the redefinition of the relation between pure grammar and pure logic (a relation that traditional logic would have missed, since it was perverted by metaphysical presuppositions), when what is at issue therefore is the constitution of a pure morphology of *Bedeutungen…*, the re-apprehension of pure grammaticality, the system of rules that allow us to recognize whether a discourse in general is really a discourse – if it makes *sense* or if falsehood or the absurdity of contradiction (*Widersinnigkeit*) do not make it incomprehensible and do not deprive it of the quality of meaningful discourse, do not render it *sinnlos* – then the pure generality of this meta-empirical grammar does not cover the whole field of the possibility of language in general; it does not exhaust the whole extent of the *a priori* of language. The pure generality of the meta-empirical grammar concerns only the *logical a priori* of language; it *is pure logical grammar.* This restriction is functioning from the beginning."[54]

Already in the theses contained in *Logical Investigations*, Derrida recognizes Husserl's assumptions, known from his later works, concerning life and the aspect of life (*Lebenswelt*):

> First, it is necessary to pass through the problem of language. We shall not be surprised to discover that language is really the medium of this play of presence and absence. Is it not in language, is not language first of all the very thing in which *life* and *ideality* could seem to be united? Now, we must consider *on the one hand* that the element of signification – or the substance of expression – which seems best to preserve at once ideality and living presence in all of its forms, is living speech, the spirituality of the breath as *phone.* On the other hand, we must consider that phenomenology, the metaphysics of presence in the form of ideality, is also a philosophy of *life*. It is a philosophy of life not only because, in its center, death is recognized as having nothing but an empirical and extrinsic signification, the signification of mundane accident, but also because the source of sense in general is always determined as the act of a thing that lives, as the act of a living being, as *Lebendigkeit*.[55]

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52) Ibid., 3.

53) Ibid., 4–5.

54) Ibid., 7.

55) Ibid., 8–9.

This is further developed in the Husserlian approach towards *Lebenswelt*.

The Husserlian concept of sign leads Derrida beyond semantic speculation, undertaken in a strictly logical and linguistic context: "*What therefore is a sign in general?* For many reasons, our ambition is not to answer this question. We only want to suggest the sense in which Husserl may seem to evade it. 'Every sign is a sign for something.'"[56] Simultaneously, Derrida introduces this speculation to an area sporadically linked to the issues of Husserl's semantics, and before his speculation regarding intersubjectivity – the area of "life":

> When empirical life or even the pure region of the psychical are bracketed, what Husserl discovers is still a transcendental *life* or in the last analysis the transcendentality of a *living* present – and Husserl thematizes it without so much as posing the question of this unity of the concept of *life.* "Consciousness without a soul" (*seelenloses*), whose essential possibility is presented in *Ideas I …*, is still a *living* transcendental consciousness.[57]

Derrida argues:

> By exploiting all of its resources with the greatest critical refinement, Husserl will radicalize the necessary privilege of the *phone* which is implied by the entire history of metaphysics. For Husserl will not recognize an originative affinity with the *logos* in general in the sonorous substance or in the physical voice, or in the body of the voice in the world; rather the originative affinity will be recognized in the phenomenological voice, in the voice in its transcendental flesh, in the breath, in intentional animation which transforms the body of the word into flesh, which turns the *Körper into Leib*, a *geistige Leiblichkeit.* The phenomenological voice would be this spiritual flesh which continues to speak and to be present to itself – *to hear itself* – in the absence of the world. Of course, what we grant to the voice is granted to the language of *words*, to a language constituted from unities – which we could believe irreducible and indecomposable – welding the signified concept onto the signifying "phonic complex." Despite the vigilance of the description, a perhaps naive treatment of the concept of "word" has no doubt failed to resolve in phenomenology the tension between its two major motives: the purity of formalism and the radicality of intuitionism.[58]

One could say that Derrida's polemics are aimed against Husserl's essential assumptions, as well as with his conception of meaning, related to the eidetic recognition and cognition of the objects of logic, mathematics and geometry as ideal or transcendental objects. Derrida's views, in regard to his polemic against Husserl's semantics, were mostly influenced by his original conception of language and sign, writing and text, concerning colloquial language, and various practices of language, instead of logical propositions. Therefore, Derrida carries speculation regarding ideal meaning over to the area of colloquial language. However, he simultaneously exceeds beyond the colloquial understanding of language, supplementing speculation with inspiration drawn from Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas*. He repeats the argument, often present within late structuralism, that the arbitrary nature of particular executions of language affects meaning and impedes reference to the transcendental argument in general. However, it allowed one to employ empirical and functional arguments.[59]

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56) Ibid., 20.

57) Ibid., 9.

58) Ibid., 14.

59) Ibid., 17: "The difference between indication and expression appears very quickly, over the course of the description, as a difference

In other words, it allowed for cultural and social context, conventions as accepted rules, that partially limit the arbitrariness within the boundaries of a given language. Derrida somewhat depreciates the ideal character of *Bedeutung*, for example, by reducing the German term to the French "*vouloir-dire*" expression, which would allow for the comprehension of the meaning of the aforementioned term (the meaning of a term for meaning). Derrida's other proposal was the attempt to define Husserlian ideality using the term "transcendental signified", partially borrowed from Saussure's vocabulary. The "transcendental signified" would define a mental, ideal content that would reflect the content of a term accordingly, a term which has its material basis, that is, the signifier. The reduction of Saussure's *signifiant*, *signans*, to a material aspect of a sign was quite typical for late structuralism (including Jacques Lacan), however unfounded it is in regard to Saussure's theses.

Derrida omits the assumptions of Husserl's realism concerning the theory of concept, and attempts to define Husserlian reality using the word "life". He notes that the category of life would inevitably lead Husserl from the materiality of the external world to the transcendental aspect of subjectivity, the interiority of ego, the subjectivity. In his polemics against Husserl, Derrida argues:

> It is true, that the scope of the phenomenological concept of "sense" at first seems much broader, significantly less defined. Even the recognition of its limits seems difficult. All experience is an experience of sense (*Sinn*). Everything that appears in consciousness, everything that is available to consciousness in general, is sense. Sense is the phenomenality of the phenomenon. In his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl rejected Frege's distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. Later, this distinction proved useful to him... to mark the distinction between sense and its most general range (*Sinn*), and sense as an object of logical or language utterance, sense as "*Bedeutung*".... In order to isolate sense (*Sinn* or *Bedeutung*) from utterances or semantic intention (*Bedeutung-Intention*), which "enlivens" utterances, Husserl required a strict distinction between the signifier (the sensual), which he considered to be primary, however excluded it from his logical-grammatical speculation, and the signified sense (intelligible, ideal, "spiritual")…. This way, "sense" – either "signified" or "expressed", or not, "interwoven" or not, with the process of meaning – is an intelligible or spiritual ideality, which, at best, may connect with the sensual aspect of *signifiant*, despite there being no reason for it. The presence of such ideality, sense or the essence of sense is conceivable beyond that connection, when a phenomenologist, just as the semiotician, refers to the pure unity, to a strictly identifiable aspect of sense or *signifié*.[60]

Derrida adopts *Husserl's phenomenological conception of semantic intention as empty intention*, that may be fulfilled individually by the user of a language:

> The norm is knowledge, the intuition that is adequate to its object, the evidence that is not only distinct but "clear": the full presence of the sense to a consciousness that is itself present to itself

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that is more *functional* than *substantial*. Indication and expression are functions or signifying relations and not terms. One and the same phenomenon can be apprehended as expression or as indication, as a discursive sign or as a non-discursive sign. That depends on the intentional lived-experience that animates it. The functional character of the description immediately shows the extent of the difficulty and gets us right to its center. Two functions can be interwoven or entangled in the same concatenation of signs, in the same signification."

60) Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Paris: Editions Minuit, 1972), 42–43, part *Sémiologie et grammatologie: entretien avec Julia Kristeva*; cf. the English translation: Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), part *Semiology and Grammatology: Interview with Julia Kristeva*, 15–36, and note 1, p. 98.

in the fullness of its life, in the fullness of its living present. Also, without overlooking the rigor and the audacity of the "pure logical grammar," without forgetting the advantages that it can offer if we compare it to the classical projects of rational grammar, it is indeed necessary to acknowledge that its "formality" is limited. We could say as much about the pure morphology of *judgments,* which, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic,* determines the pure logical grammar or pure morphology of *significations.* The purification of the formal is regulated according to a concept of *sense* that is itself determined on the basis of a *relation to the object.* The form is always the form of a sense, and the sense is open only in the epistemological intentionality of the relation to an object. The form is only the empty, pure intention of this intentionality. Perhaps no project of pure grammar escapes it, perhaps the *telos* of epistemological rationality is the irreducible origin of the idea of pure grammar, perhaps the semantic theme, as "empty" as it is, always limits the formalist project. Always in Husserl, the transcendental intuitionism weighs very heavily on the formalist theme.[61]

However, Derrida applies the conception of empty semantic intention primarily to the practices of the users of the signs of "writing", therefore, to signs of culture that are repetitive and submitted to reproduction. Reference to Husserl's thesis, regarding the empty semantic intention submitted to fulfilling, allows Derrida to expand on the semiotic and semantic theses of late structuralism, which would increasingly depart from the assumptions of functionalism, and from the idealization of meaning, in favor of pragmatic conceptions.

Conclusion – Realism *versus* Moderate Nominalism

One must note that part of the structuralist polemics against Edmund Husserl's position resulted from ascribing to his semantics theses concerning colloquial language, whereas his semantic conception is finally dedicated to the structures of logical propositions. Although, according to Husserl, colloquial language and reasoning constitute a certain core, from which we emerge and where we return while formulating logical propositions, the semantic order of logic regards structures different from those discussed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Lévi-Strauss.

As previously mentioned, Saussure considered the entire system of language (*langue*) of a given natural language as an assortment of certain rules, present and executed within various languages (within the scope of Indo-European languages). The rules vary depending on a particular language, however they occur universally – they are executed in an empirically varying manner. However, the common source of the systemic arrangement and its rules remain indeterminate. The above mentioned universal character of the rules in motion directs attention to their essential origin, motivating meanings due to the motivation of structurally conceived conventions–contracts. However, the empirically varied character of particular executions encourages interpreters to examine structuralist semantics within the context of semantic pragmatism. Both interpretations refer to the sources of inspiration of Saussure's successors, and their structuralist theses (from the 1950s) – to Husserl's essentialist semantics and the pragmatically conceived semantics of Ludwig Wittgenstein and John L. Austin. Simultaneously, structure was presented as a type of schematic construction within the context of a redefined Kantian schematism. However, *the late structuralist conceptions exceed beyond these simple distinctions: Husserl's essentialism and the realism in regard to the theory of concept, and Saussure's nominalism, reduced, by some of his successors, to semantic pragmatism* (e.g. Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard). Eventually, it seems that

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61) Jacques Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon,* 84.

their position in the critique of Husserl's semantic theses, became a *moderate nominalism* with the indication of meaning, which in connotation, grasps certain subjective and objective features. The terms of a language are evoked along with meanings. A modification of terms and a change of meanings occurs simultaneously. The qualities indicated by meanings are located within beings – they are empirically and rationally recognized, and grasped structurally as mental contents, exactly due to the use of terms.

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