

CHAPTER TWO .

ORIENTATION TO PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH
IN SOCIAL SCIENCES WITH REFERENCE TO EDMUND
HUSSERL

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ORIENTATION TO PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

The preceding chapter attempted to give a brief account of the earlier social philosophies and the sociological theories ensuing from them. A chronological view of their development reveals that the problem concerning social scientific knowledge begins mainly from the Enlightenment and continues till the modern period. The theoretical bifurcation between the objectivist groups viz., positivism, neo-positivism and scientism etc. on the one hand, and the subjectivist groups viz., interactionism, instinctivism and psychologism etc. on the other, surfaces in this continuity. Corresponding to this bifurcation we notice two different approaches with regard to the methodology of social sciences.

The approach taken by thinkers like Montesquieu, Rousseau, Saint-simon, Comte, Durkheim etc. upholds the unity of scientific method i.e., the view that the method of social sciences should be like that of the natural sciences. The other trend of thought has been carried out by thinkers like William James, Pierce, Cooley, Mead, Blumer etc. This trend highlights individual consciousness and its interaction with the fellow men and the world, and thereby incorporates idealistic or subjectivistic elements into the methodology of social sciences marking its difference from the natural-scientific method. Max Weber's

philosophy of social science, however, presents us with a different type of approach which emphasizes both objective and subjective aspects involved in social understanding. For him the aim of social sciences is to acquire objective understanding of subjectively meaningful social actions.

So, Weberian methodology is a very significant meeting-point of two trends which are epistemologically poles asunder, viz., subjectivism and objectivism. And from this point emerges the phenomenological school in social sciences along with the ethnomethodological approaches. Such an orientation is definitely an attempt towards a transcendence of the disjunction of subjectivism and objectivism in social scientific theories. The contribution of Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) deserves special attention and consideration in this regard. While the philosophical premises of his phenomenological sociology are derived largely from the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), Weber's sociological theory also casts similar impact on him. Schutz took the help of the notion of 'ideal-type' from Weber and this laid a directive for Schutz's philosophy of social sciences. Besides that Schutz was also influenced by the interactionism of Cooley and Mead.

While Weber's thought contributed immensely towards forming perspectives for further research on the methodology of social sciences, the philosophico-anthropological notions like 'the other', 'alter-ego', 'relation between ego and

alter-ego', etc., provided a major clue for determining an alternative frame-works beyond rationalism, idealism and objectivism so far as the social sciences are concerned. This trend had its seed in the thoughts of Edmund Husserl and fruits in M. Merleau-Ponty, Harold Garfinkel and others. In this chapter the discussion at length will be limited to Husserl only. Next chapter will highlight other phenomenologists like Schutz, Garfinkel, Merleau Ponty, Berger, Luckmann and Mannheim.

HUSSERL'S SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE METHODOLOGY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

In order to understand Husserl's contribution for any methodological analysis, it is first required to understand his pure phenomenological method aimed at intuition of essence (eidos). For this, Husserl in his earlier phase of philosophizing developed an eidetic and transcendental approach characterized by epoche' or parenthesizing. The result was the notion of a transcendental ego or subjectivity. But its another outcome was transcendental solipsism. Husserl's all subsequent endeavours to disentangle from this solipsism were but a failure. In the later days of his life, Husserl accepted intersubjectivity not as a problem, rather as a datum¹, the 'other' as a part of the natural world. So it may be said that from early Husserl to later Husserl, we find a lot of conversions over the notion of the 'other' or 'alter ego' without the clarification of which, his significance for the philosophy of social science will remain unclear.

So in this chapter we shall begin with a brief outline of Husserl's phenomenological reduction and his attempt to constitute and establish the notion of 'alter Ego' through a process like empathy or appresentation. Husserl's assumption was that an analogical apprehension of an Other's living body takes place on the basis of a similarity to my own living body. But it contradicts the phenomenological finding that my living body "stands out" in my primordial perceptual field in a manner which is fundamentally different from the manner in which the allegedly similar body of the other stands out in this field"².

Thus for Husserl there was a significant problem regarding the paradox of alter Ego. This paradox and the dialectic of the Ego and the alter Ego are possible only if these two are defined by their situation and not freed from all inherence. For the 'Other' to be more than an empty word it is necessary that my existence should never be reduced to bare consciousness of existing; it should include my incarnation in some nature and the possibility of a historical situation.

At this point however, Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'body' plays an important role in articulating this incarnation of mine as a clue to the existence of the other. If for me as the perceiving subject, the body is in a primordial relation with the world — the body of the other too is equally in such a relation.

Thus the meaning of the world is based on a co-existence of many selves incarnated through a sort of bodily subjectivity

and their natural and subsequently rational inherence in the world. The human person or Body-subject achieves intersubjectivity or communication because he links the simultaneous separation and union of perception and expression in himself and with others.

Now to reach the point of relevance of Husserl's phenomenological method to social scientific knowledge we shall proceed in terms of three steps which include both early and later phases of Husserl's philosophy. In the first step, we shall be concerned with Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. This is an egological analysis aimed at revealing the transcendental ground on which the knowledge of 'other' is to be found. He primarily took it to be a deliverance from the problem of transcendental solipsism. In the second step, our aim is to examine Husserl's analysis of the notion of the 'life-world' as the basis of all human activity including those of various sciences. For him, the task of the humanistic sciences is to clarify the meaning of the 'life-world'. In the third step, we shall concentrate on Husserl's analysis of the particular attitude, which characterizes any humanistic science whatsoever. He calls it to be 'personal attitude', in which human beings must be envisioned as 'persons' instead of psychophysical organisms. Such an attitude in turn changes the 'personal life' of the human-scientist too thereby paving way for a wider transformation in both individual and collective spheres.

HUSSERL'S ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH
INTER-SUBJECTIVITY

According to Husserl, phenomenology consists in an analysis of what is given to introspection in its generality, without making use of any extraneous knowledge of causes or of natural laws which apply to the physical universe. Also the phenomenologist suspends his common-sensical or normal standpoint. This is to perform an epoché or abstention from what he, as an ordinary commoner, may happen to know or believe that causes his experience. In the light of this aspect of phenomenological method for acquiring knowledge of one's self and the world completely uninfluenced by any natural scientific, practical, and common presupposition and concern, phenomenology is understood by Husserl as a priori in the best sense of the word. The phenomenological description of any experience requires the knower to stand apart from what he describes and to perform a phenomenological reduction to the facts themselves.

Husserl's purpose was to describe such experiences phenomenologically. But what is this self or consciousness which embarks upon this kind of description? It can not be 'psychical or empirical self', The self studied by ordinary introspection, experimental psychology or even by history, is empirical self immersed in many presuppositions. But phenomenologically reflective self is transcendental, non-psychological and in a sense one can say, the Platonic self the knowables for which cannot be worldly, natural things. It is the centre of all

acts of consciousness. There can not be any further presupposition beyond this transcendental self-hood. On the contrary the transcendental selfhood is presupposed even in our most detailed description of ourselves in the psychical sense. In the epoche what is grasped is the pure life of consciousness in and through which the entire objective world exists for the subjectivity as the surrounding life-world.

But for Husserl the notion of alter ego is an important problem. It is also a problematic that how the social reality can be understood as founded on the interaction of man with his fellows in the life-world. The transcendental subjectivity, according to Husserl, is in a peculiar relationship with other subjectivities. But any such other subjectivity is meaningfully and intentionally constituted by the transcendental subjectivity or 'Ego', by its own activity. All social phenomena, beginning from simple thou-relation to most complicated communities, belong to this single and unitary life-world. The question is: 'can any world be constituted by the transcendental subjectivity, once the transcendental reduction is performed? Is not a solipsism inevitable here'?

According to Husserl, the life-world constituted by the activities of the transcendental subjectivity is not certainly a private world, but a public world accessible to all. Other fellow men also belong to it not as bodies or just noema-correlates but as members of an egological cosmos. But what is the "transcendental clue" for the experience of other?

The world which is experienced after the completion of the reduction to my pure life of consciousness is an intersubjective world, and that means that it is accessible to everyone. Then, for phenomenology the problem of the experience of others need not be a dark corner', as beautifully expressed by Husserl. The task of a true philosopher is to light up this dark corner instead of running away from it. In the Cartesian Meditations Husserl attempted a solution to this problem.

To understand the problem I quote a long passage:
".... I experience others as actually existing and, on the other hand, as world objects — not as mere physical things belonging to nature, though indeed as such things in respect of one side of them. They are in fact experienced also as governing psychically in their respective natural organisms. Thus peculiarly involved with animate organism, as 'psycho-physical' objects, they are 'in' the world. On the other hand, I experience them at the same time as subjects for this world, as experiencing it (this same world that ^I experience) and in so doing, experiencing me too, even as I experience the world and others in it".³

After the execution of the epoche I can first eliminate from the thematic field within the transcendental universal sphere all the constitutive activities which are immediately or mediately related to the subjectivity of others.⁴ In this way I reduce the universe of my conscious life to my own transcendental sphere, to my concrete being as a monad. What is left

by the abstractive elimination of the sense of other's subjectivity is a uniformly connected stratum of the phenomenon "world" — Husserl calls it the primordial sphere — which is no longer a world objectively existing for everybody, but is my world belonging peculiarly to me alone being a private world of mine. In his own words, "These problems will become more understandable if we proceed to characterize the ego's sphere of ownness, or correlatively, to carry out explicitly the abstractive epoche that yields it"⁵. Through this we may switch over to this very uncovering and sense-clarification by the novel epoche. Within this reduced world-phenomenon, one object is distinguished by the fact that I can control that in action and that I attribute sensorial fields to it is conformity with my experience and this is my body — a corporeality⁶. If other human beings are reduced in a similar way, I get peculiar corporealities only. But when I reduce myself as a human being, I get "my body" and "my mind" or me as a psycho-physical unity. Now in this reduced exterior world the "other" also appears as a distinct corporeality, which I apprehend as a body and indeed as a body of another by a process of appresentation.

Appresentation or analogical apperception may work as a mediate intentionality of experiencing someone else as an alter ego. 'Other' is not given in experience originally. Regarding other we have a kind of making "co-present" or "appresentation". My body is constituted originally as an animate organism, but the body over there must have derived a

sense of animate organism by an apperceptive transfer from my own. "It is clear from the very beginning that only a similarity connecting, within my primordial sphere, that body over there with my body can serve as the motivational basis for the "analogizing" apprehension of that body as another animate organism. " ⁷

Appresentations are, however, multilayered. There is a radical difference between appresentation which belong purely to the primordial sphere and those that present themselves with the sense of 'alter ego'. A body is mostly apprehended as animate organism under circumstances where the primally institutive original is always livingly present, and the primal instituting itself is therefore always going on in a quite livingly effective manner. Under such circumstance ego and alter ego are always and necessarily given in an original 'pairing' . According to Husserl pairing is a universal phenomenon of the transcendental level and also "is a primal form of that passive synthesis which we designate as 'association' ". ⁸

The other's corporeality, once experienced, continues indeed to manifest itself as a body through its changing but always concordant gestures, which appresentatively indicates a psychical aspect. This psychical side at first only indicated by appresentation has to be fulfilled by original experience. In this way an other is appresentatively constituted in my

monad as an ego that is not "I myself" but a second ego which mirrors itself in my monad. This second ego, however, is not simply there and given in and of itself, but is an alter ego, it is an 'other' which in accordance with his own constitutive sense, refers back to me, as the ego of the alter ego to the other. The alien corporeality that is apperceived as an "other" appears in my monadic sphere above all in the mode of "there" (illic) while my own body is in the mode of absolute "here" (hic).⁹ That which becomes appresented in this way does not derive from my own sphere of peculiarity, it is a co-existent ego in the mode of the illic and therefore an alter ego.

Starting from myself as the original constitutive monad, I thus get other monads, that is, others as psychophysical subjects. These others are not merely related by means of associative pairing to my psychophysical being in their capacity as being bodily opposite to me, rather it is a question of an objective equalization, or mutual interrelatedness of my existence and that of all others.¹⁰ For, as the body of the other is appresented by me as an Other, so my body is experienced by the Other as his Other, and so forth. The same thing obtains for all subjects, that is, for this open community of monads which Husserl has designated as transcendental intersubjectivity existing purely in the meditating ego in an immanent way through all intentional experiences of the life-world. But what is the verifiability of appresentation?

Appresentation as a kind of experience has its own style of verification. Its fulfillingly verifying continuation depends on new appresentations that proceed in a synthetically harmonious manner. At this point Husserl makes a nice instructive comparison with the process of memorisation. "Just as, in my living present, in the domain of 'internal perception', my past becomes constituted by virtue of the harmonious memories occurring in the present, so in my primordial sphere, by means of appresentations occurring in it and motivated by its contents, an ego other than mine can be constituted — accordingly, in non-originary presentations of a new type, which have a modification of a new kind as their correlate".¹¹

The constitution of the specifically human, and cultural worlds in their peculiar manner of objectivity is of much significance for our purpose. According to Husserl, accessibility to everyone belongs in essence to the constitutive sense of Nature, of corporeality and of the psychophysical human being. The constitution of the world of culture, similar to the constitution of any 'world' including the world of one's own stream of experience, has the lawful structure of constitution, oriented with respect to a "null-point", i.e., to a personality. Other cultural humanity can become accessible only by a complicated process of understanding, namely, on the basic level of the common Nature. Nature, in its specific spatio-temporal structure, constitutes the horizon of being for the accessibility to all the manifold cultural phenomena.

Husserl thus tries to explain the process of transcendental constitution or establishment of the community of monads starting from my own Ego — the primordial monad. Transcendental intersubjectivity thus means the open community of monads. But there are various levels of intermonadic community, constituted through the social acts — the acts of the Ego that reach into the other Ego.¹² Thus cultural world is the higher level of communalization. Husserl writes, "... Everyone, as a matter of a priori necessity, lives in the same Nature, a Nature moreover that, with the necessary communalization of his life and the lives of others, he has fashioned into a cultural world in his individual and communalized living and doing — a world having human significances, even if it belongs to an extremely low cultural level".¹³ So the understanding is also multi-layered.

A man is to understand his own cultural and surrounding world first and then through a deeper understanding and generic comprehension of humanity as such, is opened up the horizon. "Starting from what is most generally understandable, he must first open up way of access to a sympathetic understanding of broader and broader strata of the present and then the historical past, which in turn helps him, to gain broader access to the present".¹⁴ In this way, according to Husserl the Ego disentangles himself from the solitary cocoon and raptures in the multitude of alter egos.

Now let us sum up Husserl's proposed picture of the ego-centric life-world as found in the fifth meditation. My 'animate organism' is the central 'member' of the 'nature or world' which becomes constituted through the governance of the former. Again my psycho-physical organism is the central-member of the 'Objective world of mutual externalities'. But what would the place of the 'others' in it. According to Husserl "... the multiplicity of Other's world is given as oriented peripherally to mine..."¹⁵

Husserl extends this model to the world of cultures too, thereby making the multiplicity of cultural formations possible which are mutually accessible to each other. In his own words; "We see that in this fashion the cultural world too is given 'orientedly', in relation to a zero (zero) member or a zero 'personality'. Here I and my culture are primordial, over against every alien culture. To one and to those who share in my culture, an alien culture is accessible only by a kind of 'experience of someone else', a kind of 'empathy', by which we project ourselves into the alien cultural community and its culture. This empathy also calls for intentional investigations"¹⁶. Here Husserl, seems to forward an exit to the outward reality belonging to others, from the jurisdiction of my ownness. This may be treated as Husserlian frame-work of interpersonal or inter communal passage to Other and other culture.

The transcendental ego, is conceived by Husserl as the source of very 'givenness-beforehand', the product of which is the assertion of externalities. This is the Ego's sole mechanism, which proves the world harmoniously. Husserl calls it 'the Apriori of constitution'. But what is the nature of this a priori constitution. Does the primary and the subsequent projections of the ego come out as contingent offshoots? According to Husserl, ego through intentionality includes and motivates the universal de facto structure of the given Objective world as an 'essential necessity'.¹⁷ It is stratified as mere Nature, as psychophysical being, as humanness, sociality of various levels and above all as culture. The world attains concrete intelligibility in this intended constituted sense arranged around the Ego in many layers.

But in spite of Husserl's proclaimed anchor upon the transcendental ego, as the ultimate source of understanding, we may trace there hints of his famous notion of life-world which is "for all of us". The life-world is natural and given beforehand in straightforward experiences, but requires an explication with new originality and free from definitiveness. What should be then the clue for discovering the universal ontology of the objective world. In his own words; "... nothing prevents starting at first quite concretely with the human life-world around us, and with man himself as essentially related to this our surrounding world; and exploring, indeed

purely intuitively, the extremely copious and never-discovered Apriori of any such surrounding world whatever, taking this Apriori as the point of departure for a systematic explication of human existence and of world strata that disclose themselves correlatively in the latter".¹⁸

Thus Husserl seeks to get over all kinds of naiveties. The first form of naivete is the daily practical living, which is nothing but 'immersion in the already given world'. Again all of the modern positive sciences are naivete's of a higher level, which can not explain the 'ultimate intentional performances'. Radical and universal self-investigation of phenomenological reduction can only reveal the transcendental ego, as the source of ultimate meaning and understanding. In this way the idea of an all embracing philosophy, proving the foundation for all branches of knowledge, becomes actualized. Husserl was critic of the naturalistic positive sciences, as manifest from his concluding remark of the Cartesian Meditations, "Positive science is a science lost in the world. I must lose the world by epoche in order to regain it by a universal self-examination".¹⁹

HUSSERL'S NOTION OF THE LIFE-WORLD AS THE FOUNDATION OF SCIENCES

The relation between the life-world and the sciences can be brought to light by humanistic and cultural sciences

(Geisteswissenschaften) only. Natural sciences can be viewed as human enterprises to bring to surface some universal laws of nature, to formulate theories for explaining some natural phenomena so that mankind can be benefitted. But the conception of natural sciences as reified and estranged from human effort and cognition, cannot help us in discovering the basis of natural sciences. Here lies the connection between life-world and natural sciences. Hence natural sciences cannot be really dissociated from humanistic and cultural sciences and Nature as something abstract and standing apart from man. Such a Nature cannot be a constitutive element of the life-world. Husserl says, "... it is forgotten that natural sciences, (like all sciences as such) is a title for spiritual activities, those of natural scientists in cooperation with each other; as such these activities belong, as do all spiritual occurrences, to the realm of what should be explained by means of a science of the spirit"²⁰. Hence Husserl refuses to confuse 'natural science' as belonging to 'spiritual activity' of men, with 'natural science' as 'the historical event' estranged from human subjectivity.

A proper explication and clarification of the concept of natural science, for Husserl, is possible only in the light of what he calls the Science of the Spirit. Thus he clearly makes a distinction between 'Science' as a science of spirit with its foundation on human subjectivity and the so-called modern view of 'Science' as an outlook bereft of its spiritual

basis. In his own words, "In our time we everywhere meet the burning need for an understanding of spirit., while the unclarity of the methodological and factual connection between the natural sciences and the sciences of the spirit has become almost unbearable".²¹

In the earlier stages of this development as in Ideas, Husserl was eager to explore the threshold point of cognition. In so doing he arrived at the transcendental subjectivity as the center of all meaning-bestowing and meaning fulfilling activity. He also claims to be able to remove the gap between subjectivity and objectivity, because the very sense of objectivity is anchored in the transcendental subjectivity. Thus philosophy, for Husserl, meant a perpetuated return to beginnings nullifying the human mind's propensity to natural attitude. This can be achieved through epochē and reductions. Such a philosophy, according to Husserl, in the proper sense of the term, is philosophy as the rigorous science — or science of essence-intuition.

But, as Husserl observes, philosophy in general, has never been a rigorous science, as is claimed to be from its earliest beginnings. The following quotation summarizes the long history of philosophy: "During no period of its development has philosophy been capable of living up to this claim of being rigorous science; not even in its most recent period, when — despite the multiplicity and contradictory character of its philosophical orientations — it has followed from the

Renaissance up to the present an essentially unitary line of development. It is, in fact, the dominant characteristic of modern philosophy that, rather than surrender itself naively to the philosophical impulse, it will by means of critical reflection and by even more profound methodological investigation constitute itself as rigorous science. But the only mature fruit of these efforts has been to secure first the foundation and then the independence of rigorous natural and humanistic sciences along with new purely mathematical disciplines"²².

Thus philosophy is not performing its own responsibilities and consequently has been detached from the tradition of scientific rigour. Philosophy, even has not been an imperfect science, because it never had been initiated as a science. However, science in general, according to Husserl, can not be a paradigm of perfection. "All sciences are imperfect, even the much admired exact sciences"²³. This is evidenced by the existence of limitless horizon of open scientific problems — theories and proofs. But the crisis of sciences is on a different level, much dissimilar to that of philosophy. In spite of differences, Husserl is not ready to accept the view that it is the very essence of philosophy to be non-scientific."²⁴ It is only in the transcendental phenomenology that philosophy gains its real status as a rigorous science. This fundamental rigorous science or a 'first philosophy' can

guarantee the true scientific character of the particular sciences.

Husserl, throughout his life has sustained an effort to demonstrate the interaction between science and philosophy. But his starting position has almost reversed in his later development. It will be discussed in three sections : 1. Husserl's idea of science and philosophy in his eidetic phenomenology, 2. Husserl's criticism of the methodological pattern of the natural sciences in general, and 3. Husserl's proposed life-world phenomenology to improve the modern science's understanding as a whole.

1. Husserl had his own conception of 'genuine science' or 'rigorous science' in Cartesian Meditations. The discovery of such a science was for him the purpose of philosophy and that a genuine science alone could be the foundation of all other sciences. ²⁵ Guided by the eidetic principle, here Husserl points to a withdrawal from the intra-mundane character of the knowable objects and the hidden wordly-hood of the human modes of knowing to the transcendental consciousness which is the foundation of all sense and meaning.

He, in his earlier writings, showed staunch opposition against all forms of naturalism and psychologism. For him, "Naturalism is a phenomenon consequent upon the discovery of nature, which is to say, nature considered as a unity of ²⁶ spatio-temporal being subject to exact laws of nature". Mind is to get over this, what Husserl calls 'natural attitude'

through 'bracketing'. Phenomenology is to attain its rigorous scientific character by a transcendental exposition of the intentional and immanent processes of consciousness. To carry out this all existential and prejudiced considerations are suspended and the structures of purified streams of consciousness are to be grasped. Thus any endeavour can be rigorously scientific only when it is 'eidetic' in grasp. Husserl, keeps this essence-intuition or Wessenschau as the ultimate ground of knowledge. Let me quote one of his so many relevant expressions: "Pure phenomenology as science, so long as it is pure and makes no use of the existential positing of nature, can only be essence investigation, and not at all an investigation of being-there; all 'introspection' and every judgment based on such 'experience' falls outside its frame-work"²⁷. But without entering into the details of Husserl's pure phenomenological method, let us examine his initial view about the relation between science and philosophy.

At this stage, his thoughts manifest a kind of blending or intermingling between science and philosophy. This is understandable from the profusion of terms like 'philosophical science' and 'scientific philosophy', that are interchangeably used by Husserl.²⁸ So it seems to me that he was aiming at the intersection of philosophy and science. This is the specific meaning of his Wessenschau philosophy. But Husserl undergoes a radical transformation in partially supporting Weltanschauung philosophy, which is sharply distinguished from any scientific

philosophy. These are two related but separate human values. According to Husserl, "... Weltanschauung philosophy presupposes all the particular sciences as treasuries of objective truth, and in so far as it has as its goal to satisfy as far as possible our need for through going and unifying, all-embracing and all penetrating knowledge, it looks on all particular sciences as its basis"²⁹. Here, what we obtain, appears to be an union of philosophy and science, within our common life-world, forming a world-view but of probable type.

But an inclination to Weltwissenschaft or world-science at the rejection of Weltanschauung philosophy is the distinguishing feature of Husserl's later thought. In his The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology we may notice a significant shift according to which philosophy ought to point to the life-world as the source and basis of all scientific thinking. The crisis of sciences, for him lies in forgetting this basis. Jürgen Habermas rightly observes, "Husserl was concerned with crisis : not with crises in the sciences, but with their crisis as science"³⁰. According to his later philosophy, the life-world cannot be bracketed out; it is the limit of phenomenological reduction.

At this level Husserl thinks about the meaning of science and philosophy in a new way. From this newly achieved stance, the methodology of naturalistic or positivist sciences prove to be inadequate for the mankind as a whole. He asserts: "... the crisis of philosophy implies the crisis of all modern sciences as members of the philosophical universe : at first

a latent, then a more and more prominent crisis of European humanity itself in respect to the total meaningfulness of its cultural life, its total Existenz³¹". Husserl however does not say anything about the scientific elements of modern exact science. He forwards a picture of the historical development of the sciences and its main trend, as regards epistemology.

Science in general has been developing with the humanity. Pre-historic men had their know-hows too in order to carry out some activities. But a real revolution took place when men could conceive the nature as idealiter. This began with Euclidean geometry and then with Greek natural sciences. The revolution, according to Husserl, reached the apex almost when Galileo (1584-1642) worked out the mathematization of nature. He writes; "... through Galileo's mathematization of nature, nature itself is idealized under the guidance of the new mathematics; nature itself becomes — to express it in a modern way — a mathematical manifold [Mannigfaltigkeit]³²". Husserl, in this context, shows that mathematics or geometry also originated from a prescientific practical life. "The art of measuring thus becomes the trail-blazer for the ultimately universal geometry and its 'world' of pure limit shapes"³³.

Through a continuous tradition of scientific research and theorization, the natural sciences have discovered a method based on objectivistic physicalism and a criterion called verifiability. Science has progressed enormously and man can exercise his power of dictation upon so many natural phenomena.

Scientists express significantly various observable natural processes through mathematical symbols and formulae. Such a mathematization and idealization of nature has but another consequences. Scientific objectivism gradually leads to the elimination of all anthropo-centric or the subjectively accomplishing elements from theories. According to Husserl the construction of a non-human universe has resulted in the flourishing of such rigorous and exact natural sciences. Without the invention of this attitude, the sciences as a whole would be hardly able to emancipate from the mystified doctrines of the past, however .

The marvellous success of the mathematical natural sciences have also influenced the thinkers in other branches of knowledge, in that this methodology of the natural sciences are being treated as a paradigm. The obvious outcome has been a dualistic inclination either to a self-contained and real corporeal world, or to a mental world which is somewhat dependent on the former.³⁴ The further consequence is that even the psychical realm is to be explained more geometrico according to the unified method of natural sciences, which is called 'pysicalistic rationalism' by Husserl.³⁵

Following this model psychology is required to be treated objectivistically. This means that in the world which is given self-evidently through experience one will search for 'objective truth' without peeping into the subjective activities of mind. But from a phenomenological standpoint, the

subjectivity is the source of the ontic sense for the pregiven life-world. So with this purported elimination of the purely subjective from the focus of thematic interest — the human being as an investigator has buried himself. In this way an objectivistic psychology leads to the result of a self-disguise or self-concealment for consciousness. A functioning subjectivity is incomprehensible within such a physicalistic psychology, which has borrowed its methodological pattern from the exact sciences.³⁶ The same is the fate of the positivist social sciences too. What then is the cause of this crisis?

Husserl's answer is that these sciences have been quite divorced from its historical human context, in spite of their immense methodological triumph. At this level he tries to draw attention to the realm of prescientific trivialities which any scientist must consider as the unquestionable presupposition in general.³⁷ Thus he introduces the notion of Lebenswelt or life-world. The meaning of any science can be clarified only with reference to these categories. It is the domain of a transcendental philosophy or a science of Spirit (Geisteswissenschaften) to make this Lebenswelt a thematic.

3. In his last major work The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, Husserl works out an elaborate analysis of the rudimental structure of the life-world or Lebenswelt and its relation to sciences. Challenging the popular view of embracing the methodology of natural sciences for the social sciences, he emphasizes on the urgent formulation

of a more deep-reaching humanistic science. Only ~~it can~~ save us from miserable crash-down. For him the crisis of European sciences actually stands for the crisis of all sciences in general. Science is the practice of humanity as a whole. So, the ultimate position where Husserl arrived is that all sciences are required to be philosophical, if they are to retain their worth as science at least. But the question is that sciences have executed a kind of bracketing of all varying instances in order to make an abstraction or idealization for their relevant essences, and this is at par with the method of transcendental phenomenology. And the knowledge that has been accumulated so far possess reasonable absoluteness, subject to systematic verifiability. There is no paradoxical problem regarding their doctrinal content. What tortures Husserl, is the apparent anomalous incidents resulted by the unbridled application of human emotions. But surely this falls beyond the jurisdiction of the so-called natural or in many cases, social sciences too. This, on the contrary, has reference to the indomitable and inherent nature of human spirit. So, if there is any crisis, it must be traced in man rather than in science.

So, let us sum up the route traversed by Husserl regarding what may be called his philosophy of science. Mathematico-physical sciences have been exact and marvellous following the path of steadfast mathematization and idealization, but at the

same time their essence-intuition has amounted to ruthless abstraction from the original sub_ostratum creating a great crisis of civilization. These sciences are to be joined to this earth by a radical clarification of the meaning fundamentals, carried by phenomenological analysis. "Thus the greatest step our age has to make is to recognize that with the philosophical intuition in the correct sense, the phenomenological grasp of essences, a limitless field of work opens out, a science that without all indirectly symbolical and mathematical method, without the apparatus of premises and conclusions, still attains a plentitude of the most rigorous and, for all further philosophy, decisive cognitions".³⁸

Life-world is the matrix in which the ego sees himself. It comprises of other persons, animals, material bodies, nature, state, God and so many entities. Such a rudimental stratum called life-world can not be the thematic of natural sciences, because the latter imbibes on the former. So a special effort is required to cast a theoretical glance upon the life-world. This is the domain of Husserl's life-world phenomenology.

HUSSERL'S IDEA OF 'PERSONALISTIC ATTITUDE'

Now let us see how does Husserl engage in an analysis of 'attitude', that tends to distinguish the natural sciences and the humanistic sciences. This may be called a phenomenology of attitude, directed to theoretical realms - viz. man, nature,

To begin; Husserl first investigates into the very nature of scientific activity of man (particularly of European kind). For him, scientific attitude is a cultural attitude which aims at objectivity. This attitude intends to know the world of objects as reified from human consciousness, as a world of beings-in-themselves.

The crisis of European men, according to him, lies in their inability to distinguish this attitude from the humanistic attitude. This attitude does not really belittle the status of natural sciences but attempts to disclose the foundation of natural scientific activities of men upon his transcendental consciousness. From this approach we can focus on what a 'Husserlian' approach to the method of social sciences qua humanistic sciences could be. Humanistic science is the science of human subjectivity. In Husserl's own words; "Man, in humanistic sciences is not the subject matter as an identical reality whose being-in-itself can be determined objectively; rather it is historical man insofar as he acts and holds sway subjectively in his surrounding world".³⁹

Now let us enter into the structure of the specific attitude which distinguishes these two types of sciences. At this point Husserl speaks of the novel attitude that may be thematically directed to the sphere of subjectivity through which the world is experienced, appreciated and apprehended. This is nothing but a 'personal attitude', as the salient feature of any genuine humanistic science.⁴⁰

Personal attitude is the attitude in which interest is directed towards the persons (who are localized through their physical bodies in natural space and in natural time). Interest is also directed toward their comportment with the world, toward the manners in which thematic persons possess awareness of whatever they are conscious of as existing for them. Human beings are in space, and the world of realities is always pre-given with human beings in it. From this point of view human beings are looked upon as persons who are interrelated in the community of life and the surrounding world through various actions, emotions and cognitions and passions. In this sense what is in question is not 'the' world as it actually is, rather the particular region of world there which is intentionally, correlated with the person, e.g., personal acts of perceiving, of remembering, of thinking, of valuing, of speculating, of creating or destroying etc. Persons are motivated only by that of which they have some consciousness. Thus we obtain the most basic feature of the humanistic sciences, according to Husserl, to be the science of the world as the surrounding world of persons — as the world appearing to persons.

Personal life is generally not theoretical in that things are not generally scientifically thematic for persons in terms of how they are in themselves. Rather it comprises of extra scientific components of life. If we attempt to thematize scientifically the things, nature, the animals and human

worlds, living bodies and souls as they are 'in-themselves' then we are nothing but natural scientists, zoologists or anthropologists etc. But all the endeavours of the later group are included within the domain of the personal accomplishments of them, viz, the personal community which is called the 'community of scientists'.⁴¹

Nature as something objective or being-in-itself and a subject-matter of science is viewed by Husserl as a personal accomplishment or the idea of such an accomplishment through natural-scientific method. But all natural sciences, and natural-scientific 'nature' in-itself or 'nature' as reality, can be encompassed by the humanistic sciences, as the all-embracing science of the spiritual world. The experience and idealization of nature run through each personal life, but the regulatory interests of the personal life concern nature free from all theory. This pre-scientific and pre-theoretical life-world of persons is the thematic of all praxis. Only it is through humanistic sciences, we can reflect upon the world in the "subjective" how of its appearance to the persons. Accordingly this world can not be fragmented into merely individual-subjective and temporally transient aspects. Rather through such aspects a communal surrounding world is constituted for the historical community. Each person meets the horizon of the surrounding world (Umwelt) only through its communalization. In this way a person can attain an overlapping and common surrounding world as the same 'real' world to which he is

related with the other.

Now, let us for the moment, discuss the difference between the two types of enquiry viz. "natural-Scientific"-psychological on the one hand and the humanistic on the other. Both of these two have the same spirit or soul as their subject-matter but from quite different standpoints. The natural sciences view the spirit as a localized subject existing with a body and unified with it in the psychophysical sense of Descartes. On the contrary the humanistic sciences look upon it in a personal attitude. For the person, the living body is the privileged object in the surrounding world, over which it has direct command. But this is obtained through apperception which is inductive yet objective.

At this point the notions of 'person' and 'spirit' need some clarification. Naturally the person is localized and this concrete localization is possible only by means of incarnation in natural space and in natural time. The spirit is there where his living body is and from this specific spatio-temporal point he lives in and acts upon the world. He is the spirit, the ego of his surrounding world in having a consciousness of it. Husserl puts it as follows; "And to this belongs the fact that the constantly has a privileged experiential consciousness of 'his' living body, that is, he has the consciousness of being with this object in a quite immediate way and of always 'living' and 'being-able to do' things through it as the affected ego and the ego holding sway".⁴²

From the preceding discussion we may come to the position that the humanistic sciences deal with the human being as persons or as having their living bodies which are employed to establish relationship with Others. But, Husserl also speaks of another attitude such an objectivist humanistic science which ought to be distinguished from the previous psychophysical personal attitude. The objectivist humanistic orientation is not acceptable for Husserl as it is more a physicalisation of or a naturalistic approach to human subjectivity, the ontology of which consists in an empirical or factual togetherness of human body and spirit.

This distinction between natural scientific and humanistic enquiries is based on the mode of thematization. Any attitude lies within the subject who thematizes any object. If the meaning of 'objectivity' is stipulated upto the working of the so-called natural, objective sciences it is possible to objectivise any subject matter of one's study. The subject-matter may range from inanimate nature to human beings, society, civilization etc. On the other hand one can make all such phenomena one's subject-matter in a subjectively related manner. Here 'subjectively' means - to take the phenomenon straight-forwardly as one's subject-matter without inquiring into its objective nature unrelated to consciousness. From the start the theoretical attitude conceives the world as the universe of what is. Empirical humanistic sciences like economics,

political science are its instances. At this point Husserl presents the 'reduction' to discover the 'a priori' of any humanistic science whatever.

What are the principles for any such transcendental phenomenological reduction for attaining the essence of spirit or subjectivity. According to Husserl appearance or experience can not exhaust the being of the soul. In his own words "As it is for the physical living bodies as natural objects, so it is with souls; that experience in relation to them has no end"⁴³. In spite of vast difference between the essence of a thing and the essence of psychic subjectivity, the latter can be extracted and known. For this, what is urgently required is that, from the beginning, one must strictly relinquish all the false analogies. Again one must be guided by the essential knowledge of the spirit and also the spiritual community, in course of carrying out investigations of factual spirits in their historicity.

Husserl goes on to say that the structure of the personal surrounding world bears an essential connection with the structure of the personal life. Human being in the world is characterised by two primordial finite substrates. Firstly that of 'Being-next-to-one-another', which is the domain of empathy, of the body, nature, and the instincts. Secondly, 'Being-with-one-another', which gives birth to the realm of communication of sociality, culture, ethics, history. It is only here that we enter the sphere of the "social-historical" world.

Thus as regards the attitude towards the personal surrounding world we may have two levels. Firstly, we can orient our attitude towards persons and personal communities in investigating into the actual, concrete surrounding worlds. Secondly, the attitude may be directed to essences, in which we can start with the factual, common world to arrive at the essential form of the human surrounding world. For this we are to confront with other human civilizations and quite infinitely. Thus we can have the idea of an ontology of the experiential world purely as such emerging through an ongoing process of correction throughout possible transitional surrounding worlds. The attitude oriented toward nature can have a different sense. Underlying such a scientific attitude is ultimately a willful making of nature into one's subject matter — in fact, pure nature, with the conscious elimination of everything that is merely subjective. The goal of "exact" natural science is a different one in that it aims at determining the nature "in-itself" which is identical throughout all relativities through "truths in themselves". But the descriptive nature is relative in the personal, human sense. Obviously all the descriptive scientific attitude is essentially historical and bound up with particular attitudes of the generative communities.

Whereas descriptive nature belongs to the personal surrounding world of all men - that means with anthropology, exact scientific nature on the other hand belongs only to the surrounding world of the exact natural scientists. In the words

of Husserl, "Natural science is a culture [and] it belongs only within the cultural world of that human civilization which has developed this culture and within which, for the individual, possible ways of understanding this culture is present".⁴⁴

The process of thematization is such that extending from personal and communal life, the universal unity of "civilization" can be corroborated within it. Again, civilizations that have only loose contacts with one another can become thematic. Thus we have left behind natural-scientific inquiry and have entered into problems of the humanistic sciences; or instead, the descriptive nature has been incorporated within the humanistic science of history. Finally, the universal personal science itself appears to change itself into the all-encompassing science to render itself into a universal philosophy, and eidetically into a universal ontology. Since everything emanates from ourselves, the persons who pose theoretical questions and who constitute the possible subject-matter of all answers; we are the way toward the subjectivity. This is the route of regression from the universal, personally oriented world-view, which is historical in its fashion and which moves upon the basis of the pre-given world, back to the absolute ground that of transcendental subjectivity.

The crisis of sciences in general and that of Europe in particular for Husserl lies in the principle that "Merely fact-minded sciences make merely fact-minded people". That⁴⁵ natural sciences had developed, begs no question for their

scientific character, rather what sciences in general, had meant and could mean for human existence is a question about the eidetic of the science and their relation to the life-world.

Now let us re-examine or rather reiterate Husserl's philosophy of science or better to say his philosophical anthropology. If we consider the methodological problematic we may notice that Husserlian philosophical anthropology is not an empirical anthropology. On the contrary it is an a priori pure anthropology. One of its aim is to find out the basic methodological foundation upon which any empirical or fact-oriented science of spirit could be established.

Husserl's anthropology is characterised by, what may be called the 'anthropological epoche'. A phenomenological enterprise in purely Husserlian line for studying human being requires that the observer suspends or brackets all his/her naturalistic attitudes. Such views or attitudes would not be actively held by the observer, nor in any way it would be applied to the subject-matter. Thus only a disinterested anthropological observer can experience and thematize the human being as a person situated within a surrounding world. The basic aspects of this new humanistic science viz., apriorism, eidetic or pure description, and intentionality, all appear to the disinterested spectator in his/her theoretical attitude.

The a priori structure of the discipline is evidenced as the observer uncovers and discloses those structures which are necessary for the subject, as the human being, and without which it would be inconceivable. Eidetic or pure description plays a significant role when the a priori structures are made manifest through a form of eidetic description, or inner seeing" or "essence intuition", pertaining to the human personal and communal existence. Finally, the structure of the intentionality appears as a primary aspect of Husserl's philosophical anthropology in that its objective is also to elucidate the intentional web of man's life of consciousness i.e., of the ways in which it becomes aware of things and of the objects of those acts.

Thus, here, Husserl instead of bracketing the world and thereby arriving at a transcendental ego which excludes everything, conceives a transcendental inter-subjectivity in such a way that other men and nature are included within the subject's territory. Apparently the problem of solipsism is not there and for this a basis of social interaction and institution has been rendered possible. But it is also a naivete which any layman also takes for granted. But such a naive thing is not easy to explicate philosophically, because, there is some gulf between commonsense and philosophy. However, Husserl is not content with the naive appearance of the Umwelt and aims at revealing the eidetic structure of it. It needs deeper examination to see, whether the proposed eidetic of the social (pre-reflective as well as reflective) is possible or not. Yet

his later findings that ego is not solitary but characterized by an 'inward being-for-one-another and mutual interpenetration' open up new horizon for any transcendental approach.⁴⁶

In the foregoing sections our discussions have been centering on various aspects except one thing — that is the subjective sphere of the human-scientist qua the phenomenologist qua the philosopher, as the highest genera. Though philosophy is basically a humanistic breakthrough. I like to follow the above mentioned order. According to the very phenomenological insight any humanistic science as such can not be estranged from the over-all being of the scientist through whom rationality is actualized. In other words the personal attitude does not only reach a man in person, but affects the 'personal life' of the scientist also. Once the attitude happens to be personal, the scientist must undergo a self-transportation from the earlier position.

Then, what should we understand by 'personal life'? It will be better to quote from Husserl : "Personal life means living communalized as 'I' and 'We' within a community-horizon, and this in communities of various simple or stratified forms such as family, nation, supranational community"⁴⁷. Personal life is an inherent feature of all men including scientists and/or philosophers. In our naive personal life, we all lead a natural life goaded by natural praxis. Theoria or cognitive endeavour takes place when natural attitude is replaced by a theoretical attitude. Theoretical attitude, according to Husserl is totally

unpractical and at the same time vocational. Vocational life is not propelled by any existential impulse. To quote from Husserl again; "In the sphere of its own vocational life, then, it is based on a voluntary epochē of all natural praxis, including the higher-level praxis that serves the natural sphere"⁴⁸. So, we may say that in order to make the world itself thematic, one must disentangle from the gripe of this "world-life".

According to Husserl, scientific orientation is fundamentally an accomplishment of the individual spirit, although embedded in a socio-cultural matrix. He writes, "... natural science is a product of the spirit that investigates nature and thus presupposes the science of the spirit"⁴⁹. Spirit can ever essentially execute knowledge through self-reflection. Likewise, 'scientific spirit' practices scientific self-knowledge by making a return from its naive external orientation - to itself. But what is the way to such self-reflection? Husserl replies that the underlying motive beneath transcendental phenomenology is to develop "an actual method for grasping the fundamental essence of the spirit in its intentionalities". He emphatically proclaims; "It is my conviction that intentional phenomenology has made of the spirit qua spirit for the first time a field of systematic experience and science and has thus brought about the total reorientation of the task of knowledge"⁵⁰.

Philosophy derives a perennial value from Husserl, insofar as it means a transcendental phenomenology. He doesn't

admit that such a philosophy may be just an 'armchair-occupation' having no impact upon the life of man and society. The dissemination of philosophy takes place in two ways, 'as the broadening vocational community of philosophers and as a concurrently broadening community movement of education (Bildung)'⁵¹. Again, philosophy diffusing in the form of Bildung, surely moulds spirit in two steps. Firstly, the philosophical ego attains a universal critical stance and secondly, a self-aware humanity evolves across all geographical lines.

Philosophical knowledge of the world brings out such a human posture that comes into intervention and interaction with the practical life and tradition, as well. It is only a philosophy which can assess the tradition as a whole.⁵² This universal critical attitude is at first to be effective within rational boundary and then it may spread over the neighbouring nations. By virtue of such expansion in perpetuation 'a supranationality of a completely new sort could arise'. Such an ideal, though seems to be utopian, as cherished by Husserl echoes the fundamental motive of the enlightenment philosophers. One of the driving motives behind Husserl's philosophy is what may be inferred from his declaration : "Europe's greatest danger is weariness". Bertrand Russell also expresses his despair seeing the present predicament of humanity. He states : "The world has need of a philosophy, or a religion, which will promote life. But in order to promote life it is necessary to value something other than mere life. Life devoted only to life is animal,

without any real human value, incapable of preserving men permanently from weariness and the feeling that all is vanity".⁵³

It is right that Husserl does not contribute directly in the field of empirical or theoretical research methodology for the social sciences. That actually lies beyond the scope of either a genetic or a static phenomenology. Nevertheless, his phenomenological analysis of 'ego-in-life-world', creates a real ground-work of the sciences in general and social sciences in particular. His contribution rests on the guidance he gives to the social sciences for awaking from a positivist or naturalistic slumber.

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