Chapter IV

HUSSELR

In case of Husserl we find a point which primarily distinguishes him from the two philosophers that we have studied in the preceding two chapters. Both Kant and Hegel were basically philosophers, by inclination as well as by their academic grooming and profession. Husserl on the other hand is 'an outsider' coming to philosophy from his earlier interest in mathematics. But the germ of taking a philosopher's, onlooker's stand-point was present even there when he moved from mathematics proper to 'Philosophy of Arithmetic' (1891) in which he attempted to give a psychological interpretation of the basic concepts of mathematics. However, Frege's criticism of psychologism made him give up that position with the result that in future he remained a strong critic of psychologism. In addition, Brentano's theory of the intentional nature of our mind influenced him considerably with the nature of consciousness itself.

Around this time, the intellectual scene around Husserl was in some respects similar to that prevalent in the years when Kant came to the centre stage. On the one hand, the grand claims made by the Hegelian philosophy regarding either the Absolute Knowledge or a spectrum of different parallel systems of such knowledge had failed to deliver the goods. On the other hand, the natural, positivistic sciences with their exact and mainly mathematical methods had demonstrated their success and in their jubilant mood had started professing the use of those very methods for the study
Consequently, a debate over methods raged. As we shall see, Husserl's chief concern was methodological; but this consisted not in taking sides with or against the advocates of unity of method but in considering the concept of method has such. Thus after a long gap in the methodological deliberations we come in Husserl to the same point.

This, of course, should not be taken to mean that Husserlian phenomenology is only an up-to-date dressed version of the thoughts of any one or more of his predecessors. It is true that, in Husserl, we find clear echoes of certain insights gleaned in the history of philosophy by many a philosopher. But on closer look there also appear to be serious divergences from each one of them. A quick look at some of these will be certainly helpful in understanding the exact position of Husserl vis-a-vis these important philosophers and in appreciating the novelty of Husserlian approach at the frustrating problem we are trying to understand.

In this way, the earliest philosopher with whom we can link Husserl is Plato. Though the earlier phases of phenomenology are descriptive, very soon Husserl starts dealing not with particulars qua particulars but as 'examples' of the universal, the 'eidos' that they manifest and thus enters the province of transcendental essences, not just of objects but also of the very contents of the cognitive processes - thus the talk of the essence of seeing, the essence of method. Naturally, the only source of genuine knowing is 'seeing'. But like Plato he doesn't posit another world of ideas and condemn the world of particulars. On the contrary, as seen in the Interlude, Husserl feels a recurring need to come back to the world of exeperi-
In his motivation Husserl can be regarded as closer to Descartes. His problem, ‘How can I know if I can ever really know that there exist not only my mental processes but also that which they apprehend?’ is no doubt an echo of the Cartesian problem. No wonder then that Husserl would insist on indubitability as the hallmark of knowledge and hence regard ‘seeing’ as the most basic source of knowing. At the same time, Husserl differs with Descartes, many a times as a result of misunderstanding. For example, his reading of Cartesian doubt as one regarding the nature and not existence of a thing is certainly wrong. Similarly, his observation that Descartes denies what he discovers by regarding that ego cogito is a part of this world also is based on a misconception. But, methodologically, the most important difference is that the Cartesian doubt is intended to vanish at the end whereas, for Husserl, it would be a permanent feature of the phenomenological investigation.

Husserl’s relation with Kant is still more important. It can be said without the least exaggeration that it was Kant who brought him out of the ‘Crisis of 1906’, because even after the rejection of psychologism in the second edition of Logical Investigations, Husserl was at a loss with respect to the proper way of further investigations. But after a study of Kantian philosophy, his writings seem to have a distinctive Kantian flavour - not just in words but also in the line of thinking. Thus, Husserl’s remark in Ideas-I, ‘we are not challenging the possibility of cognition… we do have them. The question is How are they possible.’ or his insistence on
developing phenomenology as a theory of essence prior to phenomenology as a science of matters of fact or his recognition that 'transcendence' is the initial and central problem of the critique of cognition - all these are unmistakable marks of Kantian influence on Husserl. But for all these Husserl's phenomenology is not identical with critique in the Kantian sense. Because, in the first place phenomenology is based on intuitive seeing while the critique moves solely in the sphere of understanding which 'constructs' thinkingly. Secondly, setting the limits to reason is a necessary feature of the critique as on it depends the possibility of reconciliation of Physics and morality. Thirdly, the very approach of the critique is justification oriented and hence doesn't require description of individual's experiences. Allied to both these differences is the fact that Kant has to accept a noumenal reality that is thinkable but not knowable. In Husserlian phenomenology, even in the later transcendental phase, this sense of limiting is absent. Thus, in spite of Kant's crucial influence, Husserl outruns the former's shadow.

If Kant's influence on Husserl were total, one could not even imagine Husserl acknowledging certain important insights in Hume. But that he does is a fact. With him he agrees that phenomena are the only given and yet believes that through them is knowledge possible.5

In the Interlude, the similarities and differences between Hegel and Husserl are dwelt on at length. Nonetheless, so far as the methodology is concerned, we may note a further similarity. Like Hegel, Husserl too, insists on the internality of a method - 'A detailed knowledge of the sphere will also work to provide norms for richer
methods. A method, after all, is nothing which is, or which can be, brought from outside. But, at the same time, we should remember that, in Husserl, this does not result in 'relativism' as in the case of Hegel. Moreover, whereas for Hegel, phenomenology is equal to philosophy, for Husserl it is, like Kant's critique, only a propeadeutic, not only to philosophy but also to science which in Husserl's eyes is not sufficiently scientific. Rather, the development of phenomenology as a rigorous science will help science to reach its ideal.

The above remarks situating Husserl in the context of his predecessors, particularly Kant and Descartes, have as their background Husserl's own ideas in Ideas-I and Cartesian Meditations. But when we consider Husserl's late work, mainly Crisis, in a sense the historical background of phenomenology is more articulate. For, in Crisis, one whole part is devoted to this issue of historical antecedents of transcendental phenomenology. But, besides, there is also a certain modification or modulation of his own earlier historical references. The basic theme of the historical part of Crisis is devoted to a much fuller statement and elaboration of a note struck earlier in the Ideas-I, i.e., the whole of western philosophy in general and modern philosophy in particular is an attempt to undertake the project of transcendental philosophy. Earlier Husserl has described phenomenology as the secret nostalgia of western philosophy. In Crisis he spells out this idea in details. The whole course of western philosophy is presented as a struggle between two tendencies - a naive objectivism and transcendental point of view. It is this diagnosis of the trouble with western philosophy that provides a unity to western tradition and
pertinence to Husserl's work.

It is in this context that Husserl reviews the affinities of his thought with Kant, Hume and Descartes. In Kant, while recognizing critical philosophy as the inauguration of the transcendental turn, Husserl has certain reservations about completeness and depth of the revolution of Kant. Basically, this reservation is about the narrowness and restricted form of Kant's conception. Kant saw the transcendental turn as a method but, for Husserl, it is only a surface manifestation of a deeper orientation viz - transcendence as a turn towards subjectivity. Husserl, like Heidegger, regards the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason as philosophically more profound as there Kant gives importance to subjective deduction while in the second edition, out of the fear of subjectivism and psychologism, Kant deemphasized it. For Husserl, this is not only a minor change in emphasis. Subjective deduction implies importance of subjectivity as the ultimate source of transcendental knowledge. But, apart from this major response to Kant, there are a few other minor and technically critical judgements on Kant. For example, while accepting the critical enterprise of seeking the grounds of the possibility of objective judgements, Husserl would claim that Kant saw these grounds in the structures presupposed by Newtonian science. Husserl's most important insight in Crisis is that the structure of science is a superimposed construction on life-world. Kant does not seek for the conditions of experience in life-world but equates the world of experience with science. This failure to distinguish a construction of thought from the given, pre-theoretical experience of life-world that is the root of rationalism or intellec-
tualism of Kant.

Connected with this is the second point that Kant’s theory of perception is not phenomenological but is an implicate of scientific construction of the world. Hence, Husserl claims that the transcendental aesthetic of Kant is tied too closely to the categorial presuppositions of Newtonian science. This point could be brought out by showing how space and time, the forms of sensibility, are almost indistinct from Euclidean space and time. On the contrary, Husserl, recognizing the spatio-temporality of life-world, shows how space and time of life-world are not the same as space and time of Physics.

The third way in which Husserl would see the relative superficiality of Kant’s revolution has to do with transcendental subjectivity. Kant recognized transcendental subjectivity as the ultimate ground of categories, for, in the Analytic of Judgement, he shows how all categories are made possible by the transcendental unity of apperception. But this structure of consciousness is seen by Kant as ‘consciousness-as-such’, the common and universal framework of any objective thought.

According to Husserl Kant’s subjectivity is an abstract, impersonal, structural thought. For Husserl, it is the concrete life of a subject. The idea of transcendental life, so prominent in Cartesian Meditations and Crisis is non-Kantian, for Kant could never associate the concept of transcendental with the category of life. It is because he sees transcendental subject as a structure than as a life that the problem of intersubjectivity does not occur. For Husserl, this problem becomes the ultimate issue.

Generalizing from these responses, the Crisis, accepting the
achievements of Kant, would see the inadequacies in Kant as due to the enormous power of the other tendency of thought viz. objectivism. Because Kant could not come to terms with this issue, the critical philosophy surrenders to the objective mode of thinking. This is why Crisis expresses a new appreciation of the depth of Humean thought. In Hume, the problem of subject as the originary ground of all ideas is never out of sight. Therefore, Husserl believes that Hume is closer to the spirit of transcendental philosophy. But the failure of Hume is similar to that of Kant who recoiled from philosophy of subjectivity because he did not have the understanding of psychology as a genuine science. Hume, too, thought in terms of a naturalistic model of mind. Hence, his theory of subjectivity results in psychologistic scepticism. The way out, as Husserl sees it, is to overcome naturalistic objectivism in the very core of subjectivity by working towards a genuinely transcendental psychology. It is here that Husserl recognizes the immense contribution of Brentano. According to Husserl himself intentional psychology is possible only as transcendental psychology. But Brentano was still caught up in empiricistic objectivism, the point of view from which he aimed at developing psychology.

These remarks not only clarify the context of Husserl's phenomenology but also reveal an inner dialectic working within phenomenology. As stated earlier, Frege's criticism of psychologism of Philosophy of Arithmatic was a turning point. In Logical Investigations there is a profound criticism of psychologism. But when we look back at the development of phenomenology from the point of Crisis, this early break from psychologism has to be re-
interpreted properly. Critics like Marvin Farber talk of repudiation of psychologism as indicating a turn. They hold that with Ideas and the emphasis on transcendental subjectivity there is a relapse into idealism. Hence they see the development of phenomenology as a struggle between realism and idealism. But when we look at it from the point of view of Crisis, we see that the anti-psychologistic polemic of Investigations is only a preparation for a genuine science of psychology. It is not giving up of psychology. But the prospects of phenomenological philosophy are bound up with the prospects of psychology. Without it, transcendental phenomenology is impossible. Conversely, without transcendental phenomenology, a genuine psychology is not possible. It is a new threshold that Husserl reaches here. It is not idealism but psychology that can explain the objectivity of the thought itself. Seen in this way, Husserl's development can be better understood through his interconnections with others and then a proper grasp of what is new in it is possible.

From the point of view of the present thesis, the most profitable way to enter Husserl's thought would be to begin with his understanding of scepticism. It is true that there is hardly any systematic presentation and analysis of scepticism in Husserl's writings. Yet from the few remarks that he makes directly about scepticism as well as from his analysis of Hume's culmination in scepticism, it becomes clear that he had an insightful grasp of the threat to knowledge. This grasp, incidentally, is also a very
important, though not the only one, factors that shapes his phenomenology.

In the 'Train of Thoughts' that precedes the lectures - 'The Idea of Phenomenology', Husserl points out that the natural thinking (which for him includes scientific as well as ordinary thinking) takes the existence of things for granted and hence is not bothered about scepticism. The reason why scepticism is a challenge to philosophy is that the latter, though believing itself to be different from the naturalistic stand-point does implicitly accept the natural way and hence ends necessarily in scepticism. 'Treatment of natural thinking in a natural way ends in contradictions and, therefore, in scepticism.' Thus, his rejection of psychologistic position of Investigations brings him to the realization of the need to adopt a method which must be non-naturalistic through and through.

On the other hand his Platonic inclinations and his early upbringing in mathematics have moulded a conviction into the uniqueness of knowledge. Hence the Hegelian conception of Truth as something coming to be in history is not acceptable to Husserl. He holds that successive diversity of positions in the development of philosophy can't imply absence of 'the' valid positions and most importantly history is not the judge capable of determining the validity of a position. Here, Husserl's difference with Hegel is once more clear. For Hegel, the multiplicity of philosophical positions in history does not amount to contradiction, all of them are only manifestations of a single universal - 'the philosophy'. For Husserl, on the other hand there is and can be only a single philosophy but unlike the Platonic 'Idea' it is not something not capable of actualiza-
tion. It is true that all past philosophies strive towards that ideal and hence are only 'impulse to philosophy'\textsuperscript{19}, or 'not only not sufficiently scientific, but not scientific at all.'\textsuperscript{18}

Such a wholesale rejection of all previous philosophy as non-scientific may create an impression that, like Kant, Husserl too was impressed and fascinated by the nature of sciences - necessity, certainty, universality and objectivity. In fact, Husserl's period was all the more ripe for such an impression and scientists and positivists had in fact started clamouring for adoption of the method of science as the method of all knowledge. And himself being a mathematician, Husserl could have also been susceptible to the lure of the formal certainty. There are several reasons why this did not happen. On the one hand there is the Humean influence of regarding phenomena as the only given but the scope of the term 'phenomena' is so wide as to include even mental acts as given. Secondly, though in a limited sphere mathematics has lent the belief in the possibility of certain knowledge based on indubitable truths. This is supported in the material sphere by Cartesian method of doubt. The strategy that Husserl seems to be adopting is that of refuting a sceptic demanding indubitable knowledge by starting from 'within' with indubitable data showing beyond doubt that 'we know'. But traditionally phenomena have been conceived as only given, not necessarily standing for something else and therefore, worth ignoring or at the most capable as working as a 'stepping stone' to the higher order of concepts, universals etc.

It is here that Brentano's theory of intentionality comes to help Husserl. The theory that every mental act is characterized by a
direction upon an object in some way was a great respite for Husserl who wanted to start from phenomena especially those involved in the act of knowing. Of course, Husserl himself did not agree fully with the 'intentional inexistence' part of Brentano's theory and held in Logical Investigation that the objects are always transcendent.

Again, in spite of the glamorous achievements of the natural sciences, Husserl does not subscribe to the doctrine of 'unity of method'. On the contrary he is very critical of the methods of these sciences. The most glaring lacuna in them is that they posit objects or even the existence of the world as a whole.11 Worse still they are not concerned with problems of cognition, rather they 'presuppose reaching the transcendent'.12 In addition they are not aware of their ultimate grounds and hence must be 'inherently incomplete'.13

Naturally, with so much of dogmatism in their very constitution scientific methods can't be suitable for a rigorous study.

Now we are in a position to delineate the strategy that Husserl is adopting and to which a brief reference was made a few pages back. In the light of the theory of intentionality of our consciousness, Husserl is giving the phenomena a new status. True, they are personal, fleeting, changing. But they are not as bereft of substance as they were thought to be in the past. Even as particulars they have their essential characteristics - their essence or eidos. And, as an object of intuition, it can be grasped. In the present context, if only we can intuit the essence of cognition, valid cognition will be an unquestionable fact silencing the sceptic for ever. In short, Husserl aims at answering the sceptic in his own language - indubitable experience of knowledge.
It is thus that we come to Husserl's own conception of an ideal science. Like any science it will have to be dealt with on two levels. One is the level of individual truths which must be evident and 'have a luminous certainty.... The most perfect mark of correctness is inward evidence'14. But even though phenomenology does not theorize, knowledge to deserve that title must have a logical order grounding some propositions in some others. Therefore, logic is necessary as a theory of science though all of it is not to be admitted in the beginning. Only the axioms of logic such as the law of contradiction are to be taken in and that because 'their validity is evident intuitively.'15 Thus, the basics of the ideal science that phenomenology is supposed to be are to be intuitively clear, evident as required by the Phenomenological Norm : To avail ourselves of nothing but what we can make essentially evident by observing our own consciousness itself.16

There can be a doubt as to whether 'seeing' in such a vivid sense is possible in case of universals as it is in case of particulars. To this Husserl has a firm reply - 'Thus now it is senseless to raise questions and doubts as to what the essence of red is.... one means by the word 'red' just that which is being grasped and seen there.... In a similar way, we can also grasp the essence of cognition.'17 However, the haughtily confident tone of the utterance soon tempers down to admit a possibility of error in this process, yet Husserl holds that 'if we really see what 'seeing' really amounts to, the error is avoidable.' The comment that follows is interesting - 'But to deny 'self-givenness' in general is to deny all norms, hence to construe everything as illusion, thus embracing total scepticism. There is
nothing refuting such a sceptic.' (Emphasis added) While it reminds of a similar position taken by Hegel, this comment also subtly forecasts a shadow.

**THE PROBLEM OF BEGINNING**

In a sense the beginning point in Husserl's phenomenology is a turning back to Kant. In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant insists on a critique of our cognition prior to its application. But this requires 'accepting' a standard as unproblematic and this is against the very spirit of the critique. But we also saw that the Hegelian alternative of beginning forthwith and developing a criterion internally does not yield the promised returns either. Now Husserl, too, is insisting, like Kant, that 'A phenomenological science of matters of fact before developing the phenomenology of essence is a non-sense.' Of course, Husserl's approach is different from both, Kant and Hegel, who aim at a 'logos', thinking reconstruction of our experience, whereas Husserl insists on 'seeing'. But this won't dilute what David Lamb has termed 'the problem of critical philosophy' - the problem of starting in the absence of a standard that is itself unproblematic. It seems that Husserl is fully aware of this problem and also feels deep inside the hurdles in solving it. Thus, his treatment of the problem seems to be torn between denying the problem at all and convincing (himself and others) that though not initially evident the method will prove itself to be so in course of its application.

In the following sections dealing with the methodological aspect of phenomenology, I have mainly relied on Husserl's systematic and detailed discussion of the same in Ideas I and its synoptic presentation in Idea of Phenomenology.
Hence, on the one hand he follows Hegel in claiming that 'absolute data presents the basic criteria'\textsuperscript{21} and tries to rescue at least the Cartesian point of entry i.e. cogito by asserting that doubt can't be all pervasive, if it is, cognition as such will be impossible and thus we can safely begin with Cogito.\textsuperscript{22}

But the satisfaction offered by such efforts soon slips out of hand. In Ideas-I where he considers the methodological issues at length there are traces of the abovementioned strategy. For example he claims that 'phenomenology has inherent legitimacy.'\textsuperscript{23} the idea behind it being that 'If phenomenology is to be entirely a science within the limits of mere intuition,... then what is universal of its procedure is already given as something obvious.'\textsuperscript{24} (Emphasis added) But perhaps, the possibility of an error in the very act of seeing (mentioned earlier) is constantly nagging. Even earlier he has emphatically asserted, 'If we don't know how cognition of the transcendent is possible, we also can't say whether it is possible.'\textsuperscript{25} On the one hand this conflicts with his own earlier assertion that the problem before us is not whether cognition is possible, but on the other hand it also jeopardizes the very beginning by seriously questioning the reliability of the method itself. One can say 'If we don't know how the method works we can't say whether it works'. By Husserl's own standards intuition is not a guarantee or at least is a shaky guarantee. And as phenomenology is the very beginning, 'the methods don't have a record of past achievements.'\textsuperscript{26} Consequently, Husserl has to concede, after giving an initial characterization of the method, that 'Later on scientific reflection of this procedure itself gives it a logical grounding of method.'\textsuperscript{27}
The point of making the above observation at this stage is to bring to light the fact that despite of his shift from reason or understanding to intuitive 'seeing', Husserl is not immune to the methodological problems that his predecessors faced and hence these problems are also likely to affect the results of his investigations.

Initially at least, the phenomenological study was intended to be descriptive. But soon the demands of the nature of ideal science made it clear that 'particular phenomena are not useful in forming a science of phenomena.' At the same time particulars are necessary for intuitions of essence. Thus, though the process begins with ordinary experience, to reach the level of intuitive seeing of essences, it has to pass through certain stages. These are the reductions that are meant to lead to the intuition of the essence of cognition. While dealing with these I intend to highlight only those aspects that are important for the purpose of the problem under discussion and also to link them with the thoughts of the predecessors, especially Kant and Hegel.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION

While understanding Hegel's criticism of Kant in particular and of traditional epistemology in general, it was seen that one of the reasons that Hegel located as responsible for the inevitable failure of all critical attempts to refute scepticism was the implicit dualistic ontology underlying all those attempts. Once a boundary is conceived, crossing it becomes impossible. The conclusion that Hegel drew is that any epistemology has to presuppose an
ontology; it can't be shaken off by even the most sincere avowals. The
question is not 'ontology or no ontology'; it is 'which ontology'. So
what Hegel did was to replace the dualistic substratum by the
Absolutistic one intended to leave no scope for the problem of
knowing in principle. But as we saw the remedy did not work.

On this background, Husserl's extreme insistence on clarity
and certainty and hence on intuition as the only or at least the primary
source of knowing has brought him to the conclusion that only
phenomena are genuinely given, because they are immanent,
indubitable. His ambition of building up the science of
phenomena requires that nothing else should be accepted. Phenomenological reduction or epoche is the conscious, deliberate
articulation of this decision. It is no wonder that Husserl condemns
all previous philosophy as only impulse to philosophy and sciences as only the phenomena of sciences, because both of them
presuppose the existence of an ontological reality. The only
difference is that for philosophers there is the problem of
transcendence while for the scientists transcendence is taken for
granted.

Another thing that must be noted is that Husserl does not allow
phenomenological reduction to result in a commitment of the oppo-
site effect. Positing in case of ordinary understanding is not a
judgment but an unconsciously developed attitude, while scientist,
though they deny the reality of things as we perceive them, point a
transcendent order that suits their theoretical requirements. For a
phenomenologist, on the other hand, positing amounts not to doubt-
ing like a sceptic nor positively nullifying the world (about annihi-
lation however, there is some ambiguity because, soon afterwards, Husserl also speaks of annihilation of the external world as a result of phenomenological epoché.\(^{13}\) The scope of phenomenological reductions is almost total. Barring the pure ego and the most evident logical principles that are a must for any knowledge, everything physical and psycho-physical is bracketed.

But, from the phenomenological point of view, Husserl sees this not as a loss but a positive gain in the form of access to pure consciousness. For it is in only in reflection that the phenomenological method can work and reflection is seeing essences in cogitationes.\(^{34}\) Talking about reflection is apt to remind one of Kant and Hegel. For both of them, reflection is possible and necessary as well as sufficient for self-understanding. But with the implicit or explicit ontological moorings of their thoughts, Husserl would not treat ‘their’ reflection as pure. The epoché, as it were, severes the subtle bonds and releases the Husserlian reflection in the true scene. This appears to be a minor difference but, as we shall see, it holds great potentials for the future development of Husserlian critique of cognition.

There is also another important change brought about by phenomenological reduction and to my knowledge has gone unnoticed so far. After demonstrating the possibility of reflection in the absence of any ontological commitment, Husserl points out that ‘The existence of Nature cannot be the condition for the existence of a consciousness since Nature itself turns out to be a correlate of consciousness.’\(^{15}\) This is exactly opposite of the position taken by Hegel who holds that ‘knowledge is if the object is but not
vice versa. Husserl seems to regard this too as a positive gain and it may be indeed so as far as the 'purity' of phenomenological reflections is concerned. But I have an inkling, which can't be elaborated at this stage, that it is precisely this disontologization or autonomization of consciousness that is responsible for some of the problems that Husserl faces later on.

**EIDETIC REDUCTION**

Once the objects, i.e., the acts of consciousness as well as the knower are both inside the phenomenological realm, the next step is that of eidetic reductions, because though particulars are necessary for a science of begin with, they are not properly the objects. Moreover, 'seeing' as the way of indubitable cognition is possible only in the case of essences. Hence 'the process of arriving at the essences of particular cognitions through the presentation of the universals is necessary.'

Here, it is necessary to note that Husserl's comments on the nature of the essences reveal the uncertainty that he had about their precise status. In places, he treats them as if they are objects of a totally different kind, e.g., essence is a different sort of object.' (Pure phenomenology) moves in the sphere of essences or 'By this (eidetic reduction) a new objectivity is opened to us - essences' In these places he is almost one with Plato. Even there, as revealed by the quotation '37' above - 'essences.... through presentation of universals' - there seems to be a distinction between the two. But in his insistence on the continual need of particulars for the knowledge
of essences, he is closer to Aristotle. The real crunch, however, comes when in Ideas-I he deals with the concept of an eidetic science and ponders over whether an eidetic science of the standard of pure, formal eidetic disciplines such as mathematics is possible in case of material, factual spheres. In formal spheres, seeing as a mode of adequate grasping is effective, but when it comes to more complex entities 'the essence is given imperfectly. This is true especially of essences of physical things - Realities. We can't claim to have grasped the essence of a real individual fully.' This confession on the part of Husserl is indeed ironic for it is made at the very moment the sphere of pure phenomena is reached. Consequently, towards the end of Chapter 1 of part III of Ideas-I even though he reconsiders the idea of a descriptive eidetics and tries to figure whether phenomenology can be a 'material eidetic', a geometry of mental processes, but realizes that because of the basic differences between the formal and material spheres, an exact determination of the latter sphere is impossible. There is one last, feeble attempt to discard the model of exact eidetic sciences as prejudicial and therefore to place phenomenology as a descriptive eidetic in a totally different class. But the ineffectiveness of this procedure must have been obvious to Husserl himself.

This weakness inherent in the grasping of material essences and therefore of essence of cognition with which phenomenology is chiefly concerned is the reason why till the end Husserl could not satisfactorily formulate an adequate conception of the act of cognition, even by his own standards which were of course very rigid, and till the end remained a 'perpetual beginner' as he called himself.
One of the outcomes of phenomenological reduction is that consciousness remains as the phenomenological residuum. Eidetic reduction has taken our attention off particular things and directed it to the essences. But as far as the essence of cognition is concerned, the ground is not yet ready for its intuitive grasp. Because though the 'things themselves' are divested of their particularity, the consciousness is not and therefore it is a particular 'me' seeing essences. Hence, the operation of transcendental reduction is necessary to have the ego shorn off of its particularity or individuality.

It is rather difficult to see how precisely this transcendental reduction differs from the earlier two reductions. Because it is applicable only to ego and because it is the ego who is making all these reductions, it will not be wrong to say that transcendental reduction is a combination of both. In so far as 'we exclude ourselves as factual things' it is phenomenological. (It is perhaps more accurate to restate the exclusion in first person singular) But since consciousness as such is a necessary condition of all mental processes and therefore, of reflection, pure ego is not or can not be excluded. In this aspect it is the Eidetic Reduction operating on the very self. With this the essence of knowing as an act - Knower as such-knowing-an object-as-such' is available to the reflecting ego. Here we may say that the process necessary for the eidetic seeing of cognition is complete. There is only the pure transcendental
ego and its awareness of the pure act of cognition. But even of the two the act of cognition is dependent on the pure transcendental ego and therefore Husserl regards the latter as the only real absolute, not dependent existentially even on the world.\textsuperscript{45}

It is from this deep sanctum sanctorum of the transcendental ego thrice removed from the common sensical reality that Husserl—or rather the transcendental ego looks back at the problem of the knowledge of the transcendent. Dealing with the methodological problems it has been 'proved' that we can intuit essences and therefore also the essence of cognition. Only, as cognition is more complex so is its essence, consisting of several forms and their inter-relation. The basic essence of cognition consists in its intending to something beyond, in various ways. This is what gives us the various principles governing objectivity.\textsuperscript{46} Thus with this internal evidence the solipsistic loneliness is overcome. But the sense is not that there is the world and I know it. On the contrary, world as the result of sense-bestowal is possible only because of this transcendental ego.\textsuperscript{47} The very concept of an absolute reality is like that of a round-square. However, Husserl is quick to point out that this position does not amount to Berkeleyan idealism as it is not a new interpretation of reality but removal of a wrong one.\textsuperscript{48}

Perhaps, later on Husserl had realized that this won't be a convincing argument against a wrong interpretation of his theory as idealistic. Besides, by his own token the inference from the seeing of the essence of cognition to 'there is world' is not tenable because as he strongly holds-'...not the slightest or insignificant matter of fact truth can be deduced from eidetic truths alone.'\textsuperscript{49} It is because of this
impasse that Husserl turns towards the problem of constitution of others. But to really appreciate the significance of this turn as an attempt to avoid idealism, we will have to look back again at the three reductions and consider them in the light of their criticism at the hands of later commentators of Husserl.

The project of these reductions is in fact one of the most complex and vexatious problems in Husserl’s phenomenology as a whole. Given the dimensions of its complicity it is neither possible nor desirable to go into the debate about the whole issue - in the limited span of the present investigation. Hence I will confine myself to only a few assertions about the reductions in general and seek to relate some aspects of these reductions to the main project of grounding knowledge.

It is held by some critics of Husserl that there could be a phenomenological programme without any reduction whatsoever. But Husserl himself maintains that phenomenology in the sense he intends to develop stands or falls with the programme of reductions. It is also a practice to speak of the three reductions - phenomenological, eidetic and transcendental - as more or less separate, independent operations. That is why critics like Marvin Farber claim that phenomenological investigation is possible with eidetic reduction alone. For Farber the difference between a programme with eidetic reduction and one with phenomenological reduction is a matter of choice between realistic and idealistic phenomenology.

This position raises two issues: 1) Whether the two reductions are independent and 2) Whether the commitment of
transcendental reduction transforms phenomenology into idealism of some sort. On both these issues Husserl is definite. The eidetic reduction as essentially a means for grasping essences and essential relations is possible only on the basis of implicit transcendental reduction. The reason is that in eidetic reduction we are to comprehend essence, but the essence or eidos is borne by the particular. Therefore, Husserl holds that eidetic reduction does not involve Platonism. But, although the bearer is a particular existent, it is only when the particularity is suspended that we can grasp the essence. This operation of suspending is the transcendental reduction. Looked at this way, transcendental reduction is the gateway to even eidetic phenomenology. It is true that explicit discussion of transcendental reduction follows eidetic reductions in Logical Investigations, but as Husserl tells us in Crisis that it is implicitly present earlier. Ricoeur also confirms this interpretation of these two reductions. As such, the two reductions can be regarded as two stages in a single developing inquiry.

With regard to the second issue, viz. whether transcendental reduction leads to idealism: a few preliminary remarks first. Husserl tells us that epoche is not a denial or doubting. The objective world is not rejected or doubted. Rather it is the transcendental reduction that enables us to understand objectivity and what the thesis of positing amounts to. Reduction is therefore the interpretation of natural standpoint.

Secondly, reduction is necessarily seen with constitution. Here we have to guard ourselves against an idealistic misunderstanding. Constitution is not creation. Hence, Husserl
distinguishes his position from Berkeley's. For Berkeley, it is the mind that brings into existence all objectivity. Moreover, Berkeley's conception of mind and mental phenomena is non-intentional. Constitution, therefore, is not ontological creation. The sense of objects is disclosed precisely as transcendent. Thus, constitution is a sense giving and not creative act.

If these points are kept in mind, the initial suspicion about idealistic overtones of phenomenology will be overcome. But by themselves, they are not sufficient. Two more tasks remain in that direction. Husserl does recognize that we have to distinguish between three types of constitution. Of these, idealism deals with constitution of external objects. But this object-constitution depends on two other achievements: Constitution of the 'other' as the co-subject (intersubjective constitution) and, most profoundly, constitution of ego itself in its synthetic intentional acts in the inner time consciousness (auto-constitution). A discussion of the first constitution that ignores the other two is bound to distort the whole programme. In that way there is a monadic self-sufficient ego and all objects are constituted by its acts. This picture would raise the programme of idealism and would lead to scepticism or solipsistic impasse. What prevents the emergence of the solipsistic threat is Husserl's emphasis on constitution of others as co-subjects. This is the issue that is mainly taken up in Cartesian Meditations.

Here I will make only a few observations about Husserl's treatment of the problem of intersubjectivity so far as the problem of knowledge is concerned.

1) What a phenomenal theory of knowledge has to account
for is the possibility of cognition of objects as transcendent. Here it is necessary to distinguish between two senses of 'transcendent' -

a) In the weak sense, an object is transcendent if it has characteristics given only in additional intentional acts. b) In the strong sense, it is also necessary that these acts are the acts of an ego radically other than one's own. Therefore, to be an object is to be available to other egos. And, as such, intersubjectivity is a condition of the possibility of ego's own objective knowledge.

2) The task of phenomenology is not only to make hypotheses and justify them but to explicate experiences as given. Therefore, in the present context of intersubjectivity, it won't do if we propound a hypothetical theory justifying our belief in the existence of 'other'. It must explicate our experience of the other. Hence, we must show the possibility of intersubjective life. This task, though difficult, preserves the non-idealistic commitment of phenomenology. If successful, it will give us an idea of transcendental intersubjectivity in which the ego and alter-ego are equally fundamental and ultimate.

What increases the complexity of the problem is that the phenomenological mode of inquiry is structured by two basic themes: The first is the emphasis on intuitive seeing and its associated themes of givenness, evidence and clarity. The second is emphasis on the fact that intentional acts are not passive and receptive but constitutive of the objects to which they provide an access. This creates a tension between givenness and constitution. To increase the complexity of this problem of intersubjectivity further, there are other features of this problem that must be kept in mind.
These are regarding both the poles - givenness and constitution.

With regards to givenness Husserl remarks that the other is not given in my act of cognition as an ego-pole. What is given is only the body that, in analogy with my experience, I invest with psyche. Hence the ‘other’ is neither presented nor represented. The mode in which the other is given should be called appresentation - a peculiar function that enables me to grasp the other as an embodied subject. The idea here is that our body is not just a facticity but something animated by our consciousness. The body is experienced not as a thing but as an animate organism. Particular organs are perceived as parts of an organic unity. Similarly, in the case of the other, I see the body as an animate organism. This is how by this appresentational consciousness, I grasp other ego as similar to my own yet as other than myself - as alter ego. As such, with regard to the mode of givenness the mode in which other ego is given is different from the mode in which objects are given. Consequently, if there is difference in the mode of givenness, it would follow that there would be a corresponding difference in constitution. This of course is in consonance with Husserl’s general methodological principle of noetic-noematic correlation.

Constitution of the other as alter-ego is different from constitution of objects in another important respect. I grasp the other not as object but as a co-subject, since this grasping is appresentation, i.e., an experience in which the other as a co-subject is claimed to be constituted in my own experience. In a sense, this is only another illustration of what is true in perception. In case of perception, I perceive the object as transcending the act of
perception. Similarly, the other also is experienced as transcending my experience of the other.

This point is important because there is no special paradox involved in it. If there is, then it is as much a paradox for objects also.

The real difficulty regarding Husserl's treatment of the other has to be located in a different area. Husserl uses two principles of analysis - 1) Principle of appresentation and 2) Principle of recollection. It is not difficult to understand why Husserl uses appeal to memory. It is a phenomenological solution to explain the possibility of experience of the other ego as constituted in experience and not merely as an explanatory conjecture. In the phenomenon of memory 'I now' remember a previous experience. This reveals that in my present recollective act I remember not only a previous perception but also the previous ego. But the ego of the perceiving act is not the ego that remembers. Yet I am capable of passing over this difference. This seems to provide a model by which the intentional act can grasp the other ego. Hence, if this model is workable, we have a schema according to which I can have experience of another ego.

But there is a problem here. It is true that Husserl is right in the description of what is involved in remembering i.e., in some sense I grasp the ego and not merely the content of my experience. But this phenomenology of memory is possible only because, ontologically, there is only one ego. In the case of the other, what Husserl wants to establish is the radical otherness. It is to be questioned whether a solution along strictly phenomenological lines is possible without any ontological commitment. If that is proved to be
necessary then it may be claimed that the argument has run its full circle and is back to Hegel. We remember that Hegel responded to the Kantian project of critique that attempted to autonomize critique by avoiding any ontological commitment by showing that this is impossible. In other words, his point is that a theory of consciousness is also a theory of being. Similarly, Hegel would respond to Husserl that phenomenology can not be autonomized.

Husserl himself seems to have had an awareness of this issue. This guess is based on two considerations: 1) In Ideas Husserl writes that phenomenology is not an elimination of metaphysics but a propaedeutic on which a metaphysics can be constructed. (This is reminiscent of the Kantian concept of Prolegomena). 2) Towards the end of his life Husserl was working on a series of drafts that were later on edited by Fink and published as First Philosophy. Here Husserl is reported to have committed to ontology.

The issue therefore is open: Whether critique in Kant's sense or phenomenology in Husserl's sense could displace metaphysics. But this does not in the least sense imply that metaphysics will be untouched.

If all the issues are brought together, we might conceive the possibility of a conjunction of critique, ontology and phenomenology that would transform them all. To believe otherwise was a serious limitation of Hegel who thought that ontology is sovereign over Kant's critique. If such transformations occur in all the three, it will also be necessary to raise a final question as to whether the result could be called metaphysics, because it will be a transformation of philosophy for which we don't have as yet an
adequate name.
CHAPTER IV

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