

## Chapter II

### PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD AND PERSPECTIVE

The word "Phenomenology" is used by Husserl to denote a method as well as a discipline or a system of thought.<sup>1</sup> It is true that no method can wholly be divorced from certain presuppositions in the content of thought. But in the case of phenomenology, the intertwining of method and content is so close that it often appears doubtful whether purely methodological ideas can be distinguished at all from their actual content. The reason perhaps is this that the phenomenological method is not devised by keeping itself free from the actual content at any particular stage of Husserl's philosophical career. Rather, it is a product of gradual development of his philosophical thought. It remains always in the making through a number of intellectual periods of Husserl's thought. In spite of having this dynamic character of Husserl's philosophical investigation, it has developed a definite philosophical perspective which persists through all the changes. This philosophical perspective

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1 Husserl says : "Phenomenology : this denotes a science, a system of Scientific disciplines. But it also and above all denotes a method and an attitude of mind, the specifically philosophical attitude of mind, the specifically Philosophical method."

Husserl, E., The Idea of Phenomenology, pp.18-19.  
Translated by W.P. Alston and G.Nakhtnikian,  
Martinus Nishoff, The Hague, 1964.

consists of the following basic ideas : I. The Ideal of Presuppositionless Philosophy, II. The Technique of Phenomenological Reductions, III. Transcendental Consciousness; Its Intentional Character, IV. The Concept of the Ego, V. Transcendental Subjectivity, VI. Phenomenological Constitution. Let us now give a conceptual elaboration of these key issues in the following :

### I. The Ideal of Presuppositionless Philosophy

The first and foremost methodological principle of philosophy, according to Husserl, is that it must be free from presuppositions. In paragraph 63 of Ideas I, Husserl says : "it (Phenomenology) demands the completest freedom from all assumptions."<sup>1</sup>

The term "presupposition" harbours some ambiguity. Its literal meaning is that which is "posited as holding or existing in advance".<sup>2</sup> Broadly speaking, it refers to any kind of supposition or assumption. It may be in the sphere of ideal or material, a process of experience, a realm of existence or a formal principle.

1 Husserl, E., Ideas, p.187.

Translated by W.R. Boyce Gibson, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 5th Impression, 1969.

2 Farber, M., The Aims of Phenomenology, p.20.

Harper Torch books, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1966.

It is to be noted here that phenomenological method is entirely oriented toward one goal, that of founding philosophy as a "rigorous" and first science. By "rigorous" Husserl means that which does not take anything for granted without giving sufficient reasons for it. The de facto sciences which we have today are not "rigorous" in this sense since they are full of unjustified presuppositions which they cannot validate in their own framework. E.G., Newtonian physics cannot justify its laws of motion which are its vital presuppositions. Philosophy, in order to be rigorous science, must satisfy the requirement of freedom from presuppositions - all assumptions which cannot be justified in terms of phenomenological intuition.

According to this ideal, one cannot assume anything or take anything for granted unless there is proper reason for accepting it. Our acts of thought refer to external or even non-existent and fictitious objects. But the assertions concerning these objects cannot be assumed to be true when one is engaged in philosophizing. The "Physical" and "psychical" realities that transcend consciousness, cannot be taken for granted. A true philosophical discipline is not at all concerned with the questions relating to the existence or non-existence of "physical" and "psychical" realities. Rather, it should remain indifferent to them. For Husserl, the metaphysical questions i.e. the questions about the nature and existence of the external world or reality are quite irrelevant to philosophy which would claim itself to be a

rigorous and first science. No assertion can be made of real existence and hence the premises which are drawn from metaphysics, natural science and psychology are totally irrelevant to erect a philosophical edifice which would be a strict and ideal science. Such a scientific philosophy would give strict foundation to all empirical sciences. According to Marvin Farber : "It is this metaphysical, natural-scientific and psychical freedom from presuppositions and no other kind, that Husserl proposed to realise at this time."<sup>1</sup>

Husserl claims that the method of philosophy is to be "radical" in the sense that it does not take for granted any assumptions, beliefs regarding the existence of physical and psychical things. Even the physical existence and psychical faculties of one who is philosophising cannot be presupposed. For, if once anything is presupposed dogmatically while one has to build up a system of scientific philosophy, then there is a possibility of the philosophy to turn out to be a dogmatic one which cannot have a scientific knowledge. The hidden presuppositions may vitiate the whole of philosophy and as a result, the conclusions reached by such philosophy may collapse into nothing. The natural sciences and psychology take things for granted in their pre-given conditions. In spite of having a critical attitude of their own, natural sciences as well as psychology

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1 Ibid., p.32.

assume the physical and psychical facts beforehand. They never question the natural attitude which harbours the so-called scientific and pre-scientific statements. The spirit of a strict or 'rigorous' science would be to count nothing as really scientific which cannot be fully justified by the evidence. Hence, philosophy must realise this spirit of a strict science in order to be a source of all apodicticity.

In short, Husserl's methodological principle of presuppositionlessness requires that all scientific and prescientific statements of the assertions concerning the existence in space and time, causal connection etc. must never be presupposed. Rather, they must be eliminated in order to satisfy the methodological requirement of a scientific philosophy which is expected to provide a strict foundation for the de facto sciences by making possible a methodological reform of all of them. No unexamined assumptions or hypotheses or prejudgements relating to natural world can be accepted unless there is any reason for clearly positing them. And this would be the basic spirit of a "rigorous" science - the Husserlian designation for "Philosophy".

It must be noted here that by setting down the ideal of presuppositionlessness in his procedure, Husserl does not try to eradicate from his method all kinds of assumptions and thereby to begin philosophising from nothing. In his "Introduction" to the English edition of Ideas I,<sup>1</sup> Husserl has made a distinction between

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1 Husserl, E., Ideas, p.28, op.cit.

"presuppositions of a positive kind" and "the totality of presuppositions that can be taken for granted." The latter kind of presuppositions must always be there from where philosophy begins its journey. It is an absolute basis, a ground of unquestioned being, in which all means of solution must be contained."<sup>1</sup> This is referred to as the subjectivity of consciousness - "a self-evident basic requirement of any rational method."<sup>2</sup> Thus phenomenological method assumes at least one self-evident principle as its point of departure, though it is not explicitly acknowledged to be a presupposition.

The ideal of presuppositionlessness is a basic but important principle of phenomenological method. Husserl wants to establish philosophy on a basis of unimpeachable rationality which claims to be rigorous from its earliest beginnings. And this ambition can be fulfilled, Husserl realises only by the rigid application of phenomenological method having the scientific rigor of being presuppositionless. For Husserl, "to be presuppositionless" and "to be certain" are synonymous expressions. The main spirit of the ideal is that one must proceed towards establishing a source of apodictic knowledge by thoroughly and systematically examining all the naive beliefs and prejudices and

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1 Husserl, E., "Phenomenology".

Translated by Richard E. Palmer and published for the first time in Eyclopedia Britannica (1927) and included in Husserl: Shorter Works P. McCormik and F. Elliston University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

2 Ibid.

thus nothing is left which is open to doubt. The unjustified assumptions may contain something which may vitiate one's whole philosophical endeavour or may reduce it into a dogmatism. It is only the procedure of presuppositionlessness which guarantees philosophical thinking as having scientific rigor.

## II. The Technique of Phenomenological Reductions

As a matter of historical record, philosophy is said to have originated when man begins to question the world which is "spread out in space endlessly and in time becoming and become without end"<sup>1</sup> and seeks to have a rational foundation for it. To demand a rational foundation for the world is to take a radical attitude to it. Instead of accepting the natural world which the natural attitude demands, one has to take a changed or radical attitude to provide a rational foundation for it. This departure from the naturalist attitude to a truly philosophical attitude is called by Husserl "the phenomenological reduction."

Husserl develops his theory of reduction on the basis of his radical criticism of the "natural attitude". The phenomenological reduction eliminates the "general thesis" of the natural standpoint as such. Husserl proceeds by levelling

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1 Husserl, E., Ideas I, p.

radical criticism against the natural standpoint before he goes on to elaborate his theory of reduction. Husserl's motive behind the criticisms of naturalistic standpoint is to show that the method of reduction involves the questioning of all one's presuppositions about the world. He who philosophizes must have to take a radical attitude which consists in disregarding the presuppositions of a world existing independently of us. He has to suspend the judgements which are consisting of certain commonly held beliefs and prejudices regarding the transcendent world to lay the foundation of a "scientific" philosophy. The phenomenological reduction is an important device by the radical performance of which one can adopt a neutral position with regard to the transcendent reality. To describe this neutral attitude to the natural world, Husserl uses the Greek term 'epoche', which is used by Greek sceptics to refer to a suspension of judgements. Being a mathematician, Husserl also identifies the basic meaning of reduction with the mathematical operation of bracketing.<sup>1</sup> The underlying idea of this metaphor is that a philosopher should detach or disconnect himself from the context of his naive or natural living. A mathematician paranthesizes a mathematical equation, not in order to eliminate it, but to put it out of question for the time being in order to concentrate on the larger context of the equation. Likewise, a philosopher must have to "put out of action" of one's all the presuppositions by placing them in bracket while engaged in philosophical activity.

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1 Husserl seems to have used the three terms - "phenomenological reduction", "epoche", "bracketing" interchangeably and therefore, they may be regarded as synonymous.

The first and most fundamental aspect of the technique of reduction is negative. It seeks to eliminate the "factuality" which is the root of all contingency and hence of doubt from the object of investigation. But this does not in any mean the elimination of existence itself. Reduction simply means the elimination of natural attitude which we generally cherish with regard to transcendent world. The existence/transcendence is simply bracketed in the sense that no position is taken either for or against. By putting the transcendence into bracket, it is pointed out that existence/transcendence does not have any significance for phenomenology. So, it is simply left out of consideration by executing the radical technique of reduction. Husserl says : "I may freely abstain from entertaining any belief about experience - which I did. This simply means that I refuse to assert the reality of the world .... I must similarly abstain from any other of my opinions, judgements, and valuations about the world, since these likewise assume the reality of the world."<sup>1</sup> Further, to put the transcendent reality into bracket does not mean to deny it. It simply means to refrain from making any comment with regard to its existence. Moreover, to suspend "the natural thesis" does not mean to transform it into anti-thesis, or indecision or doubt. Rather it is something unique. It is unique in the sense that by putting it into operation, a philosopher keeps his way of philosophizing free from the influence of "natural thesis". The entire natural world

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1 Husserl, E., The Paris Lectures, pp.7-8, Tr. by Peter Koestenbaum, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 2nd edition, 1975.

which is out there continually for me and of which I am continually conscious, will remain so for ever, even though I decide to put it into bracket. Reduction affects neither the existence of the natural world nor the existence of philosopher himself as a natural being. That is to say, it changes nothing in the world. With the execution of reduction "he loses nothing of their being and their objective truths and likewise nothing at all of the spiritual acquisitions of his world-life or those of the whole historical communal life; he simply forbids himself - as a philosopher, in the uniqueness of his direction of interest - to continue the whole natural performance of his world-life; that is, he forbids himself to ask questions which rest upon the ground of the world at hand, questions of being, questions of value, practical questions, questions about being or not-being, about being valuable, being useful, being beautiful, being good, etc. All natural interests are put out of play. But the world, exactly as it was for me earlier and still is, as my world, our world, humanity's world, having validity in its various subjective ways, has not disappeared."<sup>1</sup>

Now a question may arise : which things are needed to be bracketed ? From his writings it appears that Husserl proposes to bracket out the following at one time or another :

(1) The Phenomenological epoche requires that we would abstain from making any judgement at all regarding the

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1 Husserl, E., The crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, p.152. Trans. by David Carr, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1970.

theoretical content of all previous philosophical theories which may be held in abeyance. We must detach ourselves from such philosophical theories as are constructed on the presupposition that a world exists independently.

(ii) Husserl proposes to suspend all common sense prejudices which are the characteristics of the natural attitude. Our perception of a table, for instance, on which I am writing, involves the belief that a physical table is present out there. This belief of having the existence of the table is not necessarily true and also not necessarily false either. It is contingent or accidental and therefore, has to be kept under suspension. Similarly, all our physical phenomena are also subjected to the same fate. In the words of Husserl, "with the suspending of the natural world, physical and psychological, all individual objectivities which are constituted through the functional activities of consciousness in valuation and in practice are suspended all varieties of cultural expression, works of the technical and of the fine arts, of the sciences also (so far as we accept them as cultural facts and not as validity-systems), aesthetic and practical values of every shape and form. Natural in the same sense are also realities of such kinds as state, moral custom, law, religion."<sup>1</sup>

(iii) The so-called scientific outlook as it is understood in our quotodian experience as well as in scientific perceptions

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1 Husserl, E., Ideas, op.cit., p.171.

is needed to be bracketed. "Therewith all the sciences natural and mental, with the entire knowledge they have accumulated, undergo disconnection as sciences which require for their development the natural standpoint".<sup>1</sup>

(iv) Even the world of mathematical objects as they contain transcendent claims are required to be universally bracketed. The formal logic and all the disciplines of formal Mathesis, e.g. the algebra, theory of numbers, theory of manifolds and so forth. "The theoretical framework of the mathematical disciplines and all the theorems which develop within it cannot be of any service".<sup>2</sup> Further, the eidetic sciences i.e., the sciences which belongs essentially to the physical objectivity of Nature as such have to be disconnected. For examples Geometry, Kinematics, the "pure" physics of matter.

(v) Together with all these, the process of reduction is needed to be extended to another peculiar transcendence "which comes to knowledge in a highly mediated form", namely, God. Though this "intuitable actuality" is called Absolute, yet it is quite different from the Absoluteness of pure consciousness. Hence, it is transcendent in a different sense. Husserl pronounces : "we extend the phenomenological reduction to this "Absolute" and to this"transcendent".<sup>3</sup>

1 Husserl, E., Ideas, op.cit., p.171.

2 Ibid., p.176.

3 Ibid., p.174.

(vi) (a) The phenomenological reduction is required to be carried out with regard to the historico-empirical ego which is a part of transcendent reality. This reduction is called by Husserl "the reduction to the sphere of ownness".<sup>1</sup> (b) With the self-suspending of the phenomenologist himself, he also carefully suspend all the judgements which are based on or which involves the other.

The reductive method is transferred from self-experience to the experience of others insofar as there can be applied to the envisaged mental life of the other the corresponding bracketing and description according to the subjective "How" of its appearance and what is appearing".<sup>2</sup>

The operation of reduction involves several steps. As Husserl himself acknowledges, "On grounds of method this operation will split up into different steps of 'disconnexion' or bracketing, and thus our method will assume the character of a graded reduction".<sup>3</sup> Husserl seems to have distinguished at least three stages of reduction. Some interpreters<sup>4</sup> of Husserl have been able to determine some additional steps of the same. For our purposes, we discuss the broadly-distinguished three stages of

- 1 Husserl, E., Cartesian Meditations, p.  
Trans. by D. Cairns, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1960.
- 2 Husserl, E., Encyclopaedia Britannica article on  
"Phenomenology" (1927), op.cit., p.25.
- 3 Husserl, E., Ideas, op.cit., p.114.
- 4 Quentin, Laner, Phenomenology, pp.50 onwards.  
Harper Torch books, Harper & Row Publishers,  
New York, 1965.

reduction, namely, phenomenological reduction, eidetic reduction and transcendental reduction. The first stage, namely, phenomenological reduction seems to be the most important step for Husserlian methodology. The other two stages are the refinements and variations of the first. But it must be noted here that all the three stages of reduction taken together composes "the phenomenological reduction".

(a) Phenomenological reduction : For this reduction, we require to suspend "the general thesis" of belief in an independent reality together with all other transcendences, even our scientific thinking.

Our perception of a table, for example, involves the belief that a table as a physical thing is present in front of me. Such beliefs have to be kept in disconnection. Even a mathematical number e.g. the number 2 should not be thought as having an objective, extramental existence. The number 2 can be thought independently of the things to which it is applied in our practical life.

(b) Eidetic reduction : It is a stage of reduction in which all references to individuals and particulars are dropped and thereby one reaches out to general essences. In this stage, the individual thisness or thatness is eradicated. In other words, it is a reduction from mere particular facts to general essences taking the word "essence" roughly in the sense of

platonian "eidos". In Husserl's own language : "It is only the individual element which phenomenology ignores, whilst it raises the whole essential content in its concrete fullness into eidetic consciousness".<sup>1</sup> In the case of perception of a chair, e.g., I grasp the perception itself as given essentially to my pure intuition.

(c) Having put into bracket literally everything, what we reach is the pure ego. This operation is called by Husserl "the transcendental reduction".<sup>2</sup> Husserl describes the technique of reduction chiefly in negative terms but he also indicates its positive aspect of the operation. Husserl says, "we cannot disconnect transcendentals indefinitely, transcendental purification cannot mean the disconnecting of all transcendentals."

Since otherwise a pure consciousness might indeed remain over, but no possibility of a science of pure consciousness."<sup>3</sup> Hence, the technique of reduction has far-reaching and profound mission. It points to a original field of experience. As Marvin Farber rightly comments : "Reduction is not merely a moving away from the natural world but a moving toward something. The goal of this movement is none other than transcendental subjectivity".<sup>4</sup>

1 Husserl, E., Ideas, op.cit., p.209.

2 In fact, it seems that transcendental reduction cannot be sharply distinguished from eidetic reduction. For both the stages of reduction points to the same absolute region of essence or consciousness.

3 Husserl, E., Ideas, op.cit., p.175.

4 Spiegelberg, H., The phenomenological Movement, Vol. I, p.136. Second edition, Martings Nijhoff, The Hague, 1971.

A systematic application of phenomenological method of reduction, as Husserl himself recognised, has great importance for phenomenological method as a whole. It is the technique which frees us from our usual preoccupation with natural reality and thereby it points to a most authentic region which he calls transcendental subjectivity where the naive world of things and beings finds its meaning. The process of reduction helps the philosopher to keep himself at distance from the natural reality and thus judge the authenticity of what is essentially given to consciousness.

### III. Transcendental Consciousness : Its Intentional Character

The operation of the phenomenological reduction opens up "the region of pure consciousness". The adjective "pure" indicates that the field of consciousness which is discovered by reduction is the consciousness which remains as "a phenomenological residuum" after the operation of phenomenological reduction. The realm of "Absolute" Being in which all other regions of Being have their root and to which they are essentially related.<sup>1</sup> "Consciousness, considered in its "purity" must be reckoned as a self-contained system of Being, as a system of Absolute Being, into which nothing can penetrate and from which nothing can escape".<sup>2</sup> This region of pure

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1 Husserl, E., Ideas, op.cit., p.212.

2 Ibid., p.153.

consciousness is taken by Husserl to be the field of inquiry. It is important to understand the nature of pure consciousness with specific reference to phenomenological method. For, "it is in consciousness - thanks to its intentionality - that the relations between objectivity and subjectivity occur, and it is only through these relations that we can expect to gain insight into the true sense of knowledge".<sup>1</sup>

According to Husserl, consciousness can be understood in terms of acts and these acts of consciousness are intentional or directional in nature. In his earlier writings, intentionality is held by Husserl to be the characteristic feature of consciousness, but in his later writings, he understands intentionality as the very essence of consciousness. In his Paris Lectures, Husserl says : "The essence of consciousness, in which I live as my own self, is the so-called intentionality".<sup>2</sup>

It may be worthwhile to mention how the term "intentionality" is introduced into modern philosophy and what is Husserl's reaction to this traditional conception.

It has been pointed out that Brentano for the first time introduces the term "intentionality" into modern philosophy.

1 Ströker, E., "Phenomenology as First Philosophy : Reflections on Husserl" in Edmund Husserl and the Phenomenological tradition, edited by Robert Sokolowski, p.250. The Catholic University of America Press, 1988.

2 Husserl, E., The Paris Lectures, op.cit., p.12.

His chief concern is to demarcate the boundary of psychological phenomena by distinguishing it from physical ones. Aiming at this attempt, he develops the notion of intentionality as constituent part of psychological phenomena. According to Brentano, the distinction between mental phenomena and physical phenomena lies in the fact that the former unlike the latter are characterised by "intentional relation" or by what he calls "intentional inexistence" of the intended object.

In order to characterise the psychological phenomena, Brentano makes use of two phrases (i) "intentional inexistence of an object" (ii) "reference to a content". These may be explained as follows.

In the first, "object" means factual object. The "intentional inexistence" implies the existence of the intended object inside the intending subject, and not outside. To mean the insiderness of the intended object, Brentano uses the term "immanent-object-quality". The intended object may or may not have the existence independent of the intending mind. When, for example, one thinks of a "pen", the object of this thought is the pen which exists outside and independently of the intending mind, but it need not be existent. Or, consider the example of an "unicorn" which has no extra-mental existence. The two objects, namely, "pen" and "unicorn" make no difference to Brentano's conception of intentionality. Thus the object of love, hate and desire may or may not have the independent

existence of their own. Hence Brentano calls these objects like "pen" or "unicorn" immanent object.

The second characterisation of the psychic phenomena, namely, "reference to an object" or the intentional relation, is not a property of verbs to Brentano; it is a psychological relation. Obviously, a mental act or relation presupposes an intending subject who loves, hates etc. Hence, it is clear that intentional relation holds between subject, on the one hand and the object which has "mental inexistence", on the other.

Brentano, while speaking of "intentional relatedness" finds it difficult to call it a relation, because generally a genuine relation holds between two existent objects. But the mental relatedness, of which Brentano talks, does not require this condition. It may refer to something which may or may not have real existence, e.g., unicorn, God etc. Hence, Brentano's conception of intentional directedness is psychological one. Further, Brentano points out that the mental phenomena are perceived in "inner consciousness". For example, seeing a colour, or hearing a tone are mental phenomena. Brentano speaks of mental phenomena which are directed towards their object. v Let us now turn to Husserl's reaction to the Brentonian conception intentionality and finally see how he establishes his own theory of intentionality.

Being a strong critic of both psychologism and naturalism, Husserl wants to keep all naturalistic and psychologistic

considerations into brackets. It is possible that Brentano works within the framework of psycho-physical attitude which is not acceptable to Husserl. Having clearly stated his position against naturalistic standpoint and that of psychologism, he seems under an obligation to refute any attempt at establishing the dichotomy between the mental and psychical phenomena. If this distinction is accepted by him, it would be quite inconsistent with his basic standpoint. Viewed in this perspective, it is quite understandable that he is not prepared to indentify intentionality with all mental phenomena. If it be shown that at least some mental phenomena is characterised by intentionality then it would constitute the refutation of Brentano's criterion with regard to mental phenomena. Similarly, if it be shown that besides mental phenomena, some physical actions are also characterised by intentionality, then it will also take away the weight of Brentano's argument. As has been pointed out by Mohanty, Husserl shifts between these two positions at different times, sometimes taking one, at other occasions the other in order to meet the requirement of his own methodology by proving Brentano to be wrong. This is the form of argument which Husserl seems to adopt in general in order to salvage the concept of intentionality from the cesspool of psychologism and thus he remains consistent with the method of phenomenological reduction.

Though he rejects the Brantonian theory of intentionality, Husserl gives full credit to his teacher for reviving the

scholastic term and for having called attention to this excellent phenomena. Having borrowed the term "intentionality" from Brentano, Husserl acknowledges "the existence of a highly important class of mental fact - for which Husserl reserves the title of acts - which have the peculiarity of presenting the subject with an object".<sup>1</sup> Husserl has also marked the point that there are different ways of being intentionally related to an object - in mere presentation, judgement, perception etc.

Having rejected the psychological interpretation of intentionality, Husserl gives a transcendental explanation of intentional character of consciousness which bears a much wider significance in his methodology and in his philosophy in general. Let us now turn to draw out the basic and salient features of Husserl's own intentionality thesis.

In the Volume II of Logical Investigation, Husserl gives what are called static and dynamic analyses of intentionality. But in Ideas I, he gives a more developed and mature interpretation of intentionality. We shall focus on the latter. The static analysis is meant for uncovering the structure of intentional acts of consciousness. However, in the static analysis, a distinction is made between "reelle component" and "intentional correlate" of intentional experience. In the dynamic analysis, there is a dialectics of intention and fulfilment. The dialectics implies that the intentional act

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1 Gurwitsch, A., "On the Intentionality of Consciousness" in Philosophical Essays in memory of Edmund Husserl, p.65. Marvin Farber (ed.), Greenwood Press, Publishers, N.Y. 1968.

possesses the character of "aiming at" which demands to be actualised or fulfilled.

This basic distinction which is made in the static analysis is found in Ideas I where a developed and more deeper analysis of intentionality has been given. Here the "reelle components" are of two-fold ; hyle and noesis. And the intentional correlate is called the noema. The peculiar nature of intentionality has been indicated in the expression : "Consciousness is the consciousness of something". In Husserl's own words : "we understand under Intentionality the unique peculiarity of experience "to be the consciousness of something".<sup>1</sup>

The pure consciousness, which has been stripped of all contingent and accidental characteristics, can be understood only in terms of acts which are referential or intentional or directional in character. The act of consciousness is finally termed in Ideas I as "noetic act" or "noesis". The word "act", in this context, is not to be understood as it is used in ordinary language where it is meant as activity or process.

For "act" in a general sense involves the concept of space and time. Again, it should not be confused with the psychological act which occurs in time, nor is it to be understood in an ontological sense. On the contrary, "act" for Husserl, is a conscious act which cannot be transcendent to

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1 Husserl, E., Ideas I, op.cit., p.242.

consciousness and thus involves no spatio-temporal consideration. Hence "act" in Husserlian sense, means fact-neutral act, that is to say, such act unlike act in general sense, makes no reference to physical or mental object.

However, noesis or noetic act is not bare consciousness but having directedness of its own to something - be it a percept or concept or a value and so on. The functional character of consciousness lies in its being referred to an object.

Another "reelle component" of the intentional experience is "hyle". Husserl is reluctant to confuse it with "noetic act" itself. Because, the latter is characterised as possessed of directedness, whereas the former is not. As Husserl puts it : "it is easily seen that not every real phase of the concrete unity of an intentional experience has itself the basic character of intentionality, the property of being a "consciousness of something". This is the case, for instance, with all sensory data, which play so great a part in the perceptive intentions of things".<sup>1</sup> Husserl gives the following example - in perceiving a piece of white paper, the glance of consciousness is directed towards the paper's quality of "whiteness" where lies the sensory datum "whiteness". As the "whiteness" is the essential component of perception, and hence it is the bearer of an intentionality, but it is itself not a consciousness of something. Husserl

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1 Ibid., p.120.

very cautiously distinguishes his concept of sensory element, namely, hyle from that of empiricists' by saying that his concept of sensation unlike that of the latter's is not formed out of the sensory data, that is to say, consciousness is not the consciousness of the hyletic data. Hyletic data is material component of intentional experience. In the words of A. Lingis : "the sensations, the hyletic data are mental material".<sup>1</sup> The intentional flash of consciousness comes into contact with the transcendent things only by virtue of it or rather only through it. But it is to be noted here that consciousness does not actively produce it or receive it passively from outside. Rather, it remains permanently in consciousness as the component having no referential character.

Let us now turn to "intentional correlate" i.e. the element "of something". It is said to be a crucial concept which makes it possible for us to understand the intricate nature of intentionality. Husserl's technical term for it is "noema" or "noematic content". There is a controversy among the interpreters of Husserl about the nature of noema. We shall mention some of the general characteristics of noema.

Noema is said to be the sense of conscious acts. It belongs to the sphere of transcendental subjectivity as a sinn. It is "irreal" or ideal entity for having its atemporal character. Noema is independent of any concrete act by virtue of which it

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1 Lingis, A., "Intentionality and Corporeity", Tymieniecka (ed.) Analecta Husserliana, Vol. I, D. Reidel Publishing Co., Dordrecht, 1971.

is actualised. A noema is the immediate object of perceiving, judging etc. The object of perception is object itself and the noema is the appearance of this object from one side or in one aspect. The noema is not itself the object toward which the act of consciousness is directed. Rather noema is "the object as it is intended" as distinct from the object which is intended. It is the noema by virtue of which the intentionality of consciousness is directed towards its object. Noema is said to have two components : (1) One that which is common to all acts having the same object and (2) another that is different in acts with differentthetic characters, such as, perceiving, remembering etc. According to Husserl, a simple perception has its noema, that is, "perceived as such". Similarly, in an act of judging, the noema "judged as such". In contrast to noesis, the noema is "irreal", because it remains over and above the notion of temporality and particularity.

Let us now focus our attention on an important aspect of intentionality thesis, namely, "the noetic-noematic correlation". Husserl very precisely presents this correlation in a single sentence in his book Ideas : "No noetic phase without a noematic phase that belongs specifically to it".<sup>1</sup> We shall now explain this significant correlation theory with the help of an illustration.

Suppose that Mr. X is perceiving a book on his table.

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1 Husserl, E., Ideas, op.cit., p.271.

For the first time he perceives the book from one standpoint; there he performs one perceptual act. This particular perceptual act has its noema i.e., the perceived as such. Again, Mr. X performs another perceptual act to perceive the same book from another perspective. His second perception also has its perceptual noema.

In this way, he may perceive the intended object from different perspectives and obviously, there must be different noemata corresponding to each perceptual act. In each perspectival perception, Mr. X may perceive the colour, shape or length etc. Thus it is clear that corresponding to multiple perceptual acts, there may be multiple noemata. But the intended transcendent object remains the same.

Again, when Mr. X perceives the same book from the same perspective, over and over again, then he performs different acts. This performance of perceptual act from one level, unlike the former case, has the same noema. Thus different acts performed at different points of time from the same perspective have the same noema.

In short, (1) the acts performed from different perspectives have their corresponding different noema. (2) Different acts performed from one perspective may have the same noema, (3) Multiple noemata have the same intending referent object, that is to say, noemata has its directedness towards the same transcendent object, it is noematic intentionality, (4) "Each act-phase has its noematic phase".

Now we shall understand these four-fold relationships more vividly: For Firstly, this correlation between noesis and noema should not be identified with the unity of intended object i.e., noema and the "constituting formation of consciousness". In the words of Husserl: "that the parallelism between the unity of the noematically "intended" object, of the object we have in mind should not be confused with the parallelism between noema and noema".<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the noetic-noematic correlation at one level is one-to-one but in another level many one. Thirdly, each noema may be said to have multiple perceptual acts which involves temporality and particularity, because the acts, as we have pointed out earlier, are performed in different points of time, and they are countable, but the noema remains over and above the temporality. Fourthly, when different acts are performed from one single perspective, then noema may be said to be an identity of different acts, and again different noemata have their identity in their same intending transcendent object. Thus, noema may be said to function as a mediator between the noetic act, on the one hand and the intentional transcendent object, on the other.

#### IV. The Concept of Ego.

The pure consciousness survives the phenomenological reduction and finally remains as "the phenomenological residuum".

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1 Ibid., p.290.

Pure consciousness, according to Husserl, consists of the ego, conscious acts and intentional objects. Husserl characterises the structure of consciousness, in other words, by tripartite formula : Ego - Cogito-Cogitatum.

His conception of the Ego undergoes a long development. Husserl's conception of the Ego takes its departure from ego of mundane level i.e. the psycho-physical ego which is a "thing-like object". Then he reaches a second Ego by means of a reduction which is not yet a transcendental reduction. He reaches it by cutting out the "ego-body" from the empirical ego. It is nothing but an empirical ego's stream of experience and thus it is a product of naturalistic attitude. In the second edition of Logical Investigations, Husserl first alludes to the concept of pure Ego. And he develops this notion in his Ideas I and Ideas II. In Ideas I, he introduces it not as the complex of real conscious acts, but as what he calls "ego-subject".

We may note here that Husserl seems to have distinguished pure Ego from what he calls transcendental Ego. He introduces the concept of transcendental Ego in his later writings. However the distinction lies in the fact that transcendental Ego, unlike the pure Ego, does have content and "internal features" of its own.<sup>1</sup> In Cartesian Meditations, Husserl goes forward and characterises transcendental Ego as concrete Ego which he calls in Leibnizian term a "monad".

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1 Husserl, E., Cartesian Meditations, op.cit., pp.73, 101.

Husserl introduces the concept of pure Ego as "Ego-subject" in his Ideas I. Pure Ego is "pure subjectivity" having no spatio-temporal existence. It can be grasped, unlike that of psychological ego, only under the attitude of reduction. It is the subject of all acts and not itself an experience or process. It is "the active and affective subject of consciousness, lives in all processes of consciousness and is related, through them, to all object-poles".<sup>1</sup>

The pure Ego is the originating point of all acts or cogito, which is understood in non-natural sense, since the operation of reduction leaves the pure Ego as "pure". These acts with their proper essences remain permanently and necessary related to the pure Ego as their pure subject and as their source. Each act of the Ego goes out from it and actually lives in it. It has the traits of directedness. It directs itself at something. "The "being directed towards" "the being busied with", "adopting an attitude", "undergoing or suffering from", has this of necessity wrapped in its very essence that it is just something "from the Ego"; and this Ego is the pure Ego, and no reduction can get any grip on it".<sup>2</sup>

The pure consciousness is said to be composed of a series of actual and potential acts. Actual acts are those

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1 Ibid., p.66.

2 Husserl, E., Ideas I, op.cit., p.233.

which receives directedness from the Ego towards the object. The Ego lives in them actually. But the potential acts are also acts of the pure Ego, though they are deprived of Ego's attention. The Ego lives in them potentially or ideally. These potential acts in which the Ego participates ideally constitute the field of Ego's freedom.<sup>1</sup> Hence the pure Ego is absolutely necessary for acts-actual or potential. But the Ego does not require the acts for its own being.

Now it seems that the pure Ego belongs to every experience. The intention ray passes through every actual act and towards the object. The glancing ray changes with the each act of the Ego; it arises and fades away with each act. The ray of directedness is part and parcel of the pure Ego. But the Ego remains the same and identical. Every cogitatio can change and may be subject to doubt, but the pure Ego is necessarily there in principle. It remains self-identical over and against the stream of multiple acts. It cannot, therefore, be counted as the inherent part or phase of the experiences themselves.<sup>2</sup> In this context, Husserl ascribes a kind of transcendence - in his language - "a non-constitutive transcendence - transcendence in immanence by considering the Ego's position in relation to the acts.

All experiences belong to the pure Ego and the pure Ego lives in each experiential process or act. But how the identity

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1 Ibid., p.233.

2 Ibid., p.172.

of the pure Ego can be experienced? Husserl's reply is this that it can be experienced "through the acts of experiencing as reflected on" and similarly, we know the necessary relationship of the stream of experience to the pure Ego. Husserl also points out that all conscious acts belong to one single stream of experience, namely, to my stream of experience. Husserl expresses this point in Kantian term: "The 'I think' must be able to accompany all my presentations."<sup>1</sup>

According to Husserl, the pure Ego cannot be object of inquiry or study. Because, apart from its "ways of being related", there is nothing to describe. Apart from its "ways of behaving", it is empty of essential content that can be unravelled or described. This seems to imply that the Ego, when living in the experiential acts, can only be open to description.

During the Ego's living actually in a cogitation act, it distinctly and manifestly exhibits a peculiar characteristic of consciousness, namely, intentionality. This means that the consciousness is always consciousness of something. Consciousness is always intentional in character. This is Ego's manner of being-directed-to things. Here Husserl distinguishes the pure Ego living in experiencing process, the proper act and the content of experience. Husserl technically called latter two aspects "noesis" and "noema". The directedness towards something

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1 Ibid., p.173.

is in harmony with the act involved, perceptive in perception, fanciful in fancy and so forth. Thus, the directedness is not the proper act and the "object" towards which the intentionality is directed is not necessarily an apprehended object. It is the object intended by the pure Ego.<sup>1</sup>

Pure Ego is positional or thetic in character. When the Ego lives in the act actually or potentially, it intends "something". To be "busied with" something on the part of the Ego makes it possible to thematise all kinds of "theses". This "something" becomes "objectivated". Here "thesis" includes doxic theses, volitional theses etc.

However, in Ideas II, the Ego is said to have been described as polarised, it is said to be the individual ego-pole of conscious acts having possessed of the form cogito.

In Cartesian Meditation, Husserl states that the being of the pure Ego and its cogitationes is antecedent to the natural being of the world. "It continually presupposes the realm of transcendental being".<sup>2</sup> To say that Ego is transcendental is to say that it is presupposed by the sense and being of the world. The "Objective" world which exists and will exist for me, with all its objects, derives its sense from me as the transcendental Ego. Thus, the transcendental Ego is not an item of the world we live in.

1 Ibid., p.121.

2 Husserl, E., Cartesian Meditations, op.cit., p.21.

According to Husserl, transcendental ego is what it is solely in relation to intentional objectivities. These objectivities are of two kinds : (i) objects within the ego's own adequately verifiable sphere of immanent time and (ii) world-objects which can be existent only in inadequate and presumptive external experience. Thus, it is the essential property of intentionality which are going on within it.

Further, transcendental ego exists for itself in continuous evidence. The ego is understood to be as the ego's own flowing life — as the universe of actual and possible subjective processes. This flowing life is inseparable from the ego itself. This implies not only that ego constantly constitutes itself as existing, but also that the ego is constituted by its own flowing life. The ego not only grasps itself as a flowing life, but also as "I" who lives through this or that cogito as the same 'I'. The ego polarises the multiplicity of actual and possible consciousness toward identical objects. There is a second polarisation where the ego polarises all the individual multiplicities of the cogitationes collectively as belonging to one and the same identical ego — as the same undergoing subject of consciousness.

Husserl points out here that this active subject of consciousness is not to be taken as an empty pole of identity. But according to the law of transcendental genesis, it exhibits throughout an abiding style or property — "a personal character"

with its acts originating from it and having a new objective sense. Thus the ego manifests itself as the only decision-maker and becomes the substrate of habitualities. "Habitualities" indicates a kind of inclination from being to having, from me to mine. It means a kind of content or internal features and does not mean any real psychological dispositions. The habitualities emerge from the self-constitution of the ego in inner time. The ego can recognise itself while living in the acts as the same identical ego.

Husserl now distinguishes this ego as the identical pole of subjective processes and as the substrate of habitualities from the ego grasped in its full concreteness. "The Ego can be concrete only in the flowing mutiformity of his intentional life, along with the objects meant - and in some cases constituted as existent for him - in that life."<sup>1</sup> This concrete ego is called "monad" in Leibnizian term. This monadic ego embraces everything admitted by phenomenology without exception. Obviously, it includes the whole conscious life - actual or possible. It is said to be the universe of all sense and therefore, includes all essences along with hyletic data and noema. Phenomenological method is meant for uncovering the all-embracing *eidos* ego or transcendental subjectivity which contains all apriori principles and which constitutes within itself everything that exists for the pure or transcendental ego as sense.

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1 Husserl, E., Cartesian Meditation, op.cit., p.68.

## V. Transcendental Subjectivity

The outcome of the operation of phenomenological reduction is two-fold : (i) it leads to the disclosure of a self-contained, absolute and apodictic region which bears its justification within itself. It needs nothing transcendent to have a foundation for itself. Rather, it founds everything. This region is what Husserl calls transcendental subjectivity. (ii) Another aspect of the outcome of the execution of phenomenological reduction is the "giving of sense" to everything which is transcendent to pure subjectivity. It is the pure subjectivity which gives sense to the entire world of things and beings. The giving of sense is what constitutes the central theme of phenomenological "constitution".

Let us elucidate the concept of transcendental subjectivity which may be said to be the basis of phenomenological method and phenomenology in general. For, it is the transcendental subjectivity which carries out the function of "sense-giving" through constitution. According to Spiegelberg, the discovery of transcendental subjectivity is "the wonder of all wonders" for Husserl's phenomenology. Husserl, like Descartes, seeks to have certainty in philosophy. He is in constant search for a apodictic field of certainty. And in course of search, Husserl discovers transcendental subjectivity as an apodictic source of certainty. It is the subjective principle of consciousness which is aware of its own being as well as of other beings. In his

Encyclopaedia Britannica article entitled "Phenomenology", Husserl describes transcendental subjectivity as follows :

"The psychic subjectivity, the concretely grasped "I" and "we" of ordinary conversation, is experienced in its pure psychic ownness through the method of phenomenological-psychological reduction. Modified into eidetic form, it provides the ground for pure phenomenological psychology. Transcendental subjectivity, which is inquired into in the transcendental problem, and which subjectivity is presupposed in it as an existing basis, is one other than again "I myself" and "we ourselves"; not, however, as found in the natural attitude of everything or of positive science; i.e., apperceived as components of the objectively present world before us, but rather as subjects of conscious life, in which this world and all that is present - for "us" - "makes" itself through certain perceptions".<sup>1</sup>

In the above passage, Husserl describes how a psychic subjectivity is transformed into transcendental subjectivity. The psychic subjectivity is a concretely grasped human ego having its own psychical sphere and who is the knower and giver of sense of all that is presented to sense-perception. The psychic subjectivity can be modified through the method of reduction where it remains "I" or "we" but not in the natural-psychical sense. After the operation of phenomenological-eidetic reduction,

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1 Husserl, E., "Phenomenology" Encyclopaedia Britannica, article (1927), op.cit., p.

all beliefs about the existence of transcendent world and all references to individuals and particulars are dropped. In order to reach the transcendental subjectivity, we require further reduction, namely, transcendental reduction through the application of which "I" or "we" no longer remains the part of mundane world. The worldly things and beings including phenomenologist's own ego are transformed into pure consciousness. Hence, Husserl by the foregoing discussion seeks to clarify the point that we are not dual beings - psychological and phenomenological/transcendental. Rather, the psychological subjectivity is reduced into transcendental one through the operation of the method of reductions.

The transcendental subjectivity, as it has been discovered after having freed itself from the bondage of experiences based on natural standpoint, is called by Husserl neither real nor unreal, but "irreal". The psychic subjectivity is real, in the sense that it has natural-psychical existence. To avoid the confusion, Husserl uses the term "irreal" to designate the ontological status of transcendental subjectivity. This "irreal" subjectivity constitutes all reality within itself.

Transcendental subjectivity is "absolute". It is absolute in the sense that it is "given" fully, apodictically and adequately. It is a self-sufficient and self-contained region needing nothing for its foundation and justification. As Husserl says : "Transcendental subjectivity alone exists

in itself and for itself".<sup>1</sup> Everything needs transcendental subjectivity for its foundation and justification. "Every existant is relative to transcendental subjectivity"<sup>2</sup> to have its sense within it. It is to be noted here that by saying that transcendental subjectivity is absolute, Husserl does not mean any metaphysical or psychological entity.

According to Husserl, transcendental subjectivity is the basis of all conscious acts which are of intentional character. Every existent is constituted in transcendental subjectivity through intentional acts. Here "act", as we have already pointed out, does not mean the act in ordinary sense where it involves the concept of space and time. These are acts of pure consciousness having no spatio-temporal reference.

For Husserl, transcendental subjectivity is a piece of self-explication which reveals the original self-evident truths. The "Phenomenological self-explication" that does on within the ego, explicate ego's all constitutings and all objectivities as they exist for him. And thus all worldly objectivities including my and other ego finds their place in the universe of pure possibilities.

In this context, Husserl says : "The whole of phenomenology is nothing more than scientific self-examination on the part of

1 Husserl, E., Formal and Transcendental Logic, p.273.  
Translated by Dorion Cairns, Martinus Nijhoff,  
The Hague, 1978.

2 Ibid., p.273.

transcendental subjectivity, an examination that at first proceeds straight-forwardly and therefore, with a certain naïvete of its own, but later becomes critically intent on its own logos, it is a self-examination that goes on from the fact to the essential necessities".<sup>1</sup> It is a systematically progressing self-examination, having its starting-point from transcendental reductions, which leads ultimately to original self-evident essences. The existent world of things and beings gets its meaning through such self-examination on the part of transcendental subjectivity. Even my ego and other egos are explicated within the pure field of subjectivity. Husserl has precisely stated the matter in the following words : "First, a self-explication in the pregnant sense showing systematically how the ego constitutes himself, in respect of his own proper essence, as existent in himself and for himself; then secondly, a self-explication in the broadened sense, which goes from there to show how, by virtue of this proper essence, the ego likewise constitutes in himself something "other".<sup>2</sup>

The self-examination on the part of transcendental subjectivity means the essential ability of it to reflect on itself. It is the ability to make itself thematic and thereby to produce judgements relating to itself. The ability of transcendental subjectivity to reflect on itself is a process

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1 Ibid., p.273.

2 Husserl, E., Cartesian Meditation, op.cit., p.85.

of uncovering itself which goes back to the original ego. In other words, this is a process of self-explication through which it finds "objective" truth and being as constituted within itself. Here something "objective" means the synthetic unity of actual and potential intentionality which belongs to the proper essence of transcendental subjectivity.<sup>1</sup>

Now, the capacity to reflect on itself by transcendental subjectivity is quite different from that of psychological reflection which moves within the field of natural-psychological reality and which is performed by psychological subjectivity. The self-reflection of transcendental subjectivity belongs to transcendental level which goes on by putting the mundane level of experience "out of play". The transcendental reflection thematises the world of things and beings through the method of reduction. Transcendental self-reflection lays bare the foundation of our mundane experience.

Transcendental subjectivity, according to Husserl, is "the universe of all sense" - actual or possible. As Husserl says : "Every imaginable sense, every imaginable being, whether the latter is called immanent or transcendent, falls within the domain of transcendental subjectivity, as the subjectivity that constitutes sense and being".<sup>2</sup> In the above passage, Husserl points out that everything gets its sense within the domain of

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1 Husserl, E., Formal and Transcendental Logic, op.cit., p.274.

2 Husserl, E., Cartesian Meditations, op.cit., p.84.

transcendental subjectivity. Transcendental subjectivity constitutes within itself the sense of everything by radical reflection. It is not only the basis of meaning-conferring acts but also that it manifests itself in the acts of constitution and gives meaning to all objects - actual or possible. Outside it lies what is precisely non-sense. But the nonsensicalness has its own mode of sense which lies within the sphere of possible insight. The world of things and beings including the community of egos receives its meaning in the life of transcendental subjectivity.<sup>1</sup>

Negatively, we can characterise transcendental subjectivity as "unnatural" and "unworldly". It is unnatural in the sense that it can be discovered by taking "unnatural" attitude and it is unworldly because it is not the object of the natural world. It is not a logical possibility; nor is it an abstraction. It is concrete in the sense that it is constantly unveiling itself through self-explication to have sense of what is given to it.

Characterising the transcendental subjectivity in this manner, Husserl aims at establishing an "all-embracing science of transcendental subjectivity" within which all particular sciences are members.

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1 Ibid., p.84.

## VI. Phenomenological Constitution

Having arrived at a sphere of apodictic, adequate "givenness", namely, transcendental subjectivity, Husserl discovers it as the source of all original formation of sense. It is the transcendental subjectivity which gives sense to all things and beings of the transcendent world when they are essentially "given" to it and this becomes possible through constitution. To mean the way in which transcendental subjectivity carries out its function of "sense-giving", Husserl uses the term "constitution".

After the operation of reduction, "we have literally lost nothing but have won the whole of Absolute Being, which, properly understood, conceals in itself all transcendences, "constituting" them within itself".<sup>1</sup> This means that transcendent objects are retained in subjectivity even after the reduction, but of course not as it is, but as "constituted". Through the operation of reduction, it is possible to reduce reality to a pure phenomenon, to something entire "constituted".

Husserl sets up a relationship between the apodictic sphere, viz. transcendental subjectivity and transcendent sphere which is to be understood in phenomenological terms. The transcendental subjectivity and transcendent reality are entirely

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1 Husserl, E., Ideas, op.cit., pp.154-55.

different types of being. This difference lies in the fact that the transcendental subjectivity is "abyss" of sense but the transcendent reality is not. Husserl also points out that consciousness can be conceived apart from reality and not vice versa. The reality is relative to consciousness which itself is absolute in nature. Transcendental consciousness is independent of the real world; but the real world is not.

The transcendent reality is dependent on consciousness/subjectivity to have a sense. The transcendent world in itself does not have sense but it can have sense, if there exists a consciousness. Consciousness is the only "absolute existent" to which the natural things and beings are relative in order to have their sense. It is only the consciousness which can give sense to all things and beings. Obviously, the transcendent objects require consciousness which is the source of all senses, not in order to have their existence, but in order to have their sense. To say more specifically and explicitly, transcendental subjectivity has the ability to constitute its own ego's sense as well as the sense of all other objects. But the transcendental subjectivity needs nothing to itself be meaningful and to make other things and beings to be meaningful. In a word, the natural reality requires transcendental subjectivity to be meaningful and not vice-versa.

We have already pointed out that it is the only absolute

existent, because it is self-contained and self-sufficient apodictic region and it needs nothing to have its own "existence". But in respect of constitution, transcendental subjectivity is absolute in a different sense, "Here it is absolute, because it does not need any other reality to have a sense".<sup>1</sup>

In saying that subjectivity gives sense to all that is transcendent, we must not ignore transcendence. If we stress only subjectivity, then it would mean that subjectivity "creates" or "produces" transcendent reality out of itself. On the contrary, if we emphasize on the transcendent reality, then subjectivity can be interpreted as unnecessary. There is a controversy among the interpreters of Husserl centering round the issue whether constitution means "production"/"creation" or not. However, without having involved ourselves into controversy, we would favour the view that constitution does not mean production or creation of sense, but simply the giving of sense to the natural beings and things. This means that the subjectivity "gives the world its sense by making it possible for this sense to come about".<sup>2</sup> Indeed such is the view held by Robert Sokolowski and Prof. R.A.Mall. Prof. Mall is of the opinion<sup>3</sup>

1 Sokolowski, R., The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution, p.196.

Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1964.

2 Ibid., p.197.

3 Mall, R.A., Experience and Reason, p.50.  
Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1973.

that the meaning of constitution is not production or creation, but the elucidation of transcendent reality and other egos have for us. The constitution consists in meaning-giving activity of subjectivity. It is an ultimate method of showing how we come to the sense of things and beings of the world.

It must also be pointed out that for Husserl, no ready-made sense is there in the pure field of transcendental subjectivity. The sense of things and beings of the world comes about in and through the intentional acts. This refers to the noetic-noematic correlation in which lies the centrality of the phenomenological constitution. Here the concept of constitution acquires fuller and deeper meaning. Transcendental subjectivity is the performer of all intentional acts and thereby it constitutes the transcendent reality within itself as sense. Everything is "given" to it in order to have sense as "constituted". "In fact, there is no givenness which, for Husserl, does refer to us back to antecedents figuring in complexes of noetic-noematic constitution".<sup>1</sup>

Having shown how all the regions of human experience is "clarified" within the field of transcendental subjectivity as the correlate through description of their constitution, Husserl now turns to show how the other ego is constituted in order to

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1 Hartmann, K., "Self-Evidence" Studies in Foundational Philosophy, p.45. Elementa series, Editions Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1988.

dispel the charge of solipsism against phenomenology. In Cartesian Meditation, Husserl shows how the transcendental ego constitutes other egos as equal partners in an intersubjective community which in turn forms the foundation for the "objective" i.e., intersubjective world. According to Husserl, our knowledge of others is to some extent indirect. The other is given us not in direct presentation, but only by way of appresentation — a process which acquaints us with aspects of an object that are not directly presented. The body of the other is really present to me and it belongs to the original sphere of my own experiences of my body. When we perceive a body other than my own as "there", rather than my own as "here" we apperceive it at once as the body of an alter ego by way of an assimilative analogy within my own ego. This, however, is not an inference by analogy. In this process, the analogising ego and the analogised alter ego are "paired". Thus the other ego, while not accessible as directly as its body, can be understood as a modification of my own pure ego by which we put ourselves into his body as if I am in his place. It is the process which makes us conscious of such an identity. Thus Husserl insists that the other egos thus constituted are themselves transcendental and that these egos form a community of "monads".

When Husserl says that the transcendent world is constituted within the field of subjectivity, this does not mean that the latter constitutes the former that exist "for us"

after Husserl's discovery of subjectivity's quality of constitution. The subjectivity possesses the quality of constitution inherently. What Husserl is showing is that the transcendent things and beings receives their sense from no other source than subjectivity.

Another misunderstanding may arise in this connection. Husserl's statement that subjectivity constitutes reality does not mean the constitution of concept or mere appearance. Transcendental subjectivity constitutes reality and not the appearance of reality as Kant conceives. For Husserl, reality is "given" to subjectivity as "phenomenon" which means "absolute showing". It is through intentional constitution that transcendent reality gets access to pure consciousness.

It is quite understandable from the spirit of phenomenology that constitution does not mean the creation of any metaphysical entity by subjectivity nor does it mean the production of any psychological reality. Constitution does not mean any psychological act.

We have already pointed out that the constitution implies a relationship between subjectivity and the world of objects. The former is said to be the self-contained and self-sufficient realm which means that the world of objects requires consciousness in order to be "real". The word "real" does not mean to be

existent, because the transcendent reality is already existent. Here "real" means to be meaningful. In the words of Prof. Mall : "To be is to be meaningful".<sup>1</sup>

According to Husserl, a sense is constituted in two related stages,<sup>2</sup> namely, (i) in the pre-predicative constitution or passive genesis, (ii) in the predicative constitution or active genesis. Passive genesis takes place as part of our conscious life, and active genesis results in ideal objects which "break off" from this life and transcend it and its temporality.

The philosophy of constitution is the culminating stage of transcendental phenomenology when the latter is consistently and systematically carried ahead. It shows how the world before us "comes to be" as meaningful to us. The task of constitution is to elucidate the sense which the things and beings of the world possess. The philosophy of constitution is said to be a process which goes on within the field of pure subjectivity and which has no beginning and end. It is a dynamic process through which we "achieve" gradually the meaning of transcendence. In short, to exist phenomenologically is meant to be real, and to be real is meant to be constituted and have a sense.

At this stage, some reflections on the foregoing account and analysis are called for. The Phenomenological method has

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1 Mall, R.A., Experience and Reason, op.cit., p.52.

2 Husserl, E., Cartesian Meditations, op.cit., p.77.

been introduced and developed by Husserl in order to put forward a programme for radical reform in philosophy. It aims at establishing philosophy as a rigorous and strict science which should rest on absolutely certain principles and as such be universally valid and evident. In order to meet the requirement of philosophy as a rigorous science, Husserl devises a radical method for philosophical investigation which has the scientific rigor of its own. In the following, we shall try to give a brief survey of phenomenological method as a series of steps on the basis of foregoing discussion.

One of the basic but teachable part of phenomenological method is this, that philosophy must be free from presuppositions or preconceptions. The phrase "freedom from presuppositions" stands for the attempt to eliminate those presuppositions that have not been thoroughly examined. But this does not mean the emancipation from all kinds of presuppositions and consequently to start philosophizing from absolutely zero. This principle prescribes us to eliminate only the unclarified, unverified and unverifiable presuppositions that are involved, so that nothing dogmatic can remain hidden which may vitiate the whole philosophical endeavour that is to be undertaken subsequently.

In order to eliminate all our naive beliefs and prejudices in the existence of the natural world and metaphysical entity, Husserl introduces the technique of phenomenological reduction. It is described as an philosophical attitude, the

operation of which makes us free from our usual preoccupation with beliefs and theories of different kinds, such as, metaphysical, natural-scientific and psychological and facilitates to concentrate on essential content of "what" of the phenomena. Further, this operation helps a philosopher to return to the "things themselves" -- the original data of experience. It facilitates also to consider all kinds of data-- real, unreal or doubtful as having equal rights in philosophical sphere.

Having suspended all kinds of naive beliefs, a philosopher concentrates and starts investigation into particular phenomena within the realm of pure consciousness. First, one had to concentrate on the object intuited. This operation consists in keeping the "eyes open", "looking and listening" - to use the metaphorical phrases. One grasps the uniqueness of the specific phenomena by relating it to other phenomena. Then he analyses the phenomena themselves to trace the elements and structures of them. But the phenomenological analysis is different from the analysis of analytic school in that the latter's analysis consists of the analysis of certain linguistic expressions which refer the phenomena and not the analysis of the phenomena themselves.

It must be noted here that "phenomena" in phenomenology does not mean subjective phenomena. For Husserl's concept of subjectivity involves the attempt to discover the essential phenomena i.e., the objective essences and does not involve

subjective phenomena i.e. one's private and personal phenomena. Having explored the phenomena intuitably and analytically, one describes what is "given" to consciousness as pure phenomena - as "the original givenness".

An important phenomenological procedure is eidetic intuition. Husserl calls phenomenology an eidetic science which deals with essences (eidos). But this does not in any way mean that phenomenological method cannot be applied to empirical sphere. By virtue of reduction, real objects of the world is given as essential phenomena. However, eidetic intuition means the intuition of essences or Eide. As the essences are not the natural objects, they do not exist like individual objects. They are neither spatial nor temporal, so that they neither emerge nor disappear. "The general essence or eidos has no reality superior to particular entities. The essences are ideal beings. The general essences, as ideal mode of being, is constituted by transcendental subjectivity within itself. As the essences are ideal beings, they can only be known by special kind of intuition. In order to apprehend the essences, we need to look at particulars as instance which stand for the essences. We can take the red of an individual rose and we can see it as an instance of a certain shade of red, in general. Then we can proceed to see it as exemplifying redness. Thus the eidetic intuition is one of the devices of phenomenological method.

Husserl introduces an important phenomenological technique, namely, "free imaginative variation". Let us briefly say something about this technique with the help of an illustration. Remaining in the natural attitude, suppose that I perceive a duster on the table as real. In the phenomenologically reduced sphere, phenomenon "duster" retains the same qualities as an intentional object of my act of perceiving. If I am interested in finding out the qualities that are common to all dusters, I cannot use here the commonly accepted method of induction as it presupposes many things e.g., that there exists similar things. However, now I see before me only a single duster as a transcendent object. Now I can freely vary the object "duster" in my fancy in that I transform its colour, shape, size etc. Thus I am free to imagine an infinite number of dusters. In this process of variation, I find common qualities of infinite number of dusters imagined and they remain untouched. The common qualities that we find in infinite number of imagined dusters are called eidos or essences. This eidetic imaginative variation may be used to find out the general essence of anything.

The culminating stage of phenomenological method is the process of constitution. The operation of reduction opens up a self-contained region, an apodictic region which contain its justification within itself. It is transcendental subjectivity. Every transcendent is given to it essentially and adequately.

Now transcendental subjectivity constitutes the sense of given objects within itself. The given objects establish themselves and take shape within transcendental subjectivity. It is described as a process through which the "original givenness" gets constituted within the immanent sphere of transcendental consciousness. Thus the process of constitution is a method for the formation of sense.

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