Husserl joined with other 19th-century Platonistic logicians (Bolzano, Lotze, Frege) in assuming a range of ideal or (as we say today) abstract meanings, which include the "thoughts" or propositions expressed by a given language. Human languages are themselves social artifacts that serve the purpose of communication between people, along the lines just described. Here in a nutshell is Husserl's philosophy of language, which supplements his philosophy of logic.

Husserl posited ideal meanings in order to account for the objectivity of logic. And he proposed a theory of speech activities in order to account for human communication. In Husserl's theory of logic and language, then, activities of speech relate to ideal meanings.

But what exactly are these ideal meanings that language serves to express? In the first edition of the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl proposes a simple answer: the sense expressed by a linguistic expression (say, "the moon") is the ideal form of one's thinking about or "intending" an object in a certain way (say, conceiving or thinking about an earthly orbiter as "the moon"). Now, ideal forms or species are ideal entities along the lines envisioned by Plato (though Husserl's ontology will develop in ways different from the traditional interpretation of Plato's theory of forms).

Husserl assumes a theory of ideal types or species in part in order to identify the type of entity proposed as the sense or meaning of an expression, and so to account for the subject matter of logic and philosophy of language. Husserl here moves into the classical theory of universals. And so, as soon as Husserl has sketched his philosophy of language, on the heels of his philosophy of logic, he begins to move from meaning and language into ontology.

Ontology

Ontology is the theory of being, of what is and how things are. Ontology is also called metaphysics, though there are somewhat different usages of the terms. Some philosophers define metaphysics as speculative theory about reality beyond the reach of all

evidence; the positivists and, before them, Kant rejected meta-physics in this pejorative sense. Other philosophers define ontology as the theory of what types of things exist and then define metaphysics as the further theory of time and space and causation, of whether there is a first cause of everything (perhaps God), of the special attributes of God, of whether there is life after death, and so forth; in this sense metaphysics is focused on certain specific issues of what exists and of the order of things. Here we shall make no distinction between metaphysics and ontology. We shall take ontology to be the theory of what there is. Further questions along the lines indicated as traditional metaphysics will simply take their place as special theories within ontology. However, in due course we shall address Husserl's special innovative conception of what he called formal ontology, considering what categories or structures of the world are particularly basic because they are "formal" structures that apply to wide ranges of things – all this in due time.

Early in the history of Western philosophy, Plato's theory of forms posited a realm of ideal forms or "eidos" to which earthly objects approximate, including, say, the form of humanity in which you and I participate. Aristotle called the forms "universals" and the things that exemplify them "particulars." But Aristotle wanted to bring the forms down to earth, down from the Platonic heaven of eternal forms. A particular human being, say Socrates, is a combination of form and matter, so the form of humanity is realized in Socrates when it informs or gives shape to the matter of which Socrates is composed. For Aristotle, the form of humanity exists in the world of nature, rather than in a heaven of ideal forms. There is much more to both the Platonic and the Aristotelian ontologies, but this brief parody sets the scene for Husserl.

Husserl combines elements of the Platonic and Aristotelian theories. In the case of an individual such as Socrates, Husserl proposes to distinguish three entities: the concrete individual Socrates, the form of humanity, and (here adapting an idea of Aristotle's) Socrates' own concrete instance of humanity. This latter entity Husserl calls a "moment" of Socrates. So how does Husserl account for the relation between the individual Socrates

and the form humanity? The ideal form of humanity is instanti-
ated in a concrete instance of humanity that is a part or moment
of the concrete individual Socrates. Husserl calls this form an
"ideal species" (in *Logical Investigations*) or, alternatively, an
"essence" or "eidos" (in *Ideas* I). The concrete instance of the species
or essence is what he calls a "moment."

Why does Husserl think we need to assume a third entity here,
the moment of humanity in Socrates? Following Aristotle, we
need to distinguish Socrates' humanity from Plato's humanity.
Both individuals share the same form: humanity. But the
humanity in Socrates is numerically distinct from the humanity in
Plato. At any rate, that is how Husserl argues. It seems Husserl
never met a distinction he didn't like. And in the ontology of
species he thinks that we cannot do without any of these three
types of entity: species or essence, individual, and moment. The
challenge for alternative views is to explain "predication," how
individuals have essences or properties, without marking these
distinctions.

Husserl's doctrine of moments takes him from the theory of
universals into the theory of parts and wholes, since called "mere-
ology." For Husserl, the moment of humanity in Socrates is a *part*
of Socrates. Husserl distinguishes between dependent and inde-
pendent parts. If Socrates were to lose his left little finger in an
accident while carpentering, the severed finger would still exist,
independently of the whole of which it was a part, namely,
Socrates or his body. But Socrates' humanity cannot be separated
from Socrates, on pain of nonexistence: his particular instance of
humanity cannot exist unless Socrates exists. Thus, Husserl holds,
a moment – here, Socrates' humanity – is a dependent part: a part
that cannot exist separately from the whole of which it is a part
(here, Socrates).

This distinction between dependent and independent parts is a
highly specialized piece of ontology, which most philosophers
prefer to avoid addressing. (There seem bigger fishes to fry, say,
in considering the essence of humanity, turning to ethics or
human rights.) Nonetheless, Husserl makes considerable use of this
notion of "moments," as we shall see.

One of the most innovative ideas in Husserl's ontology – arguably new in the history of metaphysics – is the distinction he draws between "formal" and "material" ontology. Husserl distinguishes between formal and material essences (think again of forms). Material essences, or "regions," are substantive (in that sense "material") domains of entities, including, on Husserl's appraisal, Nature, Culture (*Geist* or spirit), and Consciousness. Entities in these three regions are defined by very different properties: natural objects, by spatiotemporal location; cultural objects, by social relations, values, and institutions; acts of consciousness, by intentionality. Formal essences, or "categories," govern entities in any domain or region. Categorial forms include Number, Group, Part, Individual, Property or Relation, State of Affairs, and so on. Husserl's list is incomplete, but includes both mathematical forms and "logical" forms (understood as forms in the world, as opposed to forms of linguistic expression). Husserl's scheme of formal and material essences, or categories, shapes his whole philosophical system, and we shall return to the details of that scheme in Chapter 4.

One of the biggest problems in philosophy is the doctrine of realism: the thesis that the world around us – including trees, birds, buildings, other people, electrons, black holes, and so on – exists independently of whether we see or think about or know of these things. The opposite doctrine is called idealism: the thesis that the world depends for its existence on our seeing and thinking about it. George Berkeley, the famous idealist, held that this tree I see just is a bundle of ideas in my mind (or in God's mind). As noted in the Chapter 1, Husserl wrestled all his life with the problem of realism and idealism, settling on a novel position he called "transcendental idealism" – a term Husserl borrowed, with modification, from Immanuel Kant. This doctrine was closely allied with Husserl's mature conception of phenomenology.

The mind–body problem too lies just around the corner: how is mind related to body, especially the brain, given that mental activity depends on brain activity? This problem was to loom large in the years after Husserl's death. Yet it is very much a part of the problem space of phenomenology.