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Building Objective Thoughts:

Stumpf, Twardowski and the Late Husserl on Psychic Products

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Abstract

Some Austro-German philosophers considered thoughts to be mind-dependent entities, that is, psychic products. Yet these authors also attributed “objectivity” to thoughts: distinct thinking subjects can have mental acts with “qualitatively” the same content. Moreover, thoughts, once built, can exist beyond the life of their inventor, “embodied” in “documents”. At the beginning of the 20th century, the notion of “psychic product” was at the centre of the debates on psychologism; a hundred years later, it is rather at the margins of the history of philosophy. While Twardowski’s theory of products has been frequently studied, those of Stumpf and the late Husserl have been much less discussed. A presentation of the Austro-German debates about psychic products is all the more important since these discussions might be of direct interest for contemporary philosophy. This paper examines the Austro-German notion of psychic products in Stumpf, Twardowski, and the late Husserl.

What does it mean for thoughts to be ‘objective’?² One way to understand the objectivity of thoughts is in terms of ‘ontological mind-independence’: saying that

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thoughts are objective amounts to saying that thoughts exist independently of any thinking subject. Another way to understand the objectivity of thoughts is in terms of ‘intersubjectivity’: saying that thoughts are objective amounts to saying that distinct thinking subjects have mental acts with ‘qualitatively’ the same content.³ Can there be objectivity of thoughts in the sense of ‘intersubjectivity’ without objectivity in the sense of ‘ontological mind-independence’? Frege answers this question negatively. According to Frege, thoughts are abstract particulars that exist independently of psychic representations, and thinking subjects must “grasp” (*fassen*) these thoughts.⁴ Frege seems to hold that the objectivity of thoughts in terms of mind-independence is the guarantee of their objectivity in terms of intersubjectivity, or what he calls “publicity” (*Öffentlichkeit*).⁵ Indeed, for Frege, if thoughts existed in the mind, i.e. if they were innate, acquired, or produced by thinking subjects, they would differ numerically in two distinct thinking subjects, and if thoughts were different numerically, they would also differ in terms of content: the “sense” (*Sinn*) of the Pythagorean theorem ‘in the head’ of Hinz would be qualitatively different from the “sense” of the Pythagorean theorem ‘in the head’

² I reserve double quotation marks for quotations. For the other tasks attributed to quotation marks, notably the demarcation of terms of art and notions, the mention of words, and the indication of non-literal uses of words, I employ single quotation marks.

³ By the ‘content’ of a mental act, I mean that which directs the act toward such-and-such an object under such-and-such an aspect. What I call ‘content’ is akin to what Husserl calls the ‘matter’ of an act (see the below section on Husserl). I borrow from Placek 1996 and Moltmann 2013b the distinction between numerical and qualitative sameness of content: if two numerically distinct acts with numerically distinct contents are about ‘the victor at Jena’, they have qualitatively the same content; if two numerically distinct acts with numerically distinct contents are, respectively, about ‘the victor at Jena’ and ‘the vanquished at Waterloo’, they have qualitatively different contents.

⁴ See notably Frege 1918-1919. On the fact that the Fregean senses are abstract particulars, see notably Margolis and Laurence 2007, 598 n. 7, quoted in Beck 2013, 44. For a more complex account of mind-independence of thoughts, i.e. “epistemic”, “causal”, “analytic”, and “simple” or “strong ontological” mind-independence, see Beck 2013, 34-39 (I thank Santiago Echeverri for having invited me to read Beck’s article).

⁵ For the identification of two senses of “objectivity” of thoughts in Frege, namely i) “ontological mind-independence”, and ii) “publicity”, see Angelelli 1967, 66, who, in combination with one of the referees of this journal, inspired my distinction between ontological mind-independence of thoughts vs. intersubjectivity. On the notion of ‘publicity’, see Frege 1894, 317.

of Kunz.⁶ This would lead to ‘psychologism’ understood as ‘cognitive subjectivism’: no thinking subject would have qualitatively the same conceptual and propositional contents as another, and the possibility of communication would be destroyed.⁷ The thoughts of different thinking subjects must, in order to be the same in terms of content, be numerically the same, and this is why they must be ontologically independent from the mental acts of these subjects. Frege’s implicit ground for holding that the qualitative sameness of content demands the numerical sameness of thoughts seems to be the principle of indiscernibles: as T. Placek and F. Moltmann claim, for Frege, the “numerical diversity <of thoughts> requires a qualitative difference”.⁸ In sum, the objectivity of thoughts in the sense of ‘intersubjectivity’ would be annihilated if conceptual and propositional contents were mind-dependent entities. Such considerations could also explain why Bolzano gave autonomous existence to his presentations- and propositions-in-themselves, which thinking subjects do not “produce” (*hervorbringen*), but that they “grasp” (*erfassen, auffassen*), as in Frege.⁹

Certainly, one could be unsatisfied with the Fregean and Bolzanian theories of mind-independent thoughts. Indeed, according to such theories, thoughts are meant to stay in a “third realm”, an atemporal domain distinct not only from psychic reality, but also from physical reality.¹⁰ Now, one may argue that there is nothing apart from psychic and physical reality, and that the admission of an atemporal domain filled with thoughts waiting to being “grasped” is mere metaphysical speculation. However, if one decides to bring thoughts back ‘into the

⁶ Frege 1918-1919, 68.

⁷ Usually, ‘psychologism’ refers to the theory that assimilates the laws of logic to the laws of human thought, and which amounts to an anthropological relativism about logic. Yet, ‘psychologism’ can also refer to the theory that admits, or is committed to the view that concepts and propositions differ in terms of content from one thinking being to another. This other sense of ‘psychologism’ leads to relativism in the sense of cognitive subjectivism. On psychologism, see Kusch 1995.

⁸ See Placek 1996 and Moltmann 2013b.

⁹ See notably Bolzano 1985-2000, §§25, 48, and 50, as well as Van der Schaar 2006, who assimilates Frege and Bolzano on the question of objectivity of thoughts.

¹⁰ On the “third realm”, see Frege 1918-1919. For its extension to Bolzano, see Morscher 2008, 41. More generally, on the uses of the expression ‘third realm’ (*drittes Reich*), including its “logical use”, see Gabriel 1992, who briefly evokes a parallel between Bolzano and Frege.

head', i.e. to make of concepts and propositions mind-dependent entities, one has to address Frege and Bolzano's worries, and to show that the qualitative sameness of content among distinct thinking subjects can still be guaranteed. These problems have been tackled by some 'Austro-German' philosophers, notably Twardowski.¹¹ Twardowski argued that thoughts are "psychic products" (*psychische Gebilde*), resulting from "psychic" activities or "functions" (*psychische Funktionen*). According to Twardowski, saying that thoughts are products does not entail "psychologism": conceptual and propositional contents, despite their psychic origin, can be qualitatively the same among distinct subjects. Twardowski's theory of 'products' has been the object of much attention in the literature: it has notably been defended by Placek and Moltmann as an alternative to Frege.¹² By contrast, the theories of other Austro-German thinkers who assimilate concepts and propositions to psychic 'products' have not been similarly examined, nor thoroughly compared to Twardowski's position.¹³ Yet the notion of 'products' originates in a series of texts by Stumpf, and is also adopted by Husserl, who uses it in a systematic manner in his late texts. Strikingly, in the Austro-German tradition, above all in Stumpf's texts, one finds a distinction between two meanings of 'objectivity' of thoughts similar to the abovementioned opposition between 'intersubjectivity', i.e. qualitative sameness of content among distinct thinking subjects, and 'ontological mind-independence'. On this basis, Austro-German philosophers can say that thoughts are both ontologically mind-dependent and 'objective'. Yet Stumpf and Twardowski on the one hand, and the late Husserl on the other, offer two different ontological accounts of psychic products: whereas

¹¹ As stated in Mulligan 2012, 11-19, the 'Austro-German tradition' refers to all German-speaking philosophers and psychologists of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries who were influenced by the main lines of thought of Bolzano and Brentano. It includes members of the 'Brentano School', of which the most famous are Stumpf, Marty, Meinong, Husserl, and Twardowski, and expands to their students, notably to 'early phenomenologists' such as Pfänder and Reinach.

¹² Besides Placek 1996 and Moltmann 2013b, see Brandl 1998, Van der Schaar 2006, Bobryk 2009, Dubucs and Miskiewicz 2009, and Fréchette 2012. On the fact that Twardowski's theory of products is an answer to the accusations of psychologism made against him by Husserl in his *Logical Investigations*, see Fiset and Fréchette 2007b, 135-140.

¹³ One exception is to be found in Fiset and Fréchette 2007b, 127-135, who present Stumpf's theory of products as an introduction to the discussion of Twardowski's.

Stumpf and Twardowski consider that there are as many numerically distinct, but exactly resemblant conceptual and propositional contents as there are thinking subjects producing these contents, Husserl claims that different thinking subjects produce numerically the same conceptual or propositional content.

Despite its important role in the debates on ‘psychologism’, there is no general study of the Austro-German notion of ‘product’. In this paper, I will contribute to filling this gap and provide an historical analysis of the uses of this notion. I will focus on Stumpf, Twardowski, and, in the longest part of the paper, on Husserl, comparing his theory of products to his earlier views on concepts and propositions. Throughout the discussion, I will pay particular attention to the problem of the ‘objectivity’ of thoughts in the sense of ‘intersubjectivity’, i.e. qualitative sameness of content among distinct thinking subjects. In my conclusion, I will systematize the historical information presented in the article, and emphasize some aspects of the Austro-German discussions that may be of value to current debates in the philosophy of mind.

1. Stumpf

As G. Fréchette suggests,¹⁴ the technical use of the German term ‘*Gebilde*’ (which means ‘thing’, ‘product’ or ‘form’) for concepts and propositions understood as ‘products’ could have its origins in Brentano. Indeed, in a text from 1899, *Abstraction and Relation*, Brentano holds that “general presentations” are “produced (*gebildet*) from intuitions by means of abstraction”.¹⁵ Stumpf will develop this idea.¹⁶ The notion of ‘product’ (*Gebilde*), linked to the one of ‘psychic function’, appears initially in his lecture on *Abstraction and Generalisation*, from 1902 (of which we only have an abstract), then in *Phenomena and Psychic*

¹⁴ Fréchette 2015b, 278.

¹⁵ Brentano 2013, 468; trans. Fréchette.

¹⁶ Note that besides a possible Brentanian influence, Stumpf’s theory of psychic products may have its origins in Lotze, who holds, in his *Logic*, first published in 1874, that “thought-contents” are “products” (*Producte*) of the “action of thinking” (see Lotze 1912, 569-571, quoted in Gabriel 1992, 501).

Functions, from 1906, and in *On the Classification of Sciences*, from 1907. A psychic function is a psychic “act”, “state” or “experience”. Functions have “contents”, also called “objects”. Sensitive functions have phenomena as contents. Phenomena have a “logical independence” (*logische Unabhängigkeit*) with respect to the functions of which they are the phenomena, i.e. “being-presented or being-thought is not a mark of phenomena”. The contents of non-sensitive functions are “products” (*Gebilde*). Intellectual presentational functions have “concepts” and “aggregates” (*Inbegriffe*) – including “qualities of forms” (*Gestaltqualitäten*) – as products. Judgments have “states of affairs” as products. Emotional functions have “values” or “goods” as products. According to Stumpf, all products are “correlates” of functions. In other words, products are ontologically mind-dependent. Moreover, in contrast to phenomena, products have a logical mind-dependence, i.e. they cannot be thought without a relation to a function being thought.¹⁷

Stumpf wants to avoid “psychologism”. He affirms that despite their logical and ontological mind-independence, products have “objectivity” (*Objektivität*). Even if a relation to an “individual-current” (*individuell- Augenblicklich*) function always accompanies each product, this relation is not a “mark” (*Merkmal*) of the product.¹⁸ The point is notably explained in Stumpf’s posthumous treatise *The Theory of Knowledge*, and is reminiscent of the opposition between the two meanings of ‘objectivity’ discussed in the introduction, namely ‘intersubjectivity’, i.e. qualitative sameness of content among distinct thinking subjects, and ‘ontological mind-independence’:

When Hinz and Kunz think the same concept ‘two’ or ‘square’, or when I think such a concept today and tomorrow, there are certainly so many distinct acts of thinking, and also so many thought-products in the psychological sense of ‘concept’; but there is only a unique, and always identically the same, concept in the sense of the *meaning*, in the sense of *that which is thought of*. What we call concept has this double side, the subjective and the objective one. Objective here does not mean: outside every thinking subject and independent from him,

¹⁷ On these points, see Stumpf 1906 and 1907.

¹⁸ Stumpf 1906, 9.

but only: independent from the individual subject and its current act of thinking.¹⁹

Stumpf claims that he adopts a theory of concepts and propositions inspired by the one of the early Husserl in the *Logical Investigations*. According to Stumpf, there is a “unity” (*Einheit*) and “identity” or “sameness” (*Identität*) of the psychic product, which is to be found at the level of the species. We can say of a plurality of products that they are one and the same product, *in specie*, just as we can say in front of a plurality of ovens that they are one and the same oven, *in specie*.²⁰ Stumpf affirms, in a Platonic manner, that the study of product-species is not part of psychology, but constitutes a proper discipline, “eidology” (*Eidologie*).²¹ Certainly, Stumpf’s affirmations echo Husserl’s theory of conceptual and propositional contents as stated in the *Logical Investigations*.²² For the early Husserl, conceptual or propositional contents in mental acts are “moments” (*Momente*), or ‘tropes’,²³ and they have a specific unity as instances of a universal, i.e. of an ideal species. Yet Husserl clearly holds that ideal objects, including ideal conceptual and propositional contents, exist.²⁴ By contrast, Stumpf is not a realist when it comes to universals: his species are themselves psychic products, i.e. concepts.²⁵ In other words, for Stumpf, from an ontological point of view, there are only particulars. Thus, despite Stumpf’s explicit adherence to the Husserlian theory, he cannot guarantee the qualitative sameness of contents with the help of universals.²⁶ However, following Stumpf’s own claims about “objectivity”, there is a way of

¹⁹ Stumpf 1939-1940/1, p. 88. Lotze too holds of his “thought-contents” understood as “products” that they have “objective validity” (see again Lotze 1912, 569-571, quoted in Gabriel 1992, 501).

²⁰ Stumpf 1906, 29-30, and 1907, 9-10. Of course, a better way to put it would be to hold that a plurality of ovens remains a plurality of ovens, but that the ovens are individuals of one species.

²¹ Stumpf 1907, 32-37. See also the reference to Bolzano in Stumpf 1906, 29-30.

²² For a detailed presentation of Husserl’s early theory, see the below section on Husserl.

²³ For the assimilation of Husserl’s moments to tropes, see Mulligan, Simons and Smith 1984.

²⁴ See Husserl 1984/1, II, 130.9-10, discussed in the below section on Husserl.

²⁵ See Stumpf 1906 and Stumpf 1907.

²⁶ For similar considerations on Twardowski, which are, I think, applicable to Stumpf too, see Brandl 1998, 31. For an analysis of Stumpf’s products with respect to Husserl’s theory of ideal contents, see Fréchette 2015b, who notably discusses a letter in which Husserl presents his theory of general objects to Stumpf (Husserl 1993a, Letter to C. Stumpf [draft], 11.05.1902, 169.1-173.33).

interpreting him that allows for preserving, even in the absence of ideal species, the qualitative sameness of content between numerically distinct products: when one says that Hinz and Kunz think the ‘same’ concept, it means that they possess two numerically distinct concepts, i.e. two concept-moments or concept-tropes, of which the ‘genetic-psychological constituents’, responsible for the individuation of the concept (namely ‘thought by Hinz’ and ‘thought by Kunz’), are dissimilar, but of which the elements constituting the content (e.g. ‘animal’), are, despite their numerical distinction, ‘exactly resemblant’.²⁷ In sum, Stumpf’s conceptual and propositional contents are ‘objective’ in the sense that they can be qualitatively the same among distinct thinking subjects, even if they are not ‘objective’ in the sense that they exist mind-independently.

2. Twardowski

After its appearance in Stumpf’s articles, the notion of ‘product’ (*Gebilde*) was used by S. Witasek, K. Bühler, and also A. Pfänder, A. Reinach, and J. Daubert.²⁸ But it is in Twardowski’s paper *Functions and Products* that the notion undergoes its deepest developments.²⁹ Twardowski, in the aforementioned paper, holds that the

²⁷ On exact resemblance, used today by trope theorists as an alternative to universals in accounting for the qualitative sameness of numerically distinct entities, see Maurin 2002. For the assimilation of psychic products to tropes and for the thesis that they can be exactly resemblant in terms of content, see Moltmann 2013a, 2013b and forthcoming. For a discussion of Moltmann’s views, see also the conclusion below. For the admission of tropes by Stumpf, see Rollinger 2015, 88-89. For the ascription to Twardowski of the thesis that distinct psychic products can be exactly resemblant in terms of content, see Moltmann forthcoming. According to me, such an interpretation already holds for Stumpf.

²⁸ See Witasek 1908, 222-246, quoted in Twardowski 1996, 164 n. 5; see Bühler 1908a, 1908b, 113, and 1933, 59, all quoted in Fiset 2014, 125-126, and the discussions in Friedrich 2010; for Pfänder, see the passage of his *Nachlass* quoted in Fréchette 2015a, 151; for Reinach, see Reinach 1989b, 526 n. 1, and the occurrences of the notion of ‘product’ in Reinach 1989a, quoted in Schuhmann 1987, 235-236; for Daubert, see again p. 235-236 of Schuhmann 1987, and the passages from Daubert’s *Nachlass* quoted there.

²⁹ There are three versions of Twardowski’s paper, a Polish version published in 1912, a German version edited in 1996, and a French, unpublished version. According to Fiset and Fréchette

distinction between “function” (*Funktion*) and “product” (*Gebilde*) is not only relevant to psychology, but concerns every “doing” (*Tun*) and “what is done” (*das Getane*) by it.³⁰ The difference between a function and its product is either ontological or conceptual. Some products last longer than the function that produces them, for example a knot, a drawing, etc. Twardowski calls these “enduring products” (*dauernde Gebilde*). Some products last as long as the function that produces them lasts, for example a race, a jump, etc. Twardowski calls these “passing products” (*vergehende Gebilde*).³¹ The drawing, that is, as Twardowski defines it, the peculiar arrangement of the particles of graphite of the pencil on the paper, still exists when the function ceases, i.e. it continues to exist independently of drawing. On the contrary, a jump does not exist independently of the function of jumping. Thus, between functions and their enduring products, the distinction is ontological, since the product can exist without the function. Concerning the distinction between functions and passing products, Twardowski seems to think that this distinction is conceptual, i.e. “maybe only a *distinctio rationis*”.³²

Following Stumpf,³³ Twardowski applies these analyses to the relations between mental acts and their contents: mental acts are functions, and their contents are products. Psychic products are passing products, i.e. they exist as long as their respective functions exist. More precisely, they exist *in act* as long as their respective functions exist. However, ‘in potency’, they exist eternally. Indeed,

2007a, 9, the paper by Twardowski was initially written in Polish, and only later in German, for a conference given in Vienna in 1914. Unless otherwise specified, I follow the German edition. For an earlier, i.e. from 1909, but posthumous text mentioning ‘products’, see Twardowski forthcoming.

³⁰ Twardowski 1996, 158.

³¹ Twardowski 1996, 169-171; in the Polish translation of A. Szylewicz, the opposition is between “enduring” and “non-enduring” products.

³² Twardowski 1996, 173. For a long discussion on whether, in Twardowski, the distinction between functions and products is linguistic, conceptual or ontological, see Brandl 1998. One could wonder to what extent Twardowski would admit that one function leads to the production of both an enduring and a passing product. This would help if one wants to distinguish from the function of drawing not only its enduring product, i.e. the arrangement of graphite on the paper, but also the movement of the hand as a passing product (like the jump with respect to jumping) (I thank one of the referees of this journal for having drawn my attention on this problem).

³³ Notably quoted in Twardowski 1996, 163.

Twardowski admits *possibilia* in his ontology.³⁴ Now, as regards possible psychic products, there is no reason to hold that they are not given at all times. According to Twardowski, even if all psychic agents were to disappear from the universe, since the possibility of the existence of psychic agents is not logically excluded, all products, as possible contents of possible functions of possible psychic agents, have eternal existence. Thus, even if Twardowski rejects the idea of eternal actual contents of judgments, he seems to admit eternal possible acts of judgments, with their correlative eternal possible contents:

Indeed, we talk of eternal truths, i.e. of eternal true judgements. In fact, no judgement exists eternally, but only as long as it is passed. Eternal is only the possibility to pass some judgements as true.³⁵

Twardowski, in opposition to Stumpf, thinks that psychic products are logically mind-independent, i.e. they can be thought of without their functions being thought of:

Thus, we talk of the defining of a concept, but we do not mean that it concerns the defining of the activity of conceptualization; we talk of incomprehensible questions, without wanting to say that the activity of questioning is incomprehensible [...].³⁶

As regards the problem of objectivity of thoughts in the sense of qualitative sameness of content, Twardowski's position can be adequately understood by comparing it to Stumpf's.³⁷ Twardowski thinks that every person has his 'own', numerically distinct product. Yet in some sense it is correct to say that two people have the "same" product in mind, for example two parties to a conversation. In order to do so, we have to ignore the differences between their respective products, and to focus only on the "elements" that "correspond" to each other in each product, as when we say "the same thing happened to me as happened to

³⁴ On this point, see Twardowski 1894, 36, quoted in Fréchette 2012, 68 n. 15.

³⁵ Twardowski 1996, 169-170. Fréchette 2015b claims that there is a similar theory in Stumpf.

³⁶ Twardowski 1996, 168.

³⁷ On the difficulty to understand Twardowski's position, see notably Brandl 1998.

you”, even if the same thing cannot happen twice.³⁸ Twardowski, like Stumpf, affirms that his theory is akin to that of the early Husserl in the *Logical Investigations*. Yet the early Husserl admits ideal species of conceptual and propositional contents.³⁹ On the contrary, for Twardowski, as for Stumpf, species are themselves products, i.e. concepts.⁴⁰ Thus the qualitative sameness of content between numerically distinct products cannot be guaranteed by the instantiation of a universal. It remains to say that products, in Twardowski, as in Stumpf, are individuals, or tropes, with dissimilar genetic-psychological constituents (e.g. ‘thought by Hinz’ and ‘thought by Kunz’), but which can bear an exact resemblance with regard to the elements constituting their content (e.g. ‘animal’).⁴¹ Thus, Twardowski, like Stumpf, preserves the ‘objectivity’ of conceptual and propositional contents while at the same time making of them mind-dependent entities. Twardowski is confident that his theory of products will lead to the end of the so-called “controversy concerning psychologism” (*Psychologismustreit*).⁴²

One original idea in Twardowski’s theory of psychic products, and absent from Stumpf’s account, is that psychic products have a potential existence in actual “psychophysical products”.⁴³ According to Twardowski, physical products are divided into purely physical and psychophysical products. Both purely physical and psychophysical products are “perceptible by the external senses”, but the difference is that psychophysical products are physical products that may “express” psychic products and that “signify” them.⁴⁴ Like other products,

³⁸ Twardowski 1996, 181-182.

³⁹ For a presentation of Husserl’s early theory, see the below section on Husserl.

⁴⁰ Twardowski 1996, 182.

⁴¹ Again, for the ascription to Twardowski of the thesis that distinct psychic products can be exactly resemblant in terms of content, see Moltmann forthcoming. For an alternative interpretation, according to which the contents in distinct thinkers, for Twardowski, would be at best merely resemblant, but not exactly resemblant, see Placek 1996, 197.

⁴² Twardowski 1996, 186.

⁴³ I recall that Twardowski admits *possibilia* in his ontology (see Twardowski 1894, 36, quoted in Fréchette 2012, 68 n. 15).

⁴⁴ Note the cases where psychophysical products are “artefacts” (*Artefakte*), i.e. “artificial” (*künstlich*), in the sense that they have not been produced by their natural function. According to Twardowski, such artefacts do not express what their natural equivalents express: the corporal

psychophysical products are divided into passing products, for example a speech, and enduring ones, for example a book. Whereas the passing psychophysical products last only as long as the psychic products that they may express last, the enduring psychophysical products last longer than the psychic products they may express. Twardowski says that in some sense a psychic product can be said to exist in a psychophysical product. Indeed, one can say that the psychic product signified by the psychophysical product exists in the psychophysical one as its effect, if it is admitted that the effect exists “in potency” in its cause:

But even in the periods in which the psychic product does not exist, i.e. in the periods in which the corresponding psychic activity takes place in the head of no human being, one of the partial causes exists uninterruptedly, namely the psychophysical product thanks to which a past psychic product can possibly occur. And as well as we say that the cause continues to exist in its effect, we say as well of the effect that it already exists in potency in the cause, in the partial cause too. Thus, we also say that the psychic product that acts as the signification of the psychophysical product in question exists potentially in this psychophysical product.⁴⁵

Thus, thanks to enduring psychophysical products, psychic products built by a psychic agent continue to exist in potency even when their “inventor” and the persons to whom he orally transmitted the products stop thinking them, forget them or dies;⁴⁶ but these products, of course, still depend on a potential thinking subject able to understand the language of the psychophysical product and to ‘receive’ the psychic product that the psychophysical product contains.⁴⁷

movements of an actor do not express emotional contents, the “statement” (*Aussage*) of a liar do not express judicative contents, and the same holds for the statements that one finds in logic books, which are not the expressions of judgments (Twardowski 1996, 183-185, and the reference to Marty 1908).

⁴⁵ Twardowski 1996, 178-179.

⁴⁶ The idea that writing allows psychic products to exist beyond the life of their “inventor” and the persons to whom he orally transmits the product is to be found in Husserl 1976b, 371.18-29. I will come back to this text later.

⁴⁷ The idea that written meanings need a receiver who understands the language of the writing is to be found in Husserl 2008, 427.26-32. I will quote this text below.

Twardowski thinks that a possible psychic product existing in a psychophysical product becomes “quasi-enduring” (*quasi-dauernd*), that it is “retained” (*festgehalten*), “prolonged” (*prolongiert*), and that the psychic product is allowed to say: “*non omne mortuum sum*”, “I am not totally dead”.⁴⁸ In other words, after having been built, products can be ‘stored’ in enduring means of communication, in real things in the world, and acquire a relative ‘objectivity’ in the sense of mind-independence.

3. Husserl

Husserl was aware of Stumpf’s notion of ‘product’ (*Gebilde*) probably quite soon after the publication of *Phenomena and Psychic Functions* and *On the Classification of Sciences*. At all events, there are annotated versions of Stumpf’s texts in Husserl’s library, as well as a long manuscript containing notes on these texts in his *Nachlass*.⁴⁹ As regards Twardowski’s *Functions and Products*, it is not to be found in Husserl’s library.⁵⁰ However, Husserl could have known about the Polish version, from 1912, through Ingarden’s *The Literary Work of Art*, from 1931, a book that Husserl apparently received by the end of 1930.⁵¹ In this book, Ingarden affirms that his position concerning the ontological status of “meanings of words” (*Wortbedeutung*), namely that they are “products (*Gebilde*) of subjective operations”, has “kinship” with the position adopted by Twardowski in “*Activities*

⁴⁸ Twardowski 1996, 178 and 179.

⁴⁹ See Husserl Archives, *Hoofdwoorden Catalog* (catalogue of Husserl’s personal library), BQ 460 and 463, and Husserl’s manuscript “Stumpf. Ersch<einungen> u<nd> psych<ische> F<unktionen>. Zur Einteilung d<er> Wiss<enschaften> dazu mein Brief 11/5 <19>02 über allgemeine Gegenstände” (Husserl Archives, ms. K II 4, 154-186). On the relations between Husserl and Stumpf, besides Fréchette 2015b, see Rollinger 1999, Schuhmann 2001, and Fisette 2015. Note that Husserl uses the term ‘*Gebilde*’ in a non-technical sense in the VIth *Logical Investigation* (Husserl 1984/2, VI, 724.29-725.15), where he talks of “*Aktgebilde*”, i.e. kinds of acts or “act-forms”, as J. Findlay translates it (I thank one of the referees of this journal for having drawn my attention on this passage).

⁵⁰ See Husserl Archives, *Hoofdwoorden Catalog* (catalogue of Husserl’s personal library).

⁵¹ Husserl 1993b, Letter to R. Ingarden, 21.12.1930, 268.24-26.

and Products”, as Ingarden translates the Polish title.⁵² But Husserl could not read Polish.⁵³ Be that as it may, in his lectures on “first philosophy” of 1923/1924, in those on phenomenological psychology of 1925, as well as in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, published in 1929, Husserl clearly affirms that concepts and propositions are “psychic products” (*psychische Gebilde*), issuing from the capacities of cognitive subjects.⁵⁴ In order to understand what differs in Husserl’s late theory compared to the *Logical Investigations*, a detailed presentation of his earlier account of conceptual and propositional contents is required.

a. Husserl’s Early Views on Concepts and Propositions

In his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl discusses the relations between the “real” (*reell*) or “descriptive” content of a mental act and its “intentional content”. For Husserl, mental acts are “*reell*”, but not “*real*”. Both these terms refer to individual items, i.e. to things existing in time. However, as stated by D. W. Smith and R. McIntyre, Husserl wants to contrast the ‘reality’ of “constituents of consciousness” or of “experience”, which are temporal, and the ‘reality’ of “physical objects”, which are “spatiotemporal”.⁵⁵ Beyond this distinction, the important point is that both ‘*reelle*’ and ‘*reale*’ items are temporal and, thus, individual.⁵⁶ According to Husserl, the real (*reell*) content of a mental act is the “sum total of its concrete or abstract parts”.⁵⁷ It includes, for example, “sensuous contents”, as well as their phenomenal feature of having more or less “vividness”. The expression “intentional content”, for Husserl, can refer to distinct things: it can designate the “object” of the act, the “matter” of the act (*Materie*), or the “intentional essence”.⁵⁸

⁵² Ingarden 1931, 107-108 n. 2. See also Ingarden 1998, 199 n. 92.

⁵³ See Husserl 1993b, Letter to R. Ingarden, 31.12.1936, 309.9-15. On Husserl and Twardowski’s older relations, see notably English 1993, Schuhmann 1993, Rollinger 1999, and Fisetto 2003.

⁵⁴ For the expression “psychic products” (*psychische Gebilde*), see Husserl 1974, 161.23 and 32.

⁵⁵ Smith and McIntyre 1982, 115-116.

⁵⁶ On the relations between reality, temporality and individuality, see Husserl 1984/1, II, 129.7-20.

⁵⁷ Husserl 1984/1, V, 411.12-13; trans. Findlay.

⁵⁸ In addition, see Husserl 1984/2, VI, 616.30-624.34, about “representative content” (*repräsentierender Inhalt*), distinguished as “intuitive” (*intuitiv*), “signitive” (*signitiv*), and “mixt”

The object is that towards which the act is intentionally directed. It is not a real (*reell*) part of consciousness, and it would be better to avoid calling it ‘content’, as Husserl himself admits at the end of §17 of the Vth *Logical Investigation*. The matter, together with the act’s “quality” (*Qualität*), constitutes the “intentional essence”. As Husserl affirms in §45 of the Vth *Logical Investigation*, the quality and the matter in a given act are real (*reell*) parts of the act.⁵⁹ What Husserl calls the “quality” refers to the “general act-character, which stamps an act as merely presentative, judgemental, emotional, desiderative, etc”.⁶⁰ As for the “matter”, it is that feature of an act which “not only determines that it grasps the object, but also *as what* it grasps it”.⁶¹ Quality and matter cannot exist separately, i.e. they are “abstract” (*abstrakt*) parts of the act.⁶² As such, they are what Husserl calls “moments”, i.e. abstract particulars or ‘tropes’.⁶³ Now, to the extent that an intentional essence “functions, or can function, as meaning-providing for a

(*gemischt*), and which refers to the mediating role played in cognition by sensation, images and signs, notably linguistic signs.

⁵⁹ See Husserl 1984/1, V, 527.13-528.21, and, besides, 435.7-20. On this point, see also Smith and McIntyre 1982, 116, Beyer 1996, 153-157 and Küne 2013, 121-123. Note that there is an apparent incompatibility between Husserl 1984/1, V, 527.13-528.21, where the “intentional essence”, made up of “quality” and “matter”, is said to be part of the “real content” of the act, and other passages in the *Logical Investigations*, where Husserl distinguishes between “real” and “intentional content”, and equates the “matter” or the “intentional essence” with the intentional content (see for example Husserl 1984/1, V, 413-9-25). A solution to this problem is to hold that Husserl distinguishes, in the real content itself, the parts responsible for the act’s being intentional, i.e. quality and matter, from the other parts, for example sensuous content. This is suggested by Husserl himself when he says that “we can further distinguish, in this real content, the separable contents not belonging to the intentional essence (...)”, i.e. the intentional content seems to be distinguished from *the rest* of the real content (Husserl 1984/1, V, 528.1-3; see also Husserl 1984/1, V, 431.5-10, which may be read in a similar manner). To be sure, in the *Ideas 1*, Husserl will change his views on this topic. The equivalent of the matter of the *Logical Investigations* will be the “sense” or “noematic core”. Yet Husserl will not admit real senses: to every particular intentional act corresponds not a real, but only an unreal sense. More on the *Ideas 1* below.

⁶⁰ Husserl 1984/1, V, 425.24-26; trans. Findlay.

⁶¹ Husserl 1984/1, V, 430.2-4; trans. Findlay.

⁶² On quality and matter as “abstract”, see Husserl 1984/1, V, 430.21-30.

⁶³ For the assimilation of Husserl’s moments to tropes, see Mulligan, Simons and Smith 1984, quoted above.

linguistic expression”, it is a “semantic essence” (*bedeutungsmäßiges Wesen*). To these semantic essences correspond “ideal meanings” or meanings “*in specie*”, which are universals.⁶⁴ Note that according to Husserl’s terminology, such meanings, i.e. meanings corresponding to combinations of quality and matter, are “qualified meanings”, and they are contrasted with “unqualified meanings”, which are meaning-species corresponding merely to matters.⁶⁵ Husserl calls the unqualified meaning-species “concepts” (*Begriffe*) and “propositions” (*Sätze*).⁶⁶ Their counterparts in mental acts are concept- and proposition-instances.⁶⁷

To be sure, for Husserl, universals, even if they are not something real “localized” in a “τόπος οὐράνιος”, in some place in heaven, nevertheless have a proper mode of being, namely an unreal, ideal one, i.e. they have “validity” (*Gelten*), as Husserl says, following Lotze. “Real” and “temporal” are “coextensive” notions, while unreal, ideal beings are “intemporal” (*unzeitlich*).⁶⁸ Now, Husserl refuses to reduce the unity of the species to the plurality of its instances, and moreover defends the idea that relations of resemblance are unable to constitute the unity in question, since such relations presuppose this unity: “‘alikehood’ is the relation of objects falling under one and the same species”.⁶⁹ It must be emphasized that a universal, for Husserl, is not a “metaphysical part” (*metaphysischer Teil*) of the particular in which it is instantiated.⁷⁰ Thus, as D. Armstrong would say, Husserl is not an “Aristotelian” realist about universals, but rather a “Platonic” realist. According to Aristotelian realism, universals are “immanent”, i.e. they exist ‘*in re*’ (in things). An immanent universal is always “conjoined” with an ‘individuator’, which is distinct for each instance (the individuator can either be a ‘bare

⁶⁴ Husserl 1984/1, V, 431.11-31.

⁶⁵ Husserl 1984/2, VI, 617.34-618.1.

⁶⁶ Husserl 1984/1, I, 110.12.

⁶⁷ On these questions, see more broadly Husserl 1984/1, I, 104.21-106.32, II, 117.14-120.18, 128.30-131.13, V, 411.1-416.30 and 425.20-435.32; trans. Findlay, slightly modified.

⁶⁸ See Husserl 1984/1, I, 104.21-106.32, II, 117.14-120.18, 128.30-131.13, V, 411.1-416.30 and 425.20-435.32. For the reference to Lotze’s “validity”, see Husserl 1979, 157.9. For the rejection of the ‘localization’ of species, Husserl was following Lotze’s interpretation of Plato (Lotze 1912). On this point, see Willard 1972, 14-15. For a detailed comparison of Husserl and Lotze, see Beyer 1996.

⁶⁹ Husserl 1984/1, II, 118.19-20; trans. Findlay, slightly modified.

⁷⁰ Husserl 1975, 135.4-12.

particular', i.e. a primitively individuated property-bearer with no qualitative feature, or something else, like spatio-temporality). Such a universal, being *in re*, has a 'multiple localization': saying that there are two particular red things means that there are two things constituted by one and the same universal 'redness' and two distinct individuators.⁷¹ Thus, according to immanent realism, a universal never exists "separated" from particulars, of which it is a metaphysical part. Armstrong contrasts "Aristotelian", or "immanent", realism and "Platonic", or "transcendent", realism about universals. Transcendent realism is "the doctrine that universals exist separated from particulars".⁷² This seems to be Husserl's view. Indeed, on the one hand, he holds that universals are not metaphysical parts of the particulars in which they are instantiated. On the other hand, he clearly admits that universals exist: "ideal objects (...) exist genuinely".⁷³

In sum, the early Husserl, in his *Logical Investigations*, holds that conceptual and propositional contents, or "matters", are "moments", or 'tropes', in mental acts. These contents, or matters, are instances of a corresponding universal matter or (unqualified) meaning-species. The matter-instances are real (*reell*), temporal parts of the mental acts, whereas the matter-species themselves are ideal, intemporal, transcendent universals. Thus, the matter-species, contrary to their instances, are ontologically mind-independent.⁷⁴ Husserl explicitly says, in his 1st *Logical Investigation*, that for "concepts" and "propositions", "being thought or being expressed are alike contingent".⁷⁵ Is this position different from the Fregean or Bolzanian ones? According to K. Mulligan, in Husserl's theory, the relation of a singular thought to its ideal concept or proposition is a relation of instantiation and has nothing to do with "any sort of mental or psychological relation" of

⁷¹ On all these points, see Armstrong 1978, especially 1, 111-113.

⁷² See Armstrong 1978/1, 140.

⁷³ Husserl 1984/1, II, 130.9-10.

⁷⁴ According to the categories of Beck 2013, 34-39, quoted above, Husserl's conceptual and propositional content-species have "simple" ontological mind-independence ("X is *ontologically mind-independent* just in case X does not depend for its existence on any minds, and thus could exist if there were no minds"), but not "strong" ontological mind-independence ("X is *strongly ontologically mind-independent* just in case [i] X is ontologically mind-independent and [ii] either X is a particular or some instances of X's are ontologically mind-independent").

⁷⁵ Husserl 1984/1, I, 110-14.15; trans. Findlay.

“grasping (*erfassen, fassen*)” that one finds in Frege and Bolzano.⁷⁶ To be sure, Frege affirms of “grasping” that it is “maybe the most mysterious process among all”. According to Frege, “grasping” is a relation that exists in the soul and, thus, does not concern “logic”, but rather psychology.⁷⁷ When Frege gives a positive account of this relation, he talks of it as an “aiming at” (*hinzielen*) founded in “consciousness”.⁷⁸ This indeed resembles a “psychological relation”: it recalls intentionality. As regards Bolzano, his “grasping” relates “subjective presentations” and “judgments”, i.e. psychic acts of presenting or judging, to “presentations-” and “propositions-in-themselves”. Another way, for Bolzano, to express this relation is to say that a presentation-in-itself is the “matter” (*Stoff*) of a subjective presentation and a proposition-in-itself the “matter” (*Stoff*) of a judgment.⁷⁹ Husserl himself affirms, in his 1913 “Draft of a ‘fore-word’ to the ‘*Logical Investigations*’”, that Bolzano’s presentations- and propositions-in-themselves gave him access to the domain of idealities.⁸⁰ Yet Husserl has a wavering account of Bolzano’s grasping. Indeed, Husserl sometimes says that Bolzano’s relation of “grasping” amounts to a relation of instantiation. As showed by Rollinger, Husserl bases his claim on §21 of the *Theory of Science*, where Bolzano equates his “propositions-in-themselves” to the notion of “proposition” found in G. Mehmel, i.e. “a judgment considered in abstraction from the mind of which it is the action”.⁸¹ Husserl, in the margin of this passage in his copy of the *Theory of Science*, affirms that Bolzano is talking of “the judgment *in specie*”.⁸² However, next to §19 of Bolzano’s text, where propositions-in-themselves are said to be thought by God, Husserl remarks that Bolzano is talking about these propositions as if they were some sort of objects. This would make of “grasping” a “psychological relation”.⁸³ In

⁷⁶ Mulligan 2011, 275. See also Willard 1972, 16.

⁷⁷ Frege 1897-1969, 157.

⁷⁸ Frege 1918-1919, 75.

⁷⁹ See notably Bolzano 1985-2000, §§48, 50 and 291, quoted and discussed in Beyer 1996, 95-130.

⁸⁰ Husserl 1939b, 128-130 and 2002, 297.20-299.4.

⁸¹ See Mehmel 1803, 48.

⁸² See the quotations of Husserl’s *Handexemplar* in Rollinger 1999, 80. See also Künne 2013, 129.

⁸³ See also Husserl 1987, 33.6-39, 155.22-156.15, and 1977, 218.33-219.42 (note that in this last passage, Husserl seems to hold that Bolzano, when he talks of Mehmel’s abstract judgment, is

1903, in a review of a book by M. Palágyi, Husserl holds that Bolzano's theory could be interpreted as going in the same direction as his own views, but that most probably, Bolzano missed "the phenomenological relations between meaning, meaning-moment and complete act of meaning".⁸⁴ To be sure, the Mehmel-quote is not sufficient to make Husserl's point, since 'abstraction', in this context, does not necessarily mean 'generalization', but could just be another way to say that there are propositions 'in-themselves'.⁸⁵ As for the claim that God is thinking propositions, it could simply mean that these propositions are the "matter" (*Stoff*) of his thoughts. In fact, Husserl's problem is that he tries to analyse a relation that Bolzano himself refuses to analyse. As Ch. Beyer affirms, Bolzano's relation of 'grasping' is "categorially heterogenous", since it relates something real, i.e. a psychic act, to something unreal, i.e. a presentation- or a proposition-in-itself, but there is not much more to say about the nature of this relation, which is no less "mysterious" than its Fregean equivalent.⁸⁶ According to E. Morscher, one is faced here with a "primitive concept".⁸⁷ In other words, Bolzano's grasping is not equivalent to instantiation, as even Husserl seems to admit in 1903. In sum, it is likely that neither Frege nor Bolzano consider that thoughts are species instantiated in psychic acts. They seem rather to hold that distinct subjects thinking '2 is smaller than 3' grasp numerically the same particular thought, and Frege suggests that this 'grasping' is a "psychological relation".⁸⁸

referring rather to the activity of judging, i.e. to the "noesis", than to its 'content', i.e. to the "noema"; on the notions of 'noesis' and 'noema', see below).

⁸⁴ Husserl 1979, 157.14-21, quoted in Beyer 1996, 160. Besides, note that even if in the "Draft of a 'fore-word' to the *Logical Investigations*", Husserl says that he gained access to the domain of idealities thanks to the Bolzanian presentations- and propositions-in-themselves, he seems to recognize Lotze as his source for the theory of the instantiation of concepts and propositions. Indeed, Husserl says that his own views were inspired by Lotze's Platonism and that Bolzano was "far away" from holding such a theory (Husserl 1939b, 128-130 and 2002, 297.20-299.4).

⁸⁵ For a criticism of Husserl's identification of thought-species in Bolzano, see also Künne 2013, 128-129, as well as Beyer 1996, 140 and 151, who points out that Bolzano cannot be found to say that presentations- and propositions-in-themselves are species.

⁸⁶ See Beyer 1996, 110, and 129, where he quotes Frege 1897-1969, 157.

⁸⁷ Morscher 2008, 77.

⁸⁸ On Fregean senses as abstract particulars, see Margolis and Laurence 2007, quoted in Beck 2013.

Now, even if Husserl, in the *Logical Investigations*, admits that distinct subjects thinking '2 is smaller than 3' have numerically distinct content-moments, or content-tropes, this numerical diversity does not imply the loss of the qualitative sameness of content: the distinct content-moments are qualitatively the same to the extent that they are instances of a transcendent content-species, i.e. of a universal existing "separated from particulars". As regards the moments themselves, nothing forbids us from saying that Husserl, in the *Logical Investigations*, would have considered them 'products' of particular thinking agents. Indeed, the early Husserl analyses psychic phenomena from a 'static' or 'descriptive' point of view, and brackets all questions of genesis.⁸⁹ Thus, the absence of any mention of a 'production' of concepts and propositions in the *Logical Investigations* does not allow us to conclude that Husserl would have rejected the view according to which instances, or "moments", of concepts and propositions are products of particular thinking subjects.⁹⁰ As jurists say, the absence in question is not a 'qualified silence', but rather a 'lacuna'.

I would like to make some last remarks on Husserl's early views by coming back to Stumpf and Twardowski's understanding of the *Logical Investigations*. As said above, both Stumpf and Twardowski mean to adopt the theory of concepts and propositions of the early Husserl. Yet, as is now hopefully clear, Husserl admits ideal species, i.e. universals, of conceptual and propositional contents, and he holds that they "exist genuinely". By contrast, Stumpf and Twardowski are not realists about universals: species are themselves products, i.e. concepts. Thus, contrarily to Husserl, neither Stumpf nor Twardowski can guarantee the qualitative sameness of conceptual and propositional contents with the help of universals. But then, the question is: why do Stumpf and Twardowski refer to Husserl? As regards Stumpf, it seems that he has a conceptualist reading of Husserl's account of universals. Indeed, in his *Theory of Knowledge*, Stumpf affirms that Platonic ideas are nothing

⁸⁹ On 'static' and 'genetic' phenomenology, see Welton 1997, quoted in Smith 2013.

⁹⁰ For a seemingly different reading, see Ingarden 1998, 177-208, who usefully quotes many relevant passages showing Husserl's endorsement of the notion of 'product' (*Gebilde*), and thinks that this endorsement is in conflict with the theses defended in the *Logical Investigations*. By contrast, Derrida (1962) affirms that genetic considerations are simply missing in the *Logical Investigations*, and that Husserl's late texts on the production of concepts and propositions are complementary rather than opposed to the early texts.

other than “concepts” (*Begriffe*), i.e. products of psychic functions. However, these concepts are “objective”, i.e. ‘intersubjective’, and Plato, for Stumpf, had nothing other than such a theory “in mind” (*im Sinne*) when he was talking of ideas, even if he did not “escape the threat of a hypostasis”. The same point would hold for Husserl: his Platonic-like universals, in the final analysis, are nothing other than “objective”, i.e. ‘intersubjective’, concepts. But Stumpf also knows that some passages of the *Logical Investigations* sound much more realist. As if by way of confession, he concludes that he “leaves it open” whether Husserl “too did not go too far in the direction of objectification (*Objektivierung*)”.⁹¹ As for Twardowski, one way to understand why he quotes Husserl would be to hold that like Stumpf, Twardowski has a conceptualist reading of Husserl’s account of universals. At any rate, even if Twardowski refers to the *Logical Investigations* and to ideal species, he seems to say that from an ontological point of view, there is nothing other than particular thoughts, and that species are acquired thanks to “abstraction”.⁹² J. Brandl gives another explanation of the reasons that may have led Twardowski to equate his position to Husserl’s. According to Brandl, it has to do with the relative “mind-independence” that Twardowski gives to his products. Indeed, for Twardowski, contrary to Stumpf, psychic products are ‘logically mind-independent’, i.e. they can be thought of without their function being thought of. However, as Brandl also emphasizes, such ‘logically mind-independent’ products have only an “illusion of independence”, i.e. they do not exist independently of an individual mental act of which they are the product, contrary to what holds, according to Brandl, for Husserl’s ideal conceptual and propositional species.⁹³

b. Husserl on Psychic Products

Before adopting the notion of ‘product’ (*Gebilde*), Husserl made a series of changes to his theory of concepts and propositions. In his 1908 lectures on

⁹¹ Stumpf 1939-1940/1, 89. See also the reference of Stumpf to Lotze as an influence of Husserl.

⁹² Twardowski 1996, 182.

⁹³ See Brandl 1998, 31, as well as Twardowski 1996, 163 and 185, where Bolzano’s presentations-and-propositions-in-themselves are described as logically, not ontologically mind-independent.

meaning, he still maintains that the “matter” of a given mental act is something ‘real’ (*reell*).⁹⁴ However, in a text published as an appendix to these lectures, dated 1911 by U. Panzer, Husserl expresses some doubts about his account of meaning. He holds that the “ideality” of meanings is not the ideality of species. One must admit two sorts of generality, one for the species, and one for meanings, and this second sort of generality implies a “singularisation” (*Vereinzelung*) that does not lead to “individuals” (*Individuen*). But Husserl still asks whether the meanings are not somehow singularized and he ends his reflexions by wondering, quite mysteriously, whether one should not admit two sorts of “singularisation”.⁹⁵ In the *Ideas I*, Husserl strongly modifies his theory of mental acts and contents.⁹⁶ Now, he distinguishes between “noesis” and “noema”. The ‘noesis’, roughly speaking, stands for the ‘act-side’ of thinking, and the ‘noema’ for the ‘content-side’. More precisely, the noesis is made up of two components. First, it contains what Husserl called the “quality” of the act in the *Logical Investigations*, i.e. the “general act-character”, like presenting, or judging. This aspect of noesis, in the *Ideas 1*, is called its “thetic character”. Besides this, the noesis contains an element not theorized in the *Logical Investigations*, namely what Husserl calls the “sense-giving” (*Sinngebung*) aspect of thinking. On the basis of the “noetico-noematic correlation”, there are, in the noema, two aspects corresponding to the ‘thetic character’ and the ‘sense-giving’ element of the noesis. First, the noema too is constituted of a “thetic character”, which makes of the noema the content of such-and-such an act-“quality”: if a presentation, a ‘presentational’ content, if a judgment, a ‘judicative’ content, etc. Second, to the ‘sense-giving’ element of the noesis corresponds a “sense” (*Sinn*) in the noema, which is also called the “noematic core” and which, as Husserl says, is equivalent to the “matter” of the *Logical Investigations*. Now, for Husserl, the noesis, with all its aspects, is ‘real’ (*reell*). By contrast, the noema, taken as the

⁹⁴ Husserl 1987, 117.3-120.37.

⁹⁵ Husserl 1987, 202.8-219.33, more precisely 217 n. 1. For the translation of “*Vereinzelung*”, I follow J. English’s “*singularisation*”.

⁹⁶ For this comparison between Husserl’s *Ideas 1* and his *Logical Investigations*, I follow Smith and McIntyre 1982, 119-136.

correlate of a particular noesis, is said to be “unreal”, or “ideal”.⁹⁷ Since the noema contains a “sense” as its core, Husserl is now holding that to every particular noesis corresponds not a ‘real’ (*reell*), but only an unreal, or ideal sense. In other words, Husserl seems to go on changing his account of the ideality of meaning, as announced in the text of 1911.⁹⁸ However, in the *Ideas 1*, there is not much more to learn about the ideality of ‘senses’, nor is there any detailed explanation of how exactly their ideality must be contrasted with the ideality of species.⁹⁹ Besides, even if Husserl briefly suggests that concepts could be “psychic products” (*psychische Gebilde*), he does not develop this point.¹⁰⁰ This is all the more surprising given that the contrast between noe-‘sis’ and noe-‘ma’ echoes the opposition between function and product, i.e. between “doing” (*Tun*) and “what is done” (*das Getane*).¹⁰¹ Indeed, the Greek suffix -sis (-σις) serves to compose substantives of action, whereas -ma (-μα) is a suffix for substantives of results of actions.¹⁰² The fact that noema are the results of an action is supported by the fact that the noesis is “sense-giving”, i.e. it is described as active.¹⁰³ However, in the *Ideas 1*, these characteristics are not exploited further in the direction of a theory of “products”. But to be sure, Husserl, in the aforementioned text of 1911 and in the *Ideas 1*, laid the groundwork for his later theory, according to which: i) concepts and propositions are psychic products, and ii) their ideality is distinct from the ideality of the species.

⁹⁷ See notably Husserl 1977, 191.30-196.15, 202.1-205.8, 268.13-272.31 and 297.12-299.35. On the equation of quality andthetic character, see Smith and McIntyre 1982, 131, and for the mention of the “ideality” of the noema, see Husserl 1977, 233.16-25, quoted in Smith and McIntyre 1982, 123.

⁹⁸ Besides, note that in Husserl 1977, 218.33-219.42, quoted above, Bolzano’s presentations- and propositions-in-themselves are rather assimilated to the noema, whereas Bolzano’s reference to Mehmel’s abstract judgments and, thus, to species would, according to Husserl, concern the noesis. This too seems to indicate that Husserl does not equate anymore the ideality of the noema and the ideality of the species.

⁹⁹ Although there is, in the *Ideas 1*, a long discussion of general objects, i.e. “essences” (see Husserl 1977, 10.1-38.35).

¹⁰⁰ See Husserl 1977, 48.31-49.17, quoted in Ingarden 1998, 190-191.

¹⁰¹ Twardowski 1996, 158.

¹⁰² I thank one of the referees of this journal for having drawn my attention on this point. On the Greek suffixes, see Smyth 1920, §§840 and 841.

¹⁰³ The proximity between noema and “product” is also mentioned in Fissette 2015, 331 n. 5.

In his late texts, Husserl clearly holds that concepts and propositions, although ideal, are “psychic products”. In the *Crisis*, he writes about science:

Its theories, the logical constructs, are of course not things in the life-world like stones, houses, or trees. They are logical wholes and logical parts made up of ultimate logical elements. To speak with Bolzano, they are ‘representations-in-themselves’, ‘propositions in themselves’, inferences and proofs ‘in themselves’, ideal unities of signification whose logical ideality is determined by their telos, ‘truth in itself’. But this or any other ideality does not change in the least the fact that these are human products (*Gebilde*), essentially related to human actualities and potentialities, and thus belong to this concrete unity of the life-world, whose concreteness thus extends farther than that of ‘things’.¹⁰⁴

Note that according to Husserl, science as an ideal product belongs to the concrete world in two different senses: first, as present “in the individual scientists”, and, second, as “communicated” and present “in the community of scientists”.¹⁰⁵ According to the first sense, ideal concepts and propositions are not “external productions”, but “items produced inside the psychic sphere itself”.¹⁰⁶ After their production, they can be stored by thinking subjects and they form “habits”.¹⁰⁷ To the extent that they are produced and stored by a given, individual subject, ideal concepts and propositions acquire their first “spatial existence”. However, concepts and propositions can also acquire a sort of real extra-psychic existence, thanks to which they are present “in the community of scientists”. Indeed, psychic products can be “embodied” in means of communication, which gives them a “secondary spatial existence”:

The thoughts do not make their appearance in consciousness as something ‘external’. They are not real objects, not spatial objects, but unreal products produced by the mind; and their peculiar essence excludes spatial extension,

¹⁰⁴ Husserl 1976a, 132.32-133.9; trans. Carr, slightly modified.

¹⁰⁵ Husserl 1976a, 133.9-15; trans. Carr.

¹⁰⁶ Husserl 1974, 49-13.14; trans. Cairns, slightly modified.

¹⁰⁷ On the notion of ‘habit’, see notably Husserl 1974, 122.23-123.11.

original locality, and mobility. Like other products of the mind, they admit, however, of a physical embodiment: in their case, an embodiment by the sensuous verbal signs; and thus they gain a secondary spatial existence (that of the spoken or written sentence).¹⁰⁸

Like Twardowski, Husserl says that products embodied in *written* means of communication, i.e. in “documents”, acquire a relative “objectivity” in the sense of mind-independence.

In what follows, I will first treat the ideality of products as present “inside the psychic sphere itself”, and then discuss Husserl’s account of documented products. I will end my presentation with some remarks on the relations between objectivity of thoughts and communication in the late Husserl.

In his late texts, Husserl exposes in detail his change of mind with regard to the ideality of contents. The main novelty is that he no longer admits content-moments, nor transcendent content-species, i.e. universals existing “separated from particulars”. Indeed, he holds that two mental acts thinking ‘2 is smaller than 3’ do not contain proposition-“moments”, or ‘tropes’: both acts contain a “numerically identical” (*numerisch identisch*) proposition, and the “localization” in the act “does not actually individuate” the proposition. As a corollary, there are no transcendent proposition-species anymore: “the irreality of objectivities of understanding does not signify generic universality”.¹⁰⁹ Rather, a content is an “unreal immanent entity” (*ein irreal Immanentes*).¹¹⁰ In sum, two distinct mental acts, of the same person or of different people, can contain numerically the same proposition, i.e. produce numerically the same proposition, and this proposition does not exist anywhere other than in those acts. Hence, if two people are simultaneously thinking, i.e. having as content, the same proposition, numerically the same proposition is in two ‘places’ at the same time. Husserl defends this explicitly:

¹⁰⁸ Husserl 1974, 163.3-163.15; trans. Cairns, slightly modified.

¹⁰⁹ Husserl 1939a, 309-317; trans. Churchill, Ameriks, slightly modified (see also Husserl 2008, 298.8-299.25). Besides, see Husserl, 1974, 162.33-163.3.

¹¹⁰ See Husserl 1939a, 16-17.

[...] they can appear simultaneously in many spatiotemporal positions and yet be numerically identical as the same.¹¹¹

In the analysis I made of Stumpf and Twardowski's theories, thinking the 'same' product, for Hinz and Kunz, entails having two numerically distinct products, with dissimilar genetic-psychological constituents ('thought by Hinz' and 'thought by Kunz'), and numerically distinct, but exactly resemblant contents (e.g. 'animal'). On the contrary, according to Husserl, thinking the 'same' product, for Hinz and Kunz, entails having two numerically distinct entities constituted by dissimilar genetic-psychological constituents ('thought by Hinz' and 'thought by Kunz'), but numerically the same content (e.g. 'animal'):

That a subject conceives a proposition in evidence gives the proposition localization, a unique localization as something conceived by a particular thinker in a particular situation, but not with regard to the proposition as such, which would be the same if conceived at different times in different situations.¹¹²

As emphasized by Künne, Husserl's grounds for criticizing his former theory are epistemological. Indeed, Husserl holds that when someone wants to think of the ideal proposition '2 is smaller than 3', he does not need to "compare" (*vergleichen*) a series of judgments and "abstract" an ideal proposition. When thinking of a judgment with the content '2 is smaller than 3', one is directly acquainted with the ideal proposition '2 is smaller than 3' itself. What one finds in the judgment is the ideal proposition as such, not the instance of a species.¹¹³ However, note that the idea of a 'comparison' is not that important in Husserl's argument, since he holds, in the *Logical Investigations*, that the abstraction of meaning-species can be made on the basis of a unique meaning-moment: Husserl compares the abstraction of meaning with the abstraction of the species "red", and says that this species can be abstracted by considering a unique case of red.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Husserl 1939a, 312; trans. Churchill, Ameriks (see also Husserl 2008, 298.19-20).

¹¹² Husserl 1939a, 312-313 (see also Husserl 2008, 299.21-25).

¹¹³ Husserl 1939a, 315-316.

¹¹⁴ See Husserl 1984/1, II, 111.13-112.6 and Beyer 1996, 157-158.

Thus, Husserl's claim for his new theory is not: "in order to think an ideal proposition, there is no need to 'compare' a series of judgments and 'abstract' an ideal proposition", but more simply: "there is no need to 'abstract' an ideal proposition". Be that as it may, the objection that Künne addresses to Husserl is that such an argument may convince us that concept- and proposition-species do not become "cognitively accessible" in the same manner as other species, but it fails to make the point that concept- and proposition-species do not exist.¹¹⁵

How to defend Husserl against this objection? Following Künne, I think that Husserl's own line of argumentation is indeed not convincing, since it conflates, without further precision, the epistemological and the ontological levels of analysis. However, I think that one can take an alternative path in favour of Husserl. Indeed, an unnoticed but appealing aspect of Husserl's theory is that it provides an original account of the ontological status of concepts and propositions, differing both from 'Platonism' and from the 'trope-view'. Even if Husserl claims to abandon the understanding of contents in terms of universals, it could be said that he nevertheless makes of these contents universals, certainly not transcendent ones, i.e. existing "separated from particulars", but *immanent* ones, i.e. universals '*in re*', constituting metaphysical parts of particulars.¹¹⁶ First of all, Husserl almost explicitly defends such a view, since he holds both that his contents are i) "non-individuated" and ii) "immanent". Besides, holding that the same content exists simultaneously in different places conjoined with an individuating genetic-psychological constituent, i.e. "conceived by a particular thinker in a particular situation", but without being individuated "as such" amounts to the admission of the 'multiple localization' of one and the same general entity. This is precisely what is defended in 'immanent realism' of universals.¹¹⁷ The 'immanent universal' interpretation seems to be confirmed by Husserl's description of the temporal

¹¹⁵ On these questions, see Künne 2013, 129-133.

¹¹⁶ On "immanent realism", see Armstrong 1978, presented above.

¹¹⁷ Note that according to immanent realism, the 'multiple localization' of a universal does not entail a 'multiple realization': two particular red things are both constituted by two distinct individuators, but by numerically the same universal 'redness'. This is different from Husserl's transcendent realism, where a transcendent universal, i.e. "separated from particulars", has a 'multiple realization' in the sense that its instances are numerically distinct tropes (I thank one of the referees of this journal for having brought me to make this precision).

mode of his conceptual and propositional contents. In the *Bernauer Manuscripts on Time-consciousness*, Husserl holds that ideal objects are “supra-temporal” (*überzeitlich*). This does not mean that such objects have no relation to time. First, they have a relation to time to the extent that they are thought of, since, as such, they are grasped in time by subjects with a flow of consciousness, which is temporal. But this time is the “time of givenness” of general objects, not an “objective” time, not a “duration” that enters in their “essence” (*Wesen*).¹¹⁸ Second, such objects have a temporal relation to their “extension”, i.e. they have real, temporal instances. But in that case too, when they are taken as “something general”, they remain “supra-temporal”.¹¹⁹ Now, the late Husserl still affirms of conceptual and propositional contents that they are “supra-temporal”, or that they are “timeless” (*zeitlos*). However, the “timelessness” of these contents is not an “intemporality” (*Unzeitlichkeit*), contrary to what we find in the *Logical Investigations*, but a “mode of temporality”, namely “omnitemporality” (*Allzeitlichkeit*).¹²⁰ Now, transcendent universals, i.e. universals existing “separated from particulars”, like the content-species of the *Logical Investigations*, are “intemporal” beings, i.e. they are not themselves in time. By contrast, immanent universals, since they exist only ‘*in re*’, can only exist *in time*. However, they are “omnitemporal”: they exist in time, but they are still “timeless” in the sense that they can exist at any different moments as numerically the same. Whereas in the *Logical Investigations*, ideal contents were transcendent, ‘Platonic’ universals, i.e. existing “separated from particulars”, these contents, in Husserl’s late texts, resemble immanent, ‘Aristotelian’ universals. In the final analysis, a product, for the late Husserl, is an ontologically complex entity made up of a genetic-psychological constituent (e.g. ‘thought by Hinz’ or ‘thought by Kunz’), responsible for the individuality of the product, and a conceptual or propositional content (e.g. ‘animal’), which resembles an immanent universal. Thus, as for Stumpf and Twardowski, for Husserl, concepts and propositions, although psychic products, have objectivity in the sense of ‘intersubjectivity’: distinct thinking subjects

¹¹⁸ See Husserl 2001, 311.35-312.9 and 316.31-317.3.

¹¹⁹ Husserl 2001, 321.22-322.13.

¹²⁰ Husserl 1939a, 309-314; trans. Churchill, Ameriks.

produce numerically the same concept or proposition, and hence qualitatively the same.

Except this difference concerning the ontological status of conceptual and propositional contents, Husserl's account of products has striking similarities with Twardowski's. Contrary to Stumpf, but with Twardowski, the Husserlian products are logically mind-independent, i.e. "the expressed proposition which is won as a result in logical thinking contains as product of sense nothing of thinking in its own sense itself".¹²¹ Moreover, there is a way to say, in Husserl, that ideal contents are "valid", i.e. existent, "at any time" (*in jeder Zeit*), resembling Twardowski's "eternal" existence of psychic products: ideal contents exist "at any time" as possible, provided that psychic agents are possible which would build these contents.¹²²

More importantly, Husserl, in a way very similar to Twardowski, thinks that psychic products can be "embodied" in real, physical things in the world, i.e. in enduring means of communication, or "documents", and acquire a relative "objectivity" in the sense of mind-independence. One of Husserl's most famous developments on this question is to be found in a passage of "The Origin of Geometry".¹²³ The passage treats of the "objectivity" (*Objektivität*) of thoughts. The two senses of 'objectivity' of thoughts presented in the introduction of this paper, namely 'qualitative sameness of content among distinct thinking subjects' and 'ontological mind-independence', which are also to be found in Stumpf, were known to Husserl. Indeed, they are mentioned in his notes on Stumpf's *Phenomena and Psychic Functions* and *On the Classification of the Sciences*.¹²⁴ Yet in "The Origin of Geometry", Husserl uses 'objectivity' in the sense of 'ontological mind-independence'. He starts his analysis with an individual subject building a "product" at the "intrapersonal" level, i.e. in his "conscious space"

¹²¹ Husserl 1962, 21.23-25; trans. Scanlon.

¹²² See Husserl 2008, 299.1-8, and the parallel passage in 1939a, 312. On the admission of *possibilia* in Husserl's late ontology, see Husserl 1939a, 450.

¹²³ See Husserl 1976b, 368.39-372.2. On "The Origin of Geometry", which has mainly been commented in the so-called 'Continental' tradition, see Derrida 1962, Merleau-Ponty 1998.

¹²⁴ See Husserl, "Stumpf. Ersch<einungen> u<nd> psych<ische> F<unktionen>. Zur Einteilung d<er> Wiss<enschaften> dazu mein Brief 11/5 <19>02 über allgemeine Gegenstände" (Husserl Archives, ms. K II 4, 163b).

(*Bewußtseinsraum*).¹²⁵ Husserl holds that once built, the “same” product can be thought anew by the subject, remaining at his disposal as part of his habit.¹²⁶ Yet this analysis, according to Husserl, concerns a “mere intrasubjective product”, i.e. it is “not gone beyond the subject and his subjective, evident capacities”. In other words, no “objectivity”, i.e. no ontological mind-independence, has been established.¹²⁷ After having said that thanks to oral communication the inventor of a product can lead someone else to build the same product,¹²⁸ Husserl writes:

Now we must note that the objectivity of the ideal product has not yet been fully constituted through such actual transferring of what has been originally produced in one to others who originally reproduce it. What is lacking is the *persisting existence* of the ‘ideal objects’ even during periods in which the inventor and his fellows are no longer wakefully so related or even are no longer alive. What is lacking is their continuing-to-be even when no one has realized them in evidence.¹²⁹

However, since the late Husserl no longer admits transcendent content-species, i.e. universal contents existing “separated from particulars”, the mind-independent existence that he is willing to attribute to his products cannot be full-fledged. The position that he adopts is reminiscent of Twardowski. Indeed, Husserl thinks that the highest degree of ‘mind-independence’ that products can acquire is a potential existence in enduring means of communication. In other words, products, once built, can be stored in documents:

¹²⁵ Husserl, 1976b, 369.1-4; trans. Carr, slightly modified.

¹²⁶ Husserl 1976b, 370.41-45; trans. Carr, slightly modified. On the fact that meanings form a “habit” (*habitus*) in the psychic agent after having been invented, see also Derrida 1962, 92.

¹²⁷ Husserl, 1976b, 369.5-10 and 370.45-47; trans. Carr, slightly modified.

¹²⁸ Husserl 1976b, 371.14-17.

¹²⁹ Husserl 1976b, 371.18-25; trans. Carr, slightly modified.

The important function of written, documenting linguistic expression is that it makes communications possible without immediate or mediate personal address; it is, so to speak, communication become virtual.¹³⁰

For Husserl, written language gives to products the mode of being of “objective validity” (*objektive Gültigkeit*). Thanks to written language, meanings are “reaching beyond the subjectivity now actually cognizing and its acts”. They are “factually existent even when no one is thinking them”, i.e. “in documented form, they have objective factual existence, just like the other objectivities of the cultural world”.¹³¹ Note that meanings, when embodied in a given language, either in written or in spoken form, become what Husserl calls “bound idealities”, i.e. idealities whose existence, it seems to me, depend on a given culture and historical period, as opposed to “free idealities”.¹³² But conceptual and propositional contents taken apart from their embodiment in language are not “bound”, i.e. they do not depend on some given culture and history, but are “omnitemporal”. Besides, it must be emphasized that even if written language is “sensually embodying” products and allows them to “exist objectively in the world”,¹³³ documented meanings still need a thinking subject as the receiver of the text, i.e. a thinking subject who would, as Husserl says, “reactivate” the product, i.e. a potential thinking subject who understands the language of the document.¹³⁴ In sum, for the late Husserl, as for Twardowski, if products have any ‘objectivity’ in the sense of mind-independence, it is in real things in the world, not in a “third realm”.

Before concluding, I would like to stress an important point in the late Husserl’s theory. The ‘objective validity’, or relative mind-independence, that

¹³⁰ Husserl 1976b, 371.26-29. See also Husserl 1963, 398.2-3, where it is explicitly said that the meaning in spoken or written language must be “psychically actualised” (*psychisch aktualisiert*). Moreover, I recall that Husserl admits *possibilia* in his late ontology (see Husserl 1939a, 450).

¹³¹ Husserl 1974, 37.31-38.2; trans. Cairns, slightly modified.

¹³² See Husserl 1939a, 317-324; trans. Churchill, Ameriks, as well as 2008, 299.26-300.2. See also Husserl 1962, 396.29-43 and 1976b, 367.44-368.39.

¹³³ Husserl 1976b, 368.23-25. Moreover, see Husserl 1962, 117.17-23.

¹³⁴ See Husserl 1976b, 372.2, and 2008, 427.26-32, where it is said that “embodied” meanings are accessible to “‘everyone’ [...] who stands in the unity of a communication and tradition with the <subject> giving the signification”.

Husserlian products receive thanks to language should be distinguished from their ‘objectivity’ in the sense of qualitative sameness of content. Notably, one should not attribute to the late Husserl the view that the qualitative sameness of content among distinct thinking subjects is constituted by language and communication. Certainly, in “The Origin of Geometry”, Husserl affirms that the inventor of a psychic product can, by talking, lead someone else to build numerically, and hence qualitatively, the same content:

In the unity of the community of communication among several persons the repeatedly built product becomes conscious not as something similar, but as one product common to all.¹³⁵

But the sameness itself of the content does not depend on communication. It is thought that has the power to build the same, ideal content. Indeed, concepts and propositions are “producible precisely at any time”, and “*in all possible productions, they would be the same*”.¹³⁶ As the late Husserl clearly states, even other human beings, *with whom we have not entered into communication*, can produce the same thoughts as ours:

We can also think of imaginary human beings in an imaginary world, in which these thoughts would be thought and embodied in documents as the same thoughts.¹³⁷

In sum, the objectivity of psychic products in the sense of the qualitative sameness of content is grounded in ‘intersubjective’ cognitive abilities, i.e. in the possession, by distinct thinking subjects, of the same cognitive powers.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Husserl 1976b, 371.14-17; trans. Carr, slightly modified. See also Husserl 1973, 198.1-200.19.

¹³⁶ See Husserl 2008, 299.1-8, quoted above.

¹³⁷ Husserl 2008, 133.31-34. As Derrida says (1962, 95), every ideality could have “another real history”.

¹³⁸ This is precisely the kind of interpretation of “The Origin of Geometry” that Merleau-Ponty (1998) wants to reject.

Conclusion

In 1911, in the age of the “*Psychologismusstreit*”, Brentano, in an appendix to his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, wrote:

<‘Psychologism’> is a word which has lately come into use and when it is spoken many a pious philosopher – like many an orthodox Catholic when he hears the term Modernism – crosses himself as though the devil himself were in it.¹³⁹

Frege and Bolzano were undoubtedly pious philosophers. Both wanted to avoid ‘psychologism’, i.e. ‘cognitive subjectivism’, and they assumed that the assimilation of thoughts to mind-dependent entities would lead to this unfortunate consequence. Indeed, if thoughts were psychic items, the thoughts of different thinking subjects would be numerically distinct, and this numerical distinction would entail a difference in terms of content. Their idea seems to be, with a very Leibnizian flavour, that the numerical distinction of thoughts entails a qualitative distinction.¹⁴⁰ In order to avoid this consequence, both Frege and Bolzano hold that distinct subjects thinking a given thought grasp numerically the same, particular, ontologically mind-independent thought.

The Austro-German philosophers took a distinct path. Indeed, Stumpf, Twardowski, and Husserl, as well as others, like Witasek, Bühler, and also Pfänder, Reinach, and Daubert, described thoughts as “psychic products” (*psychische Gebilde*). Now, such a move, according to these thinkers, does not imply ‘psychologism’ or ‘cognitive subjectivism’. Indeed, thoughts can be ‘products’ and still be ‘objective’, i.e. distinct subjects can think qualitatively the same content. The Austro-German philosophers had different ontological solutions to account for the qualitative sameness of content. Stumpf and Twardowski seem both to hold that concepts and propositions are individual products, or ‘tropes’, numerically

¹³⁹ Brentano 1924-1925, 179; trans. Rancurello, Terrell, McAlister. On this text, and, more broadly, on Brentano’s sarcastic reception of the accusations of psychologism of which he was (supposedly) the victim, see Fiset and Fréchette 2007b, 140-144.

¹⁴⁰ On these points, see the introduction above, as well as Placek 1996 and Moltmann 2013b.

distinct in each thinking subject, but exactly resemblant in terms of content. This exact resemblance allows for saying that two distinct subjects think the ‘same’ concept or proposition. The early Husserl, for his part, does not talk of concepts and propositions as ‘products’. However, he explicitly admits that distinct thinking subjects have numerically distinct content-“moments”, or content-‘tropes’, and nothing in the *Logical Investigations* forbids us from saying that the moments in question are ‘products’ of particular thinking agents. As for the qualitative sameness of these content-moments, it is not threatened by their numerical distinction: two subjects can think the ‘same’ thought, and they do it by instantiating a transcendent, unreal, intemporal universal, i.e. a Platonic universal, “separated from particulars”. The opposition between, on the one hand, Stumpf and Twardowski, and, on the other hand, the early Husserl echoes some recent concerns of Friederike Moltmann, who, integrating Twardowski’s theory of products into contemporary debates in philosophy of mind, evocates two distinct solutions that could account for the “qualitative sameness” of contents (Moltmann calls the products “attitudinal objects”):

First, the sharing of attitudinal objects may consist in the attitudinal objects being exactly similar (though not numerically identical). Second, the sharing of propositional contents may consist in kinds of attitudinal objects being shared.¹⁴¹

Now, the second option proposed by Moltmann is itself to be separated into two sub-options. Indeed, the late Husserl, who explicitly endorses the view that conceptual and propositional contents are ‘products’, affirms that those contents, when built by distinct thinking subjects, are not individuated by their psychic localization, but are numerically the same in distinct subjects. In other words, Husserl’s concepts and propositions resemble immanent universals, i.e. universals existing ‘*in re*’. Such a view is an alternative to the transcendent universals account of the sameness of contents, which was Husserl’s own solution in the *Logical Investigations*. Thus the Austro-German thinkers offer a wide range of solutions to contemporary philosophers willing to bring conceptual and propositional contents

¹⁴¹ Moltmann 2013b, 694.

back ‘into the head’: either these concepts and propositions are exactly resemblant abstract particulars, i.e. ‘tropes’, or their qualitative sameness is guaranteed by universals, alternatively transcendent or immanent. Irrespective of the metaphysical solution that one prefers – and which is not a question of philosophy of mind proper –, the result will be the same as regards the *Psychologismusstreit*: thoughts do not need to dwell in a “third realm” in order to be ‘objective’. They can stay ‘in the head’. Certainly, one can also take them out, and store them in enduring means of communication, i.e. in ‘documents’. Thanks to this, they will persist through time, and be accessible to future audiences. As Husserl writes:

Monuments and written testimonies in documented form create a connexion between the actual beings and the co-present ones in general, and the future respectively the past ones. Plato, to the extent that he published writings with an address to his future reader, directly talked to me, in that I read them.¹⁴²

Documents allow psychic products to live longer than their inventors, to pass from Plato to Husserl, and from Husserl to us. This is the highest degree of ontological mind-independence that thoughts can acquire, embodied in the concrete world, beyond which there is nothing to grasp.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Husserl 2008, 80.21-25.

¹⁴³ Shorter versions of this paper were presented at a conference on Marty in 2014 in Einsiedeln and at the 2015 SoPha Congress in Montréal. I thank the participants for their remarks, especially Denis Fisette and Sébastien Richard. I am particularly grateful to Santiago Echeverri, Guillaume Fréchette, Guy Longworth, Kevin Mulligan, Anne Reboul, and two referees of this journal, who commented on previous drafts of this paper and suggested very useful modifications of its ‘content’. Moreover, I thank Lucie Mercier for our discussions on Husserl’s “The Origin of Geometry”. I also thank Ulrich Melle, the director of the Husserl Archives in Leuven, for allowing me to access to Husserl’s library and manuscripts, and I am particularly grateful to Thomas Vongehr, who helped me during my visit to the Archives. Finally, I thank Nicole Osborne for having checked my English.

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