

CONCLUDING NOTE

In its application to social scientific understanding or knowledge the phenomenological framework has two interrelated dimensions, viz. reflexion and dialogue. It is reflexive so long as it sees the social reality as having a definite bearing upon the social scientist's self-understanding. 'Reflexion' here means a self-knowledge, self-correction and self-preparation which is simultaneous with the social scientist's encountering the social reality.

Gouldner's suggestion that a sociologist, in his theory formation, ought to be self-reflexive and at the same time interactive with the social agents as his subjects and as being at the same level endorses this stance of ours. But the nature of this partnership or relationship needs a more serious attention and a more adequate elucidation since it affects the self-reflexive aspects of the social scientist. Reflexion here is not a self-enclosedness; it is rather self-understanding and self-revelation with respect to the relationship. On this point the concept of dialogue makes a crucial contribution. 'Dialogue' does not exclude the self-reflexive aspect of man; it rather enriches self-reflexion. The phenomenological social science having 'dialogue' as its key-concept brings about a clarification of the notion of self-reflexion as well and comes forward with an adequate, synoptic methodology. Hence as an addition to Gouldner's contention Richard M. Zaner writes : "... it [self-criticism] is also extraordinarily difficult for such criticism

necessarily requires being truly radical that is, carrying out this critical task 'to the roots', to the ultimate foundations or presuppositions, which is much more than the sort of self-awareness Gouldner has called for in his "reflexive sociology"¹. So Zaner contends that besides reflexion we need something else in phenomenology : "To say that philosophy's fundamental discipline is phenomenology (radical criticism) is, however, to insist as well that it is necessarily dialogical and reflexive"². To account for the role of dialogue besides that of reflexion in communication he writes : "It is, in other words, dia-logos; I and thou seeking together, mutually geared in the effort to know and reciprocally open and available to one another in the course of this quest"³. Remaining within the framework of such critical phenomenology, Zaner also appreciates Garfinkel's ethnomethodology as an attempt to find the root of social scientific theory. But these, however for him do not succeed in reaching the realm of 'subjectivity' which is composed of both solitude and sociality. So for any social theory and science, 'subjectivity' is that territory, "... the systematic exploration of ... which occupies phenomenology"⁴.

But Zaner makes a serious mistake by conceiving the realm of subjectivity as the receptacle of dialogue. He pushes his improvement upon Gouldner's thesis back to the impasse of subjectivity and objectivity. It is one thing to say that solitude and sociality are alternating phases for being 'dialogical' with more authenticity; and it is another thing to suggest that 'dialogue' is a subjective state of being. The

latter contention goes against the very ontology of Thou and betrays "the relation's own being". We find Martin Buber's notion of dialogue as a possible and potent alternative for rendering significant improvement in this regard and suggesting a consistently adequate methodology. Though Zaner makes a distinction between 'subjectivity' and 'subjectivism' as "an errant metaphysical stance", he does not comply with the uniqueness of being 'dialogic'⁵.

To look at from Buber's point of view the phenomenological framework for social-scientific understanding is dialogic in the sense that the object of enquiry needs to be free from the social scientists' imposition of his own conceptual framework and set at a 'distance' from his self for a fresh relationship. Such relationship is of an I-Thou kind since the decoding of the social text requires the scientist's partnership with the tradition and background of the text (in Gadamerian sense) and also with the social agents' life for understanding their actions and their mind. A combination of these two i.e., reflexion and dialogue forms the core of phenomenology of dialogue which we here found as essential for evolving an adequate methodology of social sciences from the phenomenological point of view.

We have seen that most of the philosophers of social sciences characterize human nature to be composed of two mutually opposing propensities, which have immense impact upon man's cognitive faculty. To begin with; Comte was eager to bring about a positive stage at the nihiliation of a theological one so that

a positive science of mind can be formulated. This was his route to sociology not only of mind but of all disciplines. In Husserl's earlier phenomenology there is a dualism of natural standpoint and transcendental epochē, while in his later days he advocates for the theoria of intentional phenomenology and Bildung, at the rejection of physicalistic psychology. To form a human community armed with a universal critical stance he wants a wide-spread philosophical education. Transformation of the humanity was a common concern to both of them.

Schutz however is not explicit in supposing any such world of self-reflexion. Yet his distinction between the interest-locked daily life guided by practical motivation and an interest-free cognitive life of social scientists, is very much consolidated. The realm of scientific enterprise is determined by unvitiated rationality, through an onlook at the fellowman's life and then construction of various ideal-types. Thus he makes a gulf between the 'personal reality' and 'role reality' of the social scientist. The radicalism of ethnomethodology consists in unearthing the root of theory-formation to the extent that the 'social' reality becomes ultimately an 'X-factor' having no ground or self-consistency for an ethnomethodologist.

Gadamer speaks of two basic human habits — one of denying the role of prejudices and effect-history, and the other to rehabilitate prejudices through 'effective-historical-consciousness'. The latter nourishes the understanding of man by means of establishing an I-Thou relation between man and

tradition. The ultimate goal is the dialogue within the unity of 'self'. Habermas's proposed antagonism is basically within man himself — between ideology as falsified consciousness and Ideologiekritik that emancipates man to ascend a level of freedom alike 'ideal speech situation'. In spite of his addition of accessory elements of work and power, the primacy of language for rectifying false consciousness is not relinquished. The project of self-transformation of anyone through genuine hermeneutic effort is confirmed though it is not clear to what extent such an understanding inheres in the mundane activist sphere of the social life.

The most significant contribution of Buber's dialogical philosophy lies in emphasizing the ontology of relationship. He deserves equal credit for nicely unveiling the periodical alternation between I-It and I-Thou attitude. With the necessary stress on the basis of authentic existence and personal wholeness he is really unique in asserting that only through personal participation the spirit or being as a man is actualized. All human relationship not with the exception of social scientists' effort, must aim at such fulfilment of existence. According to Buber a mutual addressing between I and Thou takes place in a dialogical manner towards the fulfilment. Such a framework is an imperative for the Geisteswissenschaften of the science of 'Spirit' in the comprehensive sense.

But at this point a slight debunking⁶ of social science itself may not be irrelevant. Following Husserl's insight that

science is after all an accomplishment of human beings in the life-world, we may envisage the social sciences as a gradual continuum of man's life-orientation rather than as a drastic and sudden mutation of the mundane human nature. Following Habermas' model of 'knowledge-interest' interlocking, it appears that discrete social sciences may aim at some sublime branches of Geisteswissenschaften for self-actualization but through preliminary stages of self-adjustment to the environment or world with the positivistic motto of "knowledge to control". This is the realm of I-It attitude in Buber's term. Spencer's 'Social Darwinism' or Saint-Simon's 'social physiology' are concerned with such aspects of the social mechanism. Buber himself admits that alongside the reciprocal world of I-Thou relation a world of I-It is a requisite for the persistence of psycho-physical organism and social structure.

As we have mentioned earlier, even for understanding the I-It aspect of human reality man has to be addressed as 'Thou', because Thou does not dissect man in terms of his specific, discrete aspects but I-It approach definitely fragments human existence by highlighting only the separate aspects of his existence. Hence for a fuller and proper understanding of the aspects of human social reality, it is necessary to connect them to the social reality as a whole. For making this social reality transparent to the social scientist, it is again a requisite for him to have a Thou-orientation to the members of social reality as well as their tradition. It is through a

participation in a community of Thous which includes linguisticality and not through a mere linguistic/verbal participation alone that such a transparency can be achieved. Dialogue, in Buber's sense, fulfils this demand.

When Buber speaks about the unfolding of the personal potentialities through communion we may notice that very notion of personal transformation to be accomplished, which was the aim of Husserl's Bildung of intentional phenomenology. Husserl's objective of ensuring a change in the personal life of a human-scientist through a personalistic attitude, finds a real fruition in Buber's account of personal relationship. This is the heightened level of Geisteswissenschaften, illuminated with the wisdom of self-fulfilment. In doing so a change is most likely to occur in the personal sphere of the partners of a dialogue or the social scientist and his counterpart. But a question seems to be obvious as to how far the element of 'Sociality' as such is retainable in such a Geisteswissenschaften. A science can not be pertaining to 'the social' if it is just capable of enhancing the self-reflexion and personal emancipation of the scientist, because the social world is not self-contained within reflexion and language. Knowledge as Habermas characterizes must not be only a body of coherent linguistic propositions being an epiphenomenon of labour and authority.

The domain and dictum of a comprehensive social science must be such that it may guide in the direction of self-transformation with an I-Thou orientation as well as in a frugal

I-It adjustment of self against the surrounding world. Such an attempt may be expected to remain truthful to the life-world — both in the realm of Geist filled with affection and appraisal and in the sphere of Welt featured by conflict and competition.

It appears to me that such a methodological pattern does not evade the phenomenological emphasis upon immanence. Schutz, out of his strict phenomenological adherence, never stepped beyond the very domain of what is given or is a 'phenomenon'. For him consciousness is engaged in typification, be it inhaled with a layman or a scientist. What he describes as the scientific model construction, is a random phenomenon with the scientific consciousness. The notion of scientist as a 'disinterested observer' is the best ideal-type of the , we may surmise, so-called profession-minded scientists of the day⁷. Buber would characterize them to be the heir of positivistic I-It orientation.

But as has been stated earlier an understanding and articulation of the It-dimensions i.e., the specific aspects of man can be possible by beholding him with reference to the dialogic sphere. One could say that social science from this view point is a dialogical discourse founded upon an I-Thou relationship which is aware of the possibility of its fall to an I-It sphere also.

Buber has considered the dialogue between man and man to be the most adequate version of meeting, though the meeting

relation of I-Thou is not continuous. Whatever be the cause of the fall into I-It, it has a pragmatic value of making both the partners realize the otherness of their respective Thou as a person, a source of intentional emanations. A comprehensive social-scientific method should take into consideration both the active and passive modes of Thou, be it an individual or an institution.

Dialogue is not just an interaction because the latter may not be essentially bereft of subject-object dichotomy. In an antagonistic pattern of interaction the subject is the annihilation of other subject by reducing into an It. But in the method of dialogue both the partners preserve other's subjectivity with reference to the vivid 'betweenness' that encompasses them. Without it intersubjectivity can not be effective both in principle and in practice.

Though social scientists do not raise philosophical question about the taken-for-grantedness of the intersubjective social life, they do not also investigate whether their model construction does retain this basic datum of the life-world intact. Any model of social-scientific enquiry that knows no respect or recognition for the Others or whomever they study, fail ultimately to work out an intersubjective picture of the social world. This is the tragedy of a sheer I-It attitude. So any social scientist in any field should aim at that common domain of relationality which is accessible to him/her in person along with the set of human beings, to whom thematic

interest has been directed. The set of such human beings is to be looked upon, as Gouldner says, like a 'brother sociologists' who have their own ways of interpretation.

The dialogic self of the social scientist and the subjects of his/her study together form the knowledge situation for the social scientist. Neither the primacy of the knower (as a scientist) nor that of the knowable (people there), but a dialogic sphere between them is the starting point for the methodology that this work speaks of.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Richard M. Zaner, 'Solitude and Sociality: The Critical Foundations of the Social Sciences' in Phenomenological Sociology Issues and Applications, George Psathas (ed.) A. Wiley-Interscience Publication, 1973, p. 30.
2. Ibid., p. 31.
3. Ibid., p. 32.
4. Ibid., p. 43.
5. Kurt H. Wolff has raised several objections against the ultra-critical stance of Zaner in the article 'Toward Radicalism in Sociology and Every Day', in Phenomenological Sociology, G. Psathas (ed) pp. 47-58.
6. See Peter L. Berger's contention 'that there is a debunking motif inherent in sociological consciousness', in his Invitation to Sociology - A humanistic perspective, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, England, 1963, p. 51.
7. Gouldner has discussed this with reference 'professional conventions' of sociologists, who rather need a Reflexive Sociological meet. See his The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, p. 489.