CHAPTER VIII

A CONCLUDING ASSESSMENT OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY
Husserl wants to develop a pure phenomenological psychology. He has refuted psychologism. But he never rejects psychology. What he rejects is that psychology can never be the foundation of logic. In his earlier writings he describes phenomenology as a descriptive psychology. The kind of psychology he wants to develop is a pure, presuppositionless eidetic science which has its basis in transcendental subjectivity. This pure psychology is to be clearly distinguished from naturalistic empirical psychology which naturalises consciousness and regards it as a mundane event among other events in nature. Mind has a structural unity of its own that can be known by intuitive reflection and can only be described and never be explained by hypothetico-deductive method. Psychologists must depend on phenomenology for their knowledge of the essences of psychical states and processes. Psychology should be intentional. The intentional character of our psychical states is clearly expressed by Brentano, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Gurwitsch and Scheler. All our conscious states are
directed to something. To think is to think of something, to perceive is to perceive something, to feel is to feel about something, to love is to love something or some person and so on. Brentano seems to think that the object of intentional acts are in some sense immanent within consciousness. But Husserl says that the object is not immanent within consciousness, but it always transcends the act which intends it. According to Gurwitsch, the intentional act or the noesis and the intentional object or the noema are inseparable. The identifying function of intentional act gives us the sense of sameness, which according to James is the very backbone of our thinking.

Among the traditional psychologists the Gestaltists alone may be taken as being intentional psychologists. They had become discontented with the associationistic and behavioristic psychologies. The atomists model consciousness after the physical object and think that it can be divisible into parts like the physical object. Behaviorists try to confine psychology within the realm of objectively observable events. Psychology must be the science of behaviour which can be explained causally in terms of
stimulus and response. Objective method is the true method of psychology. There is no place of introspection in psychology. There is nothing which may be called mind, consciousness, thought, feeling and the like, because all these are reduced to observable bodily states. Privacy in the form of mental state has no significance. They reduce man to a machine and give us only a mechanical explanation of human behaviour. Merleau-Ponty holds as against the behaviorists that our behaviour cannot be explained in terms of stimulus and response. Behaviour is intentional. It cannot be explained mechanically. For, it is a joint product of the intention of the subject and the properties of the object. Behaviorism has value and significance no doubt, but it is one-sided.

The phenomenologists and the existentialists think that consciousness has a unique nature that cannot be explained causally. Intuitive reflection upon consciousness can provide us with the true nature of our conscious states and processes. Psychologists must have the knowledge of the essence of psychical states. Sartre has applied the method of phenomenological reflection to the study of the essence of emotion, imagination and also in his existential psycho-analysis.
He stresses the intentional nature of emotion. James and Janet had neglected the role of mind in emotion. Janet had wrongly introduced the concept of purposiveness in his mechanical theory. James' causal and physiological explanation fails to explain all the emotions. Freud's explanation of emotion in terms of unconscious urges has turned into a failure. For, conscious states cannot be explained with the help of the unconscious forces. The explanation of emotion must be found within consciousness. Emotion has a meaning, it is a purposive behaviour that reaches some goal by transforming the world magically. The magical role of emotion is however similar to the concept of regression in abnormal psychology.

With respect to imagination the empirical psychologists' explanation cannot be accepted. They are the victims of the illusion of immanence, for they think that the object of imagination is immanent in consciousness. Therefore, consciousness has spatial and temporal qualities like the object. This view distorts the nature of consciousness. According to Sartre, imagination is intentional. There is a sharp distinction between the act of imagining and the object of imagination. Reflection teaches that imagination
is the creative freedom of the self that cannot be explained causally. In imagination the full significance of the object being presented, there is no doubt regarding its true nature as well as there is no progress of knowledge. The object of imagination can be neither touched nor seen. In fact, it posits the non-existence of its object.

Sartre's existential psycho-analysis is a specific application of the phenomenological method to the field of psycho-analysis. Sartre aims at discovering the significance of every human behaviour by deciphering it. Freud's empirical psychoanalysis tries to discover the complex. In its attempt to discover the complex personality of man in terms of a few desires it neglects that man is a whole. We must know the original choice of man. Both the empirical and the existential psychoanalysts are concerned with man as he lives in the world and take every human behaviour as symbolic. Sartre uses the concept of bad faith instead of Freud's unconscious, for our mind is co-extensive with consciousness. Sartre rejects Freud's pan-sexualism. According to existential psycho-analysis, man wants to be 'en-soi-pour-soi'. Through all his concrete desires such as eating,
sleeping and creating the work of art, he is trying to realise this goal. The particular means which he adopts to understand this goal reveals the nature of his personality. It is the method of phenomenological intuition which enables Sartre to discover the fundamental choice of man.

Max Scheler has discovered the essence of sympathy by intuitive reflection. Sympathy has intentional structure. My feeling of joy and sorrow is always directed to the other person's happiness or misery. The naturalistic theory, that falsely identifies fellow-feeling with solidaric feeling, emotional infection or emotional identification, has been criticised. For, on the one hand, since it presupposes a distance between the sympathiser and the person to whom sympathy is directed, it cannot be taken as emotional identification. On the other hand, emotional infection is not true fellow-feeling, for in such a state, instead of feeling sympathy with other's sorrow, we try our best to get rid of this sorrow.

In connection with his theory of love and hatred, Scheler shows that love is a spontaneous intentional movement towards the discovery of higher value. Love is not sympathy, though we cannot but feel sympathy for our object of love.
While love is self-directing, sympathy is directed to other person whom we may love or not. Freud's endeavour to explain the phenomena of love and sympathy in terms of repression and sublimated sexual desire is subject to criticism. The feeling of shame and moral principles restrain the power of libido, and thereby develop the finer feelings of sympathy, love and other moral motives. It seems to Scheler that Freud's theory is circular, for according to Freud, sublimation is due to moral principles and it is also through sublimation that moral principles are developed. The phenomena of sacred love, as demanded by the empirical psychologists, cannot be produced in the laboratory. Love is not an instinct and is not blind to values. In fact, it is the basis of evaluation. Instead of attempting the empirical psychologist's to explain the knowledge of other's mind causally, Scheler thinks that other's mind can be known by us immediately like our own. In opposition to the naturalistic psychologists Scheler holds that intuition and introspection are the true methods of psychology.

The method and the principles of Gestalt psychology are akin to those of phenomenological psychology. The Gestaltists first raise the question: What is perception? The wholeness
character of mental phenomena is emphasised by them. Every whole is not the and-summation of its parts rather it is something more. Our brain as a whole responds to a situation. Corresponding to phenomenal Gestalt there is a physiological Gestalt in the cortex. We perceive a figure against a background. That which is figure at one time may be a ground at another moment.

Gestalt psychology has some similarity with phenomenology which studies things as they appear to us. With the help of the method of phenomenological reduction it reaches the realm of transcendental consciousness. After the dismissal of the constancy hypothesis the Gestaltists study the percept as the perceptual noema or phenomena. After the performance of the reduction the phenomenologists face the problem of the constitution of the world. A very similar problem, i.e., how to make a distinction between true being and the illusory one, is felt by the Gestaltists. Again, regarding perception there is some similarity between the two. The problem of both the phenomenologists and the Gestaltists is: how can we perceive the whole thing? The Gestaltists try to solve this problem with the help of their notion of the relation between whole and part. Every whole is composed of parts which are functionally
related to the whole. The seen part of a thing internally refers to the whole thing so that in a single act of perception the whole thing is presented before us. Our present perception is internally related to the previous one. The Gestaltists' figure-ground conception is accepted by the phenomenologists. Like the Gestaltists they think that the object of our perception or the theme is always presented in a thematic-field. There is a Gestalt connection between the theme and its background. Thus we find that there is a common ground between Gestalt psychology and phenomenology. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the Gestaltists are not free from naturalistic attitude.

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From the above discussion it should be clear that in opposition to the objectivistic behavioristic psychology, the phenomenologists have tried to establish a new science of psychology which would be presuppositionless, pure, intentional and whose final task would consist in the clarification of psychological concepts within the range of transcendental consciousness with the help of intuitive reflection. To explain psychical states the psychologists
must not look to the physical world but within transcendental consciousness in which both subjectivity and objectivity have their origin. Thus, the phenomenologists want to bring a radical change by replacing the traditional theories of atomism and behaviorism. Now in this connection, some questions arise in our mind. What is the value of such a phenomenological psychology? Can it be taken as a psychology in the true sense of the term? Can it replace the traditional psychologies properly? I shall try to answer these questions.

A phenomenological approach to psychology has undoubtedly some value. The insight into essence is the final contribution of phenomenology. Psychology is primarily a science that deals with the psychical states and processes. It needs the clarification of the concepts with which it is concerned. The psychologists must not blindly accept that there is emotion, perception, imagination, personality, intelligence and so on without raising the question: What is consciousness, what is mind, what is perception, what is the significance of human behaviour, what is personality, imagination, thought, will and the like? What do those psychical concepts mean? The meaning and significance of these psychical concepts can be revealed
to us only by phenomenological reflection. The experimental empirical psychologists may study the psychical states and process experimentally. But if they have no first-hand knowledge about the nature and significance of psychical states and psychological concepts, then what should be the object of their experiments? How would they proceed? In fact, it is held that "Before it can try to explain anything it must have something definite to explain, and phenomenology provides the starting point which is the Given after it has been systematically comprehended."¹ Thus psychology can carry on its investigations only when the nature of the things to be investigated is supplied by phenomenology. That is why Sartre clearly states, "If we want to found a psychology we must go beyond the psychic, beyond the situation of man in the world, even to the very source of man, of the world and of the psychic, to the transcendental and constitutive consciousness that we attain through a 'phenomenological reduction', or 'putting the world in brackets'. It is this consciousness that must be interrogated."² The unique nature of consciousness as

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² Sartre, Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions, p. 22
revealed by the phenomenologists has some bearing on psychology. It is true that consciousness is not static like a physical object. It is in a constant flow and has meaning and significance. The intentional structure of consciousness shows that every psychical state has meaning by being directed to some object. The phenomenological method discloses the nature and active role of our mind which has a special significance for psychology. The method of phenomenological reduction makes it easy for us to consider all data real or unreal with equal importance. The suspension of existential belief is to some extent necessary for the exploration of the nature of essences and essential relations. In fact, only the investigation into consciousness can tell us what consciousness has contributed to the constitution of phenomena. Truly speaking, the value of phenomenological approach to psychology cannot be ignored. By their emphasis on pure psychology, the phenomenological psychologists have done justice to the nature of psychology as basically the science of mind. It is through intentional analysis that the complex structures and functions of consciousness are revealed to us.
But from the above discussion we must not think that the pure psychology advocated by the phenomenologists has replaced or can replace the traditional psychologies of behaviorism and atomism. If we look deeply, we find that the nature of pure psychology, as depicted by the phenomenologists, is more akin to philosophy than to psychology. After all phenomenology is a philosophical discipline which seeks to give universal and necessary knowledge about the nature of things. According to the phenomenologists, only the investigation of essence can provide us with the necessary and universal knowledge upon which all sciences, especially the science of psychology are based. In their pursuit of essence the phenomenologists have reached the realm of transcendental consciousness or pure subjectivity in which everything has its true being, and therefore, from which the science of psychology must start. This is to some extent a philosophical approach to psychology. It is true that psychology must clarify the essence of psychical concepts. It must know the essence of the concept of man, mind, individual and the like. But over and above this, psychology is a factual science that deals with the psychical states and processes. The essence of man cannot be had by eliminating him from his existence.
Husserl never regards the psychical states as belonging to a real organism; on the contrary, he considers the psychological phenomena as they appear to us. To discover the essence of man means to give him a position in a world of individual beings which the investigation of essence apart from existence cannot reveal. The concept of pure consciousness is an ideal concept. The phenomenological reflection is related to the transcendental self which is not personal but pre-personal, while psychology is concerned with the empirical self. Therefore, to adopt the method which suits the nature of transcendental subjectivity is incapable of revealing the psychical states and processes of empirical self. The nature and aim of psychology are different from those of philosophy. Therefore, the adoption of the philosophical method raises psychology to the status of a philosophy. Husserl's main intention is to refute psychologism, which means psychology can never take the position of philosophy. But if psychology like philosophy seeks to know the essence of mind, consciousness, man as well as all psychical states and processes, and makes a reduction so that the psychical states and process can be studied in their pure form apart
from existential posittings, then this psychology is more allied to philosophy than to the scientific study of mind. According to the phenomenological psychologists, every psychical state is intentional i.e. it refers to object and every intentional object refers to a consciousness. But this consciousness is not the consciousness of an individual i.e. a man of the world who lives, moves and has his being in the everyday world of our own. The psychical state free from any physiological accompaniment is a pure state that belongs to a pure consciousness which is not an empirical self of flesh and blood. Therefore, the investigation regarding its nature can never be the proper object of psychology which is a factual science. Psychology investigates how man behaves in response to a situation, what are the laws that regulate human behaviour and so on. To remain within the field of pure consciousness and to seek everything regarding the world and the individual within it is the view of the idealistic philosophers. In fact, though Husserl states that psychology can never take the place of philosophy, in practice he has given psychology an equal status with that of philosophy. The idea
of transcendental subjectivity is a product of reflection. Therefore, the investigation of the essence of mind in transcendental consciousness is rather insignificant. How could a sound psychology result thereby? The concepts of reduction, epoch, transcendental subjectivity and their too much emphasis on reflective attitude and on purity show how much the phenomenological psychologists are disinterested about the factual world. In their search for certainty and purification they have neglected the real world and real existence. Lauer has truly said, "Phenomenological things are not common sense objects or sense-data but the phenomena in their presentation, grasped as intentional objects. These 'things' are neither 'real' nor 'unreal', they are the immediate, 'originary', presentations grasped only in so far as presented and as presented." 3 Out of the consciousness we can get only that which is the product of consciousness, but not the true nature of the individual mind which is the proper object of psychology. The ideal of psychology, as depicted by them, has turned psychology into a philosophy. Instead of a true

psychology, they have established a philosophical psychology which is impractical and unscientific. Therefore, descriptive psychology cannot be taken as psychology in the true sense of the term.

Now we have to see how far they are successful in replacing the traditional psychologies of behaviorism and atomism. In opposition to the traditional psychologists the phenomenological psychologists want to establish a presuppositionless psychology. But if psychology starts only when the essence of the psychical concepts to be investigated is supplied by phenomenology, then such a pure psychology is not presuppositionless. On the contrary, it presupposes phenomenology. The phenomenological psychologists reject introspection on the ground that it is subjective, and studies consciousness as an object. But the phenomenological method of intuitive reflection is not much different from introspection in nature. Depending on intuition different thinkers may have different notions regarding the same thing. It is by their intuitive reflection that the different phenomenological thinkers have come to the conclusion that intentionality is the distinguishing
characteristic of all psychical phenomena. It is this which differentiates the psychical from the physical. Consciousness is intentional no doubt. But Brentano, Husserl and Sartre are not unanimous regarding the true nature of intentionality and its relation to object. So how can intuition, though reflective, be the true method of psychology? Is not intuitive method as subjective and private as the method of introspection?

The phenomenological psychologists want to establish a psychology which is free from the naturalistic attitude. In this connection, they may regard Gestalt psychology as an example of intentional psychology. But an adequate explanation of Gestalt theory shows that they are influenced by naturalistic standpoint. In fact, Husserl himself says that in principle Gestalt psychology and atomistic psychology are not quite different. For, like the atomists the Gestalists also naturalise consciousness, and give a physiological or causal explanation of psychological phenomena, especially perception. Again, the application of phenomenological method for revealing the significance of psychological concepts of emotion, imagination fellow-feeling and psycho-analysis, though new and encouraging, is not free from limitations.
Phenomenological psychology aims at describing things as they appear to us. But can it stick to its standpoint strictly? Phenomenological investigation is concerned with meaning. It is in the intentional structure that the meaning of conscious acts are revealed. Our whole cognitive and emotional life has meaning. These meanings may immediately be revealed to us in intuition. But in many cases that which is immediately given is not the true meaning of the psychical state. In fact, here we have to decipher the given so as to obtain the true meaning by using the given as the clue to that which is not given. As for example, we may cite the case of Sartre's existential psycho-analysis. Such an explanation is opposite to the principle of phenomenological psychology. For, according to the phenomenological psychologists, we must describe what is given and must not attempt to construct an explanatory hypothesis regarding the nature of that which is not given on the basis of what is given. But in any case, if phenomenological psychology is to enrich and expand itself by discovering the hidden meanings underlying the given one, it must deviate from its own standard. Therefore, though its aim is to abolish hypothetical construction from the field of psychology, it is itself the victim of this defect.
The phenomenological psychologists, especially the Gestaltists, hold that our existential belief must be suspended and we must study things as they appear to us. Everything has intended existence and not a real one in their system. Now the problem is: how can I thus make a distinction between hallucination and illusion, between perception and illusion as I have no access to the real thing? Therefore, in order to differentiate the real from the unreal the psychologists must have a direct contact with reality.

In order to refute the traditional psychologists' attempt to explain behaviour in terms of stimulus and response Merleau-Ponty says that the field of psychology is quite different from that of the other sciences, especially physics. In the psychological field the facts are ambiguous. Therefore, every explanation is probable. With regard to them no decisive explanation can be had. If this be the case, how can the phenomenologists claim that their own explanation of psychical states and processes is decisive? It must be regarded that Merleau-Ponty's own explanation that behaviour is intentional is also subject to doubt, and cannot be accepted unanimously by all as that which reveals the significance of human behaviour most satisfactorily.
According to Macleod, "the phenomenological approach in psychology is likely to lead us into psychophysics, into psychophysiology, into social psychology, perhaps even---- into a sophisticated behaviorism." Macleod has truly said psychological phenomenology is not psychology but a preliminary step to psychology.

Thus by giving due weight to the contribution of the phenomenologists for the science of psychology I proceed now to give an account of the nature of psychology which seems to me most satisfactory. It has been shown that the behavioristic psychology has turned man into a machine. It has analysed behaviour for the sake of behaviour itself and has completely neglected the role and significance of mind. The behavioristic analysis of behavior is too mechanical and has no connection with the inner motives of man. Such a psychological procedure is one-sided. On the other hand, phenomenology because of its emphasis on the reflective attitude has become more philosophical than psychological. The phenomenological analysis of transcendental consciousness tends to raise psychology to the status of a philosophy.

If psychology wants to be a science, it must not be indifferent to the phenomenal world. Psychology must not negate the man of flesh and blood. Though knowledge of essence is necessary for psychological investigations, the task of psychology is not yet confined merely to this investigation. In a true science of psychology the contribution of both behaviorism and phenomenology must be synthesised. Watson wants to wipe out any stains of philosophy and tries to make his theory sound like biology and physics. And to some extent he was successful. The behaviorists are of opinion that if psychology is to be a science it must confine itself to the study of that which is visible and tangible. Behaviorism has significance for psychology in so far as it holds that psychology like all other sciences must not neglect verification. Its fault lies in the fact that it wants to confine the psychological investigation to that which is only objectively observable. For, a science must start from the visible and tangible but must go beyond it. As Macleod has truly said that if wants to psychology be a science, it must start from the phenomenal world but at the same time it must transcend it and give us informations about the transcendent reality, this may be the reality of the material world or the world of values or spirits. The behaviorists should look within the organism
to see what is going on there. In fact, the changes within the organism may not be taken as the physiological cause of behaviour, on the contrary, they are parts of behaviour. The laboratory experiments of the behaviorists would be accepted. But at the same time we must not be blind to the facts of consciousness and the structures and functions of mind in so far as psychology is the science of psychical states and processes. We should not be mechanical in our procedure by regarding man as a machine; rather we must regard him, according to Rogers, as "a person in the process of creating himself, a person who creates meaning in life, a person who embodies a dimension of subjective freedom. He is a figure who, though he may be alone in a vastly complex universe and though he may be part and parcel of that universe and its destiny, is also able in his inner life to transcend the material universe; he is able to live dimensions of his life which are not fully or adequately contained in a description of his conditionings or of his unconscious." Man is free, he has power to create something new, he gives meanings and values to the world in conformity with his perspectives and purposes. His behaviour can be

5. Wann, Behaviorism and Phenomenology, p. 129.
objectively observed but the significance of his behaviour can be known only by an essential insight into his personality, his manner of living and his manner of viewing the world. Behaviour is neither purely subjective nor purely objective. In fact, it is a joint product of the two. Therefore, the method which can be used in studying behaviour must be, on the one hand, phenomenological and on the other behavioristic. Phenomenological method reveals the essence of human nature upon which the significance of human behaviour depends. It enables us to know what is behaviour. But this is not the whole thing. The essence of behaviour discovered by phenomenological insight must be verified and placed on a solid scientific ground. So after knowing the essence of behaviour we must make experiment in the laboratory in order to confirm our claim. Psychology is a science of mind. But man has a body and sometimes we find that the physiological changes in his body are accompanied by corresponding changes in his mind; we cannot therefore neglect the contribution of behaviorism totally. Over and above this we must remember that behaviour is not simple so that the task of psychology will be finished as soon as the mechanical
explanation of behaviour is obtained by making experiments in the laboratory. The psychologists must acquire the knowledge of the essence and significance of behaviour from phenomenology.

Again, the function of the psychologist is not terminated as soon as he knows the essence of behaviour. If psychology is to be a science worthy of name, the psychologists must make experiment upon the psychical states and processes in the light of the knowledge of essence supplied by phenomenology in order that they may attain ultimate certainty and can proceed in the secure path of a science. Phenomenological psychology has yielded rich rewards in the field of psychology. This phenomenological approach to psychology has a good prospect and it would play a more significant role in handling the psychological problems only if it is supplemented by laboratory experiments, keeping in mind the fact that in the field of psychology the knowledge of essences as well as the knowledge of facts have equal importance. Psychology is the science of both facts and essences. Therefore, phenomenology can never replace traditional psychology, it can only reform it and supplement it. Gurwitsch is right when he says, "Husserl's
radical reflections on psychology, its rootedness in the world of primordial experience, its place within the system of sciences, especially its autonomy in several respects with regard to physics, and finally his insistence on the notion of intentionality, however to be redefined, imply indeed a thorough-going reform of psychology which would transform it into a genuine universal science of mind. 6