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NON-DECLARATIVE SENTENCES AND COMMUNICATION IN HUSSERL'S *LOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS*

**Contributions to a theory on communicative
acts in the light of Husserl and Austin**

I. Starting at the end, in the guise of an introduction

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In *Logical Investigations*, principally in the undervalued last chapter of the Sixth Investigation, we find the fundamentals for a theory about the logical-semantic status of non-declarative sentences that express desires, questions, orders, promises, etc.¹ This sketch of a theory responds to the questions that were raised in the very first paragraph of the Sixth Investigation about intentionality in general and, in particular, about the acts that could be »carriers« of meaning.²

Contrary to what is commonly thought, this doctrine of non-declarative sentences, and of the »not-objectifying acts« (*nicht-objektivierende Akte*) that these sentences express, is, therefore, deeply rooted in the theoretical corpus of the *Investigations*. For that very reason, it not only has far-reaching consequences for various domains (e.g. with regard to the theories on language and the intentionality of conscience), but is also based, in turn, on a set of very well-defined

1 The exact title of this last chapter is: »Non-objectifying acts as apparent fulfilments of meaning«. This ninth chapter is the Third Section of the Sixth Investigation, which is entitled »Clarification of our Introductory Problems«, that is, the problems in the light of which the whole Sixth Investigation is developed.

2 The title of the first paragraph of the Sixth Investigation is, precisely, »Whether every type of mental act, or only certain types, can function as carriers of meaning«. See *L. U.*, Hua XIX/2, p. 544; English translation (from now on »*LI*«), vol. II, p. 191 ss.

assumptions. The theory about these sentences (*Sätze*) that are not statements (*Aussagen*), as well as about the way in which they are related to declarative sentences (*Aussagesätze*) that express statements, is, therefore, far from being that minor issue that decades of silence or lack of phenomenological work on pertinent logical-semantic issues would seem to suggest. On the contrary, it has an extraordinary relevance for an evaluation both of the strength and the inadequacies of Husserl's theoretical positions. Indeed, Husserl himself so admits, by suggesting that a theory contrary to what he himself argues about non-declarative sentences would knock down some of the backbones that support his *Investigations*. This last chapter on the status of non-declarative sentences should, therefore, despite their patently flawed nature, be read, in my opinion, not as an appendix, but as truly completing the dome that was gradually built throughout the six investigations. The examination of the potential problems inherent in Husserl's theses about the logical-semantic status of non-declarative sentences could thus work, in retrospect, as a really fitting *test* for certain central Husserlian theories, as expounded in the *Investigations*.

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Expressed in Husserlian idiolect, the disputed issue concerning non-declarative sentences lies in knowing »[...] whether the familiar grammatical forms used in our speech for wishes, questions, voluntary intentions – acts, generally speaking, we do not class as 'objectifying' – are to be regarded as *judgments* concerning our acts or whether these acts themselves [...] can function as 'expressed' whether in a sense-giving or sense-fulfilling fashion.«³

Under the general designation of »non-declarative sentence«, we understand both an interrogative sentence type (*Fragesatz*), like *is the cat on the mat?*, or an imperative sentence (*Befehlsatz*), like *go away!*, or wish sentences (*Wunschsätze*), like *good luck!*, *may the gods be with us...*, or any other sentences that express acts, otherwise so different from one another, such as to promise, threaten, advise, ask or even pray, to invoke the well-known example of Aristotle in *Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας*. In short, it is a question of knowing, as the first paragraph of the Sixth Investigation had already stated, if *signifying* is only effected in acts of an objectifying nature, if only these, therefore, can be *Bedeutungsträger*, »meaning-carriers«, or if questions, volitions, orders, and any other acts of any kind can *support* the meaning function, in such a way that, let us say, a propositional matter like »there is life on Mars« could be *direct* and *immediately* »carried« by an act of a non-objectifying quality like a question or a wish. Husserl, as he admitted, although reluctantly, had long held this last position to be inevitable. And it was precisely to finally banish it that, in the final chapter of the Sixth Investigation, the problem

3 Idem, p. 737.

was dealt with *ex professo*. For, behind the seemingly minor question about the relationship between non-declarative and declarative sentences, what is at issue is the major problem of knowing what should count as the fundamental form of intentionality, that is to say, what kind of acts (what »qualities«) are truly intentions aimed at something as an object.

Husserl's argument – it must be said from the outset – is that *all* non-objectifying qualities are based on underlying objectifying acts and that *only these* are genuinely sense-bestowing acts (*bedeutungsverleihende Akte*). His thesis, therefore, is that the forms that natural languages coined for questions, orders, etc. *should be interpreted*, from the logical-semantic point of view, *as judgments on acts*. His argument is, thus, that *there are judgments* in the expression of questions, orders, volitions, promises, etc., that interrogative sentences, wish sentences, imperative sentences, therefore *contain* (implicitly or explicitly – that is irrelevant for the moment) declarative sentences, and that it is only because there are judgments in them and because there are declarative sentences in them, that the expressions of questions, orders, promises, etc. can *have* a signification. So Husserl must show us *how* to find the objectifying act that is present in sentences that express questions, orders or wishes. It is precisely this that is addressed by the theory which Husserl puts forward in the last chapter of the Sixth Investigation.

Both this question and Husserl's response, though apparently sibylline, are, however, truly essential to decide on the accuracy and consistency (two different issues) of the foundational theses of the *Investigations*. In fact, this question involves things as essential as defining what meaning is and what are the relationships, on the one hand, between *signifying* and stating and, on the other hand, between the objectual presentation (the »intentional matter« of the act) and the belief (the positional quality of the »objectifying« acts), as well as understanding what *essential function* is, after all, entrusted to language: whether stating in a monological context or acting intersubjectively in a communicative context. In addition, it is important to know, in connection with the last of the questions above, what we are actually talking about when we refer, according to Husserl, to »qualities« such as believing, asking, wishing, ordering, promising, etc. Is it a question, with the inventory of these act qualities (or part of them), of providing a simple list of the various types of psychological lived-experiences or is it mostly a question of identifying basic forms of *linguistic behaviour* linked to social acts of communicative interaction?

All these questions call for a phenomenological analysis. To go straight to my point, I would say:

A) Husserl's argument with regard to non-declarative sentences is *consistent* with his theories on (i) intentional lived-experiences (*intentionale Erlebnisse*), (ii) signification or meaning (*Bedeutung*), (iii) expression (*Ausdruck*) and language (*Sprache*), theories that were expounded, respectively, in the Fifth, First, Fourth and again in the First Investigations;

B) But Husserl's thesis has little (or even no) *accuracy* with regard to an examination of the intentional and semantic status of non-declarative sentences, distorting, for this reason, the content of phenomenologically describable sense of acts like asking, wanting, ordering, promising, etc. The analysis of Husserl becomes, therefore, phenomenologically inadequate. Hence, we can say that there is also something wrong, in whole or in part, with the abovementioned theories, in A (i), (ii) and (iii).

When we want to determine what it is that is wrong with these theories and therefore examine alternative logical-semantic points of view, we find, surprisingly or maybe not, in a theorist of common language an insightful criticism of two major illusions that affect these analyses of Husserl. First, the assertive illusion, according to which language is mainly used to describe reality through positional orthetic acts; second, the truth-value illusion, according to which the essential core of sentences consists of a propositional structure whose content is always liable to be evaluated as true or false depending on the sheer meaning of the words involved. These two illusions are tenacious (and it would still be necessary to *explain* why they come about). In the light of the first, the use of language aims to describe reality, rather than being itself an act of constructing (intersubjective, social) reality. In the light of the second, non-declarative sentences are imperfect language realisation forms, precisely because they lack this supposed fundamental relationship with truth – as if truth-evaluation was the favoured way of using language and the essential way of making sense. When I mention this famous criticism of this double »constative« and »truth-value« illusion, I refer, of course, to the theory that John Austin expounded in 1955 about »performatives« and illocutionary acts in the *William James Lectures* at Harvard University, which were published in 1962 in *How to do Things with Words*.⁴

To conclude this overall announcement of my theme, I would say that I do not want to set Austin against Husserl or correct one or the other, but rather use the most important insights in both of them to outline a phenomenological theory

4 See J. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1976, for example, p. 3, on the »descriptive fallacy«, or p. 12, on the assumption that *to say* is always (or in cases that are worth considering) *to state something*, or p. 151, on the »true/false fetish«.

on social acts and communication. This theory was initiated by Reinach in 1913,⁵ but is, to this day, still largely unconstructed. Only it can bring to the surface, however, what is, in my opinion, the *element* in which the question of linguistic behaviour like asking, wishing, ordering, but also stating, should be described from the phenomenological point of view: the phenomenon of communication. In fact, although the phenomenon of communication has ante- or pre-linguistic roots and is wider than language (strictly speaking, not all communication is linguistic, neither does all language serve a communicative purpose), qualities of act such as questions, orders, promises, which are expressed in interrogative, imperative or promissive sentences, are, typically, uses of language with a communicative purpose. That is, in sharp contrast to Husserl in the *Investigations*, the point of departure for a theory of language is *not* pure Logic and the ideality of meaning, but the production of meaning in a definite communicational context. The shortcomings of some of Husserl's arguments may be interpreted retrospectively as so many consequences of the set of abstractions and amputations that the phenomenon of language must undergo so that, in it, something like the field of Logic, i.e. pure *Bedeutung*, can be isolated as an ideal-identical unit regardless of any speaker or any utterance context. The attempt to isolate what *is said as such* (*das Gesagte als solches*), regardless of who says it, to whom and why it is said, and the context in which it is said, is, at the same time, the greatness and greatest limitation of Husserlian analyses in the *Logical Investigations*.

Indeed, Husserl himself so suggests, in his comments of 1913 on the Fourth Investigation, when he says that the proper name for the theory that he ended up developing there is Pure *Logical Grammar*, precisely because it still lacks »relations of mutual understanding among minded persons« which is a »peculiar *a priori*«. ⁶ It is not, certainly, a question of complementing the Pure Logical Grammar with a Psychology. It is, rather, a question of developing the communicative dimension of meaning alongside the theory of forms of composition and the laws of transformation of significations. The awkward question (for Husserl) is to know whether this »communicative« *a priori* will not, in turn, interfere with the »signifying« *a priori* in such a way that would make it impossible to treat one without the other within a Logical Grammar which, henceforth, would no longer be also »pure«.

5 See Adolf Reinach, »Die apriorischen Grundlagen des bürgerlichen Rechtes«, in: *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 1: 685–847.

6 *L.U. Hua* XIX/1, pp. 348–349.

II. Three assumptions...

I said above that Husserl's theory was consistent, but not accurate. The essential issue of accuracy will be addressed later. What I want to show for now is its consistency. This will become visible as soon as we understand how Husserl's theory on non-declarative sentences follows directly from his more general tenets about *intentionality*, *signification* and *language*, expounded in the First, Fourth and Fifth Investigations. As a matter of fact, these three general Husserlian doctrines, which form the theoretical framework of the *Investigations*, contain the major assumptions which drive the whole analysis of the linguistic forms in question. I would like to consider them, therefore, before discussing the Husserlian theory on non-declarative sentences in more detail. They are as follows:

A – Regarding intentionality, the *equivalence* between intentional and objectifying acts;

B – Regarding signification, the *independence* of the meaning function;

C – Finally, the statement (*Aussage*) as the *basic* form of language.

A – As is well known, at the beginning of the Fifth Investigation Husserl presents three concepts of consciousness (*Bewußtsein*). All three of these concepts refer directly to the concept of lived-experience (*Erlebnis*). The idea of the totality of lived-experiences produces the first concept of consciousness: consciousness as the full set of lived-experiences belonging to the self, i.e. the *flow of consciousness* (*Bewußtseinsfluss*, *-strom*). Self-perception of lived-experiences produces the second concept of consciousness: consciousness as *inner perception* (*innere Wahrnehmung*). Finally, the lived-experience as an unreal relation to something that »inexists« (Brentano's expression) in it as object, i.e. lived-experience as consciousness-of, yields the third concept of conscience: consciousness as *psychic act* or *intentional lived-experience* (*psychische Akt*, *intentionale Erlebnis*).

Husserl would later have sophisticated theories to offer with respect to the first and second concepts of consciousness. Consciousness as totality is effected in the form of a consciousness of the three dimensions of time, with its open horizons (therefore, *not* totalisable) of past and future. Inner perception, or pre-reflexive consciousness of oneself (in the *Investigations*, Husserl simply criticises Brentano's theory, because it allegedly implies a *regressus in infinitum*), takes the form of »longitudinal« intentionality of the »absolute consciousness«, by which, in the connection between proto-impression and retention, a self-giveness of the flow takes place.

All this, as I said, will be the subject matter of future phenomenological analyses. In the Fifth Investigation, however, the emphasis is on the third meaning: con-

consciousness as consciousness-of (something). Regarding the particular feature of consciousness put forward by the third meaning, Husserl's thesis is that this unreal relation to something, intentionality, assumes, at its very root, the form of *positional* acts (*setzende Akte*), with the related neutrality modifications.

This is a crucial point. *Intentional matter* is the apprehension-sense (*Auffassungssinn*), which »makes objective« (*vorstellig macht*) in the broadest sense. But matter is not an act, it is only an element in an act, and this act falls under a particular qualitative kind (under a *Qualität*). Therefore, considering that there is no intentionality without this basic function of making objective (*vorstellig machen*), because it is precisely in it that the relation to something is shaped, i.e. the consciousness-of, the question is whether this function, which pertains to »matter« (the *intentionale Materie*), could be »supported« by acts of any kind (in other words: *performed* in any kind of act), or if it requires acts of a specific quality. The question, therefore, is whether the act in which something is presented could or could not be, arbitrarily, a volitive act, a wish act, or any other act, and if not, *what kind* of act will be then required by the intentional matter.

Husserl's thesis is that intentional matter does require acts of a well-determined quality, namely, acts of a positional type, acts of belief (and their modifications) in the objectivity intended to. In a nominal matter, e.g. *the defeated at Waterloo*, an object is presented in a single-rayed act; in a propositional matter, e.g. *the defeated at Waterloo was born in Corsica*, a state of affairs is intended in a many-rayed act. But intentionality is not just this presentation, it is rather the thetic belief that what the name names exists, or the synthetic belief that the state of affairs that the proposition describes really takes place. This is what Husserl calls an act of *objectifying quality* (for short, an »objectifying act«, *Objektivierender Akt*). Intentionality basically entails an act of *belief*, it is »doxical« in character, for the simple reason that to present something in a certain way (through the intentional matter) implies a belief or is closely connected to a belief that *assumes* the »reality« in a broad sense, i.e. the effective, probable, possible or even impossible *being* of the presented object. Normally, the object presented is posited as existing and this position may even be expressed in an explicit way in an act of modified matter, like, for instance, in the judgment »the defeated at Waterloo exists« or in the name »the existing defeated at Waterloo«. Normally, however, this positionality imbricates on the matter itself of the intentional act, and can only be separated by means of analysis – matter and objectifying quality are, therefore, two non-self-sufficient parts (two »moments«) of the same whole. The fundamental form of intentional acts is, therefore, that of objectifying acts. It is them that primarily relate to nominal and propositional matters, which present objects. There-

fore, presentation (*Vorstellung*, in the particular sense of »matter«) and position go hand in hand – they form what is called a *judgment* (*Urteil*).

This intentional consciousness that comes into play in the canonical form of belief can be neutralised, of course, moved to its counterpart (*Gegenstück*) of the »mere presentation« (*bloße Vorstellung*), that leaves its object »in suspension«, so to speak. But consciousness never comes into play as sheer presentation of an object (as an isolated matter, *without* positional quality) or as a »mere presentation«, relative to which an act of acceptance or rejection would come to relate afterwards (as in Brentano's theory of double judgment). Athetic element is always associated with the object-presentation, even if it is not part of the semantic and syntactic content of the proposition itself (except in a *tournure de phrase* like »the existing postman hurrying by«). In short, all consciousness, in the third meaning, is a presentative *and* positional consciousness of something – matter and quality belong to the intentional essence of acts. Consciousness of something is, therefore, at its very root, an act of *objectifying* quality.

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This is the first assumption – the identification between *intentional consciousness* and acts of a certain *quality*, namely, those that take-to-be-true (*für-wahrhalten*) what is presented in an intentional matter or that, on the contrary, are apositional and modify the positionality in a mere, neutral »leaving-in-suspension« (*dahinstellen*). This theory that intentionality is based on positional acts and on their corresponding non-positional modifications is, as everyone knows, the last interpretation of Brentano's famous *dictum* that Husserl offers in the Fifth Investigation: every act is either a presentation (a *Vorstellung*, now interpreted as an act of objectifying quality, of nominal or propositional matter) or is based on such a presentation.⁷ Intentionality is, in its nucleus, the position of being or its correlative suspension (it will always, therefore, be a »being-intention« – a *Seinsmeinung*, as Husserl says in § 38 of the Fifth Logical Investigation). Hence, all the other qualities, however diverse they might be, insofar as they refer to an object through an intentional matter, are interconnected and can be taken as a whole, in the precise extent to which they all require an act of objectifying quality as their base. Inversely, no objectifying act requires a non-objectifying quality built on it.

From here, Husserl gets an important theorem of his doctrine of intentionality: that of the »founding of non-objectifying acts such as joys, wishes, volitions on objectifying acts (presentations, acts of taken-to-be-true): here an act-quality has its primary foundation in another act-quality, and is only mediately founded

7 See *L.U.*, Hua XIX/1, 5th Investigation, § 41, p. 514.

on 'matter'.⁸ Thus, joy presupposes the conviction that the state-of-affairs that causes us joy *exists*, but the position of the state-of-affairs as existing (the objectifying act) does not require one more act of joy or sadness based on it. The objectifying act is therefore the carrier (*Träger*) of matter – if an object (*lato sensu*) is »presented« by matter, it is now settled that the primary intentional act is the being-assumption (correlative: the being-neutralization) of this presented object.

This theory is plausible, but it requires more differentiation. A wish, for example, implies a positional consciousness that is a thesis not of being or not-being, but rather of possibility. A promise implies an objectifying act that places its object as *probable*, etc. The *Ideas I*, of 1913, would introduce this higher sophistication in the doxic forms, abandoning the polarity of the *Investigations* between the position of being and its »neutralisation« (the simple understanding, *without* position-taking).⁹

It is in the light of this thesis that the founding form of intentional acts is that of objectifying acts, of both nominal and propositional matter, that all sentences that do not express statements and that are not, therefore, declarative sentences could be grouped, despite their variety. What, in fact, do wishful, exclamatory, interrogative and imperative sentences have in common? The answer goes as follows: they have in common the fact of *not being*, none of them, *declarative sentences* that express acts of an objectifying quality and, therefore, of being *based* on objectifying acts which provide their foundation, or *include* such objectifying acts so that they can have a meaning.

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These two formulations – to be based upon and to include – are not, however, equivalent, and, as we shall see, conceal an ambiguity in Husserl's thesis. Nevertheless, Husserl's rejoinder is, apparently, a good response. The critic of this appearance will be dealt with later.

B – For now, let us move on to the second assumption: the independence of the meaning function. Any reader familiar with the *Investigations* knows of Husserl's long effort to dissociate the meaning-bestowing act (*bedeutungsverleihender Akt* – for the sake of brevity, we will call it the »signifying act«) from the meaning-fulfilling act (*bedeutungserfüllender Akt*) and from the act of *intimating* the signifying intention (*kundgebender Akt*). In short, every reader of the *Investigations*

⁸ *L.U.*, Hua XIX/1, p. 519.

⁹ See, for example, *L.U.*, Hua XIX/1, p. 507 and *Ideen*, Hua III/1, pp. 271–272. In this work, acts in the sphere of will and feeling are also taken as potentially »objectifying« acts, with their own form of positionality, which ultimately refers to acts in the doxic sphere, which perform a current objectification. According to Husserl, this enshrines the privilege of the »logical« stratum of intentionality.

knows the efforts Husserl went to separate the meaning function from the communicative function of language and, once more, to separate the signifying act from the cognitive act. For him, to mean, to know and to communicate are, indeed, different things.

The connection of the signifying act with concomitant intuitions is lessened in two ways. First, *a parte ante*, Husserl insists (and he is right, in my view) that the accompanying images do not perform any essential role in the *formation* of the meaning-intention¹⁰ – so, to understand the expressions »horse«, »square root« or »prime number«, the inadequate and fleeting images, that may perhaps be produced, form no part of, nor do they fix the meaning of the expressions. In brief: *there is* understanding without intuition of images, and meaning *does not depend* at all on any kind of image formation. Secondly, *a parte post*, this meaning-intention, in which an object is intended »in the void«, has a fulfilling relationship with the intuition of the corresponding object (the fulfilling-sense), but the intuition that fulfils the meaning-intention does not *prolong* or *complete* it, as if only intuition could endow it with its object. Endowing the intention with an object is performed by the meaning function alone, and to endow with an object (the *gegenständliche Beziehung*) is not to *give* the object. As a matter of fact, the givenness rather goes from the act that intends *the* object by means of the meaning-function to the act that (re)cognises *this* intuited object as being precisely that which had been intended (or which produces a corresponding »deception«, *Täuschung*). The fulfilment of the meaning-intention by the corresponding intuition is what Husserl calls the cognitional act (*Erkenntnisakt*). But cognizing is not essential for the signifying act, which *already has* an object (related to the *Bedeutung*), regardless of any extending of the meaning-intention into the corresponding intuition. The latter will rather have the function either of reinforcing or confirming the positional quality of the signifying act. To this extent, to signify and to cognize are, therefore, different things.¹¹ And the meaning function is more fundamental than the cognizing function – in general, we can mean *without* cognizing.

The same dissociation is made for the intimating function (*kundgebende Funktion*). All expression has a meaning and refers, through it, to an object. To use a meaningful expression and to refer, through its content, to an object is the very essence of the signifying act. In addition, to use a meaningful expression also implies, by force of the utterance act (*Äusserung*), to *make manifest to another person* that the one uttering has such and such a lived-experience, in which he or

10 See *L.U.* Hua XIX/1, pp. 67 et seq.

11 See *L.U.*, Hua XIX/1, p. 44.

she intends such and such an object and even, possibly, that he or she is speaking *to that other*. However, as the famous example of the inner monologue in the »soul's solitary life« shows,¹² when we talk with ourselves, this intimating function of the linguistic sign disappears, the audible word is reduced to the simple fantasy of a possible verbal sound (*Wortlaut*) but, nevertheless, we still *continue* to signify, albeit without communicating anything to anybody. In a word, as with cognition, to mean is more basic than to communicate – we can mean *without* communicating.

Husserl's argument therefore boils down to the following: firstly, the dissociation between the meaning, the cognitive and the communicative functions; secondly, the assertion that the meaning function is entirely independent from the other two, whereas, inversely, we cannot communicate (content) or cognize (an object) without the mediation of the meaning function (more precisely, without the mediation of *sense*-bestowing acts).

However, it may be argued, *pace* Husserl, against this independence of the meaning function, that in certain important linguistic expressions, (i) the meaning is only *determined* by reference to an intuition or (ii) the meaning is only *completed* by its insertion into a communicative context.

The first instance is provided by deictics – *this, that*, etc.; by personal pronouns – *I, you*, etc.; and by adverbs of time and place – *today, here, now*, etc., i.e. by what Husserl himself, in the First Investigation, calls »essentially subjective« or »occasional expressions«. ¹³ In all these instances, the full understanding of meaning requires a reference to the current perception of the act of utterance so that the hearer can determine *in particular* to what expressions like *this, today* or *I* refer. In order to sustain the complete independence of the meaning function, Husserl perpetrates a true act of violence¹⁴ in the *Investigations*, stating that, *ideally*, from the point of view of a perfect language, every occasional expression could be replaced by a fixed, objective expression which would refer to its object without any regard for the expressive act and the utterance context. But this is yet to be demonstrated and Husserl's argument is broadly insufficient.¹⁵ As for the second case of expressions, it is clear that signification, what *is said as such*, i.e. the signi-

¹² See *L.U.*, Hua XIX/1, pp. 41–43 (§ 8).

¹³ See *L.U.* Hua XIX/1, pp 83 et seq.

¹⁴ He himself so admits in the second 1913 edition, in *L.U.* Hua XVIII, p 13.

¹⁵ It is developed as a pure theoretical argument, based on the assumption of a supposed »absence of limits to objective reason« (*Schrankenlosigkeit der objektiven Vernunft*). See *L.U.* Hua XIX/1, pp 95 et seq. (See also the suppressed passage, in the second 1913 edition, on the fixed and objective determinations of place and time which engaged Husserl to a non-relational conception of space and time.)

fictionation that literally results from the syntax and the sheer sense plus reference of the words involved, is, in many instances, still insufficient to make up the complete meaning of a sentence. Here is one of many examples: the expression *it's a beautiful day* can express a statement of fact, a feeling of joy, it can mean ironically the opposite, it can serve to blatantly change the subject in a conversation, it can be a way of informing the interlocutor or inviting him or her for a walk, etc., so much so that its *full* meaning (that is, what *is said*, plus what *is meant* by it) is only determinable by referring the literal meaning back to the respective communicational context and bearing in mind the type of communicative move that is being performed through that expression.

To circumvent this situation, Husserl once again sustains his argument at the expense of an impoverishment of the concept of communication and a hypertrophy of the meaning function. In the *Investigations*, to communicate is simply the fact that thinking acts which occur in a subject are simultaneously made known to someone through the intimating function of linguistic signs. That is, to communicate is tantamount to duplicating the same thoughts in a speaker and a listener. On the other hand, Husserl starts from the assumption that all thought is always codable and linguistically expressible, with increasing levels of explicitness until one would ideally get to the limit-point at which the literal meaning would perfectly coincide with the intended meaning, so that regard to the communicational context would, therefore, become unnecessary (we will come back to this idea).

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The privilege granted to the declarative sentence also hinges on this, and is absolutely consistent with this double Husserlian argument about (i) the ideal suppression of occasionality and (ii) the possible coincidence between the literal and intended meanings in a non-abbreviate linguistic expression (full explicitness). A sentence like *I think it's a lovely day!* would be replaceable by a long declarative sentence which, at most, would express the full meaning in the form *John says that he thinks that it is a lovely day, to mean by that to his interlocutor Paul that...* etc.

C – The third assumption is that the essential function of language is to *state*. This is the assumption that definitely confers a prominent position on the truth-value dimension of speech and, consequently, confers a privileged status on declarative sentences. This happens because the declarative sentence (*Aussagesatz*) is characterised as saying something *about* something, as a λέγειν τι κατὰ τινός: »Any expression not only means something, but also says something *about* something;

it not only has its signification but also refers to any *objects*«. ¹⁶ It is to the extent that the basic dimension of language is this stating something about something, that the truth (or falsehood) of what is stated acquires the prominence that is commonly attributed to it.

The fundamental distinction that is established in this characterisation of the essential function of language is between the thing *about* which something is said and *what is said* about this thing. In modern nomenclature, one distinguishes between signifying »content« and objective »reference«. Husserl calls these two dimensions of the declarative sentence, respectively, *Bedeutung* (meaning, signification) and *gegenständliche Beziehung* (objective reference) of an *Ausdruck* (expression). It is usual to say that, through content (*Inhalt*), language refers to an »extra-mental« object. But this, in Husserl's semantics, is a grossly incorrect assertion. For one, the *Bedeutung* is already an extra-mental, supra-subjective, ideal, unreal object (as it was *Sinn* for Frege). Then, »object« is an ontological-formal, rather than ontological-material category: the *object* can either be extra-mental or intra-mental, linguistic or non-linguistic, it can be a number, a physical being, a historical fact, a word, a lived-experience or anything else, because »object« is a category of formal ontology which can cover any entities whatsoever. The essential, in language, is rather the capacity to establish this duality between the object *such as* it is referred by a signification and the object *that is* referred by a signification. ¹⁷ The difference between both is given by a logical-semantic operation that consists of submitting various signifying expressions to an *identification synthesis*, in such a way as to release awareness that *what is intended in signification A* and *what is intended in signification B* are *the same thing* – that, for example, *Hera's husband* and the *God of Lightning* are the *same* mythological character, or that $a < b$ or $b > a$ refer to the same quantitative situation. It is this awareness of *an identical* variously referred to by several significations that prepares the consciousness of *one* object. ¹⁸ *Ideas I* will, consequently, distinguish the *Gegenstand im Wie*, the object in the how, as predicate-noema, and the *Gegenstand schlechthin*, the pure and simple object or the *X*, as a central sense-element of the noematic core.

A fundamental intuition in the *Investigations* is that language gives substance to this ontological-formal distinction between object predicated (object pure and simple) and predicate object (object in the how) when it produces the distinction between what is said about something and the thing itself about which

¹⁶ *L.U.*, Hua XIX/1, p. 52.

¹⁷ *L.U.*, XIX/1, pp. 53 et seq. and 414–415.

¹⁸ The *Vorlesungen über Bedeutungslehre*, of 1908, develop with ex-professo this theory of the object-consciousness as a correlation of an identification synthesis. See Hua XXVI, pp. 62 et seq.

something is said. This distinction is based on the structure of the intentional consciousness – to envisage *an* object *through* a meaning (*Sinn*). To the extent that language gives substance to intentionality, its fundamental dimension will be precisely this power to articulate the logical differentiations of the object consciousness. More important than what language says about things is the fact that it express this duality between object (about which one states – the *Gegenstandswörter*) and its determination (what is predicate of it), a duality that is already the fundamental distinction of the Pure Logical Grammar between primitive forms of signification: *nominal representation*, *predicate representation* and their combination into a *proposition* (*Satz*).¹⁹ In short, intentionality is consciousness of an object through content, and language, to the extent that it »clothes« the intentional consciousness, will have its essential core in the assertive structure of the declarative sentence.

III. ... towards an implausible theory

We can now examine more closely Husserlian theory about non-declarative sentences, appraise its coherence, but also expose its phenomenological inaccuracy and even implausibility.

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To go straight to the essential, it amounts, first, to the following assumptions:

1. Only those acts of objectifying quality (»thetic acts«) are meaning-carriers;
2. The expression of an objectifying act, linked to a propositional matter (i.e. a »judgment«), is the declarative sentence which says something about something;
3. The declarative sentence states something independently of the intuitive function (of knowledge) and the intimating function (of communication).

Secondly, to the following constative claim:

It seems that interrogative, imperative, volitive and wish sentences, etc., are not declarative sentences and do not express objectifying acts (of belief) but rather acts of a different type, such as the question, the order, the will, the desire, etc.

From which it follows that:

Either these sentences are, as such, signifying;

Or they borrow their signifying power from declarative sentences and objectifying acts.

¹⁹ *L.U.*, XIX/1, p. 339.

If a) were true, we would have the »Aristotelian« theory that any kind of sentence can carry meaning and questions, orders, etc. are *irreducible* to declarative sentences. We would have, therefore, the theory according to which λόγος σημαντικός (the signifying speech) is not exclusive to ἀπόφασις (of the declaration or statement, the declarative sentence), albeit only this can be true or false. But this theory is incompatible with 1, 2 and 3 above.

Thus, *in the first place*, between the declarative sentences and all other sentences there must be an essential difference: to paraphrase Mohanty,²⁰ they will not just be *different types* of sentences, but will be different *as* sentences. The genus »sentence« is not truly a genus. Sentences that have a meaning by themselves are declarative sentences. *Secondly*, from this it ensues that all others will not only be different *as* sentences, but will only have a meaning insofar as questions, orders, etc. can be *reduced* to declarative sentences of a given type. In short, either non-declarative sentences are irreducible to declarative sentences and have independent meaning or they do not have independent meaning and have to be reduced to declarative sentences. Husserl's assumptions only leave the second option open to him.

Hence the task: it must be proved (i) that declarative sentences have a logical-semantic behaviour that is different from all others, and that (ii) non-declarative sentences contain declarative sentences that are the true carriers of meaning.

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The final chapter of the Sixth Investigation addresses the task of demonstrating these two tenets.

With regard to (i), Husserl uses an apparently convincing argument. Based on his own statements but going, a little further, we could define the notion of a *complete signifying content* as follows:

So that a sentence *f* has a complete signifying content *C*, it must be possible to examine *f* both in terms of the *adequacy* of this content *C* to the object that it talks about and in terms of the adequacy of this content to the subject that is expressing him or herself; and the latter, both from the point of view of *appropriateness* of the words chosen (to express thought well or poorly) and from the point of view of the *sincerity* of his or her speech (to convey what he or she actually thinks). Therefore, for any sentence there will always be an objection or reply (Husserl's word is »*Einwand*«) about *truth*, another about *suitability* and another about *veracity*. Where these three responses are not possible, *C* is not complete.

20 Mohanty, *Edmund Husserl's Theory of Meaning*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague ³1976, p. 82.

In short, if C is complete, then f must be able to be true or false, proper or improper, truthful or untruthful, each of these three pairs of values being irrespective of the other two (for example, a sentence can be untruthful but true and proper, or false but truthful and proper, etc.)

If we now look at sentences like:

- F₁ – The cat is on the mat;
- F₂ – Is the cat on the mat?
- F₃ – Put the cat on the mat!

we observe a different logical-semantic behaviour which places F₁ on one side and the F₂-F₃ pair on the other. Indeed, as is evident, the question and the order admit the proper subjective responses (suitability and veracity) whereas the objective reply about truth cannot apply (despite Bolzano's argument²¹) – the question and the order, *as such*, are neither true nor false, because they lack the assertive dimension of stating something *about* something. Insofar as only F₁ admits the objective and subjective responses (truth and suitability/veracity), only C_I is a complete signifying content.

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This takes us to Husserl's second argument, designed to prove part (ii) of his thesis, i.e. the reducibility of F₂ and F₃ to declarative sentences. In fact, F₂ and F₃ only take on a complete content when they are rewritten in the form:

- F₂' – I ask if the cat is on the mat;
- F₃' – I order the cat to be put on the mat.

Actually, when F₁ and F₂ are rewritten so, then they acquire a complete signifying content, because now the objective response can be made – the sentences are, in fact, true to the extent that, by naming them, they refer to the subjective lived-experiences of asking and ordering and state their existence (they would be false if the person who utters were not, in fact, in any of these psychological states). Therefore, in the normal case, F₂' *is true* because it declares the existence of a subjective lived-experience that occurs *simultaneously* with the phrase that describes and names it.²²

21 See *L.U.* XIX/2, p. 738 et seq.

22 Supposedly, the truth ends up by coinciding here with the veracity because truth, in this case, consists in asserting a subjective state of affairs (the existence of the lived-experience of asking or ordering), which is also the case with the veracity. Husserl saw this at the end of his argument but, for reasons that will become clear in the following section, this equivalence is not, in my view, entirely correct, because we can make a distinction between the fact that an order or a question is or is not uttered (truth) and the fact that the speaker has or has not the inner lived-experience of ordering or asking (veracity). See *L.U.* XIX/2, p. 750, *in fine*.

Thus, for every f with a given force $*$ (interrogative, exclamative, promissive, etc.), X being the subject that utters f , we could say that:

$$\text{R1. } f^* \leftrightarrow X^* f$$

i.e. a sentence with a given force, stated by a given subject, is equivalent to a description of a psychic state of this same subject, in which the force of the sentence morphs into a description of the quality of the corresponding act (e.g. the interrogative force of the sentence will correspond to the psychic lived-experience of the interrogation, etc.)

The object signified by these sentences is, therefore, an object of a peculiar type. In fact, in general, f does not speak directly about the asked, expected, ordered, etc. objects, but rather about the corresponding *lived-experiences* of asking, expecting, ordering, and its function consists precisely in expressing these subjective lived-experiences. »Is there life on Mars?« morphs into »I wonder if there is life on Mars«, which really says that »there is in me a psychic lived-experience of wondering, which is about the life on Mars«.

To the natural objection that, if this doctrine were true, the judgment F_1 could also be rewritten in the form:

F_1' – I believe that the cat is on the mat;

which would involve a *regressus ad infinitum*, as one could carry on:

F_1'' – I believe that I believe that the cat is on the mat, etc.,

Husserl replies, and rightly so, that the situation is entirely different because F_1 can be false and F_1' true, or inversely, whereas this does not happen with F_2 - F_2' and F_3 - F_3' . This proves, in fact, that F_1 and F_1' are not *equivalent* but rather two different judgments, with possible distinct truth-values, while, in the case of the other pairs F_2 - F_2' and F_3 - F_3' , it is the same sentence, and we are considering the relationship between the *occasionally abbreviated* sentence, determined by the communicative context of utterance, and the *complete* sentence, without no occasional abbreviations (if we disregard the occasional expression »I«).

This counter-objection is correct. It should also be added that, from the sentence

F_2 – Is the cat on the mat?

one goes, unlike F_1 , through a relationship of equivalence, to

F_2' – I ask if the cat is on the mat

and also that, unlike F_1' , this does not imply a regression to infinity in the form:

F_2'' – I ask if I ask if the cat is on the mat,

because F_2' *declares* that I ask, whereas F_2'' *asks* if I ask, which is *not implicitly contained in* F_2' and cannot, therefore, be extracted from it by a supposed operation of explicitation.

This then – in brief and skipping over the terrible details that abound in the chapter – is Husserl's theory about non-declarative sentences and non-objectifying acts.

Its main characteristics are as follows:

1. Expressions for orders, questions, wishes, etc. are occasionally abbreviated formulae, within a communicational context, for declarative sentences and for objectifying acts of a peculiar type. Thus, to ask »is S p?« is equivalent to declaring »I ask if S is p«.

2. The objectifying act consists of asserting the existence of a psychic lived-experience perceived internally (a wish, a feeling, an order, a question), in such a way that it is this inner perception that is truly the meaning-carrier objectifying act in the declarative sentence »I ask if S is p«. It is, certainly, a judgment of a very peculiar type, albeit still a judgment.

3. The objectifying act of inner perception has the same relationship with the perceived wish, question or order as the intention that intends an object has with the intuition that fulfils this intention, in such a way that what happens here is, *mutatis mutandis*, the same as in the judgment: the judgement stands to the corresponding state of affairs, that is its object, like the sentence »I wish that...« to the concrete wish as a psychic lived-experience: the concrete wishful lived-experience is *not* the wish sentence itself, but rather the *object* of this sentence. We must not put together the judgment and the wish, but rather the state of affairs intended by the judgment and the wish.

4. These sentences simultaneously fulfil three functions: (a) they *mean* something (namely, that a given subjective lived-experience is taking place here and now, for example, a wish or an order), (b) they produce the *fulfilment* of this signifying intention by the corresponding intuition (since they are accompanied by the inner intuition of the wish itself or the order) and (c) they *intimate* something to somebody (to the extent that they make known to another the existence of this wish

or this order). The second and third functions (knowledge and communication) do not belong to the signifying function and are not, therefore, essential to the content of the sentence, although, by force of the orientation of the objectifying act towards inner, and not external, perception, the intention that is directed to a wish or an order and asserts its existence is always accompanied by the living intuition of the order or the wish itself, hence, by the fulfilment of the signifying intention. However, Husserl's views lead us to conclude that the intimating function, associated with communication, can always be freely suppressed. That is, as with judgments, the occurrence of wishes, but also orders, questions, promises is possible *outside any communicational space* – we can wish, ask, promise or order *im einsamen Seelenleben*.²³

We can thus establish some general rules concerning the logical-semantic behaviour of non-declarative and declarative sentences. Firstly, there is the convertibility rule, by which a sentence with any force * (even belief) can be converted into a declarative sentence having as its object the lived-experience of the very subject that utters it.

Along these lines, the declarative sentence being marked by straight brackets, we would have:

$$R2. f^* \leftrightarrow [X^* f]$$

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Symmetrically, we would have the inconvertibility rule for declarative sentences, which could be formulated as follows:

$$R3. \sim ([f] \leftrightarrow [X^* f])$$

To be explicit: *I believe that p* does not follow from *p*, nor does *p* follow from *I believe that p*: either one can be true and the other false.²⁴

23 Husserl states this expressly for questions (*L.U.* XIX/2, p. 747: we can *ask* in the »soul's solitary life«) but there are no reasons for his argument not to be extended to any non-objectifying act.

24 Let us say briefly that, in the light of R3, the possibility of a regression to infinity in Fr , Fr' , Fr'' , and so on, is immediately made impossible because, from any declarative sentence, such as *The Earth is a planet*, a sentence with the corresponding attitude does not ensue, i.e. *I believe that the Earth is a planet*, etc. In the same way, the difficulties raised by regressions, like *is S p?* – *I ask if S is p* – *I believe that I ask if S is p* – *I believe that I believe...*, and so forth, are resolved by the impossibility to regress from the declarative sentence *I ask if S is p* to a sentence expressing a belief in this sentence.

This is, for Husserl, and in line with his assumptions, how non-declarative sentences are only signifying insofar as they contain, and are convertible into, declarative sentences that express objectifying acts (judgments) of a specific kind.

IV. Two lessons by Austin

But – as I have said – the coherence of the doctrine goes hand in hand with its total implausibility. This doctrine means that asking is equivalent to *stating* that one asks, that ordering is equivalent to *stating* that one orders and that, actually, when we ask or order or promise, we are focused not in another subject within a communicational context, but in our own internally perceived lived-experiences, that we *objectify* them and that it is really *about them* that we are talking about. This is what makes the doctrine phenomenologically implausible and inaccurate.

But inaccurate why, exactly? Husserl, like no-one else, is capable of a sharp phenomenological analysis. The problem lies in knowing whether the conceptual apparatus that frames his analyses is *suitable* for the description. Driven by the programme of pure logic, in the wake of Gotlob Frege's decisive work (who »woke« him up from his »psychologist dream«, so to speak...), Husserl's concepts make him the victim of various delusions that end up by falsifying the meaning content of the phenomenon in question. It is to exorcise these ghosts that we must pay attention to the lessons by John Austin, himself an expert on, and translator of, Frege,²⁵ who knew how to find the concepts capable of accounting for a whole dimension of language that putting the focus only on pure logic obscures to the point of complete invisibility.

Here is the first recalcitrant delusion that Austin exorcises: *that declarative sentences are always the expression of statements*. In fact, a declarative sentence is not just and always the stating of something about something, i.e. a statement describing a reality and adjusting or not to it. This is the descriptive delusion: there is, so to speak, a reality preceding language that describes it, and the fundamental value of language is producing sentences that are adjusted to this pre-existing reality. We can make this relationship more sophisticated and state that, behind a constative act, in the mundane use of language, there is a *constitutive* act, on the transcendental plane, that makes the former possible. However, this really changes nothing in the fundamental insight.

25 John Austin was the translator of *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik: Eine logisch-mathematische Untersuchung über den Begriff der Zahl*, by G. Frege. See *The Foundations of Arithmetic: A Logico-Mathematical Enquiry into the Concept of Number*. Northwestern University Press, 1953.

Right at the beginning of *How to do Things with Words*, Austin places his reader before a totally different use of declarative sentences. When one says:

F4 – The session is open,

this declarative sentence may actually serve to describe a fact: that the session is open. But, if uttered by whoever opens the session, this sentence does not describe a reality, but *establishes* the very reality that it names: the session is opened by the force of the sentence »the session is open« having been uttered. The same is true for expressions such as:

F5 – I baptise thee in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost

F6 – I offer you my congratulations

F7 – I declare you husband and wife

F8 – *X* is the winner

All these expressions have the same characteristics: firstly, they are unquestionably declarative sentences; secondly, they do not describe, however, an independent reality and are consequently neither true nor false; thirdly, they instate or establish the very reality that they name, i.e. they serve to *do things*, not to *describe facts* – to congratulate *is* to say »I congratulate you«, to open the session *is* to utter the sentence »the session is open« and so forth. Austin's great discovery is that language can be, under certain circumstances – and also in certain cases, dependant on extra-linguistic social conventions (as in baptising, opening sessions, getting married, declaring a winner, etc.) – a means to perform an act. Hence, his famous division of declarative sentences into constative and performative.

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The second idol exorcised by Austin is the following: the idea that the meaning of a sentence is, or could ideally be, strictly and fully contained in the syntax and the semantics of the words making up that sentence. Developing the Fregean concept of *force* (*Kraft*), Austin distinguishes between the locutionary and illocutionary components of a speech act. The locutionary dimension concerns the purely linguistic meaning of a speech act, for example, »the cat is on the mat« – this broadly corresponds to what *is said* in a sentence. But *what is meant by that*, namely whether one is *stating* that the cat is on the mat or *asking* if the cat is on the mat or *exclaiming admiringly* that the cat is on the mat, or even *warning, predicting*, etc., it pertains to what Austin calls the »illocutionary force« of the speech act.

In the final part of *How to do Things with Words*, John Austin criticises his initial distinction between constative and performative and states that »the doctrine on the performative/constative distinction stands to the doctrine on locutionary

and illocutionary acts, in the total speech act, as the *special* theory is to the *general* theory.²⁶ That is, John Austin ends up, towards the end of his work and in the light of the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary (as well as perlocutionary) acts, by realizing that the declarative sentence with assertive illocutionary force

F₁ – The cat is on the mat

is also no more than a performative that effects, for the utterance itself, a speech act whose illocutionary force consists of *stating*, based on the rheme »the cat is on the mat«. Thus, the initial opposition comes apart. *All* sentences have a performative element since they all serve to institute the very reality of the speech act that they denote. The only difference between them is that this element can be implicitly or explicitly asserted in a prefix that precedes the locutionary part of the act.²⁷ Therefore, Austin believes that the difference between:

F₁ – The cat is on the mat *and*

F₁' – I state that the cat is on the mat

F₂ – Is the cat is on the mat? *and*

F₂' – I ask if the cat is on the mat

F₉ – Good luck! *and*

F₉' – I wish you good luck,

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lies in the illocutionary force of the speech act being or not being explicitly named.

It is this analysis of the speech act that sheds a decisive light on the least satisfactory aspects of the Husserlian arguments. From the start, Husserl is certainly right in establishing that:

F₃ – Put the cat on the mat!

is equivalent to:

F₃' – I order that you put the cat on the mat.

26 Austin, op. cit., p. 149.

27 Scholars tend to note a shift in the meaning of the concept of *performative*, in the passage from the first to the second position, in Austin's book. We shall not enter this discussion. See the initial critique by G. J. Warnock, »Some Types of Performative Utterance«, in: I. Berlin *et alia* (eds.), *Essays on John Austin*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1973, pp. 69–89. For a sound critique of the »myth of the performative prefix«, see François Recanati, *Les énoncés performatifs. Contributions à la pragmatique*, Minit, Paris 1981.

However, unlike his argument, F_3' is not a declarative sentence with assertive force, but an *order*, in the form of an explicit performative, and does not contain, therefore, any statement or any »act of an objectifying quality«. In brief, F_3' , of which F_3 is an abbreviation, does not originate in an act of inner perception that makes lived-experiences themselves objective (although certainly there is an act of non-objectifying, pre-reflexive inner perception). F_3' is rather a form of intersubjective address within a communicational context. Such is the double failure of Husserl's analyses – firstly, the false doctrine that all declarative sentences have assertive force and that the expressions of non-objectifying acts amount to declarative sentences and, therefore, to statements; secondly, that these supposed statements are about personal lived-experiences, reflexively captured in an act of inner perception. Besides that, the whole Husserlian theory is ambiguous because, on the one hand, the founding theorem states that non-objectifying acts *are based* on objectifying acts, while his analysis of non-declarative sentences implies that non-objectifying acts *contain* objectifying acts of a particular type. »To contain« and »to be founded« are two different things. Husserl's arguments do not fit each other. But their essential problem is that neither are these sentences statements nor are asking, promising, wishing good luck, congratulating, etc. reflexive objectivations of the lived-experiences themselves, but rather forms of social acts within a communicational context. Husserl's analysis is certainly valid for all kinds of wishes, volitions and feelings. Here, in fact, to say »I wish to visit the Himalayas« means to express a psychic wishful lived-experience through an act of inner perception. But it fails when the wish is a social act, like in the expression »I wish you good luck«. Here, the point is not recounting a inner psychic event but auspiciously addressing the other: to wish good luck is to *utter* before and for the other the phrase »I wish you good luck«. And, if the Husserlian analysis already fails in the case of these social greeting formulae, in the case of questions, orders, promises, warnings and others, which are manifestly forms of intersubjective connection, then it becomes completely inaccurate. If »non-objectifying acts« lack a suitable phenomenological analysis, and they certainly do, the right context for this analysis is not pure logic and the privilege of the ideal-identical *Bedeutung*, but the meaning structures of the communicative act and the communicational space.

V. What is to communicate?

If we follow in the wake of the phenomenon of communication, two things, not very obvious at first, will increasingly prevail as we continue our analysis: firstly, the communicative phenomenon *does not have to be* necessarily linguistic or even be supported by some convention-established code (some non-natural »language«); secondly, what Husserl, in terms of linguistic communication, calls the

intimating function (*kundgebende Funktion*) – which is the fact that expressions (*Ausdrücke*), as signifying signs, insofar as they are used in utterance acts (*Äusserungen*), also function as *indicative signs* of the lived-experiences of that who utters, when they are grasped by another – is not, *by itself*, communication (*Mitteilung*).

In short, it is important to be aware that (i) the roots of the communication phenomenon should be sought at the pre-linguistic level – communication »begins« before and outside language, and there is even communication without language; (ii) the structure that Husserl puts forward at the language level (expressive signs functioning as indicative signs) is not, by itself, a sufficient condition to enable us to speak about communication. And a third point is also essential: without the pre-linguistic structures of communication *there would not be* communication at the level of language, so that pre-linguistic structures do not only exist before but also *impregnate* linguistic communication as a whole.

To show this requires a description of the *phenomenon*-communication. The identification of the phenomenon to which the concept of communication is applied is not arbitrary. It is guided by the pre-conceptual understanding we have about what is a case of effective communication. If we appeal to this prior understanding, it allows us to exclude several things, in particular:

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- a) The simple awareness of the existence of another subject, present or simply represented;
- b) The simple transmission and reproduction of information, through the complementary processes of encoding and decoding, in a linguistic form or otherwise.

In brief: on the one hand, a theory of *Einfühlung*, of empathy, *is not* yet a theory of communication – clearly, we can be aware of another, realise what »is going on with him«, that, for example, he is running hurriedly, he has certain thoughts, certain emotions and intentions, we can »see« all this, but without entering into a communicative relationship with him. This is why a simple theory of intersubjectivity in line with what Husserl develops in *Cartesianische Meditationen* or what Sartre develops in *L'être et le néant* (the analysis of the *regard*) is not yet a theory of communication; secondly, a theory of information transmission and reception through a channel of some kind *is not* yet a theory of communication either – the mere presence of the same content in a transmitter and a receiver, in line with Shannon and Weaver's cybernetic concept of communication,²⁸ not

28 W. Weaver and C. E. Shannon, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, University of Illinois Press, 1963 (Weaver is the author of the famous introduction which expounds Shannon's model qualitatively).

yet a case of communication between both, as happens when, for example, by writing these lines, it turns out that another person accidentally reads them and is therefore aware of my thoughts, without, however, my having had a communicative intention in the strict sense with them. We will have the same content – but we have not *communicated*.

Which phenomenon are we looking at when we talk about *communication*? Not just at the behaviour of another, given to me in the apperception by empathy (what he thinks, what he does, etc.); not only at the way I react in myself to the behaviour of another (if I am touched, bored, enthusiastic, enraged, etc. by what he does); but rather at the behaviour of another insofar as it is *addressed* to me, insofar as we both *know* that this behaviour is addressed to me, and I *react* to it and we both know that this reaction is an appropriate *response* to this behaviour that was addressed to me. An example: if I see Louis turn to look at the door and stare at it, I can conclude that he is interested in what is happening there and become interested too, to the point of looking; but if I see that Louis turns his eyes toward the door ostensibly *so that I see him doing it*, then I infer that it is *for me* that he is making the gesture and that it is me that he wants to inform that something is happening, that, say, the person I was afraid of, or was expecting or was longing for, etc. is arriving.

It is in cases like this that, according to our pre-conceptual understanding, we are facing an actual phenomenon of communication. It involves:

1. A *vocative* intention – addressing someone, i.e., constituting one person as another subject in an interlocution situation – and the *reception* of the vocative intention.
2. An *informative* intention (in the broadest sense), performed by the presentation of content (which may be a behaviour, a gesture, a word, etc.) with the intention of eliciting a relevant reply by the interlocutor.
3. A *replicative* intention by the addressee, expressly determined by the informative content, that is relevant, clear and capable of inducing a new »move« from 2.
4. The *mutually manifest* nature, for all parties, of the vocative, informative and replicative intentions, and *good understanding* of their meaning.

Obviously, in this scheme, the vocative intention, in 1, is the specific element of the phenomenon of communication. Communication is always *directed*. The addressee can be either singular or plural, definite or indefinite. For example, at present, it is not only true that I express these thoughts, but also that I intend to communicate them to anyone who is interested in them, and all those who hear them or read them are aware of this intention. As for 2, the informative intention, what is relevant is not that it can be of any kind, verbal or non-verbal, but

that it can appeal to both *inference* processes and *decoding* processes, and both simultaneously, and that it is more fundamental to call for inference than decoding processes (of which language is just one case). Thus, in the example above, when Louis looks at me and stares at the door ostensibly so that I also look at it, this is the vocative intention – he »calls me«, appeals to me as an interlocutor. At the same time, the vocative intention is a meta-intention that goes hand-in-hand with the informative intention – the message sent (i.e. that the person I am interested in is entering) is not encoded, but results from an inference of mine, based on the things that we share and that we both know. As for 4, the manifest nature of the various intentions for all interlocutors is obviously a necessary condition for communication. But the question of »good comprehension« has a deeper and more decisive lesson. It is this: communication can only be effected on the basis of a *common world* (a *Gemeinwelt*), known by all, which is always expanding with each successive communicative move. This common world can start by being the sharing of the same perceived surrounding world, but must involve other strata, in particular, common knowledge of facts, beliefs, assumptions, etc.

Going back to our initial theme, and to conclude, let us then apply this communicative structure to the case of non-declarative sentences and non-objectifying acts. I will address only two aspects that I believe are essential.

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First of all, and contrary to the beliefs of Husserl, desires, emotions and other related things do not fall under the same genus as questions, orders, promises and other similar acts. There is a crucial distinction. Judgments referring to states-of-affairs, whether external or internal, are one thing. For example, *Earth is the third planet in the solar system, I would like to visit the Himalayas, I am angry*, etc. In all these judgments (which need not all be predicative judgments), an objectifying act refers to an objective situation whose existence is independent of the fact of being referred to or not in the corresponding judgment – Earth, my wish, my rage. In all cases, the judgement describes accurately or not the state-of-affairs, it is true or false. And the act of judging *is complete* without the communicative function – it does not need to *appear* to another.

Against this, phrases like *I wonder if the keys are in your pocket, go and get the keys, I promise you I will give you the keys, I wish you luck in the new house, I ask your forgiveness for not yet having come to the new house*, are phrases of an entirely different nature. They are neither true nor false, contrary to Husserl's tendency to consider them declarative sentences of a particular kind. Nevertheless, they do have what we might call *conditions for success*. For a promise to promise, a question to ask or an order to order, it must be *externalised*, that is, *it must appear*, and be *received as such* by an interlocutor. In short, the vocative intention must be ful-

filled by its reception by the interlocutor, and the informative intention must be well understood and appropriately answered. Austin called this the *uptake*. Adolf Reinach said that such acts are *vernehmungsbedürftig* – they need to be heard in order to succeed. In general, any act that needs these conditions to be successful (to appear, vocative and informative intentions received by another) is a *social act*: he or she that *receives* is, by the act itself, *bound* as a person who is asked, as a subordinate who is ordered, as a recipient of a promise, etc. The phenomenon of communication is therefore interconnected with the phenomenon of sociability.

Therefore, we divide acts into acts requiring and not requiring externalisation and reception to be successful. The first are social acts. The second are not. The clearest example of the second is the judgment in a monological context, which is fulfilled in the corresponding intuition. As for the former, it is now clear that the simple function of expression, as Husserl presents it in the First Investigation, is still unable to put this intricate structure of the communicative act forward: to communicate is not only the fact that someone else knows what I am thinking (maybe that *is not* even a case of communication, if he has »read« them in my involuntary gestures, if he has overheard me without me wanting him to, and so on).

The second – and last – characteristic that I want to stress is the following: verbal communication is broadly inferential and can never codify everything that is communicated. Husserl's great idea, on the contrary, is that the fundamental structure of language is given by the duplicity of *meaning* and the *object* referred to by that meaning, and that *understanding* the signification and *identifying* its object is neither dependent on, nor relative to the respective contexts of utterance. The meaning determines the reference, without, at least ideally, it being necessary to refer to the speaker or the circumstances of his speech – this is one of the central tenets of both Husserlian and Fregean semantics.

So, one of the results of our reflections on communication is that it is effected within the framework of a *Gemeinwelt*, i.e. within the framework not only of a common world, but of a common world mutually *known* as common. From the start, any sentence only makes complete sense and only finds the reference object through putting its meaning to the test of the respective common world of a community of interlocutors. In the years after the *Investigations*, Husserl realised that all empirical meaning triggers an occasional context.

Let us look one last time at the sentence that has been occupying us: *the cat is on the mat*. Can we indeed say that this phrase has an »absolute« meaning and reference, regardless of any context? Let us limit ourselves to the reference. What

cat? Let us say that this is the cat that Austin had in mind when he wrote the sentence? (Which Austin?) But using this definite description – »the cat Austin had in mind« – already concedes that the reference is found through putting the meaning to the test of the objects of a communicative community. And if we wanted to find it through the pure semantics of the sentence, we should do the following:

- (1) Eliminate the pre-linguistic reference to a present world M perceptively given;
- (2) Eliminate the reference to a world of objects shared by each of the communicative communities in which we participate;
- (3) Make the sentence itself grow, so as to add to it explicitly all that is implicitly involved in its interpretation by means of (1) and (2).

We would therefore have to say expressly, without using any occasional expressions like »this«, »today«, »last year« or even proper names like »Austin«, what cat it is, what mat, in which house, when, and even, after all this, we would always face a last and final problem, which is in fact the biggest problem: because we no longer assume a common perceptive world that the language refers to as its M , because we have only pure sentences with their meaning and their reference to objects from any possible worlds, since we only have the *verbum* without a world already given in advance, we would then have to determine, *in a purely semantic way*, from all possible worlds, *which concrete world* is referred to by the expressions we are using.

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Regarding this »semantic« full determination, I assert that to isolate *one and only one* world as a global correlate of the sentences of a language is only possible through *all the sentences* that describe the objects of this world. But this is something that implies the idea of a determinate *whole* whose formation rule we can define, but we cannot attain in any finite progression of successive steps. So no finite series of sentences can define one and only one reference world, because there will always be an infinite number of identical finite series, which are differentiated only in the following steps and refer, therefore, to different possible worlds.

Indeed, it is arguable that, if two possible worlds, M and M are discernible, then there is, in the whole of all the true declarative sentences, F and F , which describe them thoroughly, at least one sentence, f , that belongs to, say, F and not F . In fact, if F were equal to F it would then follow that M would be equal to M , since it would be indiscernible from it. Therefore if, by definition, they are different, then F and F must also be different, because otherwise the worlds would be indiscernible. Thus, to determine, without previous context, *the world that a sentence refers to* involves all the declarative sentences of a language.

You will say: »this long route is not necessary, because the sentences of a language refer to the actual world of the utterance act.« But this is not a valid response. First, because a sentence uttered in the actual world M may be referring to an object from a possible world M , like when we talk of Pegasus or that I am in Australia right at this very moment. Second, because talking of the *utterance act* of the actual world is to give as resolved the issue of context, which was the problem to be solved. Therefore, it is clear that all references are made from the perceptive world that serves as a background to the use of language (*our* world), and in this world, to the domain of objects of a particular communicative community. The passage of meaning to reference takes the form of an inferential process from a context that is always given *pre-linguistically*, but which is fluid and ever-variable. When at home I speak of the mat, everyone knows that I refer to the door-mat. When we talk here about the »Meditations«, everyone knows that we are referring to those of Husserl, not those of Descartes or to the exercises of Loyola.

In essence, without putting the meaning of a sentence to the test of the context of a communicative community, its *Gemeinwelt*, or of a perceptive surrounding world, it would have to involve all the sentences in the language, to determine the world which applies to them as the actual world. An impossible operation that would condemn us to incommunicability. If language has meaning and can refer to objects, that already presupposes a wide variety of structures, generated from perceptive, intersubjective and communicative experience, which forms for the community of speakers a *single, common* world.

