

Chapter VII

MORAL VALUES AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY : SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our objective in the preceding consideration of phenomenological theories of value has been to bring out, inter-alia, an important problem, namely, how can moral values be the object of intersubjective knowledge? How can we claim knowledge of moral values which are eternal, immutable and absolute in nature? We suggest that a clue to the solution of this problem may be found in the respective value-theories of Hartmann and Scheler, though a conscious attempt to deal with this problem was not made by either of these thinkers. In order to see how this may be possible we shall proceed by recapitulating their basic standpoints on values as such and their resolution of absolutism-relativism antinomy so as to situate the problem in a broader phenomenological perspective on values.

We may begin by turning to the antinomy which is referred to by both Hartmann and Scheler while dealing with absolutism and relativism. It must be admitted that both Hartmann and Scheler believe in the absolutism of values. Because, for them, values have their own kind of "reality" (for Hartmann, the mode of being of values is like that of platonic Ideas, and, for Scheler, values have mode of "experience" i.e., they are pure essences). Values do not depend on anything else for their

existence; they are and remain independent of anything else and are self-subsistent. But this does not mean that they deny all relativism in the field of values and our experience of them. They also, in a certain sense, advocate relativism in their theory of values. Thus the antinomy results from taking seriously two apparently conflicting yet equally weighty insights. In fact, the relativism advocated by these thinkers does not stand in contradiction with the absolutism of values. In other words, for both of them, axiological relativism does not imply the denial of what is called value-absolutism. In order to see how these phenomenological thinkers become able to consistently combine two apparently contradictory positions, it would be worthwhile to explain the sense in which, according to them, values are absolute as also the sense in which values are relative.

Let us first take up Hartmann's view. For Hartmann, values are regarded as real entities existing in a different world of their own apart from spatio-temporal world. They are "ideal beings" belonging to the ideal order, independently of all their bearers. They possess the "independent" and "ideal" mode of being like Plato's Ideas. Thus Values, for Hartmann, have self-existence, though this self-existence is not real but ideal. This ideal realm of values exist in itself independently of whatever else.

We have already seen that values are a priori for

Hartmann. Hartmann takes the term a priori to mean both epistemological a priori and ontological a priori. Values are epistemologically a priori because they are presupposed in all phenomena of value-experience. They are the conditioning factor which make their bearers valuable. Values are a priori with respect to our experience of their bearers. On the other hand, in saying that values are ontologically a priori what is meant is that in order for something valuable to exist, one must presuppose the "existence" of values. The existence of values conditions the possibility of something valuable to exist.

In their mode of being, values are absolute. The kind of reality they possess are such that they do not depend on anything else for their existence. Their peculiar mode of reality is totally independent and therefore, it cannot be relative to anything else. They must be related to their bearers i.e., persons and his acts; but this does not mean that they are relative to them. The independence and immutable nature is in no way affected by the relationality that they have with their bearers.

Besides the characterisations that values are independent in their mode of being, that they are real (though not spatio-temporally), that they are a priori, that they are absolute, we may bear in mind that they are principles of all

our actions, and that values are eternal and not subject to change or mutation. What needs to be stressed in the present context is how they are known. And this will provide us with the way as to how Hartmann accommodates the apparently conflicting views that, on one hand, values are intersubjectively objective while, on the other, they are also relative.

Hartmann conceives a vast field where values having the abovementioned peculiar characteristics exist independently of whatever else. The world of values, therefore, has its own ontological status quite peculiar to it. Though there are numerous values in this objectively existing field, human beings can have access only to a few of the world of values through their emotion.

It is through emotion that we can have the awareness of values though it should not be taken to mean "blind" drive, but rather a cognitive emotion. We can have, what Hartmann calls, the primary value-consciousness "which is emotional and intuitive awareness of values in situations".¹ Though it is personal, partial and unsystematic, but it is "stubbornly truthful". In order to get beyond the narrowness, partisanship and the unsystematic nature of the primal consciousness of value, it is necessary to turn to intellectual reflection. This is the task of philosophical ethics which lets us survey and

1 Review of E. H. Cadwallader's book, Searchlight - on Values, The Journal of Value Inquiry, op. cit., p. 242.

order our whole experience of value — both of our own and those of other people. Thus of these two kinds of awareness, that is, the primary awareness and secondary awareness, the former is most important for us in the present context. For, the former way of being aware of values are, in our view, phenomenological in nature. It is an immediate way of getting access to the world of values. No mediation such as through concepts, symbols, signs, etc. are required in order to become aware of them. It is the first and "original" discovery. It is purely an "emotional contact"¹ with the objects, that is, values. This is "in the first instance a sense of value, a primal, immediate capacity to appreciate the valuable".² Thus Hartmann recognises the role and legitimacy of emotion or "feeling" as fundamental to value-experience and thereby he consistently refuses to rationalise it into formal logic. It is, for him, a non-logical and a differentiated kind of feeling, which is "a form of comprehension, although not transmutable into the language of concepts".³ Here Hartmann's founding of his entire cognition of value-phenomena on the primacy of an irreducible apprehension of values by feeling paves the way for him to advocate, as we shall see, a kind of relativism in a radical sense.

By way of further elaboration, it may be added that

1 Hartmann, N., Ethics I, op.cit., p.95.

2 Ibid., p.86.

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Hartmann excludes the linguistic means, that is, the means of concepts, propositions etc. in understanding the realm of values in a purely phenomenological manner, though he uses philosophy for a rational demonstration of previously acquired cognition through "feeling". Because,

Words are sluggish, concepts are coarse and come hobbling after, but insights into values is inconceivably alert and highly differentiated; thought cannot tell what it will do exist.¹

Thus the primary stage of cognitive awareness is direct immediate way of understanding values through "feeling", thus underlying the phenomenological way of apprehension of values.

Turning to the question as to how the primary awareness of values takes place, Hartmann suggests that one should look into the deeper levels of moral life to find out the answer to this question. Every new conflict, every new expectation sets a new problem in human life and it is that which leads us to the primary discovery of values. Ethical convictions of mankind change and differ. And this change and differing is constantly going on without any halt. In this process of differing and changing of ethos, every age, every society, every race take part. This differing and change can never be without value-orientation. It is in the context of the differing and change

¹ Hartmann, N. Ethics I, op.cit., p.88.

in ethos that occur among the societies, cultures, the primary discovery of values take place.

Now, to our understanding, the taking place of "primary sensing" is always perspectival in the sense that every person, every society and every race "senses" values from a perspective relative to the cognising consciousness. What needs to be stressed at once that far from rejecting value-absolutism which requires that all values as immutable and eternal beings abound in a Platonic realm of pure existence, Hartmann only grants that discovery of some definite values by a society is relative to its perspective. In other words, for Hartmann, values as eternal, immutable beings belong to an exclusive realm such that all of them are accessible to any one individual or society at a point of time. Values themselves are eternal, immutable and real, though only some of them are accessible by intuitive means. It follows that different sets of values may be discovered by different societies; but this in no way should distract us from upholding value-absolutism. Relativism is only with reference to "discovery" of values even though values themselves are absolute. The searchlight metaphor provides the apt mode of understanding the absolutism of values, on one hand, and relativism with regard to their discovery, on the other. Thus, for Hartmann, "not all values are known, or, what is the same thing that we do not yet know ^{what} is good

and evil...."¹ The perspectival focus of feeling by different persons, societies, and races differ from one another. One perspectival feeling of values differs from another and therefore, they may never be the same. Those persons, societies and races who acquire the awareness of values from their respective perspectives form their norms and commandments accordingly. But the objects of primary sensing, i.e., the values remain static, immutable and eternal. Corresponding to every perspectival intuition, there is a value or a set of values which is/are already "there" in the ideal plane.

The metaphor referred to earlier would bear some further reflection and elaboration, even though we have already discussed it in an earlier chapter. Here, our value-consciousness is conceived of as "searchlight" which focuses historically "migrates" across the field of values that are static and immutable. The searchlight of "primary sensing" "moves about" on the ideal plane of values and it exposes only one constellation of values at one time. Or, the focus of searchlight of different persons, societies and races may be thrown at different portions of the ideal value-plane at the same time. Now the focus of searchlight, i.e., of value-consciousness is thrown upon a relatively small portion of the vast field whereby the values are so apprehended. Though the ethical

1 Ibid., p.94.

convictions of persons, societies and races change and differ, values themselves continues to remain static and immutable. Because, "values are independent of our differing and changing valuations".¹ But this does not, however, mean that we constantly add new values to the present stock of our intuited values. With new "unveiling" of fresh values by the value consciousness, the concurrent "vanishing" or "forgetting" of other values take place; that is, the values which at an earlier point of time have been in the focus of value-consciousness, now shift into the domain of darkness. And so, "we always survey only a limited sections of the realm of values, while we remain blind to the other sections".² Thus, in a manner of speaking, we might say that the actions, relationships which are regarded good today may be replaced by another set of values. What, however, is undeniable is that the values which are disclosed by any particular ethos-group appear as "absolute" to that ethos when it "perceives" them.

So far we have argued how Hartmann is able to maintain value-absolutism given his views that societies may opt for different value-schemes. The thrust of this matter is that values themselves do not change in terms of their ideal content.

1 Spiegelberg, H., The Phenomenological Movement, Vol. I, op.cit., p.385.

2 Hartmann, N., Ethics I, op.cit., p.228.

What really changes is the focus. Out of a infinite value-ideals one may discover only but a few or a small constellation of values. It is interesting to note that Hartmann argues for value-relativism if by that is meant changing societies adopting different values only on the ground and assumption that values themselves are absolute. Relativism of the kind referred to here can be upheld, Hartmann would argue, if only values themselves are taken to be absolute. What then is the nature of such relativism? Relativism, in a general sense, means that the values are relative to time and place, that is, relative to a particular society at a particular point of time. And any society may claim that its own standards are absolutely right and thereby it condemns the standards of another society. Thus the standard of the particular society valid for that society only and not for others. However, relativism, in the present context, may be understood in terms of the following premises : (a) that different societies/cultures seem to adopt or "discover" different values, and (b) that while the values are discovered they are given as absolute. A point that at once emerges is this that relativism, in this sense, does not destroy the objective validity and the consequent sanctity of the values discovered by the societies/cultures. In other words, given a perspective, any society/culture would find or discover the same values. That it does not happen in point of history, is because the perspective always changes.

Now, such perspectival intuition of values may be termed as "value perspectivism" which involves a kind of relativism in a radical sense. It is now clear that Hartmann rejects the relativism of the ordinary sense by denying the relativity of values themselves. For him, values themselves are not relative but the discovery and the continued discernment is relative, that is, relative to "ethos" of a people at particular point of time and place. Hartmann also thereby rejects the philosophical subjectivism which maintains that values are relative to individual consciousness or human cultures. In fact, values, being a Platonic Ideas, cannot themselves be relative to individuals or human cultures.

Thus, it would seem to make sense to distinguish the kind of relativism that Hartmann advocates from the ordinary sense of the term. By rejecting both relativism in the ordinary sense and the subjectivistic form of that position, Hartmann embraces a relativism in a peculiar and unique sense which may be termed as "perspectival relativism". In point of distinction, the relativism in this sense means that values are relative to a particular "etheic" perspective. That is to say, values are relative to a particular perspective from which a particular individual, society or race establishes an "emotional contact" with certain constellation of values and accordingly they form their norms and commandments. Thus there is a constellation of value corresponding to each perspective

from which a person, society or race intuit the eternal and immutable group of values existing in a "objectivity there" field of values. This goes for Hartmann's position that different persons, societies or races experience values as "objective" that is, existing in an independent ideal realm. Further, the perspectival "vision" corresponding to each constellation of values does not contradict with other perspectival vision of values. It is possible for individuals belonging to one ethos to be aware of a quite different constellation of values from that which individuals of another ethos becomes aware. So, there is no conflicting value-apprehensions as there are only differing value-apprehensions.

For a phenomenological understanding of values in general, and moral values, in particular, Hartmann's advocacy of value-absolutism is of crucial importance. In order to uphold this position, though Hartmann admittedly brings in the Platonic view of reality, the implicit logic of value-absolutism is tied up with objective validification of values themselves. The kind of relativism he reverts to is to be distinguished from ordinary sense of it insofar as the former and not the latter is adduced in support of the objective validity of values. By combining value-absolutism with what we have called perspectival relativism, Hartmann has pulled the realm of values out of the pale of capricious subjectivism.

One or other set of values is chosen or more appropriately "discovered" by a people not because of mere capricious preference, but because the values are "out there" objectively for the consciousness to discover them. Given a certain perspective, consciousness can but only discover that values it does and no other. Implicit in this is the argument that anyone from the same perspective (by virtue of being historically placed so) would always intuit the same values. This clearly goes for objectivity of values which a phenomenological consciousness ensures by delinking itself from the pure subjective drives which are capricious in nature. The logic of the invariance of values is based on their absolutism; that is, the values themselves belong to an ideal domain which is independent of the historical events and flux.

Indeed a hardline phenomenologist would have reservation for subscribing to a view which implicitly or otherwise presupposes any metaphysical or ontological commitments. Needless to mention, Hartmann's value-platonism may be a easy target of criticism from a hardliner. But any phenomenological analysis would be sympathetic to the core idea that values themselves are invariant and provide the basis for the objectivity of moral judgements. Hartmann's value-platonism is to be understood in this larger perspective. In order to invest values with invariance and objectivity, they must be held

as belonging to ideal realm which transcends, and is independent of, whatever exists in space and time. His value-platonism may be said to have an important underlined message, namely, that values "exist"; they do so in an ideal realm; for, if they did in space and time, they would not be invariant.

Of no less consequence is Hartmann's analysis which involves his accounting for and responding to the historical fact that different people/societies adopt different values which may give rise to the false impression that values are mere a matter of subjective preference and, therefore, nothing objective about them. In order to obviate the latter difficulty, Hartmann explains the apparent phenomena of changing values in terms of differing perspectives. Why an individual/society adopts a value is because of the perspectives from which he/it focusses consciousness on the realm of values. Given his peculiar position/perspective, there is no other alternative but to intuit the value that he does. Hartmann's approach in this direction can well be elaborated supportively by invoking the notion of intersubjectivity. To argue that an individual discovers a value relative to his perspective is also ^{to} claim that anyone else in his place would also discover the same value. The validity of value, therefore, can be upheld intersubjectively as one can sympathetically imagine different people discovering the same value where they all to view from the same perspective. In a limited context, this is borne out even historically as a

particular

society is known to apply generally the same norms of moral standard for judging the conduct of its own members.

That values in general and moral values, in particular, are not based merely on subjective ground but have objective validity is also very clearly argued and brought out by Scheler who lays the foundation of his ethics avowedly on the pattern of Husserlian phenomenology. In the present section, we shall first focus on some of the salient features of Scheler's views on values before undertaking a critique of the same.

To Scheler, phenomenology is primarily an attitude and not a method. He takes up Husserlian methodological principle to "approach the 'things' themselves" without presuppositions, above all, dissecting them from all naturalistic and metaphysical assumptions. He accepts Husserl's idea to approach "phenomena" as they are "given" and to "describe" the way they constitute themselves in the consciousness and intention of the perceiver. As against Kantian formal ethics, he lays the foundation of an ethics which is non-formal i.e. "material". For him, values are not empty, but have specifiable contents. He rejects the subjectivist's claim that values as such, and moral values, in particular, are only subjective phenomena in man's mind which do not have independent significance and existence. He argues that if values are simply the correlates of human acts of valuation, they would be variable and wholly relative.

The latter position which is taken by various naturalistic-positivist thinkers comes in for sharp criticism as Scheler attempts to refute it by demonstrating that values have a mode of being independent of the valuing man. On the other hand, for him, to the human social valuation, there corresponds an objective realm of values. In his onslaught against Kantian formalism and the various forms of modern subjectivism, Scheler builds up his theory of moral values.

Now, according to Scheler, values are phenomenological facts or what he calls "moral-facts" or "value-facts". But what are these "moral facts" or "value-facts"? Scheler explains that these value-facts are entirely independent of things, persons and relations of all kinds, that is, they are independent of all their bearers. For example, a human relationship called "friendship" is itself a value, remains static, though in practical life, a friend turns out to be a false friend. Further, they are also independent of all human considerations, prejudices. As essences, values belong to the mode of "experience" and a priori to what can be given by inductive and particularly, by causal knowledge. Furthermore, in his phenomenological description of the nature of values, Scheler compares the mode of values with colour-species by distinguishing it from individual colour shade. Thus, for him, value-facts "exist" the way colour species exist. Moreover, the "value-facts" are

"objects" as the colour species are the objects for Husserl. But, then, are they like Platonic Ideas? Spiegelberg clears away the confusion and brings out the matters more clearly as follows :

Scheler has often been interpreted as saying that values are general essences, ideal entities hovering over the empirical world of ethical experience like so many Platonic Ideas. Actually Scheler assigned to them neither the status of individuals nor that of universals. They are given as the contents of immediate intuition in concrete cases of ethical experience, once we attend to the value characters in their pure 'whatness'(was) regardless of their experience. It would seem, therefore, that such 'whatness' is an unplatonic as any other property that is carried by the objects of our concrete experience.¹

In other words, "moral facts" are "objects" of non-formal intuition, that is, of the intuition of a phenomenological kind and thus the values are intuitive a priori. Here, a point which would be substantive to our understanding of Scheler's view of a priori intuition is that the traditional dichotomy between rational truths and non-rational truths is unacceptable to him. In Greek thought, the distinction has clearly been made and upheld in conjunction with the view that only rational truths are worth pursuing whereas non-rational means, such as, emotion is either incapable of viewing any truth or is of a marginal order. This theme with some variations runs through whole

1 Spiegelberg, H., The Phenomenological Movement, Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 252-53.

western philosophical thinking. And so for Scheler, it was like swimming against the tide when he claims that truths grasped by emotion are necessary and universal in nature. On the other hand, Scheler points out, reason is incapable of providing such methodological requirement. Scheler legitimises emotion rather than reason as source of immediate necessary truths. "Moral facts" are accessible only in this fashion through emotion and are grasped immediately and intuitively. The view that whatever is gained by emotion being wholly subjectivistic can never lay claim to necessity and universality is blown to pieces in the hands of Scheler.

Thus Scheler sets his face strongly against the view that everything in the human mind that is non-rational, namely, feeling, loving, hating, intuition etc. is dependent on man's subjective constitution and therefore, cannot be our guide in our practical life. Scheler shows, on the contrary, that value-ethics can very well be based on emotions. Scheler attempts to elaborate a phenomenology of "feeling". He claims that feeling are far from being "blind" drive, as many Anglo-saxon philosophers maintain, are actually a means of knowledge which reveal through their intentionality the ethical a priori of a distinct realm of eternal values.

The crux of the matter is that according to Scheler, cognition of values is possible not primarily through intellect

but is gained in and through feeling which is intentional and cognitive. The cognitive nature of feeling would be clear only in the context of an important distinction made between feeling-acts and feeling-states. Scheler carefully distinguishes cognitive feeling from mere feeling-states by saying that the former is not mere psychological state of mind having some referents outside of it but have the intentional character which is directed towards its own kind of being, that is, value. A feeling-act is a feeling of something and this "something" is value. Further, a feeling-act is an act through which its "object", that is, value is grasped "originally" and "immanently". Thus feeling-act or cognitive feeling is not dead state of mind but "signify" something i.e. values. But, how is cognitive feeling is able to help us grasp or intuit values? Funk provides the answer on behalf of Scheler :

The feeling here reveals objects to me; it is neither a question of there being objects associated, either mechanically or through mental act, with what I perceive nor objects of being brought in "from without" the experience, for feeling goes directly to its objects, viz. values.¹

Thus, on Scheler's view, values are "given immanently through feeling-acts and thereby the latter becomes the acts of valuing.

1 Funk, R.L., "Thought, Values, and Action", Manfred Frings (ed.) Max Scheler (1874-1974) Centennial Essays, p.50. Martinus Nijhoff (The Hague, 1974)

It would be interesting to note here how Scheler's notion of valuational intuition, as we have explicated above, leads to his unique theory of relativism in the field of values. According to him, value-intuition is always perspectival. A society or a race at a particular point of time intuits values according to the historical circumstances in which it is situated. A quite another society or race may intuit values from another perspective according to its historical situation. For example, in a preponderantly military society where war is a means of acquisition, the values, such as, courage, bravery etc. are considered to be more useful for the general welfare than the values like industry, diligence, honesty etc. which find acceptance in an industrial society. Thus, here, the two societies, say, military society or the industrial society, intuits the eternal, immutable values from their respective perspectives and obviously their own perspectival "perception" would be different from each other. In the same way, numerous societies or races feel certain values and prefer them each from its own standpoint which will make possible imperatives and norms accordingly. Thus the difference and variation in norms and imperatives are due to their perspectival differences. This point bears close proximity to that of Hartmann in this regard. But the differences and variations, as we have explained in details earlier, do not in any way mean that values themselves are relative. Values, as we have stated earlier, are

eternal, unchangeable and static. In fact, all societies or races recognise the same values. The variations and differences are relative to the perspectival intuition of value-phenomena.

The different societies may "look" at the same eternal and immutable values from their divergent perspectives. They would do so as if from different windows at their "objects" of intuition which remain unchanged. As Scheler clearly affirms,

This most radical relativity of moral value-estimations gives us no reason to assume a relativism of moral values themselves and their order of ranks.

Further,

It is precisely a correctly understood absolute ethics that strictly requires these differences - this value-perspectivism of values among peoples and their times and this openness in the formative stages of the ethos. Because moral value-estimations and their systems are more manifold and richer in their qualities than the diversity of mere natural dispositions and realities of people would allow one reasonably to expect, one must assume an objective realm of values which our experiencing can enter only gradually and according to definite structures of the selection of values.

Now, the relativism advocated by both Hartmann and Scheler does not stand in contradiction with the absolutistic nature of values or Ethics. The kind of relativity advocated by Hartmann and Scheler may be termed as "perspectival relativism" which does not imply valuational relativity. Because values themselves are not affected by the perspectival intuition of persons or societies. They remain eternal, static and

immutable inspite of changes that occur in the norms and imperatives followed by diverse persons and societies. Thus relativism in this radical sense can go in hand and glove with the absolute values.

At this point of our discussion we may briefly recapitulate some of the central issues around which the phenomenological thinking has developed on the matter of values, in general, and ethical values, in particular. But let us be brief : (i) Hartmann's theory of "sensing" of values and Scheler's theory of "feeling" are basically not different from each other, though they hold divergent views with regard to the ontological status of the "objects" of apprehension i.e. values, (ii) The relativism advocated by Hartmann and Scheler is of a type which far from contradicting the value-absolutism goes really to support and sustain such a view. The argued coherence between value-absolutism and perspectival relativity of values can be realised by invoking the notion of intersubjectivity.

Let us take the first. We may begin by reminding that both Hartmann and Scheler take emotion as a source of cognition in the field of values. Kant's advocacy of "reason" or "rationality" in ethics has been vehemently criticised by both these philosophers. They express their dissatisfaction, as we have seen earlier, over the rigid disjunction of reason and emotion, as also cognitivism and emotivism. And both

of them make attempts to break down this dichotomy and bridge the supposed wedge with the help of phenomenological insights. Hartmann who subscribes to the platonic tradition uses phenomenological insight in the matter of the apprehension of values. The latter is emphasized by Scheler too. For them, feeling far from being a "blind drive" can claim to be a source of cognition. These cognitive feelings are, of course, different from subjective feeling-states, such as, elatedness, depression etc. which are non-cognitive. For Hartmann, "they are acts of feeling - not intellectual but emotional",¹ and on Scheler's view, "it is in and through our feelings that objects and states come before us as endowed with worthwhileness and counterworthwhileness...."² Further, both Hartmann's "primary discovery" and Scheler's "intentional feeling" are the immediate way of getting access to the world of values. In order to have the knowledge of values, no mediation, such as, of concepts, judgements, symbols, signs etc. is needed. It is in and through this immediate intuitive knowledge that the "Thing" itself i.e. value is "given" and "mediated experience that never gives things themselves". One thing more. This immediate "givenness" of the "objects" themselves is a distinguishing

1 Hartmann, N., Ethics I, op.cit., p.177.

2 Frindlay, J.N., Axiological Ethics, op.cit., p.59.

mark of phenomenological experiencing. Hartmann clarifies,

Every moral preference is intuitive, is immediately there and is always contained in the grasping of a given circumstance (....). It does not first wait for a judgement of the understanding.¹

Similarly, for Scheler, value-facts are given "immediately i.e. not in any way mediated by symbols, signs, or instructions of any kind".² Furthermore, as this kind of apprehension is emotional in nature, one cannot shirk away from its "objects" in order not to have the knowledge of its "objects" i.e. values. A valuing subject is not free to have or not to have the apprehension of values. A subject is purely receptive in matters of apprehending values. Such subject cannot avoid and escape the appeal of values made upon the subject's "feeling".

Now, the second point. The relativism which has been advocated by Hartmann and Scheler is quite along the same lines. They both recognise the perspectival intuition of values. That is to say, each society/culture intuits values from its own perspective and this perspectival intuition differs from the perspectival intuition of another society/culture. Or, it may be that perspectival "perception" of one generation may differ from another generation. And thus the values which are "perceived" or "felt" from a particular perspective may be said to be relative to that perspectival "perception". The emphasis here is on the point that relativism in this sense

1. Hartmann, N., Ethics, op. cit., p. 176.

2. Scheler, M., Formalism in Ethics, op. cit., p. 50

does not affect the value-absolutism which is upheld by both Hartmann and Scheler. This type of relativity which does not imply the relativity of values themselves is of a piece with the phenomenological thinking.

A point that may bear repetition here is this. The ordinary kind of relativity asserts that values are relative to time and place i.e. to particular society/culture and the society/culture may claim that its own standards are absolutely right and thereby it may condemn the standard of another society/culture which "honours" different values. Thus this type of relativism clearly implies the relativity of values. Because the societies/cultures fundamentally disagree with regard to the values themselves. It recognises the diversities in values and consider such diversity as fundamental. Here by "fundamental" is meant that it would not be removed even if there were perfect agreement about the properties of the thing evaluated".¹

But what we have referred to as "perspectival relativism" differs from the ordinary type of relativity in that in the former no such disagreement arises with regard to the values themselves like it is the case in the latter. It recognises the eternity and immutability of values and it is only the case that different societies differ only in their perspectival "perception". Thus here there is disagreement in perspectives

1 Edwards, P., (ed.), The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol.3, p.75. Macmillan Publishing Co., New York.

only and not with regard values themselves. It is their particular social circumstances which lead their members to "perceive" a particular value or a set of values and this does not imply that they (the members of that society) would deny or condemn the values advocated by other societies. Thus values intuited perspectively by each society is relative to that perspectival intuition only, unlike that of ordinary relativism in which values themselves are relative to that society.

As for the third point, it has been maintained that notwithstanding relativity of value intuition, values themselves claim objective validity. And this may be argued on the ground of intersubjectivity. As values are relative to the perspectival intuition of each society/culture, whoever would "visualise" from the same perspective would also "perceive" the same value or set of values. A military society, to take our earlier example, where war is a mean of acquisition may intuit such values as courage, bravery rather than, say, diligence, industry and honesty which are preferred intuitionally in an industrial society. Now, whoever enter the either of these societies is compelled to have the "sensing" of respective set of values i.e. courage, bravery etc. or diligence, industry, honesty etc. Thus values "perceived" by these societies are valid for each of them respectively and there is no question of condemnation

of the values adopted by one society by the other. In other words, whoever would come to "perceive" values from that societal perspective would "perceive" the same values which have been perceived by the military society or industrial society. Thus it seems to us that the perspectival relativism is intersubjective in the sense that whoever would "perceive" the values from a particular perspectival view would "perceive" the same values. Here the sense of intersubjectivity, it seems, is purely phenomenological-epistemological in nature.

Now, it seems to us that both Hartmann and Scheler are under an obligation to explain the objective validity of values so as to steer clear the charge of subjectivism that is generally levelled against phenomenological approach. The task is so much harder for them as they both subscribe to the view of the relativity in "perceiving" values. Admittedly, they both hold that relativity does not apply to values themselves which are eternal, immutable and unchangable but rather to the way they are "perceived" by the cognising consciousness which could do so only from a particular perspective or standpoint. The point of the matter is that though all values themselves are absolute, consciousness can have access but only to a few. The argument with regard to relativity of values can thus be understood in terms of the following premises : (a) values are numerous, though all of them are absolute, (b) consciousness

cannot be aware of, or, have access to all values at the same time, though it can grasp only some values at a time.

It is interesting to note that both Hartmann and Scheler dwell at length on (b) above going into details of the mode of apprehension and the manner in which values - moral or other, are grasped. For one thing, the grasping of values by consciousness is immediate and direct, and quite unlike the rational means in which reason is mediated by concepts, language, symbols etc. The distinctive stress on direct and immediate understanding of any phenomena is the hallmark of phenomenological approach to knowledge. It requires not only that we go back to "things" themselves, but do so by a mode of understanding which is both direct and immediate. Reason cannot function unmediated by concepts, symbols etc.; but emotion can. Both Hartmann and Scheler lay much store by emotion which alone can help the cognising consciousness to grasp meanings and values immediately and directly. Thus it is claimed that values, be the moral or otherwise, are directly and immediately grasped by the phenomenological consciousness. By phenomenological consciousness is meant consciousness constituted by whatever is immanent to it and emotion being immanently given in consciousness (as opposed to states of feeling) can grasp such meanings and values. Indeed, there is a sense of subjectivity here which must, however, be distinguished

from subjectivism. The latter is accidental, though pure subjectivity is out of what phenomenological consciousness is constituted.

Emotional subjectivity ignores anything that is transcendent to it and by virtue of that must grasp meaning-essences or values themselves. Unlike a mere object of mere rational cognition, values themselves are immanently given to grasping consciousness which by its very acts lays also the foundation for its objective validity. If "grasping", in the phenomenological sense, of values is made by consciousness, it is not merely a subjectivistic phenomenon; any consciousness would grasp the very same essences of values. The idea of intersubjectivity is thus intertwined with the very phenomenological mode in which consciousness grasp meanings and values. What, in effect, is argued by both Hartmann and Scheler is not that objective validity of values must be grounded on the premise that all consciousness as a matter of fact do grasp the same values; for the latter is never the case due to the divergence of perspectival positions. Intersubjective basis for the validity of values is invoked by maintaining that a consciousness from a perspectival position must always grasp the very same values as would be accessible to any consciousness from the same perspectival position. Thus the fact of differing "perceptions" of values does not affect value-absolutism which indeed may be taken as the implicit

ground for holding the relativity of "value-perception".

The foregoing analysis of values brings out another point in clear focus which is that of methodology. In the philosophical tradition of English-speaking world, there has emerged a certain ^{consensus} consciousness in favour of the view that rational mode of cognition is superior to any non-rational mode which, even if it is admitted for certain purposes, has only a very marginal role to play. The phenomenological tradition going back to the writings of Husserl, however, it succeeded in evolving and developing a methodology which is mainly oriented to the so-called non-rational mode of cognition. Not only that, The phenomenological thinkers have occasion to study and send out a message loud and clear that it is only emotion and not reason which is vastly superior to achieving the phenomenological attitude of grasping "things" and meanings themselves. From the phenomenological point of view, moral values directly and immediately grasped by a consciousness which acts within the parameters of phenomenological requirement. That such values can claim objective validity is grounded on the very nature of the phenomenological act of grasping. The choosing of values are no matter of mere caprice. Nor are they for that matter based on any rational arguments. A moral value is valid for that is what the cognising consciousness directly grasp or "perceives" in phenomenological sense. The moral worth of an action would depend on whether or not we conform

to this phenomenologically grasped values; no process of ratiocination can help us to wriggle out of such obligation. It may be said by way of a final concluding remark that phenomenological appraisal to understanding moral values encompasses within its folds two important insights, namely, that such values are absolute, eternal and immutable numerous as they may be and they are amenable to direct and immediate grasping by consciousness even though only a few at a time.

That phenomenological approach to values offers an alternative mode of cognition of values in general, and moral values, in particular, is enough clear. What is more important is that such a mode of cognition which is claimed as non-rational, non-formal or intuitive is held to be superior to the rational means of cognition that the western tradition has always tried to glorify. There is a distinct parting of ways with this rational mainstream of tradition which in the west traces itself back to the times of Plato; the phenomenological approach lays greater store by the non-formal or intuitive mode for the direct grasping of values themselves. The rational means of cognition, on the other hand, is neither immediate nor direct; it therefore must always seek its own justification in terms of arguments based on deductive and inductive modes. Phenomenological approach is characterised by a mode of understanding which is both direct and intuitive

and therefore, needs no justification from outside. However, the notion of intersubjectivity that is invoked by phenomenological approach in support of the values being objective and universal is based on sympathetic imagination whereby any person/society would intuit the same values provided the perspective from which it is done remains also the same. Thus the claim is that the objective and universal character of moral values have for them a more secure foundation than can be expected to be provided by the rationalistic tradition.

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