

# Husserl on Expression and Phenomenological Description

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**Abstract:** In Husserl's phenomenology, phenomenological cognition is to be accomplished only when what is seen in the phenomenological reduction becomes expressed in language and described. The aim of this paper is to understand what phenomenological description really is, by discussing the general relationship between 'seeing' and 'expressing'. The research begins with a clarification of the *general* relationship between 'intuition' and 'expression' as elucidated in Husserl's texts. The author will then try to discuss the relationship between *phenomenological* intuition and its expression, a relationship which Husserl scarcely considered (II). This discussion will lead to a revelation of the function of metaphorical expression in phenomenological description (III). Finally, the author will give a clear if paradoxical depiction of phenomenological description of the ultimate and deepest constituting dimension, which would be the final aim of phenomenology.

**Key Terms:** intuition, expression, phenomenological description, phenomenological language, metaphor.

The philosophical working Husserl named 'phenomenology' is actually that of his *phenomenological description*, i.e., his use of language to describe what he 'sees' under the phenomenological reduction. Husserl attached great importance to the act of 'seeing', that is, intuiting a matter (*Sache*) exactly as it is (cf. *Hua* III/1, 51). Yet this does not mean that the act of seeing alone is sufficient for cognition of a matter. Husserl rather thought that cognition is to be acquired only when what is phenomenologically seen is *expressed*



*in language* and thereby *described*. Thus, a clear understanding of phenomenological description is a key to comprehension of what phenomenology really is.

It is well known that Husserl kept his interest in expression and language all his life and gave some fruitful analyses of them. But he hardly gave consideration to the problem of a ‘phenomenological language’ which should be used in the phenomenological descriptions. This situation makes it all the more important especially in a methodological sense, to clarify what a phenomenological description is, although this would surpass Husserl’s actual analyses and works.

In an attempt to enhance understanding of phenomenological description, this paper will discuss the relationship between ‘seeing’ and ‘expressing’. In the first chapter of this paper (I), I will begin my discussion with a clarification of the *general* relationship between ‘intuition’ and ‘expression’ as elucidated in Husserl’s texts. I will then try to discuss the relationship between *phenomenological* intuition and its expression, a relationship which Husserl scarcely considered (II). This discussion will lead to a revelation of the function of metaphorical expression in phenomenological description (III). Finally, I will give a clear if paradoxical depiction of phenomenological description of the ultimate and deepest constituting dimension, which would be the final aim of phenomenology.

## I. General Connection Between Intuition and Verbal Expression

The relationship between intuition and language has been discussed by numerous philosophers since ancient times as they strove to explain the acquisition of knowledge. The question is: Can we intuit something without the mediation of language? Or is verbal expression inevitable – an indispensable part of cognition? We will start our discussion by determining what Husserl thought about this matter. Based on his texts, particularly his first and sixth *Logical Investigations* and the sections 124 - 126 of *Ideas I*, I will elucidate a close interconnection between intuition and verbal expression.

### (1) Expression Requires Verbal Representations

The first point I would like to make regarding verbal expression is that, as is generally known, Husserl distinguishes the “non-sensuous” or mental aspects of expression from its “sensuous” or corporeal side (such as verbal sounds that are



physically produced and heard, and written letters that can be seen), and attaches greater importance to the former facets (cf. *Ideas I*, § 124). However, he believes that it is impossible to express anything without an image or representation (*Vorstellung*) of words. According to his first *Logical Investigation*, “expressions also play a great part in uncommunicated, interior mental life”, and the essence of such expressions is a having meaning (*Bedeutung*) in itself. But this is not to say that expressions do not require any words. He stresses that, in order to express something, even in the isolation of one’s own mind, it is necessary to at least *imagine words*<sup>1</sup>. With the support of such verbal images or representations (cf. Hua XIX/1, 47, “*Wortvorstellung*”; LI I, 283), meaning-giving acts (acts of expression) are generated or awakened in the mind (Hua XIX/1, 46; LI I, 282), and then the words appear in the form of expressions with meaning. Thus, verbal expressions come into existence just prior to the generation of physically verbalized sounds or written signs, yet *essentially supported by those verbal representations*.

(2) Static and Dynamic Relationships Between Meaning-Intention and Meaning-Fulfillment

We must then ask how intuitions are related to such expressions. In the sixth *Logical Investigation*, Husserl defines the relationship between them as relationship between meaning-intention (*Bedeutungsintention*) and meaning-fulfillment (*Bedeutungserfüllung*), and classifies this relationship into two types: “static” and “dynamic” relationships. In static relationships, intuitive acts and expressive acts are statically unified, i.e., the meaning-intention of a verbal expression is based on intuition, and is thereby related to its object, as in the case where I speak of my inkpot when the inkpot stands before me and I see it (Hua XIX/2, 558; LI II, 687f.). In dynamic relationships, on the other hand, an expression *first* functions in a merely symbolic fashion, and *then* is joined by a ‘more or less’ corresponding intuition later, so that the meaning-intention of the expression is thereby more or less fulfilled (Hua XIX/2, 566; LI II, 694). The dynamic relationship is therefore an event which *unfolds itself in time* (“an event of self-fulfillment”), while the static relationship is a lasting outcome of a temporal transaction (“a tranquil state of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hua XIX/1, 42; LI I, 278f. Cf. also Hua XIX/2, 619f.; LI II, 738f. Husserl says here: “Each signitive act” requires a “founding content”, i.e., the “representational content” of the founding intuition of a sign, and this content “really assists the signitive act”.



being-fulfilled”) (Hua XIX/2, 567f.; LI II,695f.).

If we take various examples cited in the sixth *Logical Investigation* into consideration, however, we realize that the dynamic relationship unfolded in time must be further classified into the following two categories: In the first case, a verbal expression is first given in a symbolic fashion and then its meaning-intention is fulfilled on the basis of intuition. In the second case, an intuition is given *first*, and *then* a meaning-intention is formed in order to express it, and *after that*, the intention is fulfilled by the very intuition<sup>2</sup>. An example of the case that falls into the second category is the case in which one looks out into a garden and then gives expression to his perception of the garden in the words: “There flies a blackbird!”(Hua XIX/2, 550; LI II, 680). This is precisely a *dynamic, temporally unfolded process* in which a perception of the garden is *first* given, *then* a meaning-intention is formed, supported by the representation of the words “There flies a blackbird”, and *after that*, this intention is more or less fulfilled by that perception.

### (3) The Role of Categorial Formation of Meaning-Intention

For our final aim to clarify what phenomenological description is, we now need to pay careful attention to the second type of dynamic relationship discussed above. Husserl elaborates his explanation for this case, stating that it is also possible to “base different statements on the same perception”. For example, we could say, “That is a black bird!”, “There flies that black bird!”, “There it soars!”, and so forth (Hua XIX/2, 550; LI II, 680). This indicates, in my estimation, the following three points: First, various words and sentences can be represented (*vorgestellt*) on the basis of the same perception, and supported by them, various meaning-intentions can be formed. Second, if these intentions are more or less fulfilled by the perception in question, various kinds of cognition can be obtained. Consequently, *cognition depends upon the formation of meaning-intentions through the representation of words and sentences*. As is indicated in the first *Logical Investigation*, it is precisely through the “varying [categorial] intellectual forms” that “expressions and their meaning-intentions” come to mean their objects and fit in with intuitions. Therefore, various expressive acts can be performed and various kinds of cognition can be obtained as long as *meaning-intentions can be categorially formed in different ways* on the basis of the same intuition, i.e., as long as the same intuition can be

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Hua V, 55f. 100.



categorially apprehended *in varying ways* (Hua XIX/1, 55; LI I, 289). The expressive act ‘engraves’ the intuition with varying categorial forms and puts it in words (“*ausprägen*”: Hua XIX/2, 545). Thus, if the categorial forms are suitable to the founding intuition, the meaning-intentions of expressive act can be more or less fulfilled by this intuition, and thereby various kinds of cognition can be obtained. Accordingly, it is now clear that not only the basis of intuition but also the *categorial formation of meaning-intention* of expressive act play very important roles in the acquisition of cognition. Although cognition must be based on intuition, it can be obtained only after the ‘articulation’ of this founding intuition through these categorial forms.

(4) Mirror or Imprint?

It is well known that Husserl believes that the “semantic essence” (*bedeutungsmäßiges Wesen*) of an act is parallel to, or more precisely, coincides with, its “intentional essence” (*intentionales Wesen*) (Hua XIX/1, 431, 435; LI II, 590, 593). He therefore asserts that “the intentional essence of the act of intuition gets (more or less perfectly) *fitted into* (*sich anpassen*) the semantic essence of the act of expression” (Hua XIX/2, 566; LI II, 694), or that “the expression seems to *be applied* (*aufgelegt*) to the thing and to *clothe it like a garment* (*Kleid*)” (Hua XIX/2, 559; LI II, 688). Yet this does not mean that articulation is already perfectly executed within the intuitive act, nor that the expressive act only mirrors or depicts the intuitive act. As is clearly shown in *Ideas I*, the expressive act “depicts *in its own colors*” every other intentionality of the substratum that is to be expressed, and hence, “*imprints* (*einbilden*) *on it its own form of ‘conceptuality’*” (Hua III/1, 286 [257]). Therefore, expression is “not” something like “a coat of varnish”, or like “a piece of clothing” covering the substratum (Hua III/1, 288[259]). Even if the substratum already more or less contains in itself its articulations, the expressive act *has an effect on it, imprints on it its own form of conceptuality*, and hence *actually articulates it in its own logical form*. The meaning-intention of the expressive act is then more or less fulfilled by that intuitive stratum. Only then is cognition acquired.

(5) Excess and Inadequacy

There are two more points that need to be made concerning the general relationship between intuition and expression.

(i) According to Husserl, “*for the most part* (*zumeist*)”, the substratum to be



expressed is “a confused unitary something which does not actually include in itself its articulation,” but instead, it owes its articulation to “mere adaptation to the stratum of logical expression actually articulated and effected in original actionality” (Hua III/1, 289 [260]). Therefore, it can happen that the intuitive substratum remains all the more confused because the stratum of expression is already sufficiently distinct (cf. op. cit.). It can also happen that a part of the meaning-intention, which has been formed on the basis of the intuition, does not coincide with the very intuition, but instead, exceeds it. That is, there is always *a danger that verbal expression exceeds intuition*. That is why it is necessary, in order to have cognition of something, not only to form a meaning-intention on the basis of intuition, but also to *fulfill this intention by the intuition in question, namely, by eliminating all confusion in the intuitive substratum and making everything distinct* (cf. Hua III/1, 289f. [260]). The meaning-fulfillment is indeed “not essential to the expression as such” (Hua XIX/1, 44; LI I, 281), but it is crucial for the acquisition of cognition.

(ii) On the other hand, a sort of “universality” (*Allgemeinheit*) belongs to each expression and moment of expression (Hua III/1, 288 [259], 291 [261f.]), so that “all the particulars of the expressed can never be reflected in the expression”. Thus, “whole dimensions of variability in the substratum do not enter at all into the expressive signifying (*das ausdrückende Bedeuten*)” (Hua III/1, 291 [261f.]). Therefore, while cognition can be reached only after expression through verbal articulation, the expressive signifying can never gather all the particulars of the intuition in its articulation of universal meaning. This means that “the stratum of signifying is not, and of essential necessity cannot be, a kind of reduplication of the substratum” (op. cit.). Derrida finds here “*an essential displacement of expression (un déplacement essentiel de l’expression)* that will forever prevent it from reissuing the stratum of sense (*Sinn*)”. In this way, “Signifying (*le vouloir-dire; Bedeuten*) will never be the duplicate of the [noematic] sense [of the substratum], and this difference is nothing less than the difference of the concept (*[la différence] du concept*)”<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the signifying of the expression can never catch up with the rich substratum of the intuition. An essential gap lies between them. Even if the expression is more or less fulfilled by the intuition, we will always have a feeling of

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<sup>3</sup> Derrida 1972, 201 [168]; cf. also Derrida 1973, 122.



inadequacy about the expression.

(6) Dynamic Interconnection

Thus we have seen that the general relationship between expression and intuition in Husserl is not a simple one in which an intuition would be first given and then mirrored in an expressive act. Expression is rather “a mental formation (*eine geistige Formung*) that exercises new intentional functions on the intentional substratum and which, correlatively, is subjected to the intentional functions of the substratum” (Hua III/1, 288 [259]). There is an interconnection to be seen here, and it is, if we follow the above discussion, a dynamic one: On the one hand, expression must be based on a certain intuition, but on the other, the intuition is first actually (logically) articulated by the expressive act, which is assisted by the representation of words and sentences. The meaning-intention of the expression is then more or less fulfilled by that base intuition, and then and only then is cognition acquired. Moreover, the expression can sometimes exceed the actual intuition because the substratum remains confused for the most part and it owes its articulation to the expressive act. On the other hand, the expressive act can never catch up with the rich substratum of intuition, because it tries to scoop up this substratum, so to speak, with a net formed only of universal meanings. Essential differences, therefore, always lie between intuition and expression, and when we try to have cognition of something, we always feel a discrepancy between what is expressed and what is actually intuited. Thus, the intuition of the matter repeatedly demands that we try again to express ‘what has not yet been scooped up’ by making another articulation, or to reformulate an excessive expression. Accordingly, in Husserl, what is given (intuition) never coincides perfectly with what is signified (expression). Rather, both moments always partially overlap each other, restraining each other and placing demands on each other. This situation necessarily leads to *an open dynamic-dialectic movement*<sup>4</sup> of *re-cognition*. The relationship between intuition and expression in Husserl is thus *a dynamic interconnection*, and description and cognition, in general, must be taken as *an open dynamic movement*.

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<sup>4</sup> For an account of the expression ‘open dialectic’, cf. Waldenfels, esp. pp. 77f.



## II. The Relationship Between Phenomenological Intuition and Its Expression

With the above discussions, let us now enter into a consideration of the relationship between intuition and expression *in phenomenological description*.

According to Husserl, “the phenomenological method operates exclusively in *acts of reflection*” (Hua III/1, 162 [144]), and these reflections must be “*reflective intuitions of essences*” (cf. Hua III/1, 172 [153]), since phenomenology will be “a descriptive *eidetic doctrine of transcendently pure mental processes as viewed in the phenomenological attitude*” (Hua III/1, 156 [139]). He states: “In phenomenology [...], we perform *acts of seeing essences* immediately in given examples of transcendently pure consciousness and *fix them conceptually and terminologically*” (Hua III/1, 139f. [124]). Therefore, it would appear that, in phenomenology, a reflective intuition of essence is *first* performed under the phenomenological reduction, and *then* an expressive act is added to it. The preceding discussion, however, has shown that intuition and its expression are closely interconnected, and that the *articulation of the founding intuition by the expressive act* plays a very important role in the acquisition of cognition. In the following sections, we will see a parallel in the area of phenomenological description.

### (1) The Expression ‘*Cogito*’

The first point that needs to be made is that Husserl’s description and cognition of *cogitatio* as the most universal and essential structure of consciousness already depends a great deal upon the articulation of reflective expressing, although this process begins with, and is based on, the founding reflective intuitions. In *Cartesian Meditations* Husserl writes: “The beginning point [of the descriptive theory of consciousness] is the pure and, so to speak, *as yet dumb experience (noch stumme Erfahrung)*, which must now be brought to a pure enunciation of its proper sense for the first time. But the actual first enunciation is the Cartesian enunciation of *ego cogito*” (Hua I, 77), and this ‘*cogito*’ is now, as is clearly shown in *Crisis*, the “intentionality in those familiar forms which are *engraved upon language (in den sprachlich ausgeprägten, vertrauten Gestalten)*: ‘I see a tree which is green; I hear the rustling of its leaves, I smell its blossoms,’ etc.” (Hua VI, 236; Cr, 233). In fact, *based on these reflective expressions*, Husserl discovers a structure





engraved upon them, and takes this structure to be the essential structure of consciousness. That is, he discovers this structure of ‘consciousness of something’ (‘intentionality’) from the *categorial form of those reflective expressions in our natural language*. This means that his cognition of the most universal and essential structure of consciousness already greatly depends upon the *categorial articulation of the reflective expression within natural discourse*, although the process of cognition begins with, and is based on, still unexpressed reflective intuitions.

Another point we must not overlook: the expression ‘*cogito*’ is a historical one. As is clearly shown in *Crisis*, in phenomenological description we use “the three headings, *ego - cogitatio - cogitata*, in the same manner in which they were articulated by Descartes (*in Cartesianischer Rede*)”, and we must pursue them one by one, moving from reflection upon *cogitata* to reflection upon *cogitatio*, and then on to reflection upon *ego* (Hua VI, 174f.; Cr, 171f.). Thus, it is clear that the work of phenomenological description is connected with, and depends upon, *articulation of the historical Cartesian manner of speaking*, although the direction of the process (from *cogitata* via *cogitatio* to *ego*) is the opposite of that suggested in the Cartesian approach.

Accordingly, we can say that *acts of expression* play an important role also in the phenomenological description and cognition. Certainly, cognition of the essential structure of consciousness begins with, and is based on, reflective intuition upon mental processes. Yet in order to describe and cognize the essence of the phenomenologically intuited life, the phenomenologizing subject, i.e., the person executing phenomenology, has to express this life in language, and thereby imprint on it the conceptuality of language. As Merleau-Ponty says, “for the speaking subject, expressing is a *coming to awareness (prendre conscience)*”, and thus, “he does not express himself only to others, he also *expresses himself in order to discover what he means himself (il exprime pour savoir lui-même ce qu’il vise)*”<sup>5</sup>. And such an act of expression is, in Husserl’s phenomenology, performed in the historical sediment of those expressions which imply historicity in themselves.

## (2) Excess and Inadequacy

According to our consideration in Chapter I, however, we may and must suppose

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<sup>5</sup> Merleau-Ponty, 113.



that an expression often *exceeds* intuition also in the phenomenological field, and that the intuitive substratum may remain confused because the expression is too explicit. In fact, Husserl points out in regard to reflective cognition, that there is a “question concerning how we are to protect ourselves from statements which *go beyond* what is actually given at the moment and which is to be seized upon eidetically” (Hua III/1, 176 [157]). In the phenomenological description we are also exposed to such a danger: *expression may exceed phenomenological reflective intuition*, and hence, it will be necessary to fulfill the meaning-intention of the expression by the founding intuition, namely by eliminating all confusion in the base intuition and replacing it with distinctness.

On the other hand, we may also suppose that all the particulars of the phenomenologically intuited can never be reflected in the “cogitative” expression which has a *universal* character. In fact, Husserl states in *Ideas I* that in phenomenology, which will be a descriptive *eidetic* doctrine, we “drop the individual element (*Individuation*)” and accept a mental process as an “eidetic singularity” (*eidetische Singularität*), i.e., in the mode of the lowest essence. Nor do we stop there. Directly based on this phenomenological essential intuition, we go on to “*seize upon an essence by simple ‘abstraction’*” (*Wesenserfassung durch schlichte ‘Abstraktion’*), that is, we seize upon “*a salient ‘moment’*” (*ein abgehobenes ‘Moment’*) of that eidetic singularity as a “typical essence” (*typisches Wesen*), and describe it conceptually, for example, as the essence of the “perception of physical things”, or as “the generic essence of perception taken universally”. In a word, phenomenology describes those phenomenological essences of consciousness which belong to a “*higher level* of specificity” than to “eidetic singularities” (Hua III/1, 154-157 [138-140]).

But why does phenomenology do this? Husserl does not give any reason. In my opinion, however, phenomenology cannot help but describe essences belonging to a higher level precisely because its statements, which have a *universal* character, can never reflect all the particulars of eidetic singularities, but can only express one or more salient moments of them. Therefore, *expression in phenomenological description can never catch up with the wealth of phenomenological intuition*, though it can sometimes exceed it. There is an essential difference between ‘what is expressed’ and ‘what is really given’.

Accordingly, also in a phenomenological description, phenomenological intuition must repeatedly demand that excess expressions be reformed and new attempts be made



to scoop up that ‘which has not yet been expressed’ in the net of a new articulation. The relationship between phenomenological intuition and its expression, just as that between intuition and expression in general, is thus nothing other than a *dynamic interconnection*, and phenomenological description and cognition of the essential structure of consciousness must be taken as an *open dynamic movement* along this interconnection.

### III. The Function of Metaphor in Phenomenological Description

Although the foregoing discussion has taken a long way in characterizing phenomenological description, I believe it is not yet sufficient. For it still covers only phenomenological description of the *constituted* level of intentionality. In this last chapter, we will discuss an important role metaphorical expression plays in phenomenological description and then try to explicate the phenomenological description of the ultimate *constituting* dimension, which will be the final aim of phenomenology.

In *Ideas I*, Husserl clearly mentions that phenomenology uses “common language” (*allgemeine Sprache*) or “generally accepted language” (*allgemein geltende Sprache*) (Hua III/1, 140 [124f.]). Yet at the same time, Husserl says, “[...] in phenomenology, at the beginning, all concepts or terms must remain in flux in a certain way”. Thus, “we can only count on definitive terminologies at a very advanced stage of development of this science”. He notes that, “[f]or the beginning, any expression is good and, more particularly, any suitably chosen figurative expression (*bildlicher Ausdruck*) which enables us to guide our regard to a phenomenological occurrence which can be clearly seized upon”(Hua III/1,190 [170]). In fact, Husserl uses various figurative expressions in his phenomenological description in *Ideas I* (cf. e.g., “*geistiger Blick*”, “*Blickstrahl*” (Hua III/1, 211 [189]), and “*erhellendes Licht*” (op. cit., 213 [191])). Thus we can say that figurative expressions are accepted and approved of in phenomenological description, although they are limited to the “beginning” stages. As is already indicated in *Logical Investigations* (Hua XIX/1, 14ff.; LU I, 254ff.), matters intuited phenomenologically are not at all such as are immediately suitable to natural common language. That is why they have to be indicated with figurative expressions in the beginning; then, gradually, terminologies for them can be fixed by fulfilling these expressions with



phenomenological intuitions. In this regard, we should remember that the expressions “parenthesizing” (*Einklammerung*) and “excluding” (*Ausschaltung*) which express and characterize phenomenological ἐποχή were already kinds of “metaphors” (cf. Hua III/1, 64 [55f.]). By combining and repeating such expressions (cf. Hua III/1, 9 [6]), Husserl tried to grasp and cognize the very matter ἐποχή, which he was seeing phenomenologically.

Yet if we take into consideration the deepest *constituting* dimension of time-consciousness, which was left out of account in *Ideas I*, but the elucidation of which will be the ultimate aim of phenomenology, we may suppose that the use of metaphorical expressions in phenomenological description is not provisional or limited to the “beginning” stages, but rather essential to it.

Actually, in a manuscript written in the early stages of his analyses of time, Husserl mentioned that we have “no names” for the constituting dimension of time-consciousness, so we cannot help but speak of it “*in conformity with what is constituted*” and use concepts which designate it “*metaphorically*” (ex. “flow”) (Hua X, 371)<sup>6</sup>. Since the constituting dimension of time-consciousness was first revealed by phenomenology, natural language that predates this science includes only names that designate things that had already been temporally constituted by time-consciousness. Therefore, in speaking of the constituting dimension, we have no choice but to speak of it *metaphorically* using concepts which designate constituted beings.

Moreover, since the dimension of time-consciousness is, so to speak, that of “primal-being” (*Ursein*)<sup>7</sup> or rather “pre-being” (*Vor-Sein*)<sup>8</sup> which constitutes all beings for the first time, it cannot be reached by *objectifying reflective intuition*, which necessarily *ontifies* its object, nor can it be designated by normal expression in natural language, which objectifies and thus ontifies its theme. The constituting dimension of pre-being, “the primordial streaming” (*das urtümliche Strömen*), is “not able to be experienced” (*unerfahrbar*) and “unutterable” (*unsagbar*); as soon as it is reflectively “exhibited” (*aufgewiesen*) and “made the theme of a statement”, it is precisely “ontified”

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. also Brough, LI and LIVf.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Hua XXXIV, 172.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Hua Mat VIII, 269, 185ff.



(*ontifiziert*) (Hua Mat VIII, 269)<sup>9</sup>. The constituting dimension of pre-being can never be intuited through subsequent reflection; rather, we are only non-thematically aware of it internally and pre-reflectively<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, in speaking of this dimension, we cannot help *inquiring into it regressively*<sup>11</sup> in ‘apodictic evidence’ (i.e., in a manner that we cannot think otherwise as long as we think on the basis of what is reflectively intuited)<sup>12</sup> and trying to express it (the pre-being dimension) metaphorically in natural language, even though such language was originally developed only to name constituted beings. This is the only way to achieve a phenomenological description of the ultimate constituting level; thus metaphorical expression is inevitable.

However, it must be noted that since the ultimate constituting dimension of pre-being is ‘something we are only pre-reflectively aware of’, it can never be directly intuited and objectified through the reflection, and thus, metaphors which try to express it can also never be fulfilled by that subsequent reflective intuition. Even if a regressive inquiry is supported by an apodictic evidence, cognition in the sense discussed above cannot be achieved concerning the ultimate dimension, because these metaphorical expressions cannot be fulfilled through the phenomenological intuition of the subsequent reflection. If this is the case, does this mean that we have to say that metaphorical expression used in phenomenological description is unable to reach the ultimate dimension of phenomenology after all?

In striving to answer this question, this paper will conclude with a brief discussion of the character of the metaphorical expression used in phenomenological description as well as of the general character of the metaphor in natural discourse. In this way, it is hoped that we will achieve an understanding of the possibilities of the use of metaphorical expressions in phenomenological description.

In a manuscript written in the 1930’s, Husserl states, “[w]e must notice that every natural discourse (*natürliche Rede*) with its natural metaphoric nature (*natürliche Bildlichkeit*) [...] has a worldliness (*Weltlichkeit*) [a basis in the real world], and that all

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. also Held, 103.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Held, 146: “innesein”.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Held, 118: “*regressiv deduktive Erschließung*”.

<sup>12</sup> For an account of this interpretation of “apodictic evidence”, cf. Sakakibara. Cf. also Hua XVII, 206, 256.



phenomenological discourse therefore *entirely changes* its meaning so long as it must use natural language” (Hua XV, 389f.). Accordingly, though we must use metaphorical expressions in phenomenological discourse, they must not be ordinary natural metaphors based in the real world, but must have their meaning modified entirely. As Fink appropriately pointed out, analogies in phenomenological statements are not “natural analogies” which compare one ‘being’ with another, but rather, “an analogy to the analogy which occurs within natural discourse”<sup>13</sup>. It analogically explicates the dimension of pre-being using ontic-mundane categories<sup>14</sup>.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that it would be possible to create another language which would be totally different from natural language. As Husserl himself says, phenomenological discourse “must use natural language”. Therefore, we must conclude with Orth that the modification of meaning in phenomenological discourse is “that which occurs immanently in any literary work, which can make use of nothing other than *natural human language*”<sup>15</sup>.

But do metaphorical expressions in natural discourse actually act in this way? According to Edie, metaphor in general can arise “only when we try actually to put experience into words”, and only when words follow syntactical rules, keep their original sense, and yet are *used in unusual way*. “A word can become a metaphor, take on a new sense, only because, and precisely because it can enable us to take it as something else without ceasing thereby to signify its own original meaning”<sup>16</sup>. And, what is more important for us, some metaphorical usages “make us see what has not before been seen and force on us a new perspective”. Thus, by such acts of metaphorical expression, we “create new realms of meaning and thereby enable ourselves to see what before could not be seen”<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Fink, 98-100.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Fink, 107.

<sup>15</sup> Orth, 18.

<sup>16</sup> Edie, 187. According to Husserl’s theory, we are also able to say that an expression can become a metaphor when it follows the rules of “pure theory of meaning-forms” (Hua XIX/1, 347; LI II, 525f.), which discourage “nonsense” (*Unsinn*) (Hua XIX/1, 334; LI II, 516f.), and yet it is used in unusual way or is occasionally “(formally or materially) countersensical” (*widersinnig*) (cf. Hua XIX/1, 343f.; LI II, 523f.).

<sup>17</sup> Edie, 190. Ricœur calls this function of metaphor “a semantic innovation” (*une innovation sémantique*). Cf. Ricœur, 126.



Thus we are able to say that metaphorical expressions in the natural human language that evolved through a historical process have in themselves great potential to reveal and make us see the ultimate dimension of phenomenology, which subsequent reflection (phenomenological seeing) can never reach and of which we are only aware non-thematically or pre-reflectively. Certainly, such metaphorical expressions can never be fulfilled by subsequent reflective intuition (phenomenological seeing). Nevertheless, in order to understand the ultimate dimension, it is necessary for us to at least express it. All we can do is attempt to seek a metaphor which would make us 'see' that dimension of which we are only aware pre-reflectively. It is such metaphorical expressions in phenomenological description that reveal, make us see, and explicate this dimension for the first time<sup>18</sup>. Thus, phenomenological description of the ultimate dimension will be developed through an open movement that is continuously searching a better/more suitable metaphor.

## Conclusion

What is phenomenological description? This paper began by determining that there is a dynamic interconnection between 'seeing phenomenologically' and 'expressing in language' in the phenomenological description of *constituted* intentionality. We then went on to demonstrate that metaphorical expressions are essential to phenomenological descriptions, especially in the case of phenomenological description of the ultimate *constituting* dimension, which will be the final aim of phenomenology. In describing this dimension which cannot be reached through subsequent reflective intuition, we have to conduct regressive inquiry in apodictic evidence starting from, and based on, what has been intuited phenomenologically, and then to try to express that dimension metaphorically using our historical natural language. In this case, 'phenomenological seeing' of the subsequent reflection gives us only the starting point for regressive inquiry:

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<sup>18</sup> The expression "the flowing but fixed living present" (*die strömend-stehende lebendige Gegenwart*) which Husserl often used in the 1930's, can be simply taken to be only a "materially countersensical" expression. But both "flowing" and "fixed" are determinations of the living present which have been acquired through regressive inquiry based on subsequent reflection. The expression "flowing but fixed" is thus a prominent metaphorical expression which makes us see and explicates the ultimate constituting dimension of phenomenology.



it cannot fulfill an expressed metaphor. All that we can do, then, is to develop an open movement seeking for a better/more suitable metaphor which will make us see and make us understand that dimension better, a dimension of which we are only aware pre-reflectively.

Yet we may still ask what it means to ‘see and understand’ this dimension through metaphorical expressions? This cannot be a fulfilment by the intuition in the sense discussed above. To pursue this problem in detail will be one of my future tasks.

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All *emphases* and additions ([...]) in quotations are made by the author.

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## 胡賽爾論表達與現象學描述

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**內容摘要：**在胡塞爾的現象學中，唯有當現象學還原的內容可以用語言表達，同時被描述出來時，才能成就現象學認知。本文的目的是藉由討論「觀看」( seeing )與「表達」( expressing )的一般性關係，來理解現象學描述究竟為何。本文一開始首先釐清胡塞爾的文本所闡述的「直觀」與「表達」的一般性關係。接著筆者將嘗試討論現象學直觀與現象學表達之間的關係，胡塞爾對此種關係鮮少考慮。經過討論之後，即可揭露現象學描述中隱喻表達的功能。最後，筆者將清晰（容或矛盾）地描繪地終極且最深刻的現象學描述，這也是現象學的最終目的。

**關鍵詞：**直觀、表達、現象學描述、現象學語言、隱喻

