Chapter 3
Husserl’s Theory of Meaning: Expression and Intention

3.1 Expression and its Functions

In Husserl’s theory of meaning sign is considered as sign for something. Signs point out something. But it is not the case that signs always point out functions of meaning i.e., expression. Husserl thinks that there are such signs which do not point out functions of meaning, yet they are regarded as signs. Hence he distinguishes sign from expression. Husserl holds that although we tend to think that the two are identical, and even some times they coincide in our daily use, yet they belong to two different categories. To be sign is to be sign for something. We can give an example that the sign ‘↑’ in a sign board beside a highway points out that ‘the road is straight’ which is not a function of meaning, whereas ‘butterfly’ points out something which is a function of meaning. So signs are not always functions of meaning or expression, but expressions on the other hand are always signs. Hence, according to Husserl ‘sign’ has wider extension than ‘expression’ because the function of signification has a wider context than the function of meaning. This does not imply, Husserl warns us. “that the function of meaning is a species of the function of signifying or pointing out. Though expressions constitute a species of signs, to mean is not a sort of pointing out. The two are totally different functions.” Signs then point out and are also functions of meaning.

The main feature of a sign is indication. Husserl has discussed indication from phenomenological perspective. In this particular context Husserl introduce marks which can be considered as only point out but do not mean. Hence sign can be treated as either marks or expressions. For instance, a brand is the sign (mark) of a slave, or a flag is the sign (mark) of a nation; and the Martian canals on Mars are the marks of
the existence of the intelligent being on Mars or that fossil vertebrae are signs (marks) of the existence of prediluvian animals etc. The first two examples involve no rational necessity, whereas the second and the third examples involve a necessity. The relation of a nation to its flag is contingent in the sense that the nation might have ended up in having a different flag. It is an historical fact that a nation has a particular flag. But when we talk of the existence of canals in Mars as the mark of the presence of life in that planet, we claim that one entails the other. Given the requisite scientific knowledge, we are compelled to conclude the presence of life in Mars from observing canals in that planet. Our scientific knowledge cannot let us think otherwise. “Husserl, however, lays great emphasis on the point that a mark, as a mere mark, does not require any insight into its connection with that for which it is a sign.”

According to Husserl, essence of indication is motivation. Motivation is purely subjective which really gives us a clue as to how the subject is carried from one thought to another. My belief in the presence of water in Mars leads me to my belief in the presence of life in Mars. This motivation is absent in the case of brand-slave or flag-nation relationship. According to Husserl, this motivation performs the role of unification. For instance, in the above example, the belief in water in Mars and the belief in the presence of life in Mars are unified by motivation. Motivation can be understood as inference just as we infer fire from seeing smoke; similarly, we infer life from seeing water in Mars. In this context Husserl has distinguished two kinds of demonstration: (a) demonstration of inference and (b) demonstration of indication. Demonstration of inference is a kind of objective syllogism where a set of judgments is inferred from another set, and in this inference lies a necessity which is objective. This objective necessity is the ideal unity between the premise and conclusion. Let us take an example: All men are mortal, Socrates is a man, and therefore Socrates is
mortal. For Husserl, such a syllogism is objective and the necessity involved in it is also objective in the sense that there is no subjective contribution in this inference. Whether or not I know the rule involved in the syllogism, the conclusion would follow from the premises; there is no role left for the subject.

But in the case of demonstrative indication there is no objective necessity. The kind of objective necessity present in the syllogism is absent in the case of the relation between ‘water in Mars’ and ‘life in Mars.’ What is present in the latter is subjective motivation. Acquiring the relevant scientific knowledge leads one to believe in the presence of life in Mars from observing water there. The subject feels convinced that there is a connection between the presence of water and the presence of life. Now the question is: What is the phenomenological origin of indication? According to Husserl, the phenomenological origin of indication is a mental fact and this is association of ideas. We can take the help of an example to explain this. Columbus, by pointing to the drifting tree-branch indicated to his companions that there must be land in the vicinity. This means that the idea of tree-branch and land were related or associated in the mind of Columbus. Because of this such an indication took place. Thus these two (tree-branch and land) not only coexist, they are also made to be related by the human mind. That power or mental disposition by which such ideas are made to be related is called association of ideas. We get such association of ideas from different experiences and in this context phenomenology comes in. To go back to the question of origin of indication, indication comes from association of ideas which is nothing but an ascription of a phenomenological character between two experiences or events. That there is a unity between the two is the phenomenological character ascribed to them.
Let us now turn to the possible combinations of indication on the one hand and expressions or functions of meaning on the other hand.

I. Indication and Expression both are present:

The words 'butterfly', 'rose' etc.

II. Indication is absent but Expression is present:

In the case of monologue or non-communicative speech when I am thinking to myself and my thoughts there is in no need of having indication, because I am directly familiar with my thoughts but the words express its meaning.

III. Indication is present but Expression is absent:

(i) The sign ‘†’ is represented in the signboard beside a highway indicate that ‘the road is straight’.

(ii) The letters of the alphabet, viz. ‘a’, ‘b’, ‘c’, etc. indicate the letters of the English alphabet. They do not express any meaning in isolation.

IV. Indication and Expression both are absent:

As far as the intension of communication is concern no such examples can be found, because act of communication needs to point out or signify something.

Gestures, pantomimes, body language and facial expressions are not to be understood as expressions. The reason why Husserl does not treat gestures and pantomimes as expression in the sense in which speech and parts of speech are considered, can be understood in the following way. First gestures and pantomimes are not taken to be phenomenally identical with the experiences which are sought to
be expressed through them. On the other hand speech is taken to be indistinguishable from what is expressed through them. Second, gestures and pantomimes function as sign or as marks of mental states of the person who acts them out. And further the hearer has to interpret suitably to understand what they ‘say.’ Gestures and pantomimes by themselves do not say anything.

Let us see how communication is possible through expressions. Suppose a person $X$ makes certain sounds or writes some signs in order to communicate with a person $Y$. It is obvious that meaningless sound or meaningless signs cannot serve the purpose of communication. According to Husserl $X$ must have some intention of “expressing himself about something”. In this case $X$ not only does utter some sounds or write some signs, he also attaches some sense which he wants $Y$ to share. This desire for sharing is very important. Unless $X$ had this desire, there could not have been any communication between $X$ and $Y$. On the other hand when $Y$ hears the speaker, he not only does hear the sounds or reads the signs, $Y$ also thinks that $X$ is a human subject “who is not merely uttering sounds but speaking to him.” Further $Y$ is presuming that $X$ is attaching a certain sense to the words which $X$ wants $Y$ to share. Thus apart from the physical expression (uttering some sounds or writing some signs) the attachment of sense to the word and also the desire to share are two important factors. Communication is possible because of the mutual correlation between intimation of mental states through speaking and reception thereof in hearing.

The discussion on the inter-dependence between the speaker and the hearer makes it clear that expression in communicative speech functions as the indication of that sense which the speaker has attached to his utterances and which both the hearer and speaker want to share. The function of the verbal expression of the speaker is the indication of the mental state or the inner experience of the speaker. Thus the function
of the verbal expression of the speaker is the intimating function. Now the predicate ‘intimation’ can be understood in two different ways: one narrower and the other wider. In the narrower sense the intimating function is the act which imparts sense. But in the wider sense intimating function is that act which the speaker imposes on the hearer. Husserl has taken the example of wishing to clarify the narrower and wider sense of intimating function. Suppose $X$ is saying to $Y$ ‘wish you all the best.’ In the narrower sense $X$ has only intimated to $Y$ the judgement involved. But in the wider sense $Y$ is not only hearing the judgement of $X$ but also encountering the feelings (wishing) of $X$.

According to Husserl expressions are assigned by three basic functions viz. (1) the pronouncing function, (II) the meaning function, and (III) the naming function. Every expression pronounces some mental state or states of the speaker and at the same time besides making such a pronouncement every expression announce a statement of the speaker which conveys a particular meaning. This meaning refers to an object. Corresponding to the three functions, there are three senses in which one could speak of what is ‘expressed’ through an expression. What is expressed may be the pronounced mental state of the speaker, or the meaning conveyed by the speaker, or the object referred to by the speaker.$^8$

(I) The Pronouncing Function of expression: We have seen that Husserl distinguishes gestures, pantomimes etc. from expressions. Gestures, pantomimes etc. are not meaningless (in the sense that these are the signs by which signification takes place by means of pointing to or marking out) but not express the meaning the way speech or parts of speech express it. In a communicative discourse expression serve the hearer as signs for the thoughts of the speaker, her beliefs, doubts, wishes and also her pleasures and pains. Husserl calls this function of expressions are the
'pronouncing-function.' Certain psychical experiences of the speaker are 'pronounced' through expression in communicative speech. In a wider sense we can say that those mental experiences which the hearer attributes to the speaker are 'pronounced' and in a narrower sense we can say only those mental acts are 'pronounced' that confer meaning upon the expression concerned. We can give an example to explain the matter. Suppose someone says 'the rose is beautiful.' While listing this utterance of a particular statement the hearer come to know, on the one hand, that the speaker is having a certain perceptual experience which is expressed by the statement 'the rose is beautiful' (narrower sense). On the other, he is making the assertion that... or entertaining a belief that... (wider sense). The hearer apprehends the speaker as a person who is believing, doubting, desiring, questioning etc. and these are pronounced in a particular statement like 'the rose is beautiful.'

In this particular context of explaining pronouncing function of expression, a distinction is needed to be articulated. This is the distinction between predicative statement and perceptual statement. In a predicative statement the hearer apprehends the speaker as a person who is making an assertion or expressing a belief, and it is only in the sense that the speaker's acts of asserting and believing are thereby 'pronounced.' But it is not the case that in a predicative statement the speaker's mental experiences like believing or asserting are objectively apprehended by the hearer. On the contrary in a perceptual statement, what is objectively appear handed by the hearer is not the speaker is having a perceptual experience but merely the state of affairs, the Sachverhalt, referred to (S is P or in our example 'the rose is beautiful'). Mohanty says:

In cases of predicative statements, we could say, the 'pronounced' and the 'objectively apprehended' fall apart: the former being certain mental experiences of the speaker, and the letter being the Sachverhalt, the state of affairs referred to...
In case of statements expressing questions, orders, decisions, desires etc., what are 'pronounced' are the speaker's questioning, ordering, deciding, desiring etc., and it is precisely these that are also 'objectively apprehended.'

(II) The Meaning Function of expression: Husserl has said that expressions were originally meant for the purpose of communication. In communicative speech expressions exercise the function of pronouncement in addition to their meaning-function. Now the question is whether the two functions, the pronouncing function and the meaning function inseparable at all. Or is there any possibility to find the one even in the absence of the other? Most probably Husserl’s reaction to this question would be: it is possible to locate meaning function in the absence of pronouncing function but the reverse mean pronouncing function is present in the absence of meaning function, is not possible, because by definition expressions are meaningful signs. And the meaning function of expression may be considered as belonging to expressions qua expressions.

Even in the case of non-predicative statements or perceptual statements the meaning function is operative. The mental contents and the pronounced contents may coincide, as in the case of statements expressing desire, order etc. Husserl precisely mentions the case where the meaning function is present but the pronouncing function is not present and it is non-communicative speech or monologue. In non-communicative speech expressions retain their meaning and it is the same meaning function which is present in communicative discourse. But in case of monologues they do not announce anything; they do not any longer function as marks of mental experiences. In a communicative discourse a predicative statements announces the speaker's act of asserting, believing etc. or the fact that the speaker believes in such-and-such fact. And when the speaker himself, in the loneliness of his mind, the
expression ‘S is P’ does not announce his own act of believing, for his consciousness of his own believing is an immediately felt, preverbal awareness, not in need of being announced. For him the expression or its representation simply means. In this case Husserl thinks that we have the essential nature of expressions qua expressions i.e. in their unadulterated meaning function.  

(III) The Naming Function of expression: We have seen that how expressions pronounce certain mental experiences of the speaker. Now let us see how expressions name certain mental experiences. According to Husserl there are two types of expressions. First, there are expressions which name and pronounce the same content. Second, the expressions those in whose case the named and the pronounced contents are different. The statements expressing questions, desires, orders etc. both pronounce and name the mental states of questioning, desire, order etc. However in the case of predicative statements, the named and the pronounced are quite different. In a predicative statement what is pronounced is a belief and what is named is a Sachverhalt. In other words we can say, what is pronounced by an expression like ‘I want to listen Jas’ is the judgement that I have such and such desire, and not the desire itself, the latter being the content named: the pronounced and the named therefore are still different. In this particular context Mohanty’s reaction is:

It might be safer to say that Husserl recognizes only one class of expressions in whose case the pronounced and the named contents unmistakably coincide. These are the so-called ‘occasional’ expressions (Husserl) or ‘indexical’ expressions (Peirce), or ‘ego-centric’ particulars (Russell). These expressions, Husserl tells us, have “auf den augenblicklichen Inhalt der Kundgebung eine nennende Beziehung” : they name the momentary content pronounced by them.

3.2 Expression, Meaning and Reference

So far we have discussed the expression and its various functions. Now we will have to discuss other things related to expression. Expression has three aspects: (i)
intimation in general (ii) content or meaning and (iii) the object referred to. The way Husserl has talked about these three aspects of expression reminds us of Frege’s ideas on these. Frege has also talked about meaning (Husserl’s sense giving act). In Frege’s terminology meaning is known as sense. And what Husserl wanted to mean by sense-fulfilling act can be treated as what Frege calls “reference”. However Frege has not talked about intimation in general. Frege and Husserl addressed the question regarding the distinction between content of meaning and object referred to in two different ways. Before considering these two views we need to consider the following.

Frege has a long discussion on meaning and naming (or referring) in his article “On Sense and Nominatum.” We can have a clear idea if we consider all possible relations between expression, meaning and reference. We present here in a table from all possible relations of expression, meaning and reference:

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<tr>
<th>Expression (two or more)</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>(i) Same</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ii) Same</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Difference</td>
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<td>(iii) Same</td>
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Table 3.1 Possible interrelations of expression, meaning and reference

There is nothing much to say about case one. The expressions are identical, the meanings of the expressions are also identical and the references of the expressions
are also identical, for example the expressions ‘table’ and ‘table’. In the second case, more than one utterance of the expression is involved and all of them are identical. The meanings of all these expressions are same yet the references are different. For example take the expression ‘The table is my room’ which is uttered by both X and Y in two different rooms. Here the expressions uttered by both the persons are the same, the meaning of the expressions are also the same yet the references are different because the reference of the expression uttered by X is in X’s room while the reference of the expression uttered by Y is in Y’s room. In the third case the expressions are not identical the meanings are not identical but the reference is said to be the same. This is impossible. In the fourth case it is claimed that although expressions are the same, the meanings are different and the references are also different. For example the expression ‘ice’ a particular meaning for me, an Indian whereas for an Eskimo the meaning of the same expression may be different. For the Eskimo man the reference of the word ‘ice’ may be the wall of his igloo, whereas for me the reference is never like this and the meaning also does not have anything to do with walls of our houses. In this way we might regard that meaning and reference may differ for different communities even though the expression is the same. In the fifth case the expressions are different but the meanings and also the references are the same. That this is possible can be seen by considering the expression ‘bachelor’ and ‘unmarried man’. Although the expressions are different, the meanings of these two expressions are also the same. In the sixth case the expressions are different, the references are also different but the meanings are the same. The falling pair of example establishes the possibility of such a case. Take the two expressions, “Bucephalus is a horse” and “Mayflower is a horse.” The expressions and the references are definitely different but the meaning of both the expression may be
taken to be the same as being a horse is the main element is their meaning. In the seventh case expressions and meanings are different but the references are the same. A pair of very well-known examples, due to Frege, is “the morning star” and “the evening star” or takes Husserl’s pair of examples “The victor at Jena” and “the vanquished at Waterloo” or “the equilateral triangle” and “the equiangular triangle”. The expressions in the pairs are different and the meanings of those expressions are also different, yet they refer to the same object. And the obvious eight case claims that the expressions are different, the meanings are different and the references are different. The expressions ‘chair’, ‘table’ etc. exemplify this.

We have so far discussed possible interrelations between expressions, meanings and references. Let us now consider what would be Husserl’s and Frege’s reaction to this. We should however note the difference in terminology between Frege’s and Husserl’s. What is for Frege Sinn is for Husserl Bedeutung and what is for Frege Bedeutung is for Husserl Gegenstand (the named or the referred). That which is ‘meaning’ in English is termed by Frege ‘Sinn’, which is termed by Husserl ‘Bedeutung’. And that which is ‘reference’, in English is for Husserl Gegenstand, but for Frege it is Bedeutung.

Husserl thinks that every expression is about something, in his words überEtwas. Every expression has some reference about which the expression says something. Again there is a distinction between naming and reference. Whatever is indicated by an expression is not always named by the expression. Not all expressions name their objects. Husserl holds that only those expressions which function have has complete subject of predicative statements are names. So we see that according to Husserl, “in order to be a name, it must enter into certain syntactic relationships and must be preceded by the definite or indefinite article.” Thus for Husserl mere nouns
can but be names. For example ‘dog’ is not a name but ‘the dog’ is a name. Nonetheless expressions other than name also refer.

Let us now turn back to the notion of meaning in the context of Frege and Husserl. For Frege meaning of a sentence is the thought expressed by the sentence and its reference is the truth value. But Husserl thinks that a sentence means a thought but refers to a state of affair. For example the expressions ‘A is greater than B’ and ‘B is smaller than A’, refer to the same state of affairs, but as the two thoughts are different, the meanings of the expression are also different. For Frege an expression refers only in so far as it also means. But for Husserl an expression refers through its meaning. The reference of an expression is determined mostly by its meaning. If there is a change in the meaning, then there will be a corresponding influence on the mode of reference although the object referred to may remain the same.

In this context another important element is ‘use’. Suppose, an expression refers to an object, Husserl thinks that the reference here is shifting to the object because of the use of the expression. This shifting character of its reference is determined by its use. And the reference is coming from the expression through its meaning. One may think here that Husserl is also making the same kind of distinction as did Strawson between an expression and its use. According to Strawson meaning is the function of expression and referring is a function of its use. Now the question is does Husserl really agree with Strawson? It seems that Husserl largely agrees with Strawson. Husserl thinks that to use an expression meaningfully and to make an expression to refer to an object are the same. From this view of Husserl it follows that use is involved within reference. If the reference is falsified in relation to the real world, then the expression is not meaningfully expressed or used. If this is so, then Husserl can be said to be supporting Strawson on this issue. For Husserl reference
would be the function of use of an expression and not of the mere expression. Husserl
has understood the sense-fulfilling acts (the object referred to) to be the reference. So
in Husserl’s phenomenology we can find use of an expression in the corresponding
meaning-fulfilling acts. If we find that my expression is fulfilled then it is said that the
expression is meaningfully used. However, looked from a different perspective,
Husserl can be treated as supporting Strawson when Strawson attributes the referring
function to expression as such. J.N. Mohanty explains Husserl’s position in the
following way:

. . . though an expression in itself has a reference, this reference remains indefinite
so long as we do not consider a specific use of it. Apart from its use, an expression
is not without reference; only, its reference is vague and further determinable. It is
its use that gives it the required determination. 20

We have already said, according to Husserl, expression has three related
aspects; (i) intention (ii) content of meaning or sense-giving acts and (iii) the object
referred to or sense-fulfilling acts, and only in this context we have discussed and
compared the views of Husserl and Frege. Not only does an expression have meaning,
expressions also refer to a definite object. Expression and meaning get related to each
other in virtue of the mental acts which give its sense. Now these are two things here;
one is: how is the expression getting related to the object, i.e., what is the content of
meaning and the other is: about which is the expression being used, i.e., what is
presented. The first is sense and the second is reference. In this context Husserl has
repeatedly said, several expressions may have the same meaning but different objects.
For example “Bucephalus is a horse” and “that cart-horse is a horse” — the sixth case
in our table discussed earlier. He has also considered the converse; two expressions
can have different meaning but refer to the same object. For example “The victor at
Jena” and “The vanquished at Waterloo”— the seventh case in our table above. About
proper names too Husserl has said that the same proper name can have different meanings. For example ‘Socrates’ may have different meanings by becoming equivocal. The same thing can be said about “redness” and also “the number-2”.

In his *Logical Investigations* (vol.-1) Husserl has discussed what an expression is and what ever can be asserted by use of an expression. Husserl thinks that there is a lot of ambiguity in this area. “What an expression expresses, or about an *expressed content*, may therefore be so ordered that one distinguishes between a content in a subjective, and a content in an objective sense.” Let me clarify this comment of Husserl in the following paragraphs.

According to Husserl every expression intimates something and also names of designates something. An expression designates some objects through meaning. But sometimes, according to Husserl, we fail to distinguish between meaning and object. Meaning and object are two different important aspects of expression. *Intending meaning* deals with the content or meaning of an expression. Another aspect of expression is the object which in Frege’s terminology is reference. So on the one hand there is intending meaning and on the other there is the object itself. This intending meaning may some times be fulfilled and sometimes may not be fulfilled, just as a judgement made may be true or false in the world. But through this judgment, whether it is true or false, the intending or meaning conferring acts is performed.

Husserl distinguishes between *equivocations in talk of meanings* and *meaninglessness*. But we should at the outset clarify one thing: the word ‘meaning’ is used in different context but in *Logical Investigations* Husserl has talked about meaning only in linguistic context. The different contexts, in which the word ‘meaning’ can be used, can be seen from the following example:
(i) I don't find any meaning of my life.

(ii) Clouded sky means rain.

(iii) I have understood the meaning of Picasso's painting.

(iv) Her 'no' means 'yes.'

The above examples show the varied uses of the word 'meaning'. In the first example the word 'meaning' has been used in the existential context. In the second it has been used in the causal context. In the third it has been used in aesthetic context. And in the fourth example the word 'meaning' has been used perhaps in the psychological context. Husserl has not discussed the word 'meaning' in all such contexts. He has discussed it only in linguistic context. Husserl is interested in analysing the concept of meaning as we employ it in understanding a language of communicating through language. By equivocations in talk of meaning Husserl has pointed to the fact that by the word 'meaning' some understand objective correlate, some understand thought sequence, yet some understand subjective act, or again some understand ideal sense etc. For example, one can mean the thing pot by the word 'pot'. But Frege understands, by the meaning of a word, the thought sequence. But if we understand the objective correlate by the word 'meaning', then the expression "the present king of France" becomes meaningless. Thanks to Frege we have learned that meaning should not be identified with objective correlate. Again similar sounding words may have different meanings, for example the word 'bank.' A general expression like 'man' has many values where each individually human being may be taken as the meaning of the world. All such different kinds of 'meaning' are what Husserl means by equivocations in talk of meaning. Husserl thinks that this phenomenon of equivocation ideally should be removed. For him the words 'meaning' and 'sense' are synonymous. He further thinks that if the word 'meaning'
or the word ‘sense’ is applied in the context of meaning-fulfillment rather than in the context of meaning intention, then ambiguity will arise. We should draw a clear line between meaning and object — we should not confuse the two. Thus for Husserl the ‘meaning’ or the word ‘sense’ should be used only in the context of meaning intention. In his words:

We shall continue, of course, to understand by ‘meaning’ simpliciter the meaning which, as the identical element in our intention, is essential to the expressions as such.22

When I say ‘Snow is white’ and also when you say ‘Snow is white’, the meaning intentions of both these statements are the same. The common, shared element in these two statements is the core of meaning. Husserl wants to take the word ‘meaning’ in this sense only. Only then can the above mention ambiguity be removed.

Four things come out of the above discussion, on the distinction between meaning and object: First, expression is distinguished from sign by virtue of having meaning. There cannot be any meaningless expression. Expressions are those which have meaning. “A meaningless expression is therefore properly speaking, no expression at all.”23 For example ‘abracadabra’ is not an expression, since no meaning-intending act is made through it or it has no meaning intention. For Husserl it is only a sound pattern or physical phenomenon. Husserl has made similar comments about combinations of genuine expressions such as “Green is or”, we can give more such examples, like ‘Sound walks on the sky’ or ‘Saturday is laying on the bed’ etc. Husserl has identified these as expressions to which no unified meaning corresponds, although by the outer structure it may be thought that they have a meaning. The difference between ‘abracadabra’ and expressions like “Green is or” is
that the outer form of the former does not lead us to think that it is an expression, whereas the latter might mislead us in thinking that it is an expression.

Second, expressions must have their meanings. Whenever an expression has meaning, it must also be related to an object to which it refers. It does not matter whether this object exists or it is fictitious or even impossible. Husserl thinks that we cannot claim that an expression has meaning only when the corresponding object has factual existence and otherwise it would be meaningless. For example the words 'round square,' 'golden mountain' are not meaningless, although they are no factual objects corresponding to these. Thus for Husserl objects are whatever the expressions talk about. Husserl borrowed this idea of object from Brentano.

Third, Husserl thinks that we have the tendency to identify meaning with fulfilling intuitions, but they are different from each other. There is no fulfilling intention of the word 'fairy,' but for that the word is not meaningless. So it is necessary to distinguish objectlessness from meaninglessness. There is a tendency in us, to confuse both of them. Hence meaning fulfillment cannot be confused with meaning intention.

Forth, the proof for confusing meaning and object lies in our tendency to see the presence of knowledge whenever we use the word 'meaning.' It is thought that when I know the meaning of the word 'pen,' I also know a pen. Here we are confusing meaning intention with meaning fulfillment.

Husserl holds that the way John Stuart Mill tries to explain the concept of meaning has also led to equivocation in our talk about meaninglessness. Mill found the essence of meaning in connotation. On Mill's view those names which have no connotation are meaningless. For Mill non-connotative names are meaningless. We should note here that those names which designate something but do not imply any
property are non-connotative. For example, proper names. So for Mill, proper names are meaningless. By connotative names, Mill understands those “such as designate a subject and imply an attribute.” And by non-connotative names he understands those “such as designate a subject without indicating an attribute as attaching to it.”

According to Mill, proper names are non-connotative or meaningless in strict sense. He has compared proper names with the distinctive chalk mark given by robber in the story in *Arabian Nights*. In the story the robber gave a distinctive chalk mark to a house. Mill thinks we perform an analogous or similar operation in the case of a proper name. So for Mill proper name is such an unmeaning mark with which our mind connects the idea of the corresponding object. Whenever this mark is seen by us or thought of by us, we start thinking about that particular object. When by pointing out we say ‘This is Partha’ or ‘This is Kolkata’, “we do not, merely by so doing, convey to the reader any information about them, except that those are their names . . .”

But when the expression ‘the city where underground railway is available’ is used instead of the name ‘Kolkata’. It is not mere marks it involves lot more information than that. This is why Mill says that connotation is what constitutes their significance.

Now Husserl says that if we follow Mill’s own words, then it will be clear that Mill has confused indication and expression. Husserl says “the chalk mark of the robber is a mere indication, while a proper name is an expression.” For Husserl chalk mark is a sign which contains indication but which does not express any meaning. However we should remember here that Husserl talks the word ‘meaning’ as linguistic meaning in the sense in which the words ‘dog’, ‘cat’, ‘chair’ express meaning. Infact Husserl has not used the word ‘meaning’ in the context gestures, pantomimes, body language etc. He has taken the word meaning only in the context of ‘meaning’ of an expression. Let us take for example, the symbols like ‘+’, ‘—’.
According to Husserl, the kind of meaning expressed by the words ‘dog’, ‘cat’ is not expressed by these signs. But these signs have indication. For example ‘+’ indicates the function of addition. Hence for Husserl expression has both indication and meaning but sign has only indication.

According to Husserl, proper name is not merely a sign; it express meaning just as the world ‘dog’, ‘cat’ do. Of course just like other expressions “proper name functions as an indication, i.e. in its intimating role.” Husserl holds that there is a real analogy between the chalk mark of the robber and the proper name. The robber can identify the house to be robbed seeing the chalk mark. Similarly, in Husserl’s word:

If I hear a proper name uttered, the corresponding presentation is aroused in me, and I know: This is the presentation the speaker is framing in his mind, and that he likewise wishes to arouse in mine. A name, however, has an additional expressiveness to which the intimating function is merely auxiliary.

Sign does not have this additional expressiveness. Hence the chalk mark given by the robber is at the level of sign. In favour of Husserl, however, it can be said that expression has both indication and meaning, while sign has only indication. All expressions are signs but not all signs are expressions. So it may happen that there are signs which are expressions, for examples the chalk mark of the robber mentioned earlier.

Husserl does not accept the way in which Mill has distinguished connotative from non-connotative names. But Husserl does accept the distinction made by Mill between “names that are a means towards ‘knowing’ an object” and “names which are not.” There are such names which are the means of knowing the objects. If one understands the word ‘Love’, for example, then he can claim to know what love is all
about. Husserl accepts this distinction but this is not, according to him, the same as
the distinction between connotative and non-connotative names. Husserl says:

Mill's distinction between what a name \textit{denotes} and what it \textit{connotes} must not be
confused with the merely cognate distinction between what a name \textit{names} and
what its \textit{means}.\textsuperscript{31}

In the above discussion we have already seen how Husserl distinguished
object from meaning. Now we shall see how he has made a distinction between
meaning and mental images. According to him, meaning is not identical with mental
images. In ancient time there was an idea that when we hear a particular word, then a
certain king of picture or image is present in my mind. That particular picture is the
meaning of that word. For example when the speaker utters the word ‘dog’, at that
moment there is a picture of a particular dog that is present in hearer’s mind. Some
philosophers claim that the picture is the meaning of the word ‘dog’. But this position
is not accepted by Husserl, because mental image is fleeting and varying. He thinks
that meaning is something constant. His argument against image theory of meaning
(or picture theory of meaning) is as follows: Although there is no corresponding
mental image incase of algebraical signs or complete formulae or verbal propositions,
still they have meaning. He takes an example of a verbal proposition like, “Every
algebraical equation of uneven grade has at least one real root.” Regarding the word
‘root’ I know that the word is always accompanying the sign ‘\(\sqrt{}\)’. But there is no
mental image corresponding to the word ‘root’. Same thing can be said regarding the
words like ‘culture’, ‘religion’, ‘art’ etc. and also the words like ‘quark’, etc.

Husserl of course accepts that verbal expressions are often accompanied by
mental pictures or images. But Husserl objects to any attempt to understand or explain
meaning in terms of those mental images. Subjective images can never be treated as
necessary condition for understanding meaning. When a person is engaged in understanding some theory or other, what he is concerned with is the content of the expressions of that theory. The author’s (of that theory) psychological history or the circumstantial contingencies in which the theory way laid down do not play any role what so ever in so far as understanding the theory is concerned. The psychological image that theory evokes does not simply matter. For while the psychological images and circumstantial vagaries vastly vary, meaning remains constant.

Inability to form an image does not imply lack of meaning. Husserl claims that no geometrical concept whatsoever can be adequately illustrated. Husserl however concedes that images, in a phenomenologically describable way, act as aids to understanding meaning. But, Husserl concludes, images are not themselves meanings.

Though his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl explains the nature of sign and expression in a very diverse and interesting way. He tries to suggest that sign is not expressing meaning like expression; however outside of physical aspect signs have meaning. He thinks that sign can viewed in two ways. One is physical aspect and the other is expressing meaning. For example the signs ‘+’, ‘—’ etc. have a specific meaning when they are used in mathematics. But outside of this area they have no meaning at all. Husserl has explained this with the example of chess. The chessmen can be viewed as physical object. Outside of the game there is no meaning of those objects, but when they are used in the game with its rules, they have meaning. The rule of the game determines the meaning of the chessmen. If signs are treated as physical objects, then they will be external to us. But if we treat signs as expressing meaning, then they become a part of our life. In fact Husserl says that if signs express meaning, they become expressions.
3.3 Intention–Fulfilment Relationship

Husserl has taken dialogue to be the real case of expression. Gestures, Pantomimes, monologues etc. are in no way treated to be expressions. Husserl even claims that no meaning proper is expressed through soliloquy. One might argue in soliloquy one talks to himself and in that case words are used as signs; i.e., in such a case words give indications of the corresponding inner experience. Thus one might hold that through soliloquy expression of meaning takes place and that is why soliloquy can be called expression. In response to this Husserl says “I cannot think such a view acceptable.” For, he thinks, soliloquy is not at all like dialogue. In case of ordinary dialogue words indicate our mental states or the senses of those words. In such cases through words and verbal expressions we get the indication of the mental states of the speaker. But if the relation between the so-called expression and meaning is considered in case of soliloquy, we see that here the case is exactly the reverse of what we see in the case of dialogue, i.e., at some stage during the mental state a person starts muttering. In other words, a person talks to himself because of such a mental state. So in such a case the sense of the verbal expression is prior to the verbal expression itself, i.e., the sense in this case indicates or points out the muttered words of the speaker. This is how Husserl draws the distinction between dialogue and soliloquy. However, the indication as now mentioned is different from the indication discussed before. According to Husserl:

The existence of the sign neither ‘motivates’ the existence of the meaning, nor. properly expressed, our belief in the meaning’s existence. 34

This is why Husserl does not take soliloquy as a form of expression proper. According to him, in case of soliloquy people live in an imagined world instead of the real world. When we live in an imagined world, utterances and writings float before
us, they do not have any existence in the actual world. Husserl cautions us not to get confused by such imaginative presentation in soliloquy. Centaurs do not have any real existences; if they exist at all they exist in the imaginary world. Similarly the imagined verbal sound or the imagined printed words do not exist, only their imaginative presentations do. According to Husserl, although the mental state or thought, in case of soliloquy, does not involve the expression of meaning proper, yet such thoughts get communicated or intimated. Husserl thinks, in soliloquy, one can be taken to be speaking in the sense of imagined utterance. For instance, when I say to myself “You have gone wrong, you can’t go on like that”, there is no real communication. It is only imagined that I am speaking to myself and communicating to myself.

Although Husserl takes dialogue to be the real case of expression, yet there is a debate about whether soliloquy can also be taken as expression. Husserl has not taken soliloquy as a case of real expression, not even as complete expression. However there is no doubt about the fact that expression has two aspects; one is the physical aspect and the other is non-physical aspect. The physical aspect of expression consists in uttering words or making sound by our vocal organ or writing ink marks by the use of pen. Husserl has called this physical phenomenon. On the other hand non-physical aspect of expression consists of acts which give its meaning. When I am uttering or writing words, I am not only performing a physical act, but at the same time I am adding a meaning or attaching a sense to my expression or written word. Husserl distinguishes the sound pattern from expression, both of which have physical aspects. When I utter ‘abracadabra’, such an utterance is not infused with sense. But when I produce a verbal sound like ‘Roses are beautiful’, then such a verbal sound is infused with sense even if there may not be a conformation or
fulfillment from the side of the actual world. According to Husserl, exactly here lies
the difference between meaningless sound patterns and expressions. When the making
of a verbal sound is infused with sense then there is a meaning-conferring act. When
the speaker utters something, his intends to say or communicate something. This, in
Husserl’s terminology is known as meaning-conferring act or a meaning intention.35
And when there is no such meaning-conferring act, the making of the verbal sound
remains meaningless. It is now clear that when sense is attached to the physical
phenomenon, there is a meaning-conferring act. Now the meaning that is attached to a
pattern of sound may or may not be confirmed by the actual world. If the meaning-
conferring act is confirmed by the actual world, then what we have is a meaning-
fulfilling act.36 In that case the physical expression is accompanied by both a
meaning-conferring act and a meaning-fulfilling act. For example, uttering the verbal
pattern ‘Snow is green’ is a meaning-conferring act because there is a particular
meaning intention attached to the physical phenomenon. However this meaning
intention is not “actualizing its relation to its objects”, since in the actual world snow
is white. This is why the above physical phenomenon is not accompanied by
meaning-fulfilling act. Thus the uttering the verbal pattern ‘grass is green” — this
physical phenomenon is accompanied by both a meaning-conferring act and a
meaning-fulfilling act. The acts which have the relation of fulfilling or actualizing
their relation to the objects are characterized by Husserl as “acts, which become fused
with the meaning-conferring acts in the unity of knowledge or fulfillment, we call the
meaning-fulfilling acts.”37 According to Husserl a physical phenomenon, uttering a
sound or writing of marks is first made with meaning intention and later it turns
towards meaning fulfillment. And these two constitute our knowledge. Meaning
intention and corresponding meaning fulfillment, these two acts make a complete
knowledge. For example ‘Grass is white’ is not a complete expression but ‘Snow is white’ is a complete expression because in the latter there are both meaning intention and the corresponding meaning fulfillment. Husserl thinks that meaning-conferring act or meaning intention and meaning-fulfilling act or corresponding meaning fulfillment “have a part to play in intimation in the case of communicative discourse.” The meaning intention constitutes the innermost core of intimation in case of communication. For example when the speaker makes some verbal sound or makes some print marks (physical phenomenon), his first and main intention is to make the physical phenomenon acquainted with the hearer. This acquaintance happens through the meaning-conferring act or meaning intention. Husserl takes meaning-conferring act to be the most important factor in the case of communication between speaker and hearer. When a speaker utters some sound (physical phenomenon) for the purpose of communicating with the hearer, the real intention of the speaker is to make the hearer understand the meaning intention which the speaker attaches to the uttered sound. When the hearer understands the meaning intention of the speakers, communication between them becomes possible. For the purpose of communication it is not important to know whether the meaning intention has a corresponding meaning-fulfilling act. This is required in case of knowledge (or awareness). To have a knowledge about something, both knowledge conferring act and knowledge fulfilling acts are required.

So there are three things which we need to take note of: (i) physical phenomenon (ii) meaning-conferring act or meaning intention (iii) meaning-fulfilling act. These three elements are phenomenologically unified in the speaker’s linguistic behaviours. When a speaker and hearer communicate with each other through a dialogue, all these three things are unified with each other. We as hearer do not
remain content with experience of the physical phenomenon; the very next moment we try to understand the sense or meaning. So when the speaker makes some sound for the hearer to understand, he in fact tries to draw the attention of the hearer to the particular meaning-conferring act. A question naturally arises here: How is miscommunication possible? The meaning-conferring act which the speaker has tried to get the attention of the hearer to through his utterances may not be understood by the hearer and in that case the hearer fails to understand the speaker. According to Husserl, from the phenomenological perspective an expression, to be a real expression, all the three aspects of it viz., physical phenomenon, meaning-conferring act and meaning-fulfilling act deserve adequate explanation. Husserl thinks that all knowledge (or awareness) is complex because the above three are unified in each of them. For Husserl a phenomenological analysis of meaning can properly be given if the unity of these acts constituting the complex structure can be explained.

When we discuss the relation between expression and meaning we are not concerned with a particular physical aspect of expression. When I say the meaning of the expression ‘dog’ is an animal belonging to canine family, we are concern with the meaning of the word in general. We are not concerned with a particular utterance of the word made with the help of vocal chord etc., or the writing of the word involving material objects, muscular movements etc. We are here dealing with the expression as a species or the expression in general and not the particular occurrence of the expression. This is why Husserl uses the word ‘ideal’ in the context of the difference between expression and meaning. He says that when we go for the meaning through expression. We really move from the subjective act of making a sound towards the ideal meaning of the object. The subjective treatment leads us to the objective meaning. Husserl, in order to explain this, has taken the example of “quadratic
When I sincerely utter that, "three perpendiculars of a triangle intersect in a point," it is not only my uttered sound pattern is being referred to. The same is the case with "quadratic remainder." Instead "we mean the expression in specie." The meaning of the expression here does not refer to the meaning-conferring subjective experience which accompanies when I am uttering "the three perpendiculars of a triangle intersect in a point". What is being asserted is not something subjective, but a state of affair which leads me to the ideal meaning to the objects. It is psychological fact that I am asserting something, but "what is intimated consists in inner experiences and what we assert in the judgement involves nothing subjective." The judgement I am making about the triangle can also be made by anybody. My act of judging is a transient experience which arises and passes away but what my judgement asserts e.g. the content that the three perpendiculars of a triangle intersect in a point, neither arises nor passes away with the act of judging. It is the identical sense, one and the same geometrical truth that can be asserted indefinite number of time by indefinite number of people. Husserl thinks that the same thing can be said about all assertions. For example if I utter 'grass is white', or 'round square', I am going from the subjective act (of making a sound) to the ideal meaning of the object. This unity between expression and meaning is called by Husserl ideal unity. We do not arbitrarily attribute this ideal unity through our assertions, instead we discover it. When we make a judgement: 'If the sum of the angles in a triangle does not equal two right angles, the axiom of parallels does not hold,' then I not only make this judgement, I also do many other things. The judgement says something and what it says is completely different from what is intimated through my assertion. My utterance or my expression is an occasion by which infact "this subjective act is intimated, something
objective and ideal is brought to expression: the hypothesis whose conceptual content can appear as the same intentional unity in many possible thought experiences, and which evidently strands before us in its unity and identity in the objectively-ideal treatment characteristic of all thinking.\textsuperscript{45}

We have seen that according to Husserl all knowledge or awareness is complex because each of them is united with Intention-fulfilment. An intellectual act of awareness or knowledge is needed for our experiences of meaningful using or for the meaningful understanding and for this an expression does not necessarily amount to saying that in case of such understanding, we inspect the intentional correlate of that act. Understanding according to Husserl is the grasping or re-living of the meaning intention. Thinking also is basically – that is to say, regarding that component of it which underlies, makes possible and also supplements our operation with symbols – a meaning-intending act, a peculiarly original form of awareness.\textsuperscript{46} Husserl is very particular to advocate that in meaning-conferring act or in meaning intention we are not objectively aware of the meanings. When we are questioning or believing or judging, our question or belief or judgement not about the meaning of the expression but about the state of affairs referred to. It is only in a subsequent act of reflection that we may come to be objectively aware of the meaning of the expression, the proposition, as distinguished from the state of affair referred to.\textsuperscript{47} So in this particular context verifiability fails to appeal a criterion of meaningfulness. No doubt that there is a relationship between verifiability and meaning function but it would be a fundamental error according to Husserl if we construct the criteria of meaningfulness by its verifiability.

In a wider sense of thinking awareness is always awareness of something, which confirms that all awareness is intentional. However within the class of all
intentional acts there is a narrower group to which the so called meaning-intending acts belong. In other words we can say thinking is intentional in a sense that is more specific than the broader sense in which all awareness is said to be so. In this specific sense, *Intention* serves to define a class of experiences which are characterized by the peculiarity of being capable of founding fulfilling-relationships. However the narrower class of intentional experiences does not constitute this class by itself; there are other intentional acts belonging to this group and a kind of peculiarity in the above sense they all share in common before returning to the sort of experience with which we are primarily concerned. Even in the specific sense *Intention* is not expectation. It is a kind of living not to be directed towards the future.\(^48\)

To explain the wider and the narrower or the specific sense of intentional act we can give an example of melody. When we encounter a very well-known melody, at the very beginning we are awakening by understanding our familiar bits or rhythm and our definite intentions (wider sense) which is going to be fulfilled step by step, with the progress of the melody according to our expectations. But in every bit of the melody we are intended in a flash (specific) to witness a kind of living which is not intended towards the future for its fulfilment. My experience of the melody of course constitutes an intention which point out towards the completion of the melody, which is not given to me in a particular moment. However cannot deny the fact that I engaged with a momentary representation of my intention which is an intention towards the object and which is given to me.

Within the specific form of intention, Husserl distinguishes between two radically different groups. One group belong to the desire and wish intentions, and the other consists in what Husserl called objectifying intentional acts. Which means an act is said to be ‘objectifying’ if it is capable of functioning as a component of
knowledge situation. Knowledge which is different from mere thought consist in an intuitive fulfilment that identifies itself with the intention, subject to the object directedness of the consciousness. Meaning-intention belongs to this group of objectifying intentional acts. 49

The objectifying intentional acts are further classified in to two groups viz., signitive or symbolic acts and intuitive acts. Signitive or symbolic acts are thought which constitute the meaning of expressions. Intuitive acts are basically intuitions about perceptual or imaginative and these perceptual or imaginative intuitions are capable of further fulfilment and that therefore even intuitive acts may contain unfulfilled intentions within them. 50

The above explanation can be represented in the following manner at list the way Mohanty articulate it in his Edmund Husserl's Theory of Meaning: 51

![Diagram of Intentional Acts]

[* (B) is considered as the sub-class or sub set of (A).]

Fig. 3.1 Intentional Acts
3.4 On ‘Occasional Expressions’: Psychological and Logical

We have seen in Husserl’s phenomenology meaning intention is the key notion centering which a theory of meaning progresses. Now we will see vagaries of meaning or fluctuations in meaning can be conceptualized in Husserl’s explanation of occasional expressions. A very important characteristic of expression with regard to its meaning is that the meaning of an expression changes depending on the person or the circumstance in question. In this context Husserl has made a distinction between objective expression on the one hand and essentially subjective expression or occasional expression on the other. There is also a very subtle difference between essentially subjective expression and occasional expression although both of them are of the type of subjective expression. By essentially subjective expression, it is meant that the meanings of those expressions vary from case to case. Suppose I am telling you ‘I wish you good luck’, also suppose some other person X is telling a person Y the same thing. Now although in both these cases the wish sentence is the same, yet the meanings of the two sentences are not the same. Because the way I relate myself to my hearer is not the way X relates himself to Y. This ambiguity of meaning is different from what can be called equivocation of meaning. For example the word ‘bank’ has more than one meaning. The way the meaning of the word ‘bank’ shifts implies that the word can be used only in one of the meanings of the different meanings it has in a particular context. But the meaning of the statement ‘I wish you good luck’ changes constantly from speaker to speaker and hearer to hearer. This is called, by Husserl, ambiguity of meaning. Same sounding words (homonyms) like ‘bank’ may have different meanings, but the meanings are determinate. So the expression ‘I wish you good luck’ is an essentially subjective expression whereas expressions like ‘bank’ etc. are occasional expressions. Even to know the meaning of
an expression containing pronoun, we need to know the person who makes the expression and also the context in which the expression is made. This is also an example of occasional expression. Husserl also claims that there are such words in our language which do not have more than one meaning, yet the meaning is vague. For example ‘red,’ ‘bold’ etc.

We have so far discussed essentially subjective and occasional expressions. Now let us see what Husserl means by objective expression. Those expressions which we can understand from its manifest printed or auditory presentation, without taking the subject or the context into consideration, are called objective expressions. In these cases we need not know the circumstance of the speaker nor the speaker himself to know the meaning. Through the physical form of the expression only we can grasp the meaning. Although the speaker has a relation with the sentence and the expression is uttered in a specific psychological context, yet to understand the meaning of the expression we need not know either the subject or the specific relation. Different theorems of mathematics and logic are objective expressions, for Husserl. For example, “2×2 = 4” or ‘P v ~ P’. Husserl has called these objective expressions *sine qua non*.

All sentences involving pronouns are occasional expressions; because by using pronouns we are bringing in the specific subject. The meaning of the pronoun ‘I’ is different from person to person who utters it. One might argue that the subjective notion of ‘I’ can be changed into an objective notion. For example one might say that ‘I’ means “whatever speaker is now designating himself.” Husserl says that such a substitution in case of ‘I’ is not only unusual but also the sense becomes divergent. For example, the meaning of “I am pleased” and the meaning of “whatever speaker is now designating himself is pleased”, are not the same. For
“whatever speaker is now designating himself” is a universal semantic function of the word ‘I’. But when I represent myself by the word ‘I’, I am representing myself in a particular way and when you are representing yourself by the word ‘I’ you are representing yourself in another particular way. So there is no universality here. Since I-presentation is different to person to person, we cannot substitute ‘I’ by any objective expression. Every person has a different I-presentation, every person has a different notion of ‘I’. That is why ‘I’ varies from person to person. Yet the word ‘I’ has such a character of universally operative indication that on the strength of this, every person uses the word ‘I’ to express his own individual notion.

Whatever has been said about personal pronoun like ‘I’ is also true of demonstrative expressions. For example, sentences involving demonstrative expression like ‘this’ are also occasional expressions. Husserl has however talked about an exception here. Sometimes the expression ‘this’ involves an objective use. For example, in mathematics or logic it is some times said, “this follows from the fact that . . .” Here the use of the word ‘this’ is not occasional. In this case if we want to know the meaning of the word ‘this,’ we do not have to know the circumstance, in which the comment is made. The judgements of mathematics or logic are independent of anybody’s mental state. Barring this, the uses of demonstrative expressions like ‘here’, ‘there’, ‘above’, ‘below’, ‘now’, ‘yesterday’, ‘tomorrow’, ‘later’ etc. are occasional and they are partly universal and partly conceptual like the personal pronouns.

Now the question is the way Husserl explains the so-called ‘occasional’ expressions or ‘ego-centric particulars’ like ‘I’ ‘this’ etc., for these cases is it possible to exclude or eliminate the subjectivity or ego-centricity and the equivocation attach to such expression? Is there any possibility to demonstrate the ideality of meaning to
these 'occasional' expressions, in spite of the ambiguities and fluctuations in meaning takes places in those expressions? The answer of this question lies the distinction between 'objective' expressions and 'subjective' expressions. An expression is objective, if it is possible to fix its meaning through its mere sound sensory appearance. In other words we can say such an objective expression is intelligible without having a reference to the person uses it or the circumstances under which it is used. The ambivalence of an objective expression is quite understandable and in that case it is related to many different meanings in the same relationship subjective to various references to various circumstances of its use, and it has to be determined which of the meanings is conveyed in a particular situation. However whether the expression at all can be understood in any of those meanings is not determined on such circumstances of its use as its condition sign qua non. Hence the equivocation of objective expressions does not therefore destroy the theory of the ideality of meanings.53 So we are locating two kinds of fragmentations in meaning. One is equivocationality and the other is ideality.

The word like 'I,' 'this,' 'here' etc. possess a kind of originality in terms of its meaning, which is represented to the different uses or to the occasional uses of those words. We know this restriction at least the person who uses these words. Even without knowing the circumstances where the word 'I' is using, we are able to understand 'I' is different from 'abracadabra.' On the contrary this kind of anticipation of 'I' does not constitute the full meaning of the expression 'I.' For this full meaning of the expression 'I' we have to locate the contextual identification. Hence two layers of meaning has to be considered in respect of the full meaning of occasional expressions like 'I,' 'this,' 'here' etc. One is its general meaning-function, and the other, that which determines this general function and transforms it into the
full, real and concrete meaning. According to Husserl the former is the ‘signifying’ meaning (*anzeigendeBedeutung*) and the latter the ‘signified’ meaning (*angezeigteBedeutung*). Hence occasional expressions retain an identical unvarying component within their shifting and changing meanings. Even in the case of the ‘this,’ perception makes the meaning definite but does not constitute it. So, as far as the meaning with its totality is concern, the occasional expression like ‘I’ and ‘this’ is semi-conceptual because the meaning receives its full determination only in the context of perception which is spatiotemporal (or in the context of extraneous circumstances). But in all the circumstances the proper names convey its meaning is something different from the above occasional expressions. First, the element of mediacy which is not present in the relation of proper names and their objects, can be located in the expression ‘this’ with its semi-conceptual meaning-function of pointing towards object. Second, the kind of fixity which is involved in the relation of the proper names and its objects is not present in case of the expression ‘this’.  

The important question here is whether the subjectivity and the changing character of the meanings of the occasional expressions consistent with that identity and fixity of meaning which a phenomenology of thought demands. Husserl thinks that every subjective expression can be replaced with an objective one only if there is a possibility to get hold of its momentary meaning-intention in its identity. Husserl’s attempt for the elimination of egocentric particulars or his attempt for excluding occasional expressions from the realm of language exposed the phenomenological impotence and at the same time it reflects Husserl’s spirit behind the persuasion of an almost impossible task to extract essence from egocentric particulars. The ‘this’ is a category of the real world, and not of the realm of essences. Hence we have to recognize that there is a phenomenological discontinuity between ‘this’ as a category
of the real world and ideal-objective meaning as a category of essence – between the theoretical expressions and the practical expressions.  

Farther Husserl has made a distinction between the logical content of an expression and meaning conferring experience. In his opinion the essence of meaning can be sought through the logical content. So in the case of the meaning of an expression there is on one side the self-identical intentional unity (logical content) and on the other there is “dispersed multiplicity of actual and possible experiences”, or we can say meaning conferring experiences. The latter is a subjective act or performance of a speaker. Husserl says that different subjects can perform different meaning-conferring acts through the same expression. And again the same subject (speaker) can perform different meaning-conferring acts at different times through the same expression. In this context Husserl says that the content of expression can be of two types: one is the psychological content which is subjective and the other is the content regarding meaning or the semantic content which is objective and which does not vary from subject to subject. Husserl calls this latter the essence of meaning. By hearing a word or by seeing a word, there produces an effect in our mind. For example, whether the expression is possible or impossible, physical or psychic, individual or general, existent or non-existent — all these are psychological contents. The effect in my mind and the effect in your mind may not be the same either. But whether the expressions is true or false in its content, consistent or absurd, believed or figmentary — these logical contents of expressions cannot vary from person to person.

Husserl thinks that to know the task of logic it is important to distinguish the psychological meaning conferring act or act-character of meaning from the logical content or ideally unified meaning. Husserl has repeatedly said that since
psychological meaning conferring act is subjective, it contains multiplicity. But propositional meaning or ideally unified meaning is never variable but constant, since it is objective. The proposition “π is a transcendental number” has a unified meaning. My understanding of this proposition is an exemplification of the unified meaning, whenever anyone understands this proposition there happen an exemplification of its unified meaning. Meaning is an universal object and is constant. When different persons utter the same expression at different times and understand it, the occasions become individual exemplification of that unitary meaning. One should not think, from the above discussion, that there is a norm or model in meaning and we want to reach that norm through the utterance of the word. Nor should we think that God has fixed the meanings of words. For Husserl the origin of meaning is not supra-human. If we want to understand meaning it has to be understood in terms of human behaviour.

3.5 Conclusion

The discussion that has been carried out in the chapter can be summarized in the following manner: Husserl distinguishes sign from expression suggesting that the essence of expression consists in its meaning. Husserl analyzes meaning in the context of dialogue. Husserl invokes the concepts of meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment in order to bring out significance of meaning in communication. Husserl cautions us of not conflating meaning with the objective correlate. The present study has tried to show that how phenomenological analysis takes care of variations and fluctuations in meaning in terms of occasional expressions. In this context we should take note of the distinction of logical and psychological aspects of meaning.
Notes and Reference:

1. It is to be noted that the basic notions of phenomenology like *sign, indication, expression, signification, ideality* etc., are having an overlapping representation in the different context and in different interpretations of Husserl and Derrida. The present chapter is a representation of Husserl’s theory of meaning, basically from *Logical Investigations* (vol.-1). In Chapters 4 and 5 the study deals with Derrida’s understanding of those concepts from *Speech and Phenomena* in a critical perspective of Husserl’s phenomenology.


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. p. 9

6. Ibid.


9. Ibid. p. 10

10. Ibid. pp. 10-11

11. Ibid. pp. 13-14

12. Ibid. pp. 14-15

13. Ibid. p. 12


15. Since in the present work my focus is on Husserl, I have not gone into a detail exegesis of Frege. I have introduced Frege only to understand Husserl’s position better.


18. Ibid. p. 18


20. Ibid. p. 19


22. Ibid. p. 292

23. Ibid. p. 293

24. Here I rely on Husserl’s interpretation of Mill. See Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, (vol.-1). pp. 295 - 298

25. Ibid. p. 296


27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid. p. 296

30. Ibid., p. 297

31. Ibid.


34. Ibid.

35. Ibid. pp. 280 - 282

36. Ibid. p. 281

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid. p. 283

135
The notion of 'ideality' is discussed in 5.3 and 5.2.


In this context Russell's analysis is very relevant and worth concerned but we restrict our self only in Husserl's explanation.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.