Chapter III

Phenomenological Account of Language and Meaning

Preamble

In our foregoing discussion on Wittgenstein, Austin, Strawson and Searle we have so far dealt with speech or human linguistic behaviour as an object of logical/empirical analysis. We have not explicitly accounted for the phenomenon of 'communication' in any of these approaches. As Richard Lanigan says, "Speech acts in this account are only a part of the object of consciousness which is human behaviour generally or as Searle would say, 'form of behaviour'". It is through the phenomenological analysis that there emerges an account of speech as humanly existential within the phenomenon of communication, rather than speech as a linguistic paradigm of only logical significance. From this point of view the concept of 'speech act' in Austin's sense would be an apt choice for us to come up with a phenomenological significance of it, principally from the standpoints of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. It is interesting to note that not only Austin's, but also Wittgenstein's philosophical project is found to have interconnection with the work of Husserl. This is a matter needing probe. Before we delve into it we propose to prepare the ground by elaborating the phenomenological standpoint in the light of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty.

Continental philosophy, perhaps simply because it stands far removed from the analyst's open preoccupation with verbal expressions, has not drawn attention to its implications in the realm of philosophy of language, comparable to that of the work of Wittgenstein, although the

major exponents of phenomenology have not failed to treat the subject. If we care to compare the extreme type of logical atomism with the phenomenological view stark contrast appears between phenomenology and the analytic movement in the beginning. In the case of early analysis, the relation of language to experience is through clearly stated protocol sentences, which express simple facts. If one turns to early phenomenology it is not at all certain that linguistic problems are even major problems for the philosopher. But as the phenomenologist started to explore wider areas it became apparent that language does constitute a major problem. For example, it appears that frequently a larger problem for the phenomenologist is the relationship between the speaker and the language. Speech as an intentional act is more central. For several reasons an examination of Husserl, and particularly, Merleau-Ponty's rather extensive writings on language seems specifically appropriate for our purpose.

A: Edmund Husserl

Husserl's theory of meaning develops in two stages, in his early writings, at the core of which is the *Logical Investigations*[1] and in his latter writings which is the constitutive phase of his philosophical development.

Husserl in his early writings develops his theory of meaning in sharp opposition to naturalism and psychologism of his times. He introduces his theory of meaning by making several distinctions such as (i) 'the act of meaning' which confers meaning on words or symbols and thereby enables them to mean, to refer to 'objects', (ii) the 'objects' meant or referred to by the expression and (iii) meaning in the sense of

'an ideal content'. To emphasise the distinctive presence of the 'act of meaning' and its functions Husserl introduces yet another vital distinction between 'sign' and 'expression'.

In ordinary discourse these terms are used synonymously but according to Husserl, they do not always coincide in application. He says, "Every sign is a sign for something, but not every sign has a meaning, a 'sense' that the sign 'expresses'".[2] "A sign *qua* sign is only an indicator, and it stands in an indicative relation to what 'it signifies'".[3] Husserl's own examples are ".... a brand is the sign of a slave, a flag that of a nation."[4]

The distinction between sign and expression makes one thing clear: The essence of an expression does not consist either in its indicating function or in its relation to language. The life of an expression, according to Husserl, consists in certain acts carried out by the person concerned in his inner mental life, and these are what he called acts of meaning — the meaning conferring acts and the meaning fulfilling act.

Expressions are also means of communication; an expression communicates the thought, and that which the communication of the speaker entertains. On the level of communication expression is intertwined with indication. But when there is no communication language is superfluous. In monologue, strictly speaking, there is no hearer, no speaker, and no use of words. The person lives only in the understanding of the word which alone makes the expression an expression.[5] Husserl's distinction between indicative and expressive signs has been critiqued by Jacques Derrida.[6] It has attracted critical notice of continental as well as Anglo-American philosophers. The real import of Derrida's critique is deemed as follows:

Derrida's deconstruction of Husserl's view of meaning is neither a refutation nor a denial of Husserl's view. Nonetheless, it is polemical and the polemic is directed not only against Husserl but against the entire tradition of Western metaphysics right from Plato onwards. The entire Greek and European tradition is inexorably linked to logo-centrism—the dominance of the principle of reason. Derrida finds Husserl trapped in it despite his criticism of metaphysical speculation. His indication-expression distinction testifies to that[7].

According to Husserl, each expression not only has a meaning (says something) but also refers to certain objects (says it of something). He will make a distinction between meaning and reference. According to him, "An expression only refers to an objectivity correlate because it means something, it can rightly be said to signify and name the object through its meaning."[8] "But the object never coincides with the meaning."[9] Owing to this relation between meaning and reference Husserl's theory of meaning leads to the rejection of the referential theory of meaning. It is the mental act and not the object of reference which accounts for an expression having significance. Still, Husserl could not explain away the fact of reference, every expression involves a reference to an object. The problem of reference leads Husserl to bring in the concept of intentionality. Intentionality is that essential property of consciousness whereby every act of consciousness is consciousness of something. An expression has reference to the object because the meaning act involved in the expression is intentionally directed towards the object. Thus the intentional structure of meaning act enables Husserl

to explain the fact of reference without involving causalistic metaphysics or ontological commitment with regard to the objects of reference.

The concept of intentionality leads to the conclusion that the meaning of an expression is independent of the existence or non-existence of the 'object' meant or referred to by the expression. That which the expression names or designates need not necessarily be an existent object. For example, we say "Macbeth saw the dagger". Macbeth performed the intentional act of perceiving. The dagger was intended in the act of perception, even though the dagger did not exist and was fictitious. The expression secures reference to an intentional object just by virtue of the mental act that entertains meaning.

Another aspect of Husserl's theory of meaning is that he speaks about meanings as "ideal unities". Husserl's primary reason for regarding meaning as ideal unities is that one identical meaning can be repeated in several acts of meaning. Thus in the case of word meanings, a word uttered thousand times, remains the same word although each act of utterance is different from every other one. Correspondingly, Husserl speaks about an "eidetic language" or "essential language", and regards it as an ideal language. All other empirical languages are "realisations" of the "eidetic" language or essential language. That means the "eidetic" or essential language determines the form of all other languages.

In his later writings a change is discernable as Husserl speaks about language as "speech" and not as formal language. 'Language as speech' a process of concretization of ideal language. His earlier concept of structural language transforms into constitutive language.[10] However, these two aspects of Husserl's philosophy of language should not be taken as opposite or irreducible to each other, rather together they

constitute a satisfactory account of the philosophy of language. The ideal language constitutes the *a-priori* form of all languages and the empirical languages supply the content for the ideal language.[11]

Husserl's theory of meaning as found in the constitutive phase of Husserl's philosophy of language views language from the standpoint of noetic act and *Labenswelt*, that is, life-world.

Husserl's 'constitutive' aspect of meaning is the unity of the linguistic expression and its meaning but this unity is not an external unity because the meaning intending act or *noetic act* is an internal act which is performed by the speaker uttering the linguistic expression. The meaning-intending act is regarded as an 'intentional experience' by Husserl. By an 'intentional-experience' Husserl means consciousness of an object and the directedness of the consciousness towards an object. The meaning intending act does not merely imply the meaning of linguistic expressions. It implies more than the combination of certain words. It means something through which it refers to an object. Husserl states, "While speaking we perform an inner act of meaning which mingles itself with the words and at the same time animates them".[12] The linguistic expression is the objective phenomenon of language and the meaning giving aspect or the *noetic act* is the *experience of language*. Husserl gives importance to the latter rather than to the former because according to him, the meaning-intending act unites the linguistic expression and the meaning of language. Language in its 'constitutive' form is speech, which is experienced by consciousness. The linguistic expression does not exist independently of human consciousness. The human consciousness constitutes linguistic expression and uses it. In this sense the objective phenomenon of linguistic expression is constituted by the meaning-giving

act or *meaning-intending-act* of the speaker. According to Husserl, the phenomenological analysis of meaning is an analysis of meaning in its entirety, i.e., it is an analysis both from the 'objective' aspect and the 'subjective' aspect; that means both from the aspect of 'meant as such' and the 'act of meaning' which is an intentional act. As such the 'phenomena of meaning' is not merely the logical structure of language in isolation but in communication with 'the act of meaning'.

In the terminology of philosophy of language the transition from *'language'* to *speech* leads us to intentional communication.[13] Husserl writes: "The environment, which constitutes itself in the experience of the other, in the reciprocal understanding, and in agreement is called by us the 'communicative environment'."[14] Speech is the interaction between the speaker and the hearer in the *'communicative environment'*. Husserl's phenomenological attitude is constituted of both his earlier 'Edietic' phase and the later 'constitutive' phase where the 'Eidetic' phase is essentials for the *'intentional act'* of communicating subjects because it is only in the situation of inter-subjective communication that a linguistic expression gets its meaning. As such the phenomenological attitude to language entails at the same time both the subjectivity and the objectivity. Parain also says that in the Husserlian manner language is "neither subject nor object, is pertaining neither to one nor to the other, **subject** whilst I am speaking, object whilst I hear myself speaking".[15]

The existentialist philosopher Heidegger has much in common with Husserl. Heidegger relates language with human existence. According to Heidegger, language is not merely a tool which is used in order to communicate thoughts. The essential function of language is to disclose the existence of a man to himself which he regards as the *Being*. That

means language is an awareness of *Being*. In this respect Heidegger distinguishes between authentic and inauthentic language. In authentic language the existence of the speaker encounters things and other people. In authentic language a human being does not use language as a tool rather language arises from human existence. In inauthentic language the speaker uses language as a tool in order to express his thought where human existence is partially related to language. According to Heidegger, "In the former case, we *speak* in the true sense, in the latter case, we 'make use' of a tool".[16] From the existential standpoint the relation between existence and the authenticity of language is interdependent. The more authentic the speaker's language is, the more existent he is, and the less authentic the speaker's language is the less existent he is. The existentialist thinker Martin Buber in his *I and Thou* distinguishes between two aspects of language, the 'living dialogue' and the 'objective expression'. His distinction is similar to Husserl's distinction between the linguistic expression of language and speech. Both of them agree on the point that the logicians give importance only to the linguistic construction of language. Moreover, Martin Buber speaks in the same manner in which Husserl says that the objective theory in the logical sense is rooted in the *Labenswelt*, that is, the objective expression arises from the living dialogue. Hans Lipps says in the Husserlian manner that real language consists not in the abstract form of it, but in the living conversation that takes place between person and person.[17] But his approach to language is closer to Wittgenstein when he rejects any attempt to construct theories of meaning, and gives importance to the meaning of words in relation to context. According to him, words cannot be given any readymade meaning.

Husserl departs from the formalist by admitting that the logical form is found in the nature of all languages, and it concerns also the content and not merely the structure. But Husserl's concept of 'ideal language' is being criticized by Wittgenstein, Ryle and Hans Lipps on the ground that language is not merely an ideal linguistic expression which is devoid of the context in which there is an interaction between the speaker and the hearer.[18]A satisfactory philosophy of language must include both the aspects of an ideal, personal expression and a real and interpersonal situation. Buber is the philosopher who takes care of both these aspects. According to him, man is personal in uttering sentences, but he becomes impersonal in observing his utterance as a hearer. The very concept of communication is based on the personal-impersonal characteristic of language.

The phenomenological approach to language is both a subjective and an objective approach. The difference between existentialists and Husserl is that the existentialist's concern is with individual existence whereas Husserl's phenomenological approach is not an existential approach to language. His approach to language is an '*intentional*' approach. Husserl's Platonism does not refer to the existence of language in an ideal world. He is not concerned with the existence of language but with the *experience of language*. Philosophy is a study of the given. Husserl as a phenomenologist is not interested to go beyond the given. The given is the '*intended object*' and the main concern of phenomenology is the given or the intended object. In the phenomenological term the object as intended is *noema* which is the objective aspect of phenomenology, and the act of intending is the *noesis* which is the subjective aspect of phenomenology.

The central theme of Husserl's phenomenology is noetic-noematic correlation. Both these aspects interact upon each other, but none of them affect the autonomy of the other. The charge of Platonism in the sense that in the theory of meaning we are searching the primary entities called meanings does not hold good of Husserl. According to Husserl, in the *meaning intending* experience we are not aware of the meaning itself because we do not concentrate on the meaning itself. We experience meaning. Meaning is derived from the *intentional act*. But the intentional act is not meaning searching act. It is only through an act of reflection that we could be aware of the meaning.

The two aspects of Humboldt's philosophy of language, the static and dynamic, which are the objective and subjective aspects respectively may be compared with Husserl's eidetic and constitutive phases of language. According to Humboldt, language in its static aspect is an ideal language which is perfect and all empirical languages are approximation of that ideal language.[19] In this aspect language has an existence of its own independent of man's use of language. In the dynamic aspect, language as a perfect construction, transforms into language as an activity.[20] In this respect language is not an ideal complete product, but an incomplete product, produced in living communication. Humboldt, also like Husserl, unites these two aspects of language. His concept of language is a unity of both the objective and subjective aspects of language.

B. Maurice Merleau-Ponty

The chief inspiration behind Merleau-Ponty's thought as a whole is the phenomenology that emerged in Germany in the early decades of the twentieth century. To understand Merleau-Ponty's work at all, one must appreciate the abiding commitment to Husserl's conceptions of phenomenological description as an antidote to abstract theorizing, conceptual system building and reductive phenomenological explanation. However, Husserl was not the only influence. He was also influenced by Heidegger and Sartre. Yet he is own approach outgrew crucially from Husserl as well as any other of the major figures of the phenomenological movement. Far from revealing realm of pure transcendental subjectivity separated from the external world by what Husserl deems 'a veritable abyss'[1], or the domain of ideal essences distinct in principle from all factual reality, phenomenological inquiry instead finds embodies agents immersed in worldly situations in virtue of perceptual affective attitudes whose contents are themselves often conceptually indeterminate.

Merleau-Ponty represents phenomenology as the constant relationship between perception of the world and the action of the perceiver on the world i.e. the knowledge of the world and the consciousness acting upon it. Hence, according to him, experience about the world consist in our being intentional, i.e., always directed toward the world and its acting upon it. He does not regard this relation of the consciousness and the world as a mere synthesis of them. Rather he says, 'It is a "living cohesion" in which I belong to myself while belonging to the world'[2]. The dualism of idealism and realism does not arise to Merleau-Ponty because for him both the subject (which has

consciousness) and the object (which belongs to the world) are real and equally important. Merleau-Ponty never speaks about a 'cogito' or absolute consciousness or transcendental consciousness, like Descartes or Husserl. For him, objects are perceived because they are presented before the body, and that also is due to the fact that the body is in a certain situation. In short, embodiment is a necessary condition of perception. Consciousness experiences anything by being embodied and its body is the measure of all perceptions. Phenomenologically, a disembodied consciousness is unable to perceive anything because nothing would appear before such a consciousness. In fact, nothing remains in order to appear before such a consciousness; knowledge is the communication of the embodied rational being with the world. According to Merleau-Ponty the relationship between consciousness and the world is reciprocal. The world is for the individual the ground on which it acts i.e. It is the *living-world* for him and without this world the individual's existence would be a mere private state of affairs. Similarly the worlds disconnected from the consciousness is merely and 'uninhabited' world'. Merleau-Ponty says in *The phenomenology of Perception*, "For a disembodied spirit or transcendental subjectivity there can be no perspective, and, far from everything appearing explicitly to such a consciousness, everything would cease to be, for such a world be uninhabited"[3]. And the phenomenological reduction is a method of studying both the world around the individual and the individual. The motive of the phenomenological reduction is neither ontological nor epistemological. The aim of the phenomenological reduction is to understand the notion of internationality, which ties the individual and the world. As such the phenomenological method is a method, which aims to describe *lived*

experiences. Indeed, far Merleau-Ponty, perception and the body together constitute *the* phenomenon most crucial to an understanding of what he calls our "being in the world", Merleau-Ponty's perceptual bedrock of human existence, remains his most profound and original contribution to philosophy.

Merleau-Ponty holds that the notion of consciousness is a notion of institution rather than a notion of constitution[4]. Consciousness is an institution which consists of consciousness and its directedness towards some object and all its members are closely connected. This relationship is not a relation between two distinct objects but it is a relation between two objects which do not have any separate existence. To speak in the terminology of Indian Philosophy this is like the Samavāya relationship of the vaiśeṣika too is a concept. Like the institution of truth, ideas and culture the institution of consciousness is based on the series of interchange between subjectivity and situation. Such interchange is to be found in the relation of consciousness with language and speech and it may also serve as an introduction to other symbolic institutions like history and social sciences. This interpretation of Merleau-Ponty goes against Husserl's early concept of constructing an '*eidetic*' of all possible symbolic structures and his concept of a universal timeless constituting consciousness. According to Merleau-Ponty consciousness, language and speech are correlation depending upon each other and the role of consciousness is not the role of a constituting consciousness as held by Husserl. As such the though of constructing an 'eidetic' of all possible symbolic structure is discarded by Merleau-Ponty on the ground that it would raise the problem of intersubjectivity. Merleau-Ponty holds that consciousness is revealed in the acts of expression like language, speech

as the world is revealed in the creations of the artist, in the writing of the writer. However, Husserl in his latter writing admits with Merleau-Ponty that language is not merely an external instrument of expressing thought or an external garb rather language is a part of thought because without language the existence of thought is not possible. Merleau-Ponty says, "we know what we have in mind or what we mean once we know how to say it, by a kind of permutation of the intentional object and its embodiment in an expressive gesture[5]. Without language thought would be devoid of any intersubjective value. It is by means of language that thought is expressed. In fact language shapes thought.

Against the view that linguistic meaning is private, a function of the inner life, Merleau-Ponty reacts in the following way:

> Thought (we might say, 'meaning') is no 'internal' thing, and does not exist independently of the world and of words. What misleads us in this connection, and causes us so believe in a thought (meaning) which exists far itself prior to expression, is thought already constituted and expressed, which we can silently recall to ourselves, and through which we acquire the illusion of an inner life[6].

In order to speak of a signification prior to an actual speaking one must first be able to speak, and internal speech, or thought, is possible only if one has, in fact, learned to speak in public. Private signification is contingent upon public, that is to say, a private language presupposes a public language. The thrust of Merleau-Ponty thinking is to eliminate reference to an occult region of 'internal' meaning. This is further reinforced by turning to the actual "speaking subject". For instance,

The orator does not think before speaking, not even while speaking; his speech is his thought. In the same way the listener does not form concepts on the basis of sigh[7].

Merleau-ponty distinguishes between the study of linguists and the study of the philosophers of language. The linguists treat language as an objective element whereas the philosophers see language as they are used by human beings i.e. language as speech act. The former is an investigation into a system of signs such as words and sentences; the latter is the investigation into the meaning as used by a speaker according to certain rules, customs and conventions of a society. Speech act is the use-value of language in which it is transformed from a system of signs to meaningful expression to both the speaker and the hearer. The institution of meaning is constituted by the speaker's intention to communicate something to the hearer and the hearers understanding of it. Husserl, in his earlier writings gives impotence to consciousness and considers language as secondary correlative of consciousness. Merleau-Ponty gives importance to both consciousness and language. In order to give the thought in the mind of the speaker a public status it has to be embodied in language otherwise such thought would be a mere private state which has nothing to communicate. Language from the phenomenological perspective is not a mere collection of signs or symbols; language is a human activity and since all other activities language can be best understood by studying human activities like history, social science and politics. Language becomes alive in a society and social men use language to uncover the world.

In the case of human communication Merleau-Ponty represents language as a living-encounter between interpersonal activities. Merleau-Ponty's concept of phenomenology is the communication between personal perception and expression, which is the combination of the act of consciousness and awareness in public encounter. Merleau-ponty defines phenomenology as the study of essences[8]. And essences are *meaning-as-lived.* Mearleau-Ponty speaks of four levels of phenomenolizing. They are (i) the descriptive step (ii) the step of radical reduction (iii) internationality and (iv) expression and perception. These four dimensions together constitute the perspective for his reflectives on language. The concept of 'Intentionality' from an existential standpoint gives a concrete character to individual speech acts. It also relates individual speech acts (parole) which are surely connected with intentions and actions with the given objective structure of language (lang).

Merleau-Ponty holds in the descriptive step of the phenomenological method, that phenomenology describes the content or "objectivity" of *lived-experiences* which is communicate[9]. This content is the perception of one's thought and this arises from reality because the corporeal subject is situated in a world where be lives the reality. Meaning is given to his thought in the context of acting on reality and being fed back by reality. At this stage of phenomenolizing language becomes experience of signs, experience of symbols rather than a system of signs or a system of symbols i.e. language becomes *lived experience* and meaningful expression. The phenomenological description is the description of meaning present in the consciousness of both the speaker and the hearer. Merleau-Ponty explain in '*Praise of philosophy*: "the

communicative life of men" is history in the existential sense of human *immanence*[10].

The vehicle which he thought has to make itself public is speech. Thought takes on inter-subjectivity through speech acts, and thus it is, according to Husserl, that private thought can be shared publicly. For Merleau-Ponty, the inevitable question arises : How does meaning which will transcend the mere private or personal intention to speak and make itself available to other persons? Or, to put the question in other words, what is the source of inters-subject meaning. Merleau-Ponty is concerned to show that this kind of question can be approached and answered by performing a phenomenology of speaking, i.e., by actually investigating what one is dong when one is making verbal utterances.

In the step of the 'radical reduction' of the phenomenological method the speaker also becomes the object in the sense that he observes himself in the same way as the listener observes him i.e. the speaker becomes the listener at the same time. That means the speaker must be able to infer about himself in the same way in which the listener can; the listener's inference of the meaning is also determinate of the speaker's meaning. The 'radical reduction' makes communication possible, Merleau-Ponty writes in *signs*, "to the extent that what I say has meaning, I am a different' other' for myself when I am speaking; and to the extent that I understand, I no longer know who is speaking and who is listening[11]. Thus meaning though originated from an individual consciousness it is independent of the individual's situation and behaviour. It has an universal appeal in terms of its being interpersonal. Meaning comes from the subject but through the path of communication it becomes intersubjective. The aim of the phenomenological method is to

transform personal experience to interpersonal experience. Thus Merleau-Ponty turns phenomenology from the concept of 'intentionality' to an existential project.

"Expression at the level of description, according to Mereleau-Ponty should be designated as language"[12]. Following the explanation of the linguist Ferdinan de Saussure Merleau-Ponty defines language as the unification of the *signifier* and the *signified*[13]. In the terminology of Merleau-Ponty 'linguistic' structure which is the syntactical structure of language is an external structure of 'linguistic' content but not an 'expressed' structure of *lived-experience*. The *intended* meaning cannot be found in the perception of linguistic structure but in the expression of the *lived-experience*. Merleau-Ponty says that the '*act of speaking*' is at the core of intentionality. Speaking implies existence. Existence is inherent in the modality of expression. The existence of the speaker speaking is clear from the fact that while speaking, he is careful because he is conscious that he is expressing to himself and in the same way to others. This fact is demonstrated in our use of language before others. Merleau-Ponty defines speech in *signs* where he says "Speech as distinguished from language, is that moment when the significative intention (still silent and wholly inert act) proves itself capable of incorporating itself into any culture and the culture of others – of shaping me and others by transforming the meaning of cultura instruments"[14]. That means speech is the penetration of private existential meaning into the language or 'tongue' which we all speak and *the reality which we all inhabit*. Speech is the human utterance in a social context in which it is a matter of public perception. Speech without any social context is a

collection of symbols or signs i.e. it is mere language devoid of public perception.

According to Merleau-Ponty, there is no universal system of significance for all minds, spread out as if before an all-embracing consciousness or constituted as such. And his argument is as follows:

> It (language) is never composed of absolutely univocal meanings which can be made completely explicitly beneath the gaze of a transparent constituting consciousness. It will be a question not of a system of forms of signification clearly articulated in terms of one another not of a structure of linguistic ideas built according to a strict plan but a cohesive whole of convergent linguistic gestures, each of which will be defined less by a signification than by a use value[15].

There are thus only varying language-systems, depending upon "use value", and meanings will be a function of sharing the same general reference system, and not of a single, universal scheme of classification. Hence, to the question what more is there in speech besides the "significative intention" to speak, Merleau-Ponty replies that it is the "world" words are like physical gestures; they come to possess the and sustain meaning because of the situation or world in which they are expressed. Just as gesture points to something which transcends the word, as well. "The spoken word is a genuine gesture, and it contains its meaning in the same way as the gesture contains its". (PP, op cit., p. 183)[16]

Speaking meaningfully requires a "taking up of a position in the world"[17]. Without this world there would be no linguistic significance. Meaning is neither subjective or objective, idealistic or realistic, not a function of simply men's mind nor of external physical objects, but it is a product of both. So Merleau-Ponty says very pointedly:

> Probably the chief gain from phenomenology is to have united extreme subjectivism and objectivism in its notion of the world....[18].

And by this, Merleau-Ponty means a "would" largely of our own design, a world in which there is no other pattern than our own that is of significance. So it is that, according to Merleau-Ponty meaning is constituted out of this life-world which involves as a necessary condition man's existence within it.

It has been pointed out that rather than turning to the "world", Merleau-Ponty could have followed the phenomenological reconstruction of linguistic significance[19]. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of speaking is not radical enough in reconstructing linguistic significance centering around the self. We thin that this stand of Merleau-Ponty is due to his outgrowing the Husserlean phenomenology and working towards a Heideggerean position. However, his reference to the "Life-world" is suggestive of lingering influence of Husserl. Husser, in his *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* does speak of a world which is intersubjective[20]. It is the *life-world* which is from the beginning "nothing other than the living moment of being-with-one-another and in-one-another of original meaning constitution.....[21].

According to Merleau-Ponty meaning is the unification of expression and perception at the intersubjective level.

The phenomenological philosophy of language which we wish to propose in the following chapter concentrates more on the communicative action by means of which language and reality are knitted together in one perspective. According to the phenomenological thesis of the intentionality of consciousness, consciousness is always projective i.e., it is a consciousness of something. In other words consciousness means acts of consciousness. Now the phenomenon of language is closely related to the being of man and his action for expressing himself to the other. Austin's 'Performative' can be looked at from this standpoint.

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