

P r e f a c e

My interest in Phenomenology goes back to my M.A. days when I carried out a dissertation work on Husserlian phenomenology under the present supervisor. This was perhaps fortuitous in some way as I felt impelled to read on more phenomenological literature which created a disquiet in my mind for not being able to understand many of the basic issues. One such was connected with values, or more specifically, moral values as I tried to figure out how to grapple with the matter from the phenomenological point of view. The present project is a logical sequence to this quest. This is, however, not to say that I have in any way come to a clear solution. The present work, therefore, lays no claim to finality, though a modest attempt has been made to tie up certain reflections and insights as I gathered them from my readings into the works of Scheler, Hartmann and indeed, Husserl. My initial inspiration came when my teacher and the present supervisor drew my attention to the phenomenological significance of Moore's critique of naturalism. My conviction about it grew when I had occasion to discuss the matter with Professor R.A.Mall (Germany). It was again a stroke of luck which enabled my visit to Germany in connection with my research under the kind auspicious of German Academic Exchange Service, Bonn. The vast body of phenomenological literature to which I desperately needed access could materialise

only for my visit to two of the most ancient Universities of Europe - the University of Tuebingen and the University of Freiburg. To any student of phenomenology, it was nothing short of a pilgrimage. The phenomenological spirit lay hold of me as I looked through the old but hallowed manuscripts and other published writings in the libraries and archives of two Universities. This is, however, not to belittle the significance of my meeting with such august authorities of phenomenology as Professor Klaus Hartmann, Professor R.A. Mall, Dr. Adelgundis - the last mentioned being a direct student of Husserl. I would always cherish memories of my visit to Tuebingen University where Professor Klaus Hartmann and his colleagues were only too keen to see that I would pursue my task in an intellectually stimulating atmosphere. I am only sad that by that time the project could be completed the benign presence of Prof. Hartmann was around us, ^{but unfortunately,} he died of cancer about three years ago.

The present project was taken up with a quest for a phenomenological understanding of moral values. For this purpose, the writings and works that we have referred to mainly are those of Husserl, Scheler and Hartmann, though in keeping with the phenomenological spirit, none of them is treated here as a "historical" thinker. The Chapter on Kant has been attempted more as it helps to understand the viewpoints of Scheler and Hartmann. And the Chapter on Moore is only exploratory in our search for some

useful insights which may have some bearing on our central theme. These Chapters, therefore, are not based on any exegetical exercise. The basic objective is to lay hands on whatever insights one could which would contribute to a phenomenological understanding of values, in general and moral values, in particular. Phenomenology speaks of "pure" experience. So our central question is, can there be a "pure" moral experience? Connected with this are also issues, such as, how are moral values cognised or intuited? Are they absolute? Is our perception or intuition of values relative? In the phenomenological context, in what sense are values given a priori? And, finally, how does validity of values depend on the inter-subjective ground? These questions and other related ones have been considered in the context of phenomenological thinking.

A preface is perhaps the only place in a thesis where one may strike a personal note. So, at the outset, I would like here to express my deep and profound gratitude to my teacher Dr. Ranjan K. Ghosh, Reader, Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal under whom I carried out the present research work. Besides supervising throughout, inspite of his heavy preoccupation during the intervening period for which he was Director, I. C. P. R., he found time to go through my first drafts and discuss specific points. His insightful discussions greatly helped me to delve deep into my chosen field of research.

I feel privileged enough to ^{have} been able to work under him without whose critical but affectionate guidance, this dissertation, I am sure, would not have been possible. However, for remaining all the inadequacies I alone am responsible.

I am naturally extremely grateful to Professor Klaus Hartmann, Philosophisches Seminar, Tuebingen University, Germany with whom I have had the opportunity to discuss several issues that I have dealt with in the present work. I consider myself to be singularly fortunate that I had the occasion to read with him several portions from the phenomenological texts of Husserl.

I gratefully acknowledge the help received from Professor E.H.Cadwallader, Westminster College, Wilmington, U.S.A. who was kind enough to send me a copy of her book as also a number of her published articles addressed to the philosophy of Nicolai Hartmann. I am also grateful to her for the many valuable suggestions I received through my correspondence with her.

I am grateful to Professor R.A.Mall, Bergische University, Germany with whom I discussed some points relating to my project during my visit there. I am also grateful to Professor S.S.Barlingay, Poona University and Professor Kalyan Bagchi, Viswabharati for their insightful suggestion in

connection with the present work. I would also like to record here my gratefulness to Professor Archie J. Bahm, University of New Mexico, U.S.A. who was kind enough to help me by sending some of his published books and articles on ethics.

I am thankful to the authorities of North Bengal University for providing me with Junior Research Fellowship and also to German Academic Exchange Service, Bonn for a scholarship grant under the scheme of Indo-German Cultural Exchange Agreement which made it possible for me to visit Germany in connection with my Ph.D. work for 3 months in 1990.

I am indebted to the following institutions :

(a) North Bengal University Library, (b) National Library, Calcutta, (c) Indian Council of Philosophical Research Library, Lucknow, (d) Philosophisches Seminar Library and Central Library, Tuebingen University, Germany (e) Husserl Archives, Freiburg University, Germany, (f) Husserl Archive, Köln University, Germany.

I am thankful to the colleagues of Sukanta Mahavidyalaya, Dhupguri, Dist. Jalpaiguri for their active and constructive help and support. My special thanks are due to Prof. N.C. Paul, Principal, Sukanta Mahavidyalaya. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the College authorities which helped me by granting study leave which made my task easier and pleasanter.

I am also thankful to my friends Albert Mollenkopf, Dietmer Kock and Klaus Bort of Tubingen University, Germany with whom I had weekly meetings to discuss Husserlian texts. I greatly benefited from the academic correspondence with them.

I would also take this opportunity to express my grateful thanks to all the teachers in the Department of Philosophy, North Bengal University who were always a source of great encouragement and support in carrying out the present project. I also take this opportunity to express my thanks to my old teacher Prof. Ranjit Kr. Acharjee, Reader in Philosophy, Ramkrishna Mahavidyalaya, Kailashahar, Tripura who has been a source of encouragement and support all along. It was he who during my student days inspired me to take on philosophy.

I am also thankful to Dr.(Mrs.) Pratima Ganguli, Reader, Bhagalpur University, Shri Asraf Noor, Husserl Archive, Freiburg University and to Shri S.Bhavanandan, Lecturer in Philosophy, A.M.Jain College, Madras for various reasons.

Finally, I am also deeply grateful to my wife Rekha for her untiring care, moral support and encouragement which made my task a little easier.

N.B.U.Campus,
20th February, 1995.

Benuial Dhar.
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