On the Present State of Research in Phenomenology in Germany. With Special Regard to the Problem of Application

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Taking into account the whole mass and variety of publications, which are, for some reason, called phenomenological, it is difficult to sum up appropriately the actual state of phenomenological research in Germany in a short essay. Even trying to determine the theme of phenomenology seems to be problematic. I want to mention two reasons for this problem, which are rooted in the history of phenomenology itself.

1. Phenomenology had, in the early 20th century, first of all been a philosophical movement in Germany; and its development had—despite emphasizing a new beginning—always been deeply interwoven with the traditions of German history of philosophy, sciences and history of ideas as well as with the history of culture and society in general. But that means that phenomenology cannot work out just one theme or handle of one method. The first formation of phenomenology already shows this in the three great philosophers—Husserl, Scheler, Heidegger—who, meanwhile, are regarded as the classical authors in Phenomenology. It is unquestionable that there are relations concerning phenomenology between these three philosophers, who already in 1930 (G. Gurvitch) had been looked at as the phenomenological constellation. Yet, there are remarkable differences between them: Husserl, Scheler, Heidegger do not only represent very different relations to the past and different ways of vitalizing the traditions: the ways they shaped up their philosophical thought, too, must have impressed their contemporaries very differently. At any rate, their effects developed divergently.
2. Phenomenology promptly took effect in foreign countries, the results of which acted upon German philosophy. These reactions from foreign countries substantially have influenced, and even motivated phenomenological research in Germany until now. There are Roman Ingarden, Jan Patocka, Roman Jakobson, and Emanuel Levinas, who are of importance for Eastern Europe. E. Levinas, for his part, had decisive influences on the reception of phenomenology in France, where he still takes part in the phenomenological discussion. From France, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur, and even Derrida did or do act on the phenomenological scene. Alfred Schütz and Aron Gurwitsch—both coming from Europe and from the German speech-community—made important contributions in the US, which anew influenced the German research. Finally, foreign institutions of great significance were established early, like the Husserl-Archives in Löwen/Louvain, founded by Pater van Breda, which is paralleled by the Archives of Köln and Freiburg. The Edition of Husserliana since 1950 in Haag (by Nijhoff) and the there appearing serial *Phenomenologica*, which includes about 80 titles are—although it is a Belgian-Dutch enterprise—elements of phenomenological research in Germany. The American foundation of the journal *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* by Marvin Farber in 1940 has been a crucial approach to phenomenological philosophy.

The history of phenomenology in its actions and reactions has not been written yet. By the way, it should have to include the history of emigrations and re-migrations of this century and therewith to record the political and concrete history of culture and society.

Furthermore, there is a third reason for the difficulties in determining phenomenology, which rather concerns a systematical aspect, although it refers to the historical context: It seems characteristic of phenomenology not to remain within the pure philosophical domain, but to join in manifold single problems of research in the different scientific disciplines. Indeed, phenomenology does even work on fields of pre-scientific dimensions of orientation. These are the phenomenologies, which carry combined titles (*Bindestrich-Phänomenologien*) as phenomenology of speech, phenomenology of culture, phenomenological anthropology, phenomenology of religion, phenomenology of the social world, etc.

All of these historical and systematical elements seem to concentrate in German phenomenological research, and seem compelled to gather all these apparently heterogeneous themes and aspects into a homogeneous conception.

The factual development of phenomenology, including its variety of motivations towards themes and methods may be called a way of