

Chapter Six. Meanings as Noemata: Husserl's Generalisation of Linguistic  
Meaning to the Field of All Acts

§ 26. Act-based vs. Language-based Theories of meaning.

Consider the following pair of expressions as uttered or understood by someone who is ignorant of modern European constitutional history:

- (a) 'the queen of England'
- (b) 'the queen of France'.

The two meanings which are involved are identical in form, each being constructed in the same way from primitive constituents the meanings of which are in turn identical in form. But despite this identity in form on the level of (act-)meaning there is clearly an important difference between the two expressions, and thus also between the two acts, when these are considered on the level of reference, since there is an object denoted by (a) but not by (b).

Parallel distinctions 'on the level of reference', of just this kind can be distinguished not only for speech acts, and for acts of understanding linguistic expressions, but for every variety of mental act. Associated with each 'successful' act of perception, for example, is a corresponding act of 'unsuccessful' quasi-perception or 'hallucination', together with a spectrum of hierarchically-ordered intervening acts, distinguished as having a greater or lesser degree of partial correctness when viewed from the point of view of corresponding referents (if any). And likewise each successful act of remembering has associated with it - as a mere possibility - a corresponding unsuccessful act of quasi-remembering, and also a series of intervening partially successful acts. Associated with each act of true judgment is an act of false judgment, and so on across the whole field of acts.

We shall consider in detail an act of perception of the (present) queen of England, which we 'associate' with an act of involuntary hallucination of a female monarch of roughly the same age and shape, who is given from the same

'side', in the same situation, and so on. These two acts have act-meanings which are identical in form in a sense quite parallel to the identity of form of the linguistic meanings considered above. And the acts differ in a way which corresponds precisely to the difference between the two expressions when the latter are viewed on the level of reference: the perceptual act, but not the hallucinatory act, being graced by the possession of a referent. Now the meaning of the former will coincide, in respect of some of its features, not only with (a) but with the meaning of any one of a range of corresponding expressions, say with the meaning of:

- (a<sub>α</sub>) 'the queen of England walking down Constitution Hill',
- (a<sub>αβ</sub>) 'the queen of England walking speedily down Constitution Hill',
- (a<sub>αβγ</sub>) 'the queen of England walking her dog speedily down Constitution Hill', and so on.

And similarly the meaning of the latter act can be brought into the same kind of 'featural coincidence' with the meaning of any one of a given range of suitably chosen non-denoting expressions, for example with any of:

- (b<sub>β</sub>) 'the queen of France walking up the Champs Élysées',
- (b<sub>βγ</sub>) 'the queen of France walking haughtily up the Champs Élysées', and so on.

An interesting question, though one which we have not space to consider here, has been raised by McIntyre and Woodruff Smith (see their 1971 and 1975) and interestingly developed by Hintikka (see his 1975a). This is the question whether or not it is possible to achieve total featural coincidence by means of some (in general highly complex) expression along the given lines. McIntyre and Woodruff Smith claim that total featural coincidence is at least in principle possible for all acts, and although the examples they give suggest that this would demand a radical extension of any known language, the question which they raise continues to have content to the extent that one insists that the extensions involved be coherent ones, relative to the types of linguistic machinery with which they are familiar. The lesson which the given authors draw from their argument is that given the expressibility of all noemata, the conceptually difficult study of noemata can be supplanted by the (simpler?) study of linguistic meanings. On this claim see my (adverse) comments in (A).

§27. Noematic theories.

It is possible to determine in a systematic way the parallels which exist between the meanings of linguistically carried acts and of, e.g., acts of perception. To achieve this end we shall indicate, first of all, the principle theses which were advanced concerning linguistic meanings in our discussion of Fregean semantics in Ch.1. These were :

(1) a sign or expression may be such that, although it has a sense it does not have a referent - both 'the red horse' and 'the blue horse' are meaningful in a given context even if, in that context, only a blue horse happens to be factually present or factually existent;

(2) the sense is not itself the referent of the sign but 'that in virtue of which the sign refers', or, to take account of cases where the sign lacks a referent, 'that in virtue of which the sign is directed'.

Arising out of (2) we have

(3) in virtue of its sense the sign refers from a particular perspective, the referent, if there is one, is given in a particular aspect or aspects (as a horse, as red, etc.), being given from a particular 'side' (not necessarily in a strictly geographical or spatial sense of this term). The reference 'is only one-sidedly lighted' by the sense (SuB,27), which means to say that sense does not lead to an 'all-sided knowledge of the reference' (S&R, 86). We might say that the sense determines the mode of access which is appropriate to the referent, or at least that it determines, for a given context, the boundary conditions on accessibility which would be relevant for that context; thus it will in general determine the kind of entity with which we are dealing, and it will sometimes determine the criterion of identity for that entity,

and (4) senses are 'objective' in that they are identical for all proficient users of the given language (SuB,27) who find themselves in an identical epistemological situation - where the identity which is demanded here is much stricter than that which would be acceptable to Frege. A crucial part of the training which leads to proficient use of a term consists in the correction of those who, as is evidenced by inappropriate use in given epist-

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emological contexts, have inadequately grasped the range of senses which can be associated with the term.

Now we can recognise immediately that there are corresponding theses which can be formulated for acts of perception (assuming that 'perception' is not interpreted in such a way as to be a 'success'-verb). In expressing these theses we shall make use of the term 'noema' which was introduced by Husserl as a technical designation for the sense or meaning of an act according to his generalised conception of 'sense'. The theses in question are then simply:

(1') that the perceptual act may be such that, although it possesses a noema, it lacks a referent;

(2') that the noema is not itself the referent (object) of the act - in fact noemata can never be perceived (or 'intuited'; see pp. 144f, 147f above) at all - it is rather that in virtue of which the act is directed to some point in the local perceptual space of the subject in question and thereby directed also, if the act is a successful one, to an object which occupies that point. We then say, in more familiar language, that the act is a perception of that object. It is a distinguishing feature of 'noematic theories' in general (and here we must include Frege's theory of sense and reference) that the noema allows access, in successful cases, to the objects themselves, and not to any 'representatives' or 'images' of inaccessible Dinge an sich;

(3') in virtue of the noema of an act of perception, we perceive the object of the act (if there is one) from a particular perspective, from a particular 'side', etc. Thus we see a whitish-grey patch against the sky as smoke rather than cloud; we see a distant stone structure as a tower rather than as a backless tower-facade; we 'see' an oasis in the desert (which isn't there at all) as palm-strewn rather than as spruce-strewn, etc.;

(4') the noema of the act is 'objective' in the sense that it is identical for all subjects who share the same 'perceptual framework', (a notion which is introduced by analogy with the notion of conceptual framework). Such a framework would be dependent, for example, upon the knowledge shared by members of a given community or culture, upon the nature

of, say, the colour spectrum within the community, upon the range of artefacts of particular kinds with which the culture is familiar, and so on. Note, however, how few are the consequences which we can draw from this 'objectivity' of perceptual noemata, since the conditions of identity of situation, of lighting conditions, of attentional attitude, of perceptual surroundings, and so on, which would have to be satisfied before perceptual noemata would coincide are so rarely satisfied. Again this does not imply that a theory of perceptual noemata is impossible, it merely points up the extent of the complexity which would characterise such a theory if it was to explain, e.g. how we come to experience the world as an objectively perceptible world.

Frege himself was not unaware of certain analogies between his sense-reference theory and aspects of the theory of perception (see SuB,30). They are analogies which can easily be extended to other fields, for example to acts of memory, and to emotional and volitional acts: I desire a [still hot, brown, edible, standard-sized, hen's, unopened, three-minute] boiled egg for breakfast, and each of the bracketed features is an actual or potential constituent of the full noema of the volitional act in question. Bare analogies are insufficient however. The requirement is that such analogies should be interpretable in such a way that they reveal something of the structure which is possessed by 'noemata' or 'meanings in general', in a way which would clarify the basis of the distinction between the category of meanings-in-general and the category of objects-in-general on which we have placed so much weight.

§ 28. Components of the noema of a simple intentional act.

The most immediate type of analysis of noemata which it is possible to make is an analysis of the (hierarchical) relationships between noemata, of the constants and variables which form the cognitive content of noemata and thereby determine particular hierarchies, and so on. (See Ch.1, esp. § 5). But such a relational analysis throws no light on the (ontological) position of noemata and of their relation to the cognitive acts in which they are actualised; indeed the relational analysis is consistent with a number of conflicting approaches to the ontology of noematic entities, including, for example, the approach which would identify noemata with equivalence classes of acts (cf. Thiel, 1972, p.40), or with properties of acts (see § 25(2) above). In order to demonstrate the inadequacy of such approaches it is necessary to provide an alternative positive ontological account of noemata which has greater explanatory power than have the accounts which they would yield. One way of achieving such an account is to provide a dissection of the noema into 'components', but here it is important to bear in mind that the noema as such is not a somehow efficient conglomerate of separate or separable parts. We are here referring to moments which may be abstracted, conceptually, from the noema itself, which is a compact articulated unity, which may even admit of more than one distinct dissection into components (corresponding to the massive complexity which is involved in even the simplest act of perception or of memory).

We shall begin this componental analysis by confining our attention to what Ingarden (LWA, § 20) calls a simple intentional act. Such acts are distinguished by the fact that they 'exhaust themselves' in the sense that there are no pre-established or higher-order simultaneously effected noemata which bear on the content of the given act. (Cf. p.32 above). And they are distinguished also as being acts whose referent position is held (or would be held if they were 'successful') by individual objects of the real world (apples, tables, people, etc.). Principally these will be acts of perception and variant acts such as acts of memory, of imagination, of hallucination, even the

constituent object-giving acts involved in the reading of linguistic description in a work of fiction or in a newspaper report. For a more complete picture which will enable us to deal with acts having other categories of entity as their referent (for example with acts of remembering that something-or-other, as well as with acts of remembering him, her, or it) extra refinements will have to be introduced in the section (28) which follows.

The major components which we can distinguish<sup>134</sup> in simple intentional act-noemata of the given type are as follows:

(1) the noematic sense (noematischer Sinn), which is identified as the intended 'object' as it is intended in the act (as der Gegenstand im wie seiner Bestimmtheiten) (Id, I, p.272). The use of 'object' here is the 'internal', i.e. non-ontological use discussed in § 21, (a use which will henceforth always be marked by the use of single quotation marks). Note that the noematic sense contains as constituents constant and variable determinations precisely correlated with the set of properties which the object of the act is intended as possessing, it includes actual and potential features corresponding to co-intended aspects of the setting in which the object is intended as existing, and so on;

(2) the 'filling' of the noema, that is to say those features of the intuitive phenomenal content of the act which are reflected on the level of meaning (see Føllesdal, 1969, 682, and 1974, §§ I, B and II, A). This component constitutes the difference between the noema of a true act of perception of, say, an apple, and that of an act of 'empty' thought (directed to one and the same apple). Various partially 'filled' acts can clearly be distinguished between these two extremes (hierarchically ordered, once again); for example when I half-remember the given apple as something experienced in the distant past, or when I see the apple, but only obscurely or from the half-light of my visual field;

(3) the 'thetic character' or 'moment of existential positing' (Setzungsmoment). This is a matter of how the object in the act is posited, either as a real object, as an imaginary object, as a co-present object of

perception, as a remembered object, and so on. Thus thetic character is a moment of the noema which depends upon the type of the act involved, as an act of perception, of imagination, and so on. Note, however, that as a component of the noema it cannot depend upon the character of the act as successful or non-successful (unless this itself forms part of the component of the act); the noema as such cannot contain reflections of any characters which pertain solely to the 'level of reference'.

We shall now spend some time considering each of the above in more detail.

(1) The noematic sense and its fulfilment.

To come to some more firmly based idea of the nature of the noematic sense of an act and of the way in which this component is distinguished from other noematic and non-noematic features of the act we may consider a series of simple intentional acts, all being given as directed to the same object from the same side and with the same characteristics, but differing in respect of their act-character (act-type). Thus we shall assume that there are not only acts of perception and of memory, but also acts of imagination, of involuntary hallucination, even acts of reading an appropriately worded text. The acts differ also in that some are intuitively 'filled', while others are empty intentions as, for example, in the case of acts whose content is determined solely on the basis of a linguistic description of the object in such a way that all subjectively imported intuitive data is rigidly excluded.

Now, we must ask ourselves, what is it which is common to all the acts? Clearly what is common cannot be anything having the status of a referent for any of the acts; for unless we confine ourselves to 'veridical' acts, of perception and of memory, there can be no autonomous referent; and a Holmes-type intentional referent requires some kind of linguistic structure to guarantee its identical accessibility, but such a structure is absent except in the case of acts of language-guided imagination. What all the acts do have in common however is an intended referent qua intended - and it is this intended 'referent', as a common character exhibited by all the acts in question

which we identify as the noematic sense projected by those acts.

It will be clear from the above that the noematic sense has something of the character of an abstract entity: as Husserl puts it, 'Senses are non-real entities, they are not entities that exist in time' ("Noema und Sinn", p.109, quoted by Føllesdal, 1969, p.684).<sup>135</sup> Most importantly the noematic sense - and all the other components of the noema - are radically to be distinguished from all intuitive phenomenal content which may be possessed by the corresponding act. Following Ingarden we may distinguish this intuitive act-content from the intentional act-content, i.e. in Husserlian terminology from the noematic sense (with its filling) of the relevant act.<sup>136</sup> Ingarden points out that the intentional act-content,

when it appears in its original form [that is to say in its function as the intentional content of an act], is not experienced by the subject nor even somehow given to him, but rather it is meant or executed and, in special cases, thought by the ego in that the ego lives in and lives through the intentional content. (StEW, II/1, 197, my emphasis).

It has been suggested by Føllesdal that the relation between relevant features of the temporally determined intuitive act content and the 'abstract' intentional act content is one of token to type, that is to say, the two are related as each and every printed or written letter A is related to the abstract entity which is the first letter of the Roman alphabet. (Cf. Føllesdal, 1974, p.99). There is much that is tempting in an analogy of this kind, although it may lie unacceptably close to Husserl's early LU theory of meanings as universals (related to subjective act-contents as particulars) which we have already had occasion to criticise above.<sup>137</sup>

Before we can discuss the second component of the noema of a simple intentional act, we must devote our attention to the kinds of experiential fulfilment - which occur on a level prior to the level of meaning of an act (e.g. on the level of gastronomic fulfilment) - to which the given component, of noematic 'filling', is crucially related. The distinction between the phenomenal data associated with an act and which contribute such fulfilment

and those properly noematic constituents of the act which form the meaning of the act was recognised even by Frege with his distinction between (subjective) presentations (Vorstellungen, ideas) and (objective) thoughts and senses in general; but Frege erred in regarding the crux of the distinction as being that between the intrinsic subjectivity (as he saw it) of the former, as opposed to the objectivity of the latter. The distinction rests rather on the presence or absence of articulation: a pure phenomenal datum (if such were obtainable) would be absolutely excluded from the level of meaning, in virtue of its being absolutely unarticulated. In contrast a wholly noematic entity (Føllesdal's abstract configuration) would be empty of all phenomenal data (cf. StEW, II/1, p.197). Normally, however, there is a give and take between the two levels which is crucial (e.g. at the level of the phenomenal grasp of the printed word) to the advance of thought; in this respect Frege was mistaken to assume an unüberbrückbare Kluft between the two.

The 'empty' configuration which is a pure noema becomes fulfilled, when the conscious subject experiences, at the same time as he executes the act, an intuitive (phenomenal) content which has its source in a dimension foreign to the act itself, but which is nevertheless taken up by the subject in such a way that it becomes the intuitive content of the act. Normally speaking the grasping of the given alien intuitive content is something which results in the presenting of a determinate object in the act. (This self-presentation of an object is indeed what the phenomenologist means by the 'fulfilment' of an act).

Perhaps an illustration of the kinds of intentions and fulfilments with which we are all unthematically acquainted in our everyday experience may help to clarify matters here. Take, for example, my thought about an uncle (u) whom I am due to meet for the first time tomorrow. It is conceivable that my expectation is the result of an elaborate hoax, that there is no uncle u and thus my thoughts are 'purely noematic' in the sense that they lack a referent. We shall assume, however, that my uncle really exists and thus that the noema of my acts are not required to maintain 'him' in being as an

'object' of deception (in the 'internal' non-ontological sense of 'object'). Since I have no intuitive experience of my uncle, we may assume that the noemata of my acts are completely unfulfilled.<sup>138</sup> Nonetheless what I know, non-intuitively, of my uncle will be carried by the noematic sense which is common to all the acts which are effected at any given stage. This noematic sense, the uncle-as-intended-by-me, will be the carrier both of those properties which are explicitly ascribed to u (I may know, for example, only that he is a domineering one-armed Norwegian), and also of such other properties as are merely potentially ascribed (possession of an alimentary tract, of ears, eyes, and so on), (Cf. pp. 30 of above). What is important is that the noematic sense is otherwise totally "bare"; it will not be determined, for example, whether it is the left or right arm which is missing; and u will be intended, potentially, as having eyes of some colour or other, but which colour will remain a variable element in the content of the noema. Thus the stock of properties is insufficient to determine an object which is 'ontologically complete' (see § 48 below). The noematic sense determines an object at all only in virtue of a higher level moment of the acts involved (the noematic 'pole'?), a moment which determines that my thought is not about this noema, but through the noema and onto my uncle himself. It follows that I am never aware of the attendant bareness as such - although I may clearly be aware of my lack of knowledge of my uncle.

When the time comes for my uncle to become experientially present, whether as a voice on a telephone or as a bald man shaking my hand in an airport lounge, then the noematic sense becomes, at last, fulfilled, the elements of fulfilment being precisely coordinated to my experience of the person who is before me, or who is speaking to me on the other end of a telephone line.

The dimension of intuitive, phenomenal fulfilment is to a great extent independent of the dimension in which properties or features are ascribed, in the noematic sense of the act, to the object involved. The former are not articulated, meant constituents of the act but 'raw material' out of which the latter may be, to an extent, articulated. Most importantly, on the basis

of the phenomenal data which I will experience on shaking hands with my uncle, the stock of properties (features), both actual and potential, built into my noematic sense will clearly undergo radical changes, both in 'quantity' and in 'quality'. It is these changes which we must now discuss.

(2) The 'Filling' or Intuitional Sense of a Simple Intentional Act.

The just mentioned additional features which are contributed to the noematic sense, or more precisely, to the concretely evolving sequence of noematic senses, involved in a given occasion of phenomenal or bodily experience of an object, together with the original features built into prior noematic senses for that object, will now be intuitively enlivened in a way quite alien to that which was the case before any experiential contact with the object had been made.<sup>139</sup> To take one example, my original intention of my hitherto unseen uncle as having red hair will give way, on the first occasion of our meeting, to an intention of him as having hair of this very shade of red. Now whilst an ascription of such an enlivened feature to an object may be accompanied by a phenomenal experience of the given shade (taste, smell, etc.) - either because the object is visually present or because it is possible for the given subject to recreate, in an act of memory, the phenomenal experience of that feature - nonetheless the intention of the object as having precisely this given feature is something which may also occur purely on the level of meaning. It is the class of such meaning-components, which are in normal cases motivated by and 'backed up' by corresponding phenomenal data, but which are to a large degree independent of the latter, which constitutes the noematic 'filling' of an act.

(3) The Thetic Character or Moment of Existential Positing.

This third component belongs to the content of the act in a different way from those components which belong, respectively, to the phenomenal and to the intentional act-content. For it is a component which is contributed by and which is a reflection of the mode of execution of the act. An act of perception, for example, may be carried out in the (natural) mode of unreserved

positing of the object which is perceived, that is, in such a way that the object of the act is posited as existing. But it may also be carried out in such a way that the existence of the initial object, say an edible apple, is brought into doubt - when the red sphere which had been seen from the distance as an apple, begins to take on the appearance of a tomato, - or it may indeed be fully cancelled - when the apple-tomato is bitten into and its tomato status is confirmed. It may also be carried out in such a way that the existence of the object is posited in a neutralised way, it is held to exist 'provisionally' as it were, as when a gorgon's head is imagined in the clouds above one's head.<sup>140</sup>

Closely related to these variations of mode of positing, which clearly have analogues in other experiential act-types, for example in acts of memory, are other moments that colour the object or objects experienced in various different 'meta-level' ways. For example, moments of love and hate, of positive and negative aesthetic or ethical value, moments of desire and non-desire, and so on. Such components are distinguished from first-level components which belong either to the phenomenal or to the intentional act-content in that, like the moment of existential positing, they are reflections of the mode of execution of the act and not of its content as such.

A typical noema of a mental act occurring in everyday experience will be neither purely perceptual nor purely conceptual (in the sense of 'linguistically expressed or expressible'). It will rather be a multi-dimensional configuration, involving volitional and emotional components, as well as components contributed 'horizontally' by the bodily experiences of the subject in question. (Cf. Id, I, § 95). This leads us on to the discussion of noemata not only of simple intentional acts but of acts in general, acts which have as their 'objects' (in the wide sense of 'object-in-general' - perhaps even in the widest sense of 'referent') not only real material objects but also, say, states of affairs, events, processes, and sometimes other noematic entities.



The component of existential characterisation did not reveal itself in our initial consideration of simple intentional acts, since by definition all such acts possess a common moment of existential characterisation: the 'objects' which they present are characterised, one and all, as real material objects. Once this constituent is distinguished however we can begin to see how to provide an analysis of variant types of individual object-giving acts. For example, acts of essence intuition are distinguished from simple intentional acts by the fact that the noematic sense of an eidetic act contains an existential characterisation of its 'object' as ideal, where the corresponding moment in a perceptual act yields a characterisation of the 'object' given in the act as real. Essences too, of course, may be posited as non-existent, e.g. in acts effected by those who abstain from commitment to essences; or they may be posited, as in the present work and in Spiegelberg, 1930, as quasi-ideal (see pp.50f and §21 above).

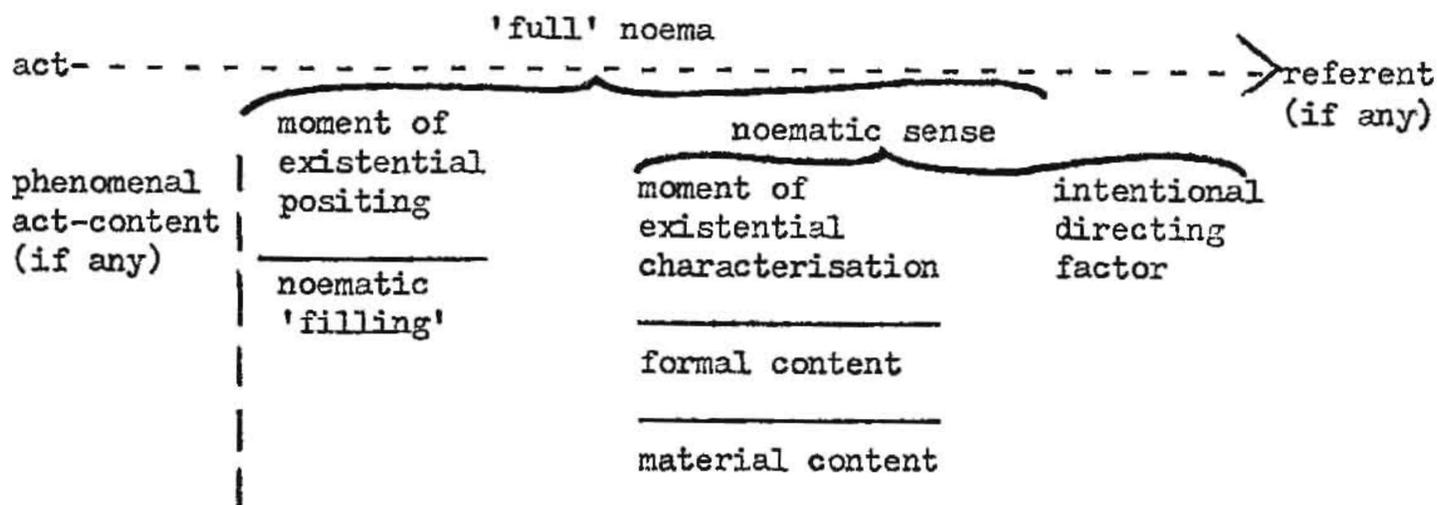
It seems that there are three interrelated axes of ontological variation:

- (i) the existential axis, which concerns variations in the mode of being which different entities possess (as real, ideal, quasi-real, quasi-ideal, etc.);
- (ii) the formal-ontological axis, which concerns variations of categorial status from entity to entity (entities are divided into individual objects, properties, states of affairs, noematic entities, etc.);
- (iii) the material-ontological axis, which concerns variations in qualitative constitution of entities (in the widest sense which is such as to encompass the 'matter' not only of real 'material' objects, but also of e.g. mathematical objects, even consciousness itself. (These three axes gave rise to Ingarden's division of ontology into existential, formal and material ontology, each discipline having its own relatively isolated sphere of problems, calling forth its own methods of solution. (See StEW, I, §9).

The existence of these three axes suggests how we can move closer to providing a completely general theory of act-noemata, namely by including, besides the moment of existential characterisation in the noematic sense of an act, parallel moments of formal and material 'characterisation'. (Ingarden himself developed a general theory of linguistic meaning along these lines as part of the comprehensive philosophy of language which forms the central section of

his study of The Literary Work of Art).

Our suggestion now is that an absolutely general analysis of all acts might be presented somewhat as follows:



The phenomenal act-content and the noematic 'filling' (intuitive sense) we have already discussed on pp. 179-84 above. We may briefly outline the nature of the remaining components here distinguished, as follows:

(a) The intentional directing factor. A given noema may give a single 'object', (a table, my brother's table in Smolensk, Holmes' favourite mahogany table, etc.). Or it may present more than one 'object' (all tables, all mahogany tables, these two tables, two new tables [as in 'my brother in Smolensk is thinking of buying two new tables'], etc.). In the former case we say that the noematic sense, and in particular its intentional directing factor, is single-rayed, in the latter case it is many-rayed. The intentional directing factor may either be constant; ('cadmium', 'Cicero', 'Holmes' are all expressions the noemata associated with which have intentional directing factors which are constant). Or variable; ('the Polish head of State', 'Carnap's whereabouts', 'the population of Germany', 'him', etc.). The intentional factor may be actually directed to some specific object-region or regions; ('these [given as co-present] apples', 'Baker Street', 'London', etc.). Or it may be merely potentially directed; ('some [arbitrarily desired] apples', 'wherever he is', 'some street or other').

Each of the axes of variation so far distinguished have been illustrated, in the main, for object-giving (simple) intentional acts. It is important

to note however that the same variations occur also with respect to acts of other types, for example to acts of predication. ('Identical with Ingarden', is a single-rayed predicate, i.e. noemata associated with it have intentional directing factors which are single-rayed). Similarly with regard to the noemata of acts giving ideal objects; ('some number or other' is an expression the noemata associated with which have single-rayed, variable, merely potentially directed intentional directing factors).

(b) The moment of existential characterisation.

An object-giving act presents its referent as existing, either really or ideally, as actually existing or as imaginary, as non-existent (purely intentional), as quasi-real, as quasi-ideal, etc.

(c) The formal content. We have already encountered a large number of formal-ontological distinctions in our work. The noema/object distinction is itself, we are suggesting, a formal-ontological distinction. And the distinctions amongst objects-in-general between objects themselves, properties (of objects), properties (of properties, etc.), relations (between objects), etc., states of affairs, events, processes, etc. are all formal-ontological in nature. Frege was partially correct in supposing that formal-ontological (for him: ontological) <sup>141</sup> distinctions were reflected in logico-grammatical distinctions amongst the expressions we use in our discourse concerning the world. Thus objects are correlated with nouns and noun-phrases (in general), properties are associated (in some highly complex way - see § 41 below) with predicates (adjectives and adjectival phrases), states of affairs are correlated with complete declarative sentences, events and processes are correlated with different types of verb and verb-phrase, and so on. Thus we can draw attention to the formal-ontological component of a given noema by considering the way in which different parts of speech may be used to characterise one and the same situation. For example, 'he is writing', 'what he is writing', 'that he is writing', 'he writes', 'the writing', all share, in a given context of application, a common material content, but

they (or rather the noematic senses associated with them in a particular pre-selected context of, say, watching Tolstoy as he writes) differ with regard to their formal content. In contrast the noematic senses associated with 'the cow', 'the horse', 'the sheep' all possess an identical formal content but differ in regard to their material content.

(d) The material content. We can now see that the material content corresponds to the qualitative constitution of the referent or referents for the acts considered precisely as the latter are presented in those acts. It may be possible to explicate this notion in terms of the metaphor of possible worlds as follows: Consider the noemata associated with the following two expressions, seriously intended: 'my new table', 'the table in the corner' which are assumed to have a common real referent (in the actual world). These two expressions differ in material content since there are possible worlds in which they do not share a common referent.

(e) The moment of existential position. Finally we can return to discuss this moment in more detail in the light of our consideration of acts other than simple object-giving acts. 'Sherlock Holmes' denotes an object that never existed nor will exist, yet which is characterised as real: it is ascribed the characteristic of being real. It is not however posited as real, except in the untypical circumstance that someone reads a Doyle novel as a work of fact. In normal circumstances **the referent of, say, 'Jehoshophat T. Holmes' or 'Winston S. Churchill' is** posited as really existent however. (In such circumstances the moment of existential position coincides with the moment of existential characterisation).<sup>142</sup>

These are brief remarks indeed; for further details the reader is referred to the works of Ingarden, especially LWA §§ 15-24, StEW, II/1, Chs. VII (for the delimitation of the notion of 'form' which is presupposed by the above), VIII (for an account of the form of the individual existentially autonomous object), XI (for an account of the form of the state of affairs (Sachverhalt)). (See also Riska, 1976, and Kung, 1972).

§ 30. Language-carried noemata : actualised meanings and canonical meanings.

We saw in §1 how the task of developing an ontology of meaning-entities ran the risk of an illegitimate hypostatisation of meanings. Hypostatisation of meanings as 'entities' was, we suggested, nothing more than a legitimate reflection of the fact that ontology as a science harmlessly demands that its subject-matter shall consist of entities. Hypostatisation is illegitimate, however, where it involves the imposition of standards appropriate to one domain of entities - usually the domain of real individual objects - upon a second 'hypostatized' domain. We shall now argue that a theory of meaning according to which meanings, even linguistic meanings, are individuated by way of associated expressions, involves precisely such an illegitimate hypostatisation. For it involves the imposition of the structure of the domain of linguistic symbols (or word-sound material), which is an object domain, upon the domain of linguistically-carried meanings. The latter ought properly to be individuated by way of the acts which constitute them. However great will be the complexity of the theory which results, to be acceptable it must be able to account for those considerations which have led so many thinkers (and not only philosophers) to adopt a language-individuated theory of meanings, and even, at times, to a theory of meaning according to which linguistic meanings, senses, are ideal entities.

To gain some measure of the problems which any full theory of act-individuated meanings would have to face, let us reflect that differences in language-carried noemata are determined not only by the fact that different language-users approach the same subject-matter with different backgrounds of pre-acquired knowledge (both linguistic and extra-linguistic), different beliefs, skills, habits, conventions, etc., but also by the fact that they exercise the latter, from context to context, with different degrees of intensity of interest, or with different degrees of clarity and distinctness, and so on, relative to the subject-matter which is before them. One and the same system of sentences (e.g. a poem) may be actualised on one occasion in a fulfilled way, yielding a

fulfilled, discursive system of meanings. On another occasion however it may be actualised emptily, that is to say: actualised through a system of empty intentions, resting upon what is merely a sequence of acts of advertence to the word-sounds or printed or written symbols which are involved. (Cf. FTL, §§ 16, 89).

If it is not a single meaning-entity which is associated with a given expression but a hierarchically ordered range of such entities, each correlated with a possible context of use, what becomes of the familiar assumption that it is possible to refer, e.g. to the meaning of a word? The answer to this question has two parts:

(1) Only certain syntactically simple expressions, that is to say, (some) proper names, common nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs, can properly be said to have a 'meaning' in their own right.<sup>143</sup> For such expressions the traditional modes of speech according to which linguistic meanings are, for example, "looked up", "forgotten", "remembered", even "bestowed upon expressions" (LWA, p. 100), are all broadly legitimate, but only if inordinate care is taken to relate such uses of 'meaning' to the proper, ontological uses established above. This is because, as we shall see, the fact that such expressions have unique 'linguistic meanings' does not imply that there is any unique meaning-entity which is somehow associated with every noema of intention of that expression through all its contexts of use.

(2) The power of language to express an infinite variety of thoughts, depends not only upon the existence of such individually meaningful expressions, but also upon the existence of purely 'functional' expressions such as 'and', 'but', 'if', etc., and of grammatical or syntactical forms at various levels, e.g. the subject-predicate form, the form of the simple command, the narrative form, or the form of a particular syllogistic argument, and so on, whose role is to generate complex meaning-unities from simple component meanings. But again, the effect of such functional elements is not fixed from context to context: declarative sentence-meanings exhibiting a wide range of differences may express themselves on the basis of one and the same sentence, and even on the basis of constituent word-meanings which have been actualised in identical ways.

Thus there appears to be an extraordinary degree of freedom of actualisation, both with regard to those individual meanings which can be associated with self-subsistent expressions and with regard to the effects of syntactic forms in generating complex meaning-unities from such individual meanings. What brings order to this seemingly unbridled licence, the order which is precisely characteristic of linguistic meaning and which makes of language the efficient medium of communication which it is, is the existence of what might be called canonical contexts, both for individual expressions and for syntactic forms.<sup>144</sup> For the use of language is acquired in such a way that each expression and each functional operation, is associated with certain conditions of perfect epistemic adequacy; conditions of maximum seriousness, attentiveness, distinctness, etc., of intention of the expression (or form) involved, and conditions in which no extraneous factors are brought into play which would imply that such an intention was somehow disturbed by previously established higher-level intentions. (For examples, see p. 32 above). A context which meets these conditions for a given expression or syntactic form determines, in turn, a canonical meaning for that expression or form, which will, in general, be unique.<sup>145</sup> Ambiguity, in this framework, is definable as the possession of more than one correct, serious, distinct, etc., meaning, for a single canonical context.

This implies that the spectra of actualised meanings associated with given expressions have a peculiar 'weighted' structure. One or more regions of stability are picked out within each such spectrum, and the awareness of these stable regions as that to which given actualised noemata will approximate under normal conditions is an awareness which is possessed by all the members of any sufficiently homogeneous linguistic community. The existence of a 'linguistic division of labour' (§ 3 above) may now be expressed more precisely as follows: each language will possess many expressions whose regions of stability will consist of meaning-entities which are inaccessible except to certain specially qualified members of the associated linguistic community. That is to say, only such qualified members will be equipped to effect actualisations of the canonical meanings possessed by corresponding 'technical' expressions.

Even then however it will rarely be the case that such 'full' actualisations will be effected; and for some expressions (including complex meaning-unities such as whole theories) full actualisations will be incapable of being effected. The canonical meaning may therefore be seen as functioning as a horizon of potentiality which is shared by all the actualised meanings associated with the expression in question. What this means is that, like a perceptual horizon, the canonical meaning/horizon is something which may, by being kept 'at a distance', be shared by more than one subject: in this case by all the members of a sufficiently homogeneous linguistic community. And it means also that, again as in the case of a perceptual horizon, the canonical meaning/horizon consists of an area into which we can move, e.g. to obtain more fulfilled meanings for the expression in question. This horizontal aspect of canonical meanings is revealed in its full force if we consider the canonical meaning associated with a linguistic structure of the order of complexity of a whole theory (or expression of a theory, either formally or informally). Here only partial actualisations, obtained by interiorisation of the theory involved, and expressed e.g. through applications of its individual theses, are even conceivable. But these partial actualisations gain their significance from the fact that they are given as actualisations of the full theory, which serves as their horizon.

We may also represent the canonical meaning as having the nature of an objective meaning stock. A stock which would consist, e.g. in the case of a common noun such as 'horse' or 'square', of all those characteristics which members of the appropriate species may possess. (See LWA, §38 and p.30f above). Anyone using or understanding an expression in a given context will, in effect, select from the canonical meaning/stock of that expression only those constituents which are relevant or dominant for that context. In some cases the selection process will break down with a recognition that no elective canonical meaning can be appropriate for the given context, which will in turn lead to the conclusion that the author or speaker is appealing, e.g. to metaphorical uses of the expression in question. Note that this 'selection' process is not something explicit, which forms a recognisable stage in the full process of using or understanding language in a meaningful way; it is rather an indelible feature of all such use and understanding, from the very

earliest stage.

Besides this process of selection from the objective meaning stock which is a given canonical meaning however, the use and understanding of an expression (however complex) involve a second process of adding to, more precisely of concretisation of the given canonical meaning. This occurs in its most conspicuous form when alien data are imported by the reader of a literary work from his experience, as part of the process of gaining an understanding of its text. For example, I read a novel about a spy who is represented as having, say, brown hair, and I allow my phenomenal awareness of the colour of the jacket of the book to determine in a concrete way the precise shade of brown which is involved. Or perhaps I even go so far as to identify myself with the spy, and concretise 'him' as having all of the characteristics which I possess. Such identification of elements represented in linguistic structures of all kinds (up to the most abstract level) with familiar constituents of one's own perceptual or conceptual experience is at once more widespread than may at first appear, and more integral a part of understanding than any 'pure' theory of meaning could allow : a grasp of the abstract cannot be achieved except on the basis of some form of 'metaphorical' reduction to what is relatively concrete.

The process of concretisation need not take the form of a determinate particularisation in each case however. That is, it need not involve any 'transparent' reference to a particular feature or object as an instrumental aid to the understanding of a given text. Such concretisations are in fact merely limiting cases of a far more general process. To see this, let us recall that all meaning-entities (including, of course, canonical meanings) are structured in such a way that it is possible to distinguish as fused together within them both constant and variable determinations. Thus, for example, it is a constant determination within the objective meaning stock of the word 'table' which implies that objects referred to by means of this term should have a flat top; but the size of the top, and the substance from which it is made are, within certain (constant) limits, variable determinations of the given meaning. Fully particularising concretisations of the type so far considered, involve the removing of all variables from a given term or set of terms by means of the (quite special) process of transition from the meaning as such to its referent.<sup>146</sup> But concretisation will more typically involve merely a simple transition within the level of meanings, from one

relatively abstract canonical meaning (involving a large number of variables) is a relatively concrete actualised meaning (lower down within the given meaning hierarchy), within which the range of variation has been curtailed or somehow shifted. Concretisation thereby comes to be seen as the necessary complement to the process of 'vertical abstraction' which we considered in § 16 above: The two processes may be designated respectively as 'downward' and 'upward' noematic abstraction, and their complementarity suggests that it should be possible, at least in principle, to effect equally spontaneous movement both up and down any given meaning-hierarchy. It is only the natural tendency of language to become an ever more efficient means of communication, such that the words we use tend to 'do the thinking for us' (GL, IV), which makes upward movement to precisely articulated canonical meanings something which is so rarely met with in our everyday experience. <sup>147</sup>

We have seen that there is a network of nodes of stability distributed across the fabric of noematic entities, in virtue of the existence of particular canonical meanings which have become associated with the expressions of the natural and artificial languages which we employ. This skeletal network will reflect, to a very high degree, the structure of that fabric as a whole. <sup>148</sup> This is because language plays the crucial role both in organising the totality of meanings which already exist (in the sense of 'have already been grasped'), and in extending this totality by making ever more remote areas 'meaningfully' accessible. And it can play both these roles not only on the (first-order) level of actual concern with the objects of a particular domain of discourse, but also on the (second-order) level of logical, grammatical, or philosophical investigation of meaning as such. For language is the medium in which our thought first becomes capable of being reflected upon in a systematic way, i.e. in such a way that the results of cognition can be subjected to criticism and eventual improvement. We can now see more precisely how the hierarchical skeletons of linguistic expressions which we distinguished in Ch. 1. can be of benefit in the study not only of linguistically-carried meanings, but of noemata in general: such skeletons capture (some of) the structure of the 'stable regions' in the domain of noemata in general.

We have appealed above to Ingarden's distinction (LWA, Ch. 4) between

- (i) nominal expressions, including verbal and adjectival expressions.

each of which can properly be said to have a single canonical meaning in its own right, a meaning which is associated 'a priori' with its expression in the sense that we understand that expression on each occasion of non-metaphorical use as having that meaning already assigned to it, and

(ii) functional expressions with their associated syntactic forms, by means of which complex meaning-unities, especially sentence-meanings, are created out of syntactically simple constituents.

The importance of this distinction lies in the fact that neither canonical contexts, nor, in consequence, canonical meanings, can be associated directly with each and every sentence of a given language (much less can they be associated with each and every complex of sentences). Thus except in the case of sentences such as 'Help!' or 'Mercy!' which take on some of the qualities of individually meaningful expressions, sentences do not have canonical meanings associated with them a priori as do nominal expressions: canonical sentence-meanings must always be created afresh not only on each occasion of use (e.g. by an author) but also on each subsequent occasion of understanding (by his readers, etc.).

For an account of the complex processes involved in actualising sentence-meanings and higher order meaning-unities such as narratives, arguments and proofs, the reader is referred once again to the excellent account given by Ingarden in LWA (Loc.cit.). What has to be made clear is that, whilst the actualisation of a given sentence will involve the actualisation of each of the meanings correlated with its component nominal expressions, the latter are not actualised one by one, i.e. in such a way that they would be somehow assembled together after they have been grasped. Component meanings are determined rather in such a way that from the start they are fitted to constitute a homogeneous higher-order meaning-entity. That is, they are determined in such a way that they progressively fill out the whole which is delimited by the syntactical form of the sentence as this is itself progressively actualised by the reader. And usually, but not always, this actualised syntactic form will be found to correspond to the canonical syntactic form of the given sentence (its logico-grammatical form), which serves as a

gradually encroaching horizon through any successful actualisation of the sentence. Sometimes, (and not least during the reading of the present work?) an initially amorphous sentence-intention may prove itself inadequate or inappropriate for the full sentence, as its constituent meanings unfold themselves. In such cases it is necessary to start again, as it were, and to make a spontaneous search through alternative initial sentence-intentions which may serve to rescue the sentence. When this process of imaginative variation on the basis of canonical meanings for the constituent expressions has run its course, then provided no grammatical hiatus has been revealed within the sentence itself, we are constrained to resort to metaphorical (non-canonical) meanings for its constituents, or to a metaphorical reading of the syntactic form of the sentence e.g. by assuming that what appears as an assertion is intended as a question, and so on. Perhaps this is the grain of truth in claims such as those made by Quine (compare n.21 above) to the effect that incorrect meanings as such are 'undiscoverable', since we shall be unable to avoid giving the speaker or author the benefit of our doubt. But this principle of charity, whilst being indispensable to the process of understanding, is nevertheless of purely 'internal' or epistemological significance. For the ontology of meanings, as for the ontology of objects, it is only the 'external' point of view which is of interest. And just as in the ontology of objects it is necessary to distinguish internal posits from externally valid objects, so it is necessary in the ontology of meanings to distinguish heuristic meaning-projections associated with given complex expressions from the canonical meanings, if any, which those expressions would receive in any canonical context which may be established for them; (the latter being something which is determined in a systematic way from the canonical contexts associated with each individual component expression by application of rules determined by the canonical syntactic form of the sentence involved).<sup>149</sup>

§ 31. Canonical meaning and the ontology of reference.

By way of a transition to the second part of the present work it may be useful if we sketch some of the implications of our notion of canonical context, as an explanatory device in the theory of meanings, for the nature of non-existent objects of reference.

Contexts, we can say, are constituted by and thus ontologically dependent upon more or less systematically ordered networks of acts: wherever two or three (or even one) are gathered together, there contexts are constituted. What are the implications of this dependence of contexts for the theory of the meanings of proper names? It is a trivial fact, first of all, that more than one object (e.g. more than one person) may possess the same proper name. Thus proper names do not determine unique canonical contexts, we may say, except in relation to some neighbourhood of accessibility. In the relatively unproblematic case where the proper name in question is the name of an autonomously existent object (e.g. a living human being) or of a higher order intentional object which is intimately bound up with autonomous objects which support it (for example in the cases of Georgia, U.S.A and of Georgia, U.S.S.R.), then the appropriate neighbourhood will simply be one which contains either the given object or a suitable 'part'. Where the object involved does not satisfy these conditions, however, as is the case, for example, where we are dealing with historical figures such as Cicero or Caesar, or with historical higher order objects such as the Ottoman Empire, or where we are dealing with pure non-existents such as Hamlet or Ruritania, then it is a quite different kind of 'accessibility' which determines the canonical contexts of the names involved, an accessibility which seems to be analogous not to the perception of material objects but to the quasi-perception of mathematical objects which we achieve in our concretisation of mathematical works. It seems that we can get very near to an adequate theory of the canonical meanings of names for all such types of intentional objects if we regard canonical contexts for such names as being determined by the higher-order linguistic struc-

tures in which they occur. This is particularly clear, perhaps, in the case of names of mathematical objects: '2<sup>o</sup>', for example, has a quite different canonical meaning relative to its appearance in formal set theories with and without the continuum hypothesis as a constituent axiom. But some of the more crucial issues can be best illustrated by means of fictional names such as 'Hamlet'. The latter seems to determine two principle canonical contexts, namely

(1) in relation to its occurrence in Shakespeare's play itself, and (2) in relation to its occurrence in (second-order) theoretical works generated by the play: works of literary criticism, of literary history, and so on. As we shall see, there are other, variant canonical contexts for 'Hamlet', but these tend to be parasitic (at least under present conditions) upon (1) and (2) above, which must therefore be discussed in some detail.

(1). The question: 'what is the canonical context associated with the name "Hamlet" as it occurs in Shakespeare's play?' is closely related to the more general question: 'what are the conditions for obtaining a correct (e.g. aesthetically correct) reading of that play?' The central epistemic conditions involved here seem to be a peculiar combination of poverty and plenitude. Poverty, since one must not bring to the play certain kinds of knowledge or presupposition which would detract from the unity of the experience of the play. One must exclude, for example, the knowledge (or belief) that Hamlet did not exist, or, more trivially still, that Danish princes of the era in question did not speak in rhyming couplets. And one must withhold oneself also from any appeal to the fact that human beings, even Danish princes, possess, say, alimentary tracts and oesophagi: a canonical context for 'Hamlet' cannot be instantiated by a biologist qua biologist (and the same applies to practitioners, even amateur practitioners, of every positive science, including, say, psychology). Similarly one cannot bring to the play one's beliefs, as professional or amateur theologian. It might seem that it were possible for all of these conditions to be satisfied as a result of simple ignorance. But this would conflict with the second set

of conditions, conditions of epistemic adequacy. For it does not seem to be possible to effect an aesthetically correct concretisation of the play as a play unless one has a logically prior possession of the knowledge that Hamlet et freres do not exist. Anyone who comes to the play with the belief that it is an accurate transcript of actual historical events must thereby fail to achieve an adequate concretisation of the play as such, to the extent that the meanings which are associated with its singular terms exclude the possibility of completion into canonical meanings. Further the demands imposed, e.g. by the need to follow the plot of the play, include the condition that one should recognise that Hamlet is a man, which implies a further 'potential' recognition that he possesses an alimentary tract, and so on. These demands include also that one be in possession of a knowledge of a quite high order concerning the nature of intrigue, of jealousy, of suicidal passion, and so on, and that one should possess at least a rudimentary ability to weave such qualities as are purportedly possessed by the characters of the play in such a way as to reconstitute its plot in as complete a form as possible. (This is not to rule out the fact that there are different degrees of intensity, of correctness, of maturity, of one's following through, but we must recall that a canonical context for Hamlet is precisely a context in which epistemically perfect conditions prevail.) Part and parcel of what it is to understand a work of fiction involves the reader's ability to fill the story in, at various points, with

sentences that do not occur in the story or logically follow from those that do, but which somehow need to be true for the story to make full and proper sense. (Woods, 1974, 63f).

For

The story, just as it stands, presents only enthymematic explanation-sketches, the missing 'premisses' of which it is the reader's job to furnish. (Loc.cit.)

It follows that bare ignorance is insufficient to satisfy the epistemic poverty-condition expressed above. Rather it must be the case that the epistemic poverty of the given context is artificially created as a result of participants deliberately bracketing (leaving out of account) the knowledge which they possess, making no appeal to it in their experience of the

play except in those cases where it is needed to 'fill out' the play, when it is 'knowledge' in only a modified sense, (it undergoes precisely the modification which is characteristic of all propositions which occur in fictional works themselves, (see n.142 above))

(2). No such condition of epistemic poverty is placed upon the canonical context determined by 'Hamlet' as it occurs in theoretical, critical and historical works concerning Shakespeare's play. Indeed such contexts, could they ever be achieved, would have to satisfy the condition that all relevant knowledge should be operative within them. Equally they would have to satisfy the condition that they rested on no 'active premisses' which were false, either to Hamlet 'him'-self, to the text as a structure of symbols, to Shakespeare, or to the period in which Shakespeare lived and worked. These conditions reveal in a particularly clear form the extent to which canonical contexts, whilst being dependent upon the linguistic machinery, conventions, interests, etc. of the subjects who would constitute them, are nevertheless such that their status as canonical can be established only 'externally'. In this respect canonicity for meanings in general corresponds to truth for propositions: a canonical context for a given proposition is one in which that proposition is given as true (or false) with fully adequate evidence.

We can now consider other candidate canonical contexts for 'Hamlet', determined, for example, by its occurrence (as 'Hamlet', 'Amleth' or 'Amloði') in pre-Shakespearean sagas of northern Europe, or by its occurrence in particular performances of Shakespeare's play and in works of dramatic criticism which the latter generate. In neither case is 'Hamlet' such as to denote Hamlet himself, (i.e. the Shakespearean character). Indeed in dramatic criticism 'Hamlet' seems to lose its character as a proper name for a single object by assuming the role of a species name: 'Irving is surely the Hamlet of the year!' There are contexts other than (1) and (2) above in which 'Hamlet' does denote Hamlet himself however: For example, the contexts generated by works such as Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead or even, where relevant, The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines. Interesting problems are raised in any attempt to provide criteria which must be satisfied by such parasite works if referential access to the original characters is to be preserved.

But the reader may perhaps be disposed to doubt that contexts such as the last-mentioned, together with (1) and (2), should be such that the meanings which they determine have a common referent, namely Hamlet himself, the Shakespearean character. For the Hamlet of (1) seems to possess a different set of properties from the Hamlet of (2), the former being a Danish prince, being broody, killing his step-father, etc., whilst the latter is a created figment which does not exist and therefore, inter alia is not e.g. broody. (Broodiness is an existence-entailing attribute in Cocchiarella's sense; see his 1969, p.33f). What must be recognised is that Hamlet, like all individual and higher order intentional objects, possesses a double structure of internal characteristics and external properties (see § 7.(2) above). Perhaps the latter may be explained more precisely as follows. We can distinguish, both for autonomous objects and for intentional objects, between those determinations which inhere in the objects involved, being red, being a horse, being a fictional character, being characterised as broody, etc., and those determinations which are purely 'relational' (in the sense that, e.g. being called Winston or Hamlet, being admired by Carnap, being written about in the local newspaper, etc. are purely relational: Compare Husserl's distinction between 'physical' and 'psychical' relations discussed in § 17.) Here we shall be interested only in determinations of the former type. What distinguishes intentional from autonomous objects is the fact that the former possess as it were two layers of such determinations, they are the carriers both of a set of properties (being a fictional character, being created by Shakespeare, being psychoanalysed by Ernest Jones), and of a set of characteristics (being broody, etc.). The way in which Hamlet 'possesses' a given property is clearly different from the way in which 'he' possesses a given characteristic, and it follows that in any ontologically adequate formulation of the logic of fiction we should be required to distinguish in a syntactic way between the two different types of possession. Thus we should be able to assert, in a non-contradictory way, that Hamlet is both broody and non-broody, that Hamlet is both a real material object and a non-existent object, and so on. It is beginning to become clear, I hope, that positive results can

be gained from the philosophical study of non-existent objects. In the second part of this work we shall attempt to develop some of these results in a systematic way and to demonstrate, in particular, that their value is not restricted to the small corner of philosophy which is the philosophy of literature. Logic itself, as a philosophical discipline, begins to appear in a new light when the full implications of the ontology of non-existent objects have been absorbed.