# DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

## MASTER OF ARTS-PHILOSOPHY

## SEMESTER –III

# PHENOMENOLOGY

## SOFT-CORE 303

# BLOCK-1

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## FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

# PHENOMENOLOGY

## BLOCK 1



## BLOCK 2

# BLOCK 1: PHENOMENOLOGY

**Introduction to the Block**

Unit 1 deals with Phenomenology: a movement of thought

Unit 2 deals with a radical method of investigation

Unit 3 deals with a presupposition less philosophy

Unit 4 deals with Phenomenology - a rigorous science

Unit 5 deals with Edmund Husserl

Unit 6 deals with Phenomenological reduction and its stages

Unit 7 deals with Phenomenological Reduction and Yogic Meditation: Commonalities and Divergences.

# UNIT 1: PHENOMENOLOGY: A MOVEMENT OF THOUGHT

**STRUCTURE**



## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit is to present the story and method of phenomenology rather elaborately. It is done on purpose, since most of the continental philosophers of contemporary period basically follow Husserl's phenomenological method, although they have deviated considerably from him. Other prominent thinkers of the movement are Martin Heidegger (1889- 1976), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-61) and Emmanuel Levinas (1906-95). In the problems they dealt with, as well as in the theoretical content of their philosophies, these thinkers differed from one another considerably. For Husserl phenomenology was primarily a means for the philosophical clarification of the formal a priori sciences (logic and formal mathematics). Heidegger saw in it the means to overcome the metaphysical tradition of Western philosophy through a 'fundamental ontology;' Sartre saw there a window that opens to existentialism; for

Maurice Merleau-Ponty it offered the means to lay bare the pre-scientific consciousness; and Emmanuel Levinas saw in it the promise of an ethics. Phenomenology is not confined to Husserl's philosophy, nor is it right to say that all of Husserl's philosophy is phenomenology. All the same, the central figure of and the initiator to this movement is none other than Husserl. Hence Husserlian phenomenology serves as the basis and foundation for the contemporary Western philosophy. It will enable the students to handle the other thinkers of contemporary period with facility. After introducing phenomenology in a preliminary manner, we shall make this study in two parts: the first part will focus on the story of phenomenology as developed by Husserl, and the second part, on the phenomenological method. The first part is intended as the foundation for the second part which is more important, and it will focus on second stage of Husserl's thought during which the phenomenological method got developed.

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

A general introduction on phenomenology cannot but be centered on Husserl, as he is the central figure in it. Before we launch ourselves into phenomenology, it is good to have a pre-view of phenomenological method. The term 'phenomenology' reminds us of Kant's distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. Husserl was opposed to this dualism of Kant. He agrees that only phenomenon is given, but in it is given the very essence of that which is. When one has described the phenomena, one has described all that can be described. The problem of reconciling reality and thought about reality is as old as philosophy itself. We meet consciousness as the consciousness of something, and something as the object of consciousness. The history of philosophy is a series of attempts at reconciliation of these two aspects: the subjective, and the objective. The difference in reconciling occurs due to the more or less emphasis on the subjective or the objective. Husserlian phenomenology is an attempt at reconciling them; but he too experienced in himself this difference of emphasis in his reconciling consciousness and reality. Phenomenology is a return to the things themselves, as opposed to mental constructions, illusions etc. The 'thing' is the direct

object of consciousness in its purified form; hence it is never merely arbitrary, being conditioned subjectively. The phenomenologist is convinced that an analysis of the things themselves can be made by a return to the pure consciousness. Phenomenology, thus, is the methodical attempt to reach the phenomenon through an investigation of the pure consciousness, the objective content of which is the phenomenon.

Phenomenology is a 20th century philosophical way of thinking about the nature of reality, which has influenced sociology. The German philosopher Edward Hussral is closely linked with phenomenology. Phenomenology argues that the only "phenomena" that we can be sure of is that we are conscious thinking beings therefore we should study any phenomena around us in terms of the way we consciously experience them.

This examination should be free of pre-conceptions of causal ideas. These ideas influenced sociologists such as Alfred Schutz who thought that sociology should look at the way individual construct the social world. Phenomenology is used in two basic ways in sociology: (1) to theorize about substantive sociological problems, (2) to enhance the adequacy of sociological research methods. There are two expressions of this approach, which are constructivism and ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology integrates the Parsonian concern for social order into phenomenology and examines the means by which action make ordinary life possible.

Ethnomethodology as a sociological perspective was founded by American sociologist Harold Garfinkel is early 1960s. The main ideas behind it are set out in his book Studies in Ethnomethodology. It differs from their sociological perspectives in the way that which all the perspectives pre-suppose that social world is orderly, ethno methodologists start out with the assumption that social order is illusory. For them social order is constructed in the minds of social actors as society confront the individual as a series of sense impressions and

experiences which she or he must somehow organise into a coherent pattern.

However, along with the changes in the broader perspectives in the development studies there can be seen another trend of changes in the approaches. The development approach gradually started to be more specialised and specific. It has become more local and regional in orientation. The early and the modern thinkers of development have been fundamentally associated with theoretical orientation of structuralism but the later development thinking has rejected this view. This approach exhibits more diversities in theoretical orientation.

The earlier groups are concerned with generalised theoretical orientation having world – wide application for development. But the present development thinking does not believe in general application of generalised theories. Now the development approaches are not relevant across the wider regions. This development approaches are related not only to growth but to what kind of growth, not simply to development but what kind of development. This has helped in emergence of approaches in diverse new directions which have come to be known as sustainable development, people- friendly growth, pro-poor growth, etc. Now the development approach is related to groups, actor- oriented approach, and participatory approach.

## 1.2 THE STORY OF PHENOMENOLOGY

It was as a programme of clarifying logic and mathematics through the descriptive-psychological analysis of the acts of consciousness which ‘constitute’ the entities that make up the subject matter of these sciences, that phenomenology had its birth in Edmund Husserl. Many others too belong to this movement with their shared concern with consciousness—a concern that is born out of the belief that consciousness is essentially involved in knowledge, in ways that were not suspected in hitherto philosophies. Different phenomenologists would conceive of the contribution of consciousness in different ways, and would differ in the

degree of that contribution. But all of them are convinced of the contribution of consciousness to the objects known. We are concerned here with Husserl's understanding of phenomenology. Husserl wanted his philosophy to have the scientific rigour and philosophical radicalism. For the modern humans scientific ideal is considered as the highest ideal. According to Husserl, Philosophy, being the greatest of the sciences, should employ the ideal of rigorous science. This does not mean that philosophy has to blindly imitate empirical sciences which deal with objects as facts that are measurable. Philosophy is not factual, but ideal or essential (eidos=essence). Philosophy can be rigorous science, since it is possible to reach truly scientific knowledge of ideal objects, or essences of things. When he speaks of scientific rigor, he had in mind the deductive sciences like mathematics. Science for him is a system of knowledge wherein each step is built upon its precedent in a necessary sequence. Such a rigorous connection requires ultimate clarity in basic insights, and systematic order in building up further on them.

Although philosophy claims to be a rigorous science, it has never been so. It can become a radical science by means of critical reflection and profound methodological investigations. For this, it is necessary to have ultimate clarity and systematic order. Together with the scientific rigor, Husserl craves for philosophical radicalism. It necessitates a return to the roots or foundations of all knowledge. The ultimate foundation of all knowledge is to be found in the things themselves, the original phenomena to which all our ideas refer ultimately. Going deeper into the things, he was convinced that these roots must be sought in the very consciousness of the knowing subject, to whom the phenomena appear. Historians of philosophy distinguish three periods in the development of Husserl's philosophy, and this distinction is based on the varying emphasis he placed on the subject or on the object: the pre-phenomenological, phenomenological and the period of pure phenomenology. The Pre-Phenomenological Period belonged to his philosophical infancy, during which he came to a slightly greater emphasis on the 'objective'. This was occasioned by certain events and persons. A chance-listening to the lectures by Brentano aroused in

Husserl interest in scientific psychology and philosophy. Following Brentano Husserl had given in his Philosophy of Arithmetic a psychological foundation to the concept of number. It developed the idea that the concept of number originated in consciousness as a result of the acts of connecting, collecting and abstracting the 'contents of consciousness.' Thus numbers are entirely of psychical nature.

They have only an intentional being. Gottlob Frege, in his review of this book, criticized it, saying that it was a form of psychologism. Husserl took seriously the critique made by Frege. Hence in his Logical Investigations part I, Husserl refuted psychologism. 'Psychologism' is the view that the theoretical foundation of maths and logic is supplied by psychology, especially by psychology of know1edge. According to this theory, the laws of maths and logic have existence and validity only because they have occurred to some consciousness. In his Formal and Transcendental Logic Husserl gives a still wider meaning to it, i.e., objects of any type are converted into psychological experiences. Thus, realizing his mistake, Husserl came to the conclusion, i.e., the untenability of psychologism. In his critique he shows the absurdity of its consequences, and the prejudices on which it is based. The axioms and principles of maths and logic are true, not because the human thinks of them, but valid in themselves. Besides, if logical laws are dependent on the psycho1ogical characteristics of human thinkers, we make them relative to these thinkers. Psychologism is now seen as a form of skeptical relativism and anthropologism in philosophy. Relativism is self-contradictory, as it denies the possibility of all knowledge, while asserting its own truth. Mathematics is concerned with numbers, and not with the operation of counting them. Two plus two is four, even if I do not know or think about it. The mathematical and logical objects are ideal objects, and are beyond the limitations of time; whereas psychical acts are real and temporal in nature. Ideal objects are what they are independently of our knowledge about them. Thus during the pre-phenomenological period Husserl could not come to a clear philosophical stand; rather he was looking for a place to stand as a

phenomenologist, which he was able find during the phenomenological period.

## 1.3 THE METHOD OF PHENOMENOLOGY

In this section we come to the most important part of phenomenology, namely, the method, which got developed during the second stage of Husserl's thought. It is at this period that Husserl reached a philosophical maturity; and he achieved the reconciliation between the subjective and the objective—the act of consciousness and its objective correlate. He had to look for some reconciliation since the problem posed itself as to how the 'ideal' objects are given to consciousness. He takes up this task in Vol.11 of Logical Investigations. Some thought that it was a lapse into 'psychologism,' rejected in Vol. I. But by making use of the theory of 'intentionality, Husserl has worked out this reconciliation in such a way that it was not a choice of the one at the rejection of the other.

In the previous post we looked at phenomenology and the thinking that motivates it. We saw that it is based on taking a naive, skeptical, beginner's view to asking "why?" and choosing to address the question using only knowledge we can obtain from experience. We also saw that experience is intentional: that it is directed from subject to object and forms an inseparable, arity 3 relation called a phenomenon. Taken together this gave us a feel for the shape of phenomenological philosophy and allowed us to glimpse some of the consequences of taking this view seriously.

We now have the context to begin exploring phenomenology's details, and the first detail to explore is the methods of exploration themselves because phenomenology is highly integrative and our assumptions — that we know the world only through experience and that experience is intentional — determine what sorts of methods we can use. Thus if we are to approach phenomenology we must first gain some familiarity with its practices.

Now if I'm honest there is only really one method of phenomenology — the phenomenological reduction — but that's a bit like telling you that the only method of decision making is Bayes's Theorem: in a sense it's true, but it's not likely to help you understand anything in the same way that telling you that you are already enlightened doesn't make you enlightened. To explain how phenomenologists think, it's more useful to talk about a broad base of specific methods and through them approach the reduction proper. Luckily, there are many methods, and you are almost certainly already familiar with several of them, so let's take a look!

Science

It might seem a little surprising to you that science is a method of phenomenology since, historically, phenomenology emerged in part from Husserl noticing the inadequacy of natural science for addressing conscious experience, and, in the latter-half of the 20th century, phenomenologically inspired thinkers in the post-modern movement sometimes took anti-scientific stances. But Husserl viewed science as part of phenomenology, and some consider phenomenology a science of consciousness, so there's more to the relationship between science and phenomenology than some surface level antagonism.

Like phenomenology, science starts from a place of empiricism — the idea that knowledge is obtained through experience and observation. To the extent that science is systematized empiricism, phenomenology is a science, but "science" usually refers to a more specific practice of the scientific method with certain standards of evidence that phenomenology doesn't always hold itself to. In particular, science considers only phenomena where subjects and intentionality can be ignored because the objects and the experiences of them remain relatively unchanged between subjects. We call such truncated, replicable experiences of objects objective or natural phenomena.

One of the foundational issues of science is to decide exactly what the criteria for objective phenomenon are, but generally objective phenomena are those that describe sufficiently similar experiences of objects no matter who or what the subject is, like the way a beam of light will be experienced as having the same wavelength no matter who sees it or what measures it. By limiting itself to these objective phenomena, science is able to make predictions about the world that it expects to hold for all subjects, which is to say that what is true of a few phenomena will be true of all similar phenomena. This let's us uncover patterns science calls theories that make strong predictions about the world.

As so far described, science is compatible with phenomenology and allows us to make much more confident statements about the world when objective phenomena are available than when they are not. But objective phenomena cannot always be reliably constructed. Because objective phenomena are not actually phenomena but patterns of statistical regularity observed over many phenomena, there is necessarily information lost in the creation of objective phenomena, limiting what can be known through them. This might seem like an obscure, technical issue for philosophers of science, but it has implications for when science, in the sense of understanding the world through the use of objective phenomena, is an appropriate method.

Phenomenology views science as extremely useful but sees it running aground the closer it gets to exploring topics where the intentional nature of experience matters and objective phenomena are less available, such as in the study of consciousness. Thus science is a great method for exploring questions of physics, chemistry, and biology; pretty good for studying economics and archeology; workable in psychology and anthropology; and of limited direct usefulness in philosophy and philology. For those topics where science cannot cover all the epistemology ground, other phenomenological methods are necessary.

An Aside on Scientism, Irrationality, and Their Kin

Now I'd rather not have to write this part but I suspect some readers may be upset at me for presenting the relationship between phenomenology and science as prosaic. The technical issue of determining how much we can figure out with science alone has and does get mixed up with all sorts of discussions about other things, so I think it's worth saying a few words about this to at least acknowledge the issue and direct you to additional reading if this topic is of interest.

Humans are political animals, so when there is disagreement on something it often sparks or gets sucked into a larger battle between groups. One of these battles is along a dimension we might call "rationality" between those who value the modern worldview and those who don't. The details get complicated, but you can basically imagine it as if there were two political parties vying for control of a country, the Pro-Rationality Party and the Anti-Rationality Party, and it's into this milieu that phenomenology and science are thrown.

The Pros claim science for their own, so the Antis reject it. Phenomenology says science is useful for understanding many things but not literally all things, so the extremists on the Pro side reject phenomenology for being "impure". The Anti side then takes phenomenology in and plays up the limits-of-science thing while downplaying the usefulness-of-science part. As a result phenomenologists more often find themselves having to defend their ideas against material realism, scientism, and other ideas on the Pro side and less against irrationality, mysticism, and other incompatible positions on the Anti side. This creates a skewed picture that implies phenomenology is anti-science by association, and it doesn't help that some phenomenologists, being humans, may actually take up sides in this debate.

But ultimately the Pro/Anti battle is more about how humans relate to ideas than the ideas themselves, and methods like debate magnify this confusion. Thankfully, phenomenologists and other philosophers have an alternative to debate that functions better at collaborative truth seeking: the dialectic.

Dialectic

Philosophers have a special way of talking to each other in good faith that cuts to the heart of their disagreements. Once they find these disagreements they can build toward mutual understanding and possible agreement. We generically call this process dialect and I've written about it before:

## 1.4 INTENTIONALITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In Vol.11 of Logical Investigations Husserl holds that a separation between logic and psychological phenomena is inadmissible and impossible. Ideal logical entities are given to us in experiences. The relationship between the 'ideal objects' of pure logic and the subjective experiences corresponding to them illustrates an insight which pervades whole of his philosophy, i.e., 'intentionality'. According to this, there is a parallelism between the subjective act and the objective correlate. This parallelism forms the basis for a correlative investigation under which both the aspects of any phenomenon are to be studied and described in conjunction. To study one without the other would be an artificial abstraction. In Husserl's terms this parallelism came to be known as that between the 'noetic' (act) and 'noematic (content). (Noesis is abstract noun, and noema is concrete noun). His aim has been a reconciliation of the objectivity of truth with the subjectivity of the act of knowledge. The central insight in phenomenological analysis is the theory of intentionality. He owed to Brentano for this theory. According to Brentano, all psychical phenomena intentionally contain an object. Husserl objects to this conception of the immanence of the intentional object to consciousness. For him intentionality means the directedness of the act of consciousness to some object. This object is not immanent to the consciousness itself, but remains transcendent to it. For phenomenology it is not of importance whether or not the object of consciousness actually exists. The object is considered from a special point of view, namely as the objective correlate of an intentional act. Thus for Husserl, intentionality means this: consciousness is directedness

to an object, as expressed in: conscious of…, joyful at…, desirous of….. etc. All 'cogito' contains a 'cogitatum'. Husserl's notion of intentionality can be clarified with the help of its four characteristics, as developed by one of his commentators, Herbert Spiegelberg. First of all, intentionality objectivates. It presents the given data in such a way that the whole object is presented to our consciousness. The various acts of consciousness are referred to the same intentional object. The sameness of the object is compatible with the various ways of referring to it such as: love, doubt, thought, which are the qualities of 'intention' as opposed to the object. When one gives thought to one's mother, it is the person of one's mother that is the objective correlate. It is not the fragmentary aspects, like the kindness or generosity of the mother, but the mother as kind or generous is the objective correlate. Secondly, intentionality 5 identifies. It allows us to assign a variety of successive data to the same referent of meaning. Without an identifying function, there would be nothing but a stream of perceptions, similar but never identical. Intentionality supplies the synthetic function by which the various aspects, perspectives and stages of an object are all focused upon and integrated into the identical core. For instance, the various intentional experiences of one's mother do not take one to different referents, but to the identical referent: one's mother. Thirdly, intentionality connects. Each aspect of the identical object refers to the related aspects, which form its horizon; an object is apprehended only within the context, or horizon that consists of the possible apprehensions. The actual intentional experience of an object does not stand in isolation, but links itself to the other possible intentional experiences. To give an example from the realm of sense experience: the frontal aspect of the statue refers to the lateral, and the lateral to the rear. Because of this 'connecting' function are we able to perceive the 'statue.' Finally, intentionality constitutes. It constitutes the intentional object. The intentional object is not conceived as the pre-existent referent to which the intending act refers as something already given, but as something which originates or is constituted in the act. The snake as fearsome is constituted in the act of one's getting frightened. Husserl, as a phenomenologist, is not interested in the object in itself, but in the intentional object, constituted in the act

consciousness. According to him, the intentional object is not immanent to consciousness, as Brentano held, but as transcendent to it.

**Check Your Progress 1**

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Discuss The Story of Phenomenology.

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2. Discuss The Method of Phenomenology.

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3. Discuss Intentionality of Consciousness.

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## 1.5 MEANING OF ESSENCE

The core of Husserl's philosophy is the notion of essence, since Husserlian phenomenology tries to attain the knowledge of 'essence' of reality. But the meaning of 'essence' in Husserl is different from what has been traditionally held as opposed to 'existence.' Natural science begins with experience and remains therein. They are sciences of facts.

The world is not exhausted by 'facts,' having a spatio-temporal existence as something existing somewhere and sometime. Every individual being is contingent insofar as it is such and such, but essentially could be other than what it is. It belongs to the meaning of every contingent thing and event to have an essential being, an eidos, that can be apprehended in all its purity. In order to come to the knowledge of essences, Husserl proceeds step by step. He distinguishes between ordinary experience and transcendent experience or intuition. The first is the accurate apprehension of the individual fact. In the ordinary experience man finds himself as a unique person, the empirical ego. The phenomenologist is not interested in the ordinary, but in the transcendental experience, which is the essential intuition proper. In the transcendental experience, I bracket all reference to existence. For the phenomenological reduction of essences, Husserl proposes to use 'inductive generalization' and 'imaginative variation' that enable one to eliminate the inessential features in order to come to the essential. Inductive generalization is not anything typically phenomenological; it means nothing other than universalizing from the various particular experiences. 'Imaginative variation' can be understood only in the light of the Husserlian notion of 'horizon'. An object is actually experienced or apprehended only within a setting or horizon, which is the context of the possible apprehensions. The objective and essential extends beyond the limits of actual perception. It is by imaginative variation that one can move from the limitation of the actual perception to the indeterminacy of what can be perceived. The 6 horizon or the setting of the 'can be perceived' is the objective correlate of the 'can perceive' or the un-actualized capacity of the perceiver. Thus by a varied and systematic process, Husserlian phenomenology claims to attain a 'direct essential insight' or transcendental reduction into the pure eidetic sphere. The essence is the objective content of my transcendentally reduced conscious experience. Looking at the object of consciousness, I reach the essence by a method of variation. I can vary the various view-points. The essence is what remains invariable, when I vary the various view-points.

## 1.6 EIDETIC REDUCTION

The act of grasping the essence has two aspects: one positive, and the other negative. Eidetic reduction is the positive aspect. It is the gradual penetration into the purified essential residue, gradually revealing the pure subjectivity as the exclusive source of all objectivity. Reduction to objectivity is one of the most difficult notions in Husserl, who has not clearly dealt with it in his published works. In his Ideas, he makes a distinction between two types of reductions that are complementary. They are eidetic reduction and transcendental reduction. Eidetic reduction refers to the distinction between 'fact' and 'essence': factual (particular, historical, existential) is converted into essential (ideal, universal and timeless). This is done by keeping away the 'thisness' or 'suchness' from the particular object. The transcendental reduction refers to the distinction between the real and the non-real. Essences as the pure noemata of pure consciousness are real, whether or not it is reduced from an existent or non-existent object. Thus the intentional presence can be reduced from a situation of physical absence. Husserl speaks of several levels of reduction, on each of which we have a subject of greater purity. When the subject is at its purest form, we have the strict science of phenomenology. Only when the subjectivity is absolutely pure, can it be the universal a priori source of objectivity. To know the subjectivity that has the function of 'constitution' is to know one, which is transcendentally related to the objects, i.e., intentionality.

**Check Your Progress 2**

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Write about Meaning of Essence.

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2. Discuss the Eidetic Reduction.

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## 1.7 BRACKETING (EPOCHÉ)

After the Logical Investigations the concepts of epoché (bracketing) and reduction began to occupy an important place in Husserl's reflections. It was in the two series of lectures which he delivered at Göttingen in the winter semester of 1906\07 and in the summer semester 1907 that Husserl for the first time explicitly introduced these concepts. It was further elaborated in the Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology (1913). Epoché was conceived as something which the phenomenologist has to perform; the performance would lay bare before him the infinite field of his research. The performance consists in suspending or 'putting out of action' the 'thesis of the natural attitude.' The thesis of the natural attitude is the belief that the world and objectivities exist independently of and apart from being related to consciousness. Once this belief is suspended, Husserl claims, the world and the entire field of objectivities would appear before us as being correlated with consciousness. Further, we would reach transcendental consciousness which 'constitutes' the world. Bracketing is the negative aspect in grasping the essence. It is the radical and universal elimination of any aspect of factual existence. The factual or the exatentia1 is kept in parenthesis or in bracket. Things under consideration may have existence, but it has no significance whatsoever with regard to the essence of things. Besides the elimination of 'existence', to describe the phenomena correctly, the phenomenologist too must be free from all cultural and philosophical bias. It requires ascetic neutrality in one's attitude to the phenomenon of one's awareness. Phenomenology deals with the insight into the essences, without regard to the empirical conditions of their perceptibility, nor even their existence. It is not a question of making it appear in its factual

reality or in its existence, but in its intentional presence as transcendent to consciousness. There is a similarity between Husserl's epoché and Descartes' methodological doubt. Descartes doubted everything; only the ego indubitably exists. In Husserl the world is not doubted, but the judgements about it are suspended The epoche demands that the philosopher takes a distance from the various solutions, which in the course of history have been proposed for different philosophical problems. It aims at eliminating the factuality, the root of all 'contingency'. Thus, during the 'phenomenological period' Husserl developed the phenomenological method, and succeeded in reaching reconciliation between the subjective and the objective. Although the method is presented step by step, the phenomenological intuition of the essences takes place in a single act of grasping. This is the reason why he uses the expression 'phenomenological reduction' rather than 'phenomenological deduction.'

## 1.8 PERIOD OF PURE PHENOMENOLOGY

After having come to a more or less satisfactory method of phenomenology, Husserl continued his philosophical thinking and reflection. This ended up in a transcendental (pure) phenomenology. It is called 'pure' in order to differentiate it from other pseudo phenomenologies. The distinction is based on the subject matter. The subject matter of pure phenomenology is pure phenomena. The pure phenomena are reached by means of the pure consciousness. Since the publication of Ideas, pure phenomenology goes by the name, 'transcendental phenomenology'. In Ideas 'transcendental' meant that the phenomenologist suspends all assertion about reality other than that of consciousness itself. Later on it meant, reaching back to the ultimate source of all knowledge, the subjectivity. Emphasis on the pure subjectivity as the source of all objectivity is the characteristic of this phase. During the phase of pure phenomenology, Husserl speaks of a universal phenomenology, conceived as the ultimate foundation of all knowledge. His intention was to achieve phenomena in its pure and indubitable form; and for this he bracketed all accidental and incidental

aspects, all judgments and interpretations of reality. Husserl started his career with a cry for 'scientific philosophy'. Phenomenology claims to fulfill the need of a scientific philosophy with ultimate clarity in basic insights and systematic order in building up on them. Such a philosophy must be the foundation of all sciences. Since these are found realized in Husserl's phenomenology, it claims to be the 'first philosophy'. As Husserl moved more towards the subjective, his critics gave him the label of an 'idealist', which he hesitatingly accepted; but he insists that his 'idealism' must be distinguished from the subjective idealism of Berkeley, that makes all being dependent on the psychological consciousness. By contrast, Husserl ties up Being with the transcendentally reduced consciousness. Being is nothing apart from the 'meaning' which it receives in the bestowing act 8 of consciousness. Husserl gives two arguments for his idealism: the self-contradictory nature of realism, and the direct phenomenological evidence, supplied by the analysis of transcendental constitution. According to him, being, by its very meaning, refers us back to acts which assign such being. In other words, being derives its meaning from consciousness. The idea of reality as unrelated to consciousness is self-contradictory. The next argument is related to the first, i.e., the doctrine of transcendental constitution. 'Constitution' does not refer to a static structure of an object, but the dynamic process by which it is built up as an object. It is the intentional consciousness that actively achieves this constitution. Objects exist for me only as objects of consciousness. In his idealism, reality is extra-mental, but the meaning of reality is in the mind. His philosophy is called 'idealism' also because it is a search into the eidos (essence, meaning). It is transcendental idealism in the sense that the real world is reduced to its pure, transcendental significance. Thus, in the final phase of his thought, especially in the Crisis of the European Sciences (posthumous, 1954), Husserl takes up pre-predicative consciousness or life-world for phenomenological analysis. It may have been influenced by Heidegger's Being and Time. Marurice Merleau-Ponty has later continued this line of thought especially in his Phenomenology of Perception (1945).

It has also influenced Hans-Georg Gadamer in his development of philosophical hermeneutics. Together with 'life-world,' Husserl gradually wanted to develop a phenomenological philosophy by applying the method to some sui-generis realities. Husserl developed the idea of a 'life-world'—the world of our immediate experience in our everyday life, a world of our concrete experience. The scientist conceals the world as our world. It is a vast domain of subjective phenomena, as they are immediately experienced in all colours and practical meaning. Sciences left out the subjective and the practical aspect of the world, and took only the objective aspect. A life-world is to be conceived as an oriented world, with an experiencing self at its centre, designated as such by personal pronouns. Thus the world becomes the one related to life and to the humans, with his human values and aspirations. He tried to make a phenomenological reflection on 'time' as well. The inner consciousness of time shows the following structure: a primal impression of a streaming present, surrounded by a horizon of immediate retention of the past (to be distinguished from active recollection) and of immediate protention (to be distinguished from active expectation). Describing retention, Husserl shows how the consciousness of the present sinks off steadily below the surface, and becomes sedimented in such a way that it is accessible only to acts of recollection. He has not given us any evidence of an active 'constitution' of time, but only of a passive synthetic genesis. Thirdly Husserl was forced to consider the 'Other', as he was criticized that phenomenology is a purely solipsistic explanation of the intentional constitution. For, when phenomenological reduction brackets, even the belief in the existence of the other subjects too is suspended. In his Cartesian Meditations he shows the difficulty of transcendental ego constituting other egos, as equal partners in an intersubjective community. If the other subjects are to be meaningful, they are to be constituted. But it is not possible, since if the constitution is subjective, it is a constitution of one's own self; if it is objective, others as subjects cannot be constituted. This problem remains unsolved in his published works.

For a phenomenological evidence for the knowledge of others, Husserl makes use of 'empathy' giving his own interpretation to it. It is a kind of intentional category, by which I experience another's experience. When we perceive a body other than our own, as there rather than here, we apperceive at as the body of an 'alter ego' by way of an assimilative analogy with our own ego. In this process, the analogizing ego and the analogized 9 'alter ego' are paired in a characteristic 'coupling'. While the other ego is not accessible as directly as his body, it can be understood as a modification of our own 'pure ego', by which we put ourselves into his, as if we were in his place. The other egos are thus constituted as transcendental, and these form a community, and thus communication is possible. Finally, he gives a thought about God in his phenomenological structure. When Husserl started his philosophical career, although he was a Jew, he kept the Bible away from him. For, he wanted to start a philosophy absolutely presuppositionless. He was not much concerned about bringing God into his philosophy, nor was there a place for God in his philosophy. His philosophy needed only intentional experience, subjectivity and objectivity. Remaining a bit away from his philosophical method, God is placed in between the ego and the world, who creatively constitutes the world, while my subjectivity meaningfully constitutes the world. Since God is the absolutely absolute, he cannot be comprehended within the focus of my ego.

In case you don't want to click the link, the short version is that the dialectical method is to consider a position or idea, called the thesis, find something that contradicts it, an antithesis, and then try to find a synthesis of thesis and antithesis that sublimates/overcomes them with new understanding. That new understanding becomes a new thesis, and the process repeats until it converges to consensus or diverges to logical inconsistency.

Dialectic differs from debate so long as the antithesis and synthesis are formed in good faith. With good faith, dialectic can get at the heart of a dispute to find agreement, but with bad faith dialectic devolves into debate and drives a wedge between people and ideas. Since

phenomenology gives primacy to phenomena, including those non-objective experiences we might call "subjective", it strongly encourages good faith and is able to make extensive use of dialectic as a tool for building understanding.

There is not always disagreement or apparent contradiction to power a dialectic, though. In those cases phenomenologists must explore the world in other ways, and more closely examining the phenomena themselves often yields dividends.

Hermeneutics

When we write, speak, or otherwise communicate, we engage in an act of creating phenomena for others by giving them objects to experience. We can try to anticipate how they will experience these objects — to predict the phenomena our audiences will find themselves subject to when they read our writing, hear our words, or see our art — but there will inevitably be variation in their experiences. This means that for all experiences of the same object there will be different experiences had by different subjects. This opens up the opportunity to compare and study the differences in experiences, and we call this study hermeneutics:

Although technically it is possible to perform hermeneutics on phenomena of non-conscious subjects, we generally consider that practice a part of applied science or engineering, so hermeneutics generally refers to the process of interpreting the experiences of conscious subjects. Originally hermeneutics primarily focused on interpretation of sacred experiences, especially of messages believed to have been sent by the gods, but Heidegger generalized the notion within phenomenology to interpretation of experience and developed the hermeneutic circle as his primary philosophical technique. Philologists then mixed Heidegger's philosophical hermeneutics with their own methods and developed techniques we now think of as literary criticism, historical analysis, and other methods of critical study in the humanities.

I think of hermeneutics as a kind of meditation on the experiences of others where people report their experiences and we think on those

reports to create our own experiences of them. We only have access to our own experiences, but from our experiences we can reason about the world that made possible the experiences of others and so gain partial, indirect knowledge of objects of experience we never experienced ourselves. In this sense hermeneutics is what we do whenever we read a book, listen to a friend talk, or empathize with the experiences of others.

We can similarly think of meditation as hermeneutical analysis of our own experiences, but this would be selling meditation short because, unlike when analyzing the reported experiences of others, we are the subjects of our own experiences and can, at least in theory, know more about them. Turning this theory to practice is not easy, though, so meditation is a method of phenomenological epistemology worth exploring on its own.

**Meditation**

"Meditation" is a word with a lot of meanings. In one sense it means focused thinking on a topic, and you might say my writings are often meditations of this sort. There's another sense in which meditation is the practice of entering trances and other altered states of consciousness, possibly associated with spiritual experiences, and while this is interesting because it may produce qualia not otherwise generated, it's not a phenomenological technique so much as a source of capta. Instead the sense in which we care about meditation is as a method of cultivating awareness of the world and our interactions within it so that we may learn everything we can from our experiences.

There are many specific meditative practices that can serve phenomenological purposes. For example, the meditation of early phenomenologists was heavily influenced by yogacara, I practice zazen, and any technique that teaches the ability to observe phenomena without interpretation will work. The key is learning to withhold judgement so that, as much as possible, the world may be seen as it is. From gaining such a clear picture of the world we may start our naive, skeptical, beginner's investigation of it.

Being skeptical, it's fair to ask how much value we can derive from meditation. After all, psychology is littered with disproved theories that drew much of their evidence from introspection, so there seems reason to be suspect of anyone claiming knowledge solely based on their own experiences. But just as science abandoned those theories when their evidence did not reproduce, the phenomenological framework similarly does not ask you to accept the evidence provided by others (or yourself!) blindly. If someone reports an experience that seems false to you in some way, you should try to understand it, and if you desire to know more you should try meditating on similar experiences yourself to see what you learn. If you get different results than others, that can be a starting point for dialectic and hermeneutics.

Thus it's important to be clear that meditation is like science, dialectic, and hermeneutics in that it does not stand on its own. Meditation cannot give us perfect knowledge even as it helps us to approach the limits of our knowledge imposed by the intentional nature of experience. But how close can we get to those limits? Husserl believed it was possible to get so close as to feel yourself transcending them, but any such feeling of transcendence must itself be an experience that can be suspended and examined, so it seems at best we can reach an equilibrium of continuously experiencing the experience of experiencing experience. To make sense of such deeply self-referential phenomena, Husserl developed the phenomenological reduction, the foundational method of phenomenology.

The Phenomenological Reduction

All phenomenological methods are expressions of the phenomenological reduction. They're not like this because they were designed this way: most phenomenological methods predate the idea of phenomenology itself. Instead, the phenomenological reduction is the core movement available to us as we explore the world via phenomena, and so all other methods are naturally expressions of it. That we do not always use the

naked reduction directly reflects the difficulty of carrying out the reduction in full.

The reduction is not very easy to describe, either. It consists of a single movement with two motions — epoche and epistrophe. “Epoche” is the Greek word Husserl used to refer to the process of suspending, stepping back from, or bracketing an experience so that it may be examined, and epistrophe is the dual or reverse process of epoche where we return, reintegrate, or reduce our understanding back from suspension. Confusingly Husserl didn’t use the term “epistrophe” to match “epoche” but instead referred to epistrophe as “the reduction proper” (German: das eigentliche Reduzieren, “the reduction in its own light”) based on the original Latin meaning of reducere from re- meaning “back” or “again” and ducere meaning “lead” or “bring”. Given the confusion this invites both because it gives too similar names to the method and one of its motions and because “reduction” is now philosophically cognate with reductionism, I choose to use “epistrophe” instead.

Notice that I called epoche and epistrophe motions and not steps or parts. This is intentional because the reduction is a complete movement where one motion naturally follows the other. You might think of epoche as breathing in, epistrophe as breathing out, and reduction as breathing: you have to breathe in and breathe out to breathe, if you breathe in you necessarily breathe out, and if you breathe out you will almost certainly breath in again. Thus although we may talk about the two motions separately, they fundamentally imply one another.

To see the reduction at work, let’s perform its motions on a classic example from phenomenology, seeing a cup.

**Check Your Progress 3**

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Discuss Bracketing (Epoché).

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2. Discuss Period of Pure Phenomenology.

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## 1.9 LET US SUM UP

Husserl's mature thought begins with a concern for the foundations of mathematics, continues with the development of phenomenological method, and concludes with a kind of idealism that is associated with the doctrine of the transcendental ego. His merit consists in the fact that he introduced for the first time the phenomenological method that brought the subjective and the objective to their right place. Thus the greatest contribution of Husserl is the theory of intentionality, with the help of which the subject and object are brought closer to reconciliation. Many of the later philosophers who used the phenomenological method deviated from him, regarding the importance given to essence rather than existence. But in spite of this difference, contemporary continental philosophers greatly owe to Husserl's contribution to phenomenology. Since Husserl did not develop a philosophy with the application of phenomenological method, he could not see some of the weak-points in his method. All the same, we cannot but admire the unique contribution of his to the philosophical world.

## 1.10 KEY WORDS

**Phenomenology**: Phenomenology is the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness. As a philosophical movement it was founded in the early years of the 20th century by Edmund Husserl and was later expanded upon by a circle of his followers at the universities of Göttingen and Munich in Germany.

**Consciousness**: Consciousness at its simplest refers to "sentience or awareness of internal or external existence"

**Essence**: In philosophy, essence is the property or set of properties that make an entity or substance what it fundamentally is, and which it has by necessity, and without which it loses its identity.

## 1.11 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss The Story of Phenomenology.
2. Discuss The Method of Phenomenology.
3. Discuss Intentionality of Consciousness.
4. Write about Meaning of Essence.
5. Discuss the Eidetic Reduction.
6. Discuss Bracketing (Epoché).
7. Discuss Period of Pure Phenomenology.

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## 1.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1. See Section 1.2
2. See Section 1.3
3. See Section 1.4

**Check Your Progress 2**

1. See Section 1.5
2. See Section 1.6

**Check Your Progress 3**

1. See Section 1.7
2. See Section 1.8

# UNIT 2: A RADICAL METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

**STRUCTURE**



## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

After unit 2, we can able to know:

- Radical Method
- Positivism Vs Phenomenology
- Phenomenological Approaches in Social and Educational
- Research
- Phenomenology and Educational Research
- Critical Paradigms
- Critical Research Process

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Phenomenology is a philosophy of knowledge that emphasizes direct observation of phenomena. Unlike positivists, however, phenomenologists seek to sense reality and to describe it in words rather than numbers: words that reflect consciousness and perception. The philosophical foundations of phenomenology were developed by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who argued that the scientific method, appropriate for the study of physical phenomena, was inappropriate for the study of human thought and action. Phenomenologists concentrate on phenomena per se, and try to produce convincing descriptions of what they experience rather than explanations and causes. Good ethnography is usually good phenomenology, and there is no substitute for a good story, well told. The split between the scientific approach and the humanistic-phenomenological approach pervades the human sciences. In psychology, most research is in the quantitative, scientific tradition, while phenomenology flourishes in clinical work because, its practitioners cogently point out, it works. In sociology, there is a significant, but small, tradition of qualitative, phenomenological research, but the field is mostly dominated by the quantitative, positivistic approach. The reverse is true in cultural anthropology, in which there is a significant, quantitative, positivistic research, but most of the field is qualitatively and phenomenologically oriented. The term phenomenology needs some clarification because it is talked about a good deal these days and is frequently used in the most general way to mean any sort of experientially based methodology. Even within the Western philosophical tradition the word labels a very broad movement and not a precise school or unitary method. Speaking generally, a phenomenological study is one that is grounded in the direct experience of aspects of one's own consciousness.

## 2.2 RADICAL METHOD

The famed Methodenstreit of the late 19th century was the battle of method. It pitted the emerging Austrian School against the German Historical School over a critically important question: what is the proper way to do social science? Here, Carl Menger, the founder of the School, vindicates the importance of theory, and lays the foundation for later

developments by Mises and others. The book was written twelve years after his principles book, and it sought to deal with the hostility with which that book was greeted in the German world. Menger argues that economics can and must be more than an effort at observing, collecting, and assembling data. It can make general observations about the laws of economics that operate independently of time and place.

Joseph Salerno writes: "The Investigations precipitated a furor among German economists who heatedly responded with derisive attacks on Menger and the Austrian School. In fact, this latter term was originated and applied by the German Historicists in order to emphasize the isolation of Menger and his followers from the mainstream of German economics."

No Austrian can overlook this very important treatise on method. This edition includes an introduction by Lawrence White that frames up the debate over method in light of modern trends in economic theory.

## 2.3 POSITIVISM VS PHENOMENOLOGY

The positivist versus the phenomenological approach to the study of man and society is considered in terms of one of the major debates in social science research. Many of the founding fathers of sociology believed that it would be possible to create a science of society based on the same principles and procedures as natural sciences such as chemistry and biology. This approach is known as positivism. They believed that this would reveal that the evolution of society followed 'invariable laws'. And that it would show that the behaviour of man was governed by principles of cause and effect which were just as invariable as the behaviour of matter, the subject of the natural sciences. The behaviour of man, like the behaviour of matter, can be objectively measured. Just as the behaviour of matter can be quantified by measures such as weight, temperature and pressure, methods of objective measurement can be devised for human behaviour. Such measurement is essential to explain behaviour. For example, in order to explain the reaction of a particular chemical to heat, it is necessary to provide exact measurement of

temperature, weight and so on. With such measurements it will be possible to accurately observe the behaviour of matter and produce a statement of cause and effect. From a 13 positivist viewpoint such methods and assumptions are applicable to human behaviour. Observations of behaviour based on objective measurement, from this viewpoint, will make it possible to produce statements of cause and effect. Theories may then be devised to explain observed behaviour. It argues that factors which are not directly observable, such as meanings, feelings and purposes, are not particularly important and can be misleading. For example, if the majority of adult members of society enter into marriage and produce children, these facts can be observed and quantified. They, therefore, form reliable data. However, the range of meanings that members of society give to these activities, their purposes for marriage and procreation are not directly observable. Even if they could be accurately measured, they may well divert attention from the real cause of behaviour. The meanings and purposes they attach to this behaviour are largely inconsequential. Phenomenological perspectives in social research reject many of the assumptions of positivism. They argue that the subject matter of social and natural sciences is fundamentally different. As a result, methods and assumptions of the natural sciences are inappropriate to the study of man. The natural sciences deal with matter. They do not have meanings and purposes which direct their behaviour. As a result the natural scientist is able to observe, measure, and impose an external logic on that behaviour in order to explain it. He/she has no need to explore the internal logic of the consciousness of matter simply because it does not exist. Unlike matter, a human being has consciousness — thoughts, feelings, meanings, intentions and an awareness of being. Because of this, his/her actions are meaningful, he/she defines situations and gives meaning to his/her actions and those of others. As a result, he/she does not merely react to external stimuli, nor does he/she simply behave, he/she acts. Imagining the response of early man to fire caused by volcanoes or spontaneous combustion, we can see that she/he did not react in a uniform manner to the experience of heat. He/she attached a range of meanings to it and these meanings directed his/her actions. For example, he/she defined fire as a means of warmth

and used it to heat his/her dwellings; as a means of defence and used it to ward off wild animals; and as a means of transforming substances and employed it for cooking and hardening points of wooden spears. Man does not just react to fire, he/she acts upon the terms of the meanings he/she gives to it. The researcher cannot simply observe action from the outside and impose an external logic upon it. He/she must interpret the internal logic which directs the actions of the actor. The distinction between positivist and pheonomenological approaches is not as clear cut as this section has implied. There is considerable debate over whether or not a particular theory should be labeled positivist or phenomenological. Often it is a matter of degree since many theories lie somewhere between the two extremes.

## 2.4 PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Hermeneutical Phenomenology

One of the most influential phenomenologies for ethnographic field work is that of Paul Ricoeur (Rasmussen 1971), a French student of Edmund Husserl. Hermeneutics has been derived from the Greek verb hermenenin, meaning to make something clear, to announce or to unveil a message. Hermeneutics involves a dialogue between a text (e.g., myth, drama, fairy story, dream report, oral history, etc.) and the experiences evoked in people participating in the text. The meaning of the text is developed within the consciousness of living people, so that there is a movement from an initial hearing of the text that may then lead to experiences that illuminate the meaning of the text. Later, people may reflect conceptually upon both the text and the memory of experiences related to the text.

Transpersonal Phenomenology

"Transpersonalism" is a movement in science toward the recognition of extraordinary experiences as legitimate and useful data. What makes these experiences extraordinary is that they in some sense go beyond the boundaries of ordinary ego-consciousness. 15 Transpersonal experiences include such phenomena as out-of-body experiences, visions, possession states, near-death experiences, and meditative, ecstatic, unique and mystical experiences. To give one example of the application of transpersonal phenomenology to ethnographic fieldwork, Lederman (1988) reported that among Malay healers, the term angin ("Inner Winds") refers to an experience that sometimes occurs during healing rituals. She mentions that her informants declined to define the concept for her, insisting instead that to know its meaning, she would have to experience angin herself. When she finally undertook the healing ritual herself, she experienced angin "like a hurricane" inside her chest. Thereafter, Lederman was able to evaluate the meaning of the "wind" metaphor from direct experience. Angin ceased to be merely a belief and was appreciated as a metaphorical description of a real and profound experience.

Social Phenomenology

Social phenomenology has had an increasing influence upon anthropological thinking about the social dimensions of experience. Schutz advocated the study of society from a special stance that he called the "phenomenology of intersubjectivity". Here, the object of scrutiny is one's relationship to another person, rather than some nonhuman object in the world. The other person (known as the capital-O "Other") requires a distinct approach in order that the essential qualities of the social relationship may be intuited.

Neurophenomenology

The best and the most direct route to uncovering the essential structures of consciousness available today is to steep ourselves in the cross-cultural evidence pertaining to human experience and then explore the

universal structures of experience via the application of a neurophenomenology. The neurosciences provide an independent source of looking directly at the architecture of the organ of experience, the human brain. Phenomenological anthropology provides a kind of cross-cultural laboratory for exploring these universal structures, as it were, from the inside. Phenomenology has a history in philosophy dating back to at least the "phenomenology of mind" of Georg Hegel in the early nineteenth century and has left a rich legacy of writings, especially those of Edmund Husserl in the early twentieth century. The influence of phenomenology in educational research has been felt only quite recently, however. Whether it applies to recovering the meaning of texts, ascertaining the effects of ritual practices in producing altered states of consciousness, discovering the universal structures underlying social interactions, or uncovering the universal neuropsychological structures producing experience, the telling impact of phenomenology in educational research continues. Probably the most important reason for the current attractiveness of phenomenology is that the issue of consciousness, long excluded from much of scientific discourse, has been reintroduced into the domains of ethnographic fieldwork and ethnological theory. Phenomenological methods can be expected to have enhanced importance to the extent that educational research becomes more focused on meaning and experience in any transpersonal or social encounter.

**Check Your Progress 1**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Define Radical Method.

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2. Relate Phenomenology and Positivism.

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3. Explain the meaning of Phenomenology and how it is different from Positivism.

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4. Describe any two phenomenological approaches in educational research.

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## 2.5 PHENOMENOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The explanations of differential educational attainment that have been presented so far have been largely based on a positivist perspective. They have seen humans reacting to stimuli external to them, to social forces beyond their control. The behaviour of students in the educational system is explained as a reaction to their position in the class structure. Those at the bottom of the stratification system are programmed to fail, those at the top to succeed. They have little say in the matter since their

behaviour is largely shaped by forces external to themselves. From an interactionist perspective, man actively constructs social reality. His/her actions are not simply shaped by social forces which act upon him/ her. Thus behaviour is not merely a reaction to the directives of subcultures or the pressures of stratification systems. Whereas the behaviour of matter is a reaction to external stimuli, the actions of men and women are directed by meanings. They are created, developed, modified and changed in a process of negotiation. Cultural deprivation theory provides the standard explanation for the widespread failure of low income Black American students in the educational system. The students simply react to their position at the bottom of the stratification system and predictably fail. From close observation of interaction situations, Labov (1973) provides a very different explanation. He compares three interviews involving an adult and a boy. In the first, the 'friendly' white interviewer presents a black boy with a toy jet plane. He asks him to 17 describe it and prompts him with various questions. There are long silences followed by short two or three word answers, which hardly provide an adequate description of the plane. This behaviour can easily be explained in terms of cultural deprivation theory. The boy is unable to provide an adequate description because he is linguisitically deprived. His behaviour is a predictable reaction to a culturally deprived environment. Labov offers an alternative explanation based on the boy's interpretation of the situation. He defines the situation as hostile and threatening and therefore his actions are defensive. This is clearly no test of the boy's verbal ability, it simply reflects his perception of the situation. In the second interview, the context of the interaction is modified. The interviewer sits on the floor, the interviewee is provided with a supply of potato crisps and his best friend is invited along. The change is dramatic. Leon's conversation is articulate and enthusiastic, and, its linguistic terms, rich and diverse. He now defines the situation as friendly and no longer feels threatened by the interviewer. In the first interview he is, in Labov's words, a 'monosyllabic, inept, ignorant, fumbling child', in the second he is a direct, confident, articulate, young man. What does this mean? Labov states, 'It means that the social situations are the most powerful determinants of verbal behaviour and what an adult man can do. This is

just what many teachers cannot do'. More generally, it can be argued from an interactionist perspective that success and failure in schools is a product of interaction situations and the meanings that are created, developed and negotiated in such situations. It rejects positivist approaches which assume that human behaviour can be objectively measured and quantified by methods similar to those used in the physical sciences. Thus, factors such as ability cannot be measured in the same way as variables such as weight, temperature and pressure. In order to understand and explain educational success and failure, the interaction processes in the classroom must be examined. The educational researchers must explore the 'ways in which teachers and students interpret and give meaning to educational situations'. Given the fact that teachers have the power to award grades and assess students, it is important to discover the meanings which direct this process. An early piece of research which attempted to uncover some of these meanings was conducted by Howard S Becker. He interviewed sixty teachers from Chicago high schools and found that they tended to classify and evaluate students in terms of a standard of the 'ideal pupil'. This standard included the teachers' view of what constituted ideal work, conduct and appearance. Teachers interpreted the behaviour of lower class students as indicating lack of interest and motivation and difficult to control. Becker argues that simply by perceiving certain students in this way, teachers experience problems in working with them. He concludes that the meanings in terms of which students are assessed and evaluated can have significant effects on interaction in the classroom and attainment levels in general. In a study entitled, the Education Decision Makers, Aaron V Cicourel and John I Kitsuse interviewed counselors in an American high school in an attempt to uncover the meanings which lay behind their classification of students. The counselors play an important part in students' educational careers since they largely decide which students should be placed on courses designed for preparation for college entry. Although they claimed to use grades and the results of IQ tests as the basis for classifying students in terms of achievement, Cicourel and Kitsuse found significant discrepancies between these measures and the ways in which students were classified. Like Becker, they found that the

student's social class was an important influence on the way she/he was evaluated within each society.

## 2.6 CRITICAL PARADIGMS

Critical Paradigm emphasises that knowledge is problematic and capable of systematic distortion. The concern of the critical paradigm is to understand the theory as well as practices

Paradigms are intended to help the researcher work at his/her trade. The first and foremost purpose of a paradigm is to supply a provisional codified guide for adequate and fruitful analyses. This objective evidently implies that a paradigm contains the minimum set of concepts with which the researcher must operate in order to carry out an adequate analysis and, as a corollary, that it can be used here and now as a guide for the study of existing analyses. Secondly, a paradigm is intended to lead directly to the postulates and (often tacit) assumptions underlying analyses. Some of the assumptions are of central importance, others insignificant and dispensable, and still others, dubious and even misleading. In the third place, a paradigm seeks to sensitize the researcher not only to the narrowly scientific implications of various types of critical analyses, but also to their political and sometimes ideological implications. The points at which a critical analysis presupposes an implicit political outlook and the points at which it has bearing on "social engineering" are concerns which find an integral place in the paradigm. The logic of procedure that a researcher follows, the key concepts, and the relationships between them are often lost in an avalanche of words. When this happens, the critical reader must laboriously glean for the implicit assumptions of the author. A paradigm reduces this tendency for the theorist to employ tacit concepts and assumptions.

Functions of a Paradigm Paradigms have at least five closely related functions. First, paradigms have a notational function. They provide a compact arrangement of the central concepts and their interrelations that are utilized for description and analysis. Second, paradigms lessen the

likelihood of inadvertently introducing hidden assumptions and concepts, for each new assumption and each new concept must be either logically derived from previous components of the paradigm or explicitly introduced into it. The paradigm thus provides a guide for avoiding ad hoc (i.e. logically irresponsible) hypotheses. 19 Third, paradigms advance the cumulation of theoretical interpretation. In effect, a paradigm is the foundation upon which the house of interpretations is built. A paradigm worthy of great confidence will in due course support an interpretative structure of skyscraper dimensions, with each successive story testifying to the well-laid quality of the original foundation, while a defective paradigm will support only a rambling one-story structure, in which each new set of uniformities requires a new foundation to be laid, since the original cannot bear the weight of additional stories. Fourth, paradigms, by their very arrangement, suggest the systematic cross-tabulation of significant concepts and can thus sensitize the analyst to empirical and theoretical problems which he/she might otherwise overlook. Paradigms promote analysis rather than the description of concrete details. Fifth, paradigms make for the codification of qualitative analysis in a way that approximates the logical if not the empirical rigour of quantitative analysis. The procedures for computing statistical measures and their mathematical bases are codified as a matter of course; their assumptions and procedures are open to critical scrutiny by all.

Elements of Critical Social Research Critical social research is extremely varied, but critical methodology is based on a number of building blocks. These blocks should not be considered as discrete units which can simply be placed next to one another. They are elements which are drawn together in various ways in the process of deconstruction and reconstruction. And they are abstraction, totality, essence, praxis, ideology, history and structure. Critical social research denies that its object of study is ‘objective’ social appearances. It regards the positivistic scientific method as unsatisfactory because it deals only with surface appearances. Instead, critical social research methodology cuts through surface appearance. It does so by locating social phenomena in

their specific historical context. Historically specific phenomena cannot be regarded as independent, on the contrary they are related to other phenomena within a prevailing social structure. Critical social research analyses this structure. Social structures are maintained through the exercise of political and economic power. Such power (grounded in repressive mechanism) is legitimated through ideology. Critical social research thus addresses and analyses both the ostensive social structure and its ideological manifestations and processes. In examining the context of social phenomena, critical social research directs attention at the fundamental nature of phenomena. Rather than take the abstract phenomena for granted, it takes apart (i.e., deconstructs) the abstraction to reveal its inner relations and thus reconstructs the abstract concept in terms of the social structural relations that inform it. This process of deconstruction and reconstruction is effected in terms of the wider societal perspective, that is, in terms of a totalistic approach. A totalistic approach denies the relevance of looking at one element of a complex social process in isolation and argues that elements have to be looked at in terms of their interrelations and how they relate to the social structure as a whole. So critical social research is concerned with the broad social and historical context in which phenomena are interrelated. It is concerned with revealing underlying social relations and showing how structural and ideological forms bear on them. It, then, is interested in substantive issues, and wants to show what is really going on at a societal level. Not only does it want to show what is happening, it is also concerned with doing something about it.

Abstraction

Abstraction is usually construed in terms of a distillation of sensory perception of the world of objects into conceptual categories. We start from the (literally) objective world and select out the recurrent or apparently the core or the defining features until an abstract concept is formulated (at least in our minds if not in a directly communicable form). This process of distillation of some features from a set of observed objects is at the basis of most systems of classification. The process may

be acceptable to phenomenalist approaches to knowledge, which involve an implicit assumption that science begins with factual observations and abstracts from them, but it is not adequate for critical social research. Indeed, the starting point for critical social research is to reverse this normal process of abstract thought. Critical social research admits that facts do not exist independently of their theoretical context. If facts are not self-evident then concepts cannot be abstracted from them. Critical social research thus works by moving from the abstract to the concrete. It starts with abstract generalizations and investigates them. Critical methodology's use of abstractions, therefore, differs from the positivist's use because, rather than simply providing a basis for ordering appearances, they are used to get beneath the surface of appearances. Instead of simply adopting an empirical approach and logging housework tasks, a critical approach relates housework to the wider sphere of production and sees it as a work relationship. The penetration of this mode of productive relations begins to get beneath the surface of appearances. The superficial taken-for-granted 'task view' of housework is replaced by dynamic conception which provides the basis for a holistic critique of social processes.

Totality

Totality refers to the view that social phenomena are interrelated and form a total whole. Further, it implies that a social phenomenon should be situated in a wider social context, it requires that social phenomena should not be analysed in isolation. They should not be regarded as encapsulated by a narrowly defined realm which can be investigated in a way that suggests that they are self-contained elements or organisms. A totalistic perspective implies that the components are interrelated into a coherent structure, that they only have meaning in terms of the structure, and in turn the structure relies on the component parts. In adopting an approach in terms of totality, critical social research attempts to relate empirical detail to a structural and historical whole. Crucial to a critical methodological approach to history and structure are three things. First, an appreciation that social relations are historically specific. Second, an

appreciation of the structural relations operating within a historical moment. Third, an appreciation of the structural relations 21 operating within that historically specific structure and specific phenomenal forms. So, returning to Delphy's example of housework, the French mid-twentieth-century housewife is seen as operating within a family unit whose internal exploitative relations are excluded from national accounting. The unremunerated (as opposed to unpaid) labour of the housewife both maintains the social and labour relationship of the family unit and is maintained by it.

Essence

Essence refers to the fundamental element of an analytic process. Most positivists regard any concern with essences as bordering on the metaphysical. Their only overt acknowledgement is in relation to the reduction of social or physical processes to their essential causal links. Phenomenologists, investigating the social world, view essences in a rather different way. They seek the essential nature of social phenomena or social relations, that is, some kind of a core of being or an engagement with a stream of consciousness, or, less transcendentally, the set of constructs that informs interactive processes. For critical social researchers, essence is a fundamental concept that can be used as the key to unlocking the process of deconstruction. For Delphy, the essential nature of housework was not the set of tasks, nor its lack of payment but its location within the exploitative relations of the family unit. Housework is essentially a work relationship. It is unremunerated work done by one member of a family unit for another.

Praxis

Praxis means practical reflective activity. It is what humans do most of the time. Praxis does not include 'instinctive' or 'mindless' activity like sleeping, breathing, walking, and so on, or undertaking repetitive work tasks. Praxis is what changes the world. For the critical social researcher, knowledge is not just about finding out about the world but it is changing

it. It is important, therefore, that a critical social researcher engages in praxis. However, the critical social researcher is not interested in the specific actions or reasons for actions of an individual. Individual actions are simply indicative of social groups operating within an oppressive social structure and/or historical juncture. What critical social research must take account of, in some way, is that changes in social formations are the results of praxis. So the subjects of any enquiry are analysed in terms of their potential for developing group action. Further, however, critical social researchers engage oppressive social structures, and their own enquiries thus embody praxiological concerns. Critical social research is thus intrinsically praxiological. Thus, for example, Delphy argues that the analysis of housework cannot begin until the notion of household unit is overturned.

Ideology

'Ideology' has not been easily translated into English and has tended to be little or poorly analysed in much of the conventional social research. The difficulty in 'objectivizing' ideology has led some social scientists to regard it as beyond scientific analysis and thus not important, or to replace it with terms like 'norms', 'values' and 'central value system'. These alternative concepts, while attempting to operationalize the idea of social legitimations, dispense with the critical element and are of little use in developing a critical analysis which goes beneath surface appearances.

Ideology as a concept has a long history but it developed its current usage as an analytic and critical tool in the work of Marx and has been an important feature of Marxism. Marx suggested that ideology is present from the moment when social relations take on a hierarchical form. There are, arguably, two approaches to a critical analysis of ideology, the positive and the negative views of ideology (Larrain, 1979, 1982). Ideology, of course, does not simply relate to class exploitation. Gender race and other forms of oppression have been legitimated in ideological terms. Patriarchal and racist ideologies can be seen as part of or

alternatives to class-based hegemony. For Delphy, the discussion of housework and a set of tasks reflects a patriarchal ideology which obscures the real relations of production within the family unit.

Structure

'Structure' is a term used in two ways in social research. Its principal meaning and the one applicable to critical social research is of structure viewed holistically as a complex set of interrelated elements which are interdependent and which can only be adequately conceived of in terms of the complete structure. An alternative use of the term 'structure' is to see it as something that can be reduced to its elements. The complexity of a structure is decomposed into a network of linked parts with a view to exposing the elements and simplifying the whole. It is assumed that the elements make sense in their own right. This is more aptly described as a 'system'. Possibly the easiest way to distinguish structure from system is to see a system as congealed patterns of interaction, and structure as underlying model of the world that structuralists seek to identify. For Delphy, to break housework down into a system of tasks ignores the relationship between the elements and the whole which is one of a transforming social relation. The exploitative nature of the task done as 'housework' can only be seen when the individual domestic labour is related to the family unit and the domestic unit is related to the broader economic unit. To see housework as tasks denies this structural relationship.

History

History refers to both the reconstructed account of past events and the process by which this reconstruction is made, that is, the process of doing history. History writing then involves both a view about the nature of history and the assembling of historical materials. There are a number of ways of 'doing' history and a number of different schemes of categorising history. Rather than assess these differing views, the nature of the historical perspective embodied in critical social research will be

outlined. Critical social research involves two essential elements, the grounding of a generalized theory in material history and the exposure of the essential nature of structural relations which manifest themselves historically. Critical social research does not accept that history is essentially 'factual'. It denies that history exists and is just lying around waiting to be unearthed by the historian. Like the product of the activity of the historian, reconstructing history is the result of an active interpretation of the available archaeological, documentary, or oral evidence. Approaches that adopt a view of history as an interpretative process rather than the gathering of already existing facts are usually referred to as historicist approaches.

Historicism has been adapted as an approach for critical social research in its radical formulations. Radical historicism adopts the basic historicist tenets of history as a presentist, objectivist and interpretative process but in one way or another attempts to dig beneath the surface of historical manifestations. Structural historicism is the process of reconstructing a honed-down history, devoid of confusing instances, as a result of new perspective gained from a critique of prevailing social structures. This approach analyses the prevailing structure and its ideology, deconstructs it, and then reconstructs a logical history guided by the structural analysis. The point of reference for the historicist reconstruction is not the prevailing social system or contemporary perspective but the radical, dialectically reconstructed, social structure. So, like all aspects of critical social research, history is not just there waiting to be picked up and fitted into the critical historical account. History has to be researched and critically evaluated as well. Within critical social research the reconstruction of history takes place alongside the structural analysis; it both informs and is informed by it.

Deconstruction and Reconstruction

Deconstruction and reconstruction begin from the abstract concepts, which are applied to, or used in relation to, an area of investigation. In practice, there may be a large list of concepts. It is not necessary to

attempt a separate critical analysis of each. They are all interrelated and so the 'key' is to locate a central concept and critically analyse it. From that, the other concepts can be reconstructed. Before addressing how the central concept is analysed, it is important to note that the deconstructive-reconstructive process is not just abstract concept analysis tacked on to the usual idealized sequence of events in a research undertaking. Critical social research is not embodied in a series of discrete phases. It is not just abstract concept analysis followed by hypothesis generation, data collection, data analysis, and the generation of results, with the implications for a theory added at the end. Critical social research develops the different elements in parallels, each aspect informing each of the other aspects. The researcher is concerned with a realm of enquiry, usually provoked by a particular question that demands attention, such as, why do some youngsters not make the most of the opportunity offered by the education system, or should women get paid for housework. These questions frame an area of enquiry. The first job is to explore its central concepts. The selection of a central concept is not simple, but, as we shall see in the substantive examples, neither is it impossible. Take housework; the conventional approach is to see it as a set of tasks. Delphy, addressed it as unpaid domestic work. She showed that deconstructing housework in these terms did not work. Such an analysis failed to address the inconsistencies between work done in one's own home and work done in another's. Nor could it deal with the difference between work which was done at home which was regarded as economically accountable yet unpaid (butchering a pig) and that which was not (cooking the pig). A more useful deconstruction was to see housework in terms of a relation of production, as work done for another family member. The exploitative nature of housework is thus reconstructable. The hidden nature of this exploitation in economic accounting which focuses on the family unit is revealed in this analysis by analysing the relationships within the family. To sum up, the dialectical deconstructive-reconstructive process can be conceived as a process of focussing on the structural totality or historical moment. The totality is taken initially as an existing whole. This structure presents itself as natural, as the result of historical progress, i.e., it is ideologically

constituted. The critical analysis of the historically specific structure must therefore go beyond the surface appearances and lay bare the essential nature of the relationships that are embedded in the structure. This critique ostensibly begins by fixing on the fundamental unit of the structural relationships and decomposing it. The fundamental unit must be broken down until its essential nature is revealed, the structure is then reconstituted in terms of this essentialized construct. The reconstructive process reveals the transparency of ideology. The whole is grounded in historically specific material reality.

## 2.7 CRITICAL RESEARCH PROCESS

Doing educational research is not just about selecting and constructing a data collection technique. On the contrary, it embraces conceptualization of the problem, theoretical debate, specification of research practices, analytic frameworks, and epistemological presuppositions. Data collection is not a self-contained phase in a linear process. Rather, all aspects of the research process are interrelated and all bear on each other. There is no neat linear sequence of events as the idealized research report format (i.e., theoretical background, hypothesis, and design of research instrument, data collection, test of hypothesis, findings, and implications for theory). However much the idealized form of research design and presentation get imposed on other form of research, critical social research is not conducive to such manipulation. Critical social research deconstructs and reconstructs. But this is not like taking a house apart brick by brick and building a bungalow using the same bricks. Reconstruction is, not just rebuilding but reconceptualization. The nature of the reconceptualization process emerges only as the illusion of the existing taken-for-granted structure is revealed. There is a shuttling back and forth between what is being deconstructed and what is being reconstructed. The nature of both emerges together. In short, critical social research is a dialectical process that cannot be broken down into successive, discrete stages. So what do you do as a critical researcher (as opposed to what do you say you did when reporting the research)? You have to start somewhere and there is no better place than with the observation, concern, frustration, or doubt that provoked the enquiry.

Ask yourself why things are as they appear to be. But frame the question, not in terms of 'what are the causes?' or 'what does this mean?' but rather as 'how does it persist?' Ask 'how come nothing is done about it?' or 'how come no one notices?' or 'how is it that people accept what clearly is not in their interest?' Ask such questions and from there get a clearer picture of what you are really asking about. Asking these kinds of questions will lead you to three related lines of enquiry. First, what is essentially going on? (Pink packaging of girls' toys is not about 'why is it pink?', 25 but about 'why are some toys demarcated as girls' toys.) Second, why has this historically been the case? (why have girls traditionally had certain toys?) Third, why structures reproduce this state of affairs? (why do firms manufacture, and people continue to buy, these toys for girls?) Empirical enquiry will start to provide a clearer focus for the questions. (Find out what toys are currently marketed for girls. To what extent are they traditional toys? How long has the tradition been going? What changes have occurred over time? What leads people to continue to buy traditional gender-defined toys?) Through empirical enquiry, broad abstractions can be filled out and made concrete. Start to broaden the enquiry. Make connections between myths or contradictions that emerge from the empirical enquiry and broader stereotypes or ideological constructs. (Assumptions about girls' toys reproduce gender stereotypes. Why do these gendered myths persist? Even people who are aware of this stereotyping still buy gendered toys. Why does this anomaly occur?) Relate the myths and/or contradictions back to the empirical data on the one hand and to broader social structures on the other. Gendered toys are bought because children want them? Why? Because they see advertisements for gendered toys on television? What role does the media play in reproducing gender stereotypes? How does marketing target customers? How is gender created in the way advertisers refer to 'already constituted' subjects? Do not just assume relationships as the enquiry develops but undertake further empirical enquiry. (Watch the advertisements, look at school reading books, ask manufactures about marketing strategies, etc.) Ask broader questions of data. (Do manufacturers stick to the same gendered toys because they are easier and safer to market? Why don't people demand alternatives?)

Begin to reveal the nature of ideological forms, how they impinge upon the area of enquiry, and whose interests are served by them? Gradually bring the specific and the societal, the immediate and the historical together in a totalistic analysis. Avoid sweeping away the enquiry with grandiose but impotent explanations that implicate 'socialization', 'patriarchy', 'capitalism', or 'racism'. Critical social research is praxiological, so it is necessary to examine in detail how people collude in their own oppression, how they are persuaded to reproduce historical social structures, and so on. It is a close and detailed study which shows how historical oppressive social structures are legitimated and reproduced in specific practices. Critical research thus raises consciousness, subverts in legitimating processes, and provides clear analyses of the nature and operation of the oppressive structures. Critical research must be detailed if it is to be revealing and convincing. Empirical evidence is crucial. Such evidence may arise from asking people questions, or by watching and participating in what people do, or by reviewing what has happened in the past, or by analysing cultural products. Data may be aggregated or treated as unique testimony. It does not matter whether one computes the percentage of toys that are gendered by being packaged in pink; ask children's television. Do any or all of these things turn to be appropriate to advancing the enquiry. But make sure that techniques are undertaken within a critical methodology. What is important is that nothing is taken for granted and that what is, or has been, done or said is related to historical developments and social structures. Having done the study and gained an understanding, the production of a report is your chance to share that understanding with others. The 'traditional' approach to reporting empirical work should be avoided. This traditional approach to research reporting tends to a structure which idealizes the research process as a logical sequence of discrete phases. It suggests an introduction which provides an overview of the context, a literature review, the identification of the theoretical concern of the research, the specification of hypotheses, a central block of 'results', an analysis of the results, the implications for theory, and suggestions for further research. Critical social research is primarily concerned with analysis and reporting of substantive issues rather than

the artificial logic of the research process. The substantive issue is the central focus of the work and any critical social research report must indicate what central question is being addressed. A central plot must be identified and this plot sustained throughout. In effect, the core argument remains as a skeleton which is filled out by empirical details.

Approaches in Critical Social Research

Critical social research makes considerable use of four approaches : critical case study, radical historicism, critical ethnography, and structuralist techniques. This is not, in any way, meant to delimit what approaches critical social researchers can adopt nor do these four approaches constitute a set of mutually exclusive alternatives. Critical case study In a critical (or theoretical) case study, the researcher deliberately selects, for detailed empirical analysis, a case which provides a specific focus or analysis of a myth or contradiction. This approach is effectively adopted by Cockburn (1983). A variety of different data collection techniques can be adopted within a critical case study approach. The researchers relied principally on structured interviews augmented by observation in ascertaining the interests, attitudes, social networks and life-styles of their case-study groups. Cockburn preferred in depth-interviewing with the case-study group. There is nothing inherently advantageous in any particular data collection method for critical case study. The case study is not an end in itself, rather it is an empirical resource for the exploration of wider questions about the nature of oppressive social structures. What is important is that the study is designed to critically address myths or contradictions at the level of actual practices that relate to broader questions about the operation of oppression. Radical historicism Radical historicism presupposes that constructing histories is an interpretative process rather than the recording of ‘facts’. Although reconstructing the past in terms of the present in one way or another, it attempts, to dig beneath the surface of the historical development of structural forms. Radical historicism involves the uncovering of historical evidence but the meaning of the evidence depends on a reconceptualization of dominant social structures.

The reconstruction of history takes place alongside structural analysis; it informs and is also informed by it. Liddle and Joshi, for example, did not just document the stages in the curtailment of women's freedom in India but related the particular practices, on the one hand, to economic considerations related to the concentration of wealth in upper castes, and on the other, to a concerted effort by men to undermine the female power principle. Critical ethnography Critical ethnography is a widely used technique in critical social research. The involvement and close attention to detail which characterizes ethnography makes it useful for rendering visible the invisible, and for revealing anomalies and common-sense notions. A critical ethnography transforms the anomalies and taken-for-granted into contradictions and myths by situating them in broader social and historical analyses.

Critical ethnography thus focuses on the way in which contradictions are negotiated and myths re-presented. Critical ethnography differs from conventional or traditional ethnography in its attempt to link the detailed analysis of ethnography to wider social structures and systems of power relationships in order to get beneath the surface of oppressive structural relationships. In essence, critical ethnography attempts, in one way or another, to incorporate detailed ethnographic analysis directly into a dialectical critique. Critical ethnography proceeds by raising substantive questions about structural relationships which the ethnographic study elaborates in terms of actual practice. Like the critical case study, the details of the ethnographic work is a resource in the deconstruction of social structures. Critical ethnography makes use of the same data collection technique as conventional ethnography (in-depth interviewing, participant observation, etc.) and is also reflexive. However, there is far less concern with 'neutrality' both, in terms of the interventionist role of the researcher, and the presentation of a non-partisan perspective. The intention is to go beyond the grasping of the subjects' meanings. Critical ethnography asks how these meanings relate to wider cultural and ideological forms. It involves keeping alert to structural factors while probing meanings. Through ideological analysis, critical ethnography aims to reveal both contradictions and myths. Inconsistencies, for

example, between what people do and what they say are transformed from anomalies to contradictions. What, for example, black community college students had to say about time keeping and what they actually did was anomalous. It became an analytic contradiction, once it was explained in terms of the notion of 'white man's clock time' lip-service to the white middle-class meritocratic system while living in an everyday milieu that operated on a different sense of time.

**Check Your Progress 2**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss the Phenomenology and Educational Research.

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2. What are the two ways in which the term structure is used in social research?

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## 2.8 LET US SUM UP

Phenomenology and critical research are two major approaches that have developed in recent times. Phenomenological perspectives in social research reject many assumptions of positivism. They argue that the subject matter of social and natural sciences is fundamentally different. Phenomenology is a philosophy of knowledge that emphasises direct observation of phenomena. Phenomenologists concentrate on phenomena per se, and try to produce convincing descriptions of what they

experience rather than explanations and causes. The most important reason for the current attractiveness of phenomenology is that the issue of consciousness, long excluded from much of scientific discourse, has been reintroduced in to the domains of ethnographic fieldwork and ethnological theory. Phenomenological methods can be expected to have enhanced importance to the extent that educational research becomes more focussed on meaning and experience in any transpersonal or social encounter. The critical educational researchers are not like other researchers who merely talk rather than observe, or merely observe rather than think, or merely think rather than put their thoughts to the test of systematic empirical investigation. Doing critical educational research is not just about selecting and constructing a data collection technique. On the contrary, it embraces conceptualization of the problem, theoretical debate, specification of research practices, analytic frameworks and epistemological presuppositions. Critical research presents the hard core of concept, procedure and inference in the analysis of social research. It does not represent a set of categories introduced a new, but rather a codification of those concepts of problems which have been forced upon our attention by critical scrutiny of current research and theory. Critical research digs beneath the surface of extensive appearances through direct analysis of social phenomena. The concepts which frame and define an area of enquiry are themselves subject to critical analysis. Specific phenomena are analysed in terms of the way they relate to wider social structures and in terms of their historical manifestations. The critical rebuilding involves a process of conceptual shuttling back and forth between the particular phenomena under investigation and the wider structure and history to which it relates, between the taken-for-granted and the deconstructed concepts and between the theoretical deconstruction and the reconstructed social totality.

## 2.9 KEY WORDS

Radical: The term political radicalism denotes political principles focused on altering social structures through revolutionary or other means and changing value systems in fundamental ways.

Positivism: Positivism is a philosophical theory stating that certain knowledge is based on natural phenomena and their properties and relations. Thus, information derived from sensory experience, interpreted through reason and logic, forms the exclusive source of all certain knowledge.

## 2.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Define Radical Method.
2. Relate Phenomenology and Positivism.
3. Explain the meaning of Phenomenology and how it is different from Positivism.
4. Describe any two phenomenological approaches in educational research.
5. Discuss the Phenomenology and Educational Research.
6. What are the two ways in which the term structure is used in social research?

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## 2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1. See Section 2.2
2. See Section 2.3
3. See Section 2.4

**Check Your Progress 2**

1. See Section 2.5
2. See Section 2.6

# UNIT 3: A PRESUPPOSITION LESS PHILOSOPHY

**STRUCTURE**



## 3.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- What is Phenomenology?
- The Discipline of Phenomenology
- From Phenomena to Phenomenology
- The History and Varieties of Phenomenology
- Phenomenology and Ontology, Epistemology, Logic, Ethics

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed

toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions.

Phenomenology as a discipline is distinct from but related to other key disciplines in philosophy, such as ontology, epistemology, logic, and ethics. Phenomenology has been practiced in various guises for centuries, but it came into its own in the early 20th century in the works of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and others. Phenomenological issues of intentionality, consciousness, qualia, and first-person perspective have been prominent in recent philosophy of mind.

## 3.2 WHAT IS PHENOMENOLOGY?

Phenomenology is commonly understood in either of two ways: as a disciplinary field in philosophy, or as a movement in the history of philosophy.

The discipline of phenomenology may be defined initially as the study of structures of experience, or consciousness. Literally, phenomenology is the study of "phenomena": appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view. This field of philosophy is then to be distinguished from, and related to, the other main fields of philosophy: ontology (the study of being or what is), epistemology (the study of knowledge), logic (the study of valid reasoning), ethics (the study of right and wrong action), etc.

The historical movement of phenomenology is the philosophical tradition launched in the first half of the 20th century by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, et al. In that movement, the discipline of phenomenology was prized as the proper foundation of all philosophy—as opposed, say, to ethics or metaphysics

or epistemology. The methods and characterization of the discipline were widely debated by Husserl and his successors, and these debates continue to the present day. (The definition of phenomenology offered above will thus be debatable, for example, by Heideggerians, but it remains the starting point in characterizing the discipline.)

In recent philosophy of mind, the term "phenomenology" is often restricted to the characterization of sensory qualities of seeing, hearing, etc.: what it is like to have sensations of various kinds. However, our experience is normally much richer in content than mere sensation. Accordingly, in the phenomenological tradition, phenomenology is given a much wider range, addressing the meaning things have in our experience, notably, the significance of objects, events, tools, the flow of time, the self, and others, as these things arise and are experienced in our "life-world".

Phenomenology as a discipline has been central to the tradition of continental European philosophy throughout the 20th century, while philosophy of mind has evolved in the Austro-Anglo-American tradition of analytic philosophy that developed throughout the 20th century. Yet the fundamental character of our mental activity is pursued in overlapping ways within these two traditions. Accordingly, the perspective on phenomenology drawn in this article will accommodate both traditions. The main concern here will be to characterize the discipline of phenomenology, in a contemporary purview, while also highlighting the historical tradition that brought the discipline into its own.

Basically, phenomenology studies the structure of various types of experience ranging from perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity. The structure of these forms of experience typically involves what Husserl called "intentionality", that is, the directedness of experience toward things in the world, the property of consciousness that it is a consciousness of or about something.

According to classical Husserlian phenomenology, our experience is directed toward—represents or "intends"—things only through particular concepts, thoughts, ideas, images, etc. These make up the meaning or content of a given experience, and are distinct from the things they present or mean.

The basic intentional structure of consciousness, we find in reflection or analysis, involves further forms of experience. Thus, phenomenology develops a complex account of temporal awareness (within the stream of consciousness), spatial awareness (notably in perception), attention (distinguishing focal and marginal or "horizonal" awareness), awareness of one's own experience (self-consciousness, in one sense), self-awareness (awareness-of-oneself), the self in different roles (as thinking, acting, etc.), embodied action (including kinesthetic awareness of one's movement), purpose or intention in action (more or less explicit), awareness of other persons (in empathy, intersubjectivity, collectivity), linguistic activity (involving meaning, communication, understanding others), social interaction (including collective action), and everyday activity in our surrounding life-world (in a particular culture).

Furthermore, in a different dimension, we find various grounds or enabling conditions—conditions of the possibility—of intentionality, including embodiment, bodily skills, cultural context, language and other social practices, social background, and contextual aspects of intentional activities. Thus, phenomenology leads from conscious experience into conditions that help to give experience its intentionality. Traditional phenomenology has focused on subjective, practical, and social conditions of experience. Recent philosophy of mind, however, has focused especially on the neural substrate of experience, on how conscious experience and mental representation or intentionality are grounded in brain activity. It remains a difficult question how much of these grounds of experience fall within the province of phenomenology as a discipline. Cultural conditions thus seem closer to our experience and to our familiar self-understanding than do the electrochemical workings of our brain, much less our dependence on quantum-

mechanical states of physical systems to which we may belong. The cautious thing to say is that phenomenology leads in some ways into at least some background conditions of our experience.

## 3.3 THE DISCIPLINE OF PHENOMENOLOGY

The discipline of phenomenology is defined by its domain of study, its methods, and its main results.

Phenomenology studies structures of conscious experience as experienced from the first-person point of view, along with relevant conditions of experience. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, the way it is directed through its content or meaning toward a certain object in the world.

We all experience various types of experience including perception, imagination, thought, emotion, desire, volition, and action. Thus, the domain of phenomenology is the range of experiences including these types (among others). Experience includes not only relatively passive experience as in vision or hearing, but also active experience as in walking or hammering a nail or kicking a ball. (The range will be specific to each species of being that enjoys consciousness; our focus is on our own, human, experience. Not all conscious beings will, or will be able to, practice phenomenology, as we do.)

Conscious experiences have a unique feature: we experience them, we live through them or perform them. Other things in the world we may observe and engage. But we do not experience them, in the sense of living through or performing them. This experiential or first-person feature—that of being experienced—is an essential part of the nature or structure of conscious experience: as we say, “I see / think / desire / do …” This feature is both a phenomenological and an ontological feature of each experience: it is part of what it is for the experience to be experienced (phenomenological) and part of what it is for the experience to be (ontological).

How shall we study conscious experience? We reflect on various types of experiences just as we experience them. That is to say, we proceed from the first-person point of view. However, we do not normally characterize an experience at the time we are performing it. In many cases we do not have that capability: a state of intense anger or fear, for example, consumes all of one's psychic focus at the time. Rather, we acquire a background of having lived through a given type of experience, and we look to our familiarity with that type of experience: hearing a song, seeing a sunset, thinking about love, intending to jump a hurdle. The practice of phenomenology assumes such familiarity with the type of experiences to be characterized. Importantly, also, it is types of experience that phenomenology pursues, rather than a particular fleeting experience—unless its type is what interests us.

Classical phenomenologists practiced some three distinguishable methods. (1) We describe a type of experience just as we find it in our own (past) experience. Thus, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty spoke of pure description of lived experience. (2) We interpret a type of experience by relating it to relevant features of context. In this vein, Heidegger and his followers spoke of hermeneutics, the art of interpretation in context, especially social and linguistic context. (3) We analyze the form of a type of experience. In the end, all the classical phenomenologists practiced analysis of experience, factoring out notable features for further elaboration.

These traditional methods have been ramified in recent decades, expanding the methods available to phenomenology. Thus: (4) In a logico-semantic model of phenomenology, we specify the truth conditions for a type of thinking (say, where I think that dogs chase cats) or the satisfaction conditions for a type of intention (say, where I intend or will to jump that hurdle). (5) In the experimental paradigm of cognitive neuroscience, we design empirical experiments that tend to confirm or refute aspects of experience (say, where a brain scan shows electrochemical activity in a specific region of the brain thought to

subserve a type of vision or emotion or motor control). This style of "neurophenomenology" assumes that conscious experience is grounded in neural activity in embodied action in appropriate surroundings—mixing pure phenomenology with biological and physical science in a way that was not wholly congenial to traditional phenomenologists.

What makes an experience conscious is a certain awareness one has of the experience while living through or performing it. This form of inner awareness has been a topic of considerable debate, centuries after the issue arose with Locke's notion of self-consciousness on the heels of Descartes' sense of consciousness (conscience, co-knowledge). Does this awareness-of-experience consist in a kind of inner observation of the experience, as if one were doing two things at once? (Brentano argued no.) Is it a higher-order perception of one's mind's operation, or is it a higher-order thought about one's mental activity? (Recent theorists have proposed both.) Or is it a different form of inherent structure? (Sartre took this line, drawing on Brentano and Husserl.) These issues are beyond the scope of this article, but notice that these results of phenomenological analysis shape the characterization of the domain of study and the methodology appropriate to the domain. For awareness-of-experience is a defining trait of conscious experience, the trait that gives experience a first-person, lived character. It is that lived character of experience that allows a first-person perspective on the object of study, namely, experience, and that perspective is characteristic of the methodology of phenomenology.

Conscious experience is the starting point of phenomenology, but experience shades off into less overtly conscious phenomena. As Husserl and others stressed, we are only vaguely aware of things in the margin or periphery of attention, and we are only implicitly aware of the wider horizon of things in the world around us. Moreover, as Heidegger stressed, in practical activities like walking along, or hammering a nail, or speaking our native tongue, we are not explicitly conscious of our habitual patterns of action. Furthermore, as psychoanalysts have stressed, much of our intentional mental activity is not conscious at all, but may

become conscious in the process of therapy or interrogation, as we come to realize how we feel or think about something. We should allow, then, that the domain of phenomenology—our own experience—spreads out from conscious experience into semi-conscious and even unconscious mental activity, along with relevant background conditions implicitly invoked in our experience. (These issues are subject to debate; the point here is to open the door to the question of where to draw the boundary of the domain of phenomenology.)

To begin an elementary exercise in phenomenology, consider some typical experiences one might have in everyday life, characterized in the first person:

- I see that fishing boat off the coast as dusk descends over the Pacific.
- I hear that helicopter whirring overhead as it approaches the hospital.
- I am thinking that phenomenology differs from psychology.
- I wish that warm rain from Mexico were falling like last week.
- I imagine a fearsome creature like that in my nightmare.
- I intend to finish my writing by noon.
- I walk carefully around the broken glass on the sidewalk.
- I stroke a backhand cross-court with that certain underspin.
- I am searching for the words to make my point in conversation.

Here are rudimentary characterizations of some familiar types of experience. Each sentence is a simple form of phenomenological description, articulating in everyday English the structure of the type of experience so described. The subject term "I" indicates the first-person structure of the experience: the intentionality proceeds from the subject. The verb indicates the type of intentional activity described: perception, thought, imagination, etc. Of central importance is the way that objects of awareness are presented or intended in our experiences, especially, the way we see or conceive or think about objects. The direct-object expression ("that fishing boat off the coast") articulates the mode of

presentation of the object in the experience: the content or meaning of the experience, the core of what Husserl called noema. In effect, the object-phrase expresses the noema of the act described, that is, to the extent that language has appropriate expressive power. The overall form of the given sentence articulates the basic form of intentionality in the experience: subject-act-content-object.

Rich phenomenological description or interpretation, as in Husserl, Merleau-Ponty et al., will far outrun such simple phenomenological descriptions as above. But such simple descriptions bring out the basic form of intentionality. As we interpret the phenomenological description further, we may assess the relevance of the context of experience. And we may turn to wider conditions of the possibility of that type of experience. In this way, in the practice of phenomenology, we classify, describe, interpret, and analyze structures of experiences in ways that answer to our own experience.

In such interpretive-descriptive analyses of experience, we immediately observe that we are analyzing familiar forms of consciousness, conscious experience of or about this or that. Intentionality is thus the salient structure of our experience, and much of phenomenology proceeds as the study of different aspects of intentionality. Thus, we explore structures of the stream of consciousness, the enduring self, the embodied self, and bodily action. Furthermore, as we reflect on how these phenomena work, we turn to the analysis of relevant conditions that enable our experiences to occur as they do, and to represent or intend as they do. Phenomenology then leads into analyses of conditions of the possibility of intentionality, conditions involving motor skills and habits, background social practices, and often language, with its special place in human affairs.

## 3.4 FROM PHENOMENA TO PHENOMENOLOGY

The Oxford English Dictionary presents the following definition: “Phenomenology. a. The science of phenomena as distinct from being

(ontology). b. That division of any science which describes and classifies its phenomena. From the Greek phainomenon, appearance." In philosophy, the term is used in the first sense, amid debates of theory and methodology. In physics and philosophy of science, the term is used in the second sense, albeit only occasionally.

In its root meaning, then, phenomenology is the study of phenomena: literally, appearances as opposed to reality. This ancient distinction launched philosophy as we emerged from Plato's cave. Yet the discipline of phenomenology did not blossom until the 20th century and remains poorly understood in many circles of contemporary philosophy. What is that discipline? How did philosophy move from a root concept of phenomena to the discipline of phenomenology?

Originally, in the 18th century, "phenomenology" meant the theory of appearances fundamental to empirical knowledge, especially sensory appearances. The Latin term "Phenomenologia" was introduced by Christoph Friedrich Oetinger in 1736. Subsequently, the German term "Phänomenologia" was used by Johann Heinrich Lambert, a follower of Christian Wolff. Immanuel Kant used the term occasionally in various writings, as did Johann Gottlieb Fichte. In 1807, G. W. F. Hegel wrote a book titled Phänomenologie des Geistes (usually translated as Phenomenology of Spirit). By 1889 Franz Brentano used the term to characterize what he called "descriptive psychology". From there Edmund Husserl took up the term for his new science of consciousness, and the rest is history.

Suppose we say phenomenology studies phenomena: what appears to us—and its appearing. How shall we understand phenomena? The term has a rich history in recent centuries, in which we can see traces of the emerging discipline of phenomenology.

In a strict empiricist vein, what appears before the mind are sensory data or qualia: either patterns of one's own sensations (seeing red here now, feeling this ticklish feeling, hearing that resonant bass tone) or sensible

patterns of worldly things, say, the looks and smells of flowers (what John Locke called secondary qualities of things). In a strict rationalist vein, by contrast, what appears before the mind are ideas, rationally formed "clear and distinct ideas" (in René Descartes' ideal). In Immanuel Kant's theory of knowledge, fusing rationalist and empiricist aims, what appears to the mind are phenomena defined as things-as-they-appear or things-as-they-are-represented (in a synthesis of sensory and conceptual forms of objects-as-known). In Auguste Comte's theory of science, phenomena (phenomenes) are the facts (faits, what occurs) that a given science would explain.

In 18th and 19th century epistemology, then, phenomena are the starting points in building knowledge, especially science. Accordingly, in a familiar and still current sense, phenomena are whatever we observe (perceive) and seek to explain.

As the discipline of psychology emerged late in the 19th century, however, phenomena took on a somewhat different guise. In Franz Brentano's Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint (1874), phenomena are what occur in the mind: mental phenomena are acts of consciousness (or their contents), and physical phenomena are objects of external perception starting with colors and shapes. For Brentano, physical phenomena exist "intentionally" in acts of consciousness. This view revives a Medieval notion Brentano called "intentional in-existence", but the ontology remains undeveloped (what is it to exist in the mind, and do physical objects exist only in the mind?). More generally, we might say, phenomena are whatever we are conscious of: objects and events around us, other people, ourselves, even (in reflection) our own conscious experiences, as we experience these. In a certain technical sense, phenomena are things as they are given to our consciousness, whether in perception or imagination or thought or volition. This conception of phenomena would soon inform the new discipline of phenomenology.

Brentano distinguished descriptive psychology from genetic psychology. Where genetic psychology seeks the causes of various types of mental phenomena, descriptive psychology defines and classifies the various types of mental phenomena, including perception, judgment, emotion, etc. According to Brentano, every mental phenomenon, or act of consciousness, is directed toward some object, and only mental phenomena are so directed. This thesis of intentional directedness was the hallmark of Brentano's descriptive psychology. In 1889 Brentano used the term "phenomenology" for descriptive psychology, and the way was paved for Husserl's new science of phenomenology.

Phenomenology as we know it was launched by Edmund Husserl in his Logical Investigations (1900–01). Two importantly different lines of theory came together in that monumental work: psychological theory, on the heels of Franz Brentano (and also William James, whose Principles of Psychology appeared in 1891 and greatly impressed Husserl); and logical or semantic theory, on the heels of Bernard Bolzano and Husserl's contemporaries who founded modern logic, including Gottlob Frege. (Interestingly, both lines of research trace back to Aristotle, and both reached importantly new results in Husserl's day.)

Husserl's Logical Investigations was inspired by Bolzano's ideal of logic, while taking up Brentano's conception of descriptive psychology. In his Theory of Science (1835) Bolzano distinguished between subjective and objective ideas or representations (Vorstellungen). In effect Bolzano criticized Kant and before him the classical empiricists and rationalists for failing to make this sort of distinction, thereby rendering phenomena merely subjective. Logic studies objective ideas, including propositions, which in turn make up objective theories as in the sciences. Psychology would, by contrast, study subjective ideas, the concrete contents (occurrences) of mental activities in particular minds at a given time. Husserl was after both, within a single discipline. So phenomena must be reconceived as objective intentional contents (sometimes called intentional objects) of subjective acts of consciousness. Phenomenology would then study this complex of consciousness and correlated phenomena. In Ideas I (Book One, 1913)

Husserl introduced two Greek words to capture his version of the Bolzanoan distinction: noesis and noema, from the Greek verb noéō (νοέω), meaning to perceive, think, intend, whence the noun nous or mind. The intentional process of consciousness is called noesis, while its ideal content is called noema. The noema of an act of consciousness Husserl characterized both as an ideal meaning and as "the object as intended". Thus the phenomenon, or object-as-it-appears, becomes the noema, or object-as-it-is-intended. The interpretations of Husserl's theory of noema have been several and amount to different developments of Husserl's basic theory of intentionality. (Is the noema an aspect of the object intended, or rather a medium of intention?)

For Husserl, then, phenomenology integrates a kind of psychology with a kind of logic. It develops a descriptive or analytic psychology in that it describes and analyzes types of subjective mental activity or experience, in short, acts of consciousness. Yet it develops a kind of logic—a theory of meaning (today we say logical semantics)—in that it describes and analyzes objective contents of consciousness: ideas, concepts, images, propositions, in short, ideal meanings of various types that serve as intentional contents, or noematic meanings, of various types of experience. These contents are shareable by different acts of consciousness, and in that sense they are objective, ideal meanings. Following Bolzano (and to some extent the platonistic logician Hermann Lotze), Husserl opposed any reduction of logic or mathematics or science to mere psychology, to how people happen to think, and in the same spirit he distinguished phenomenology from mere psychology. For Husserl, phenomenology would study consciousness without reducing the objective and shareable meanings that inhabit experience to merely subjective happenstances. Ideal meaning would be the engine of intentionality in acts of consciousness.

A clear conception of phenomenology awaited Husserl's development of a clear model of intentionality. Indeed, phenomenology and the modern concept of intentionality emerged hand-in-hand in Husserl's Logical Investigations (1900–01). With theoretical foundations laid in the

Investigations, Husserl would then promote the radical new science of phenomenology in Ideas I (1913). And alternative visions of phenomenology would soon follow.

**Check Your Progress 1**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. What is Phenomenology?

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2. Discuss about the Discipline of Phenomenology.

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3. Discuss the development from Phenomena to Phenomenology.

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## 3.5 THE HISTORY AND VARIETIES OF PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology came into its own with Husserl, much as epistemology came into its own with Descartes, and ontology or metaphysics came into

its own with Aristotle on the heels of Plato. Yet phenomenology has been practiced, with or without the name, for many centuries. When Hindu and Buddhist philosophers reflected on states of consciousness achieved in a variety of meditative states, they were practicing phenomenology. When Descartes, Hume, and Kant characterized states of perception, thought, and imagination, they were practicing phenomenology. When Brentano classified varieties of mental phenomena (defined by the directedness of consciousness), he was practicing phenomenology. When William James appraised kinds of mental activity in the stream of consciousness (including their embodiment and their dependence on habit), he too was practicing phenomenology. And when recent analytic philosophers of mind have addressed issues of consciousness and intentionality, they have often been practicing phenomenology. Still, the discipline of phenomenology, its roots tracing back through the centuries, came to full flower in Husserl.

Husserl's work was followed by a flurry of phenomenological writing in the first half of the 20th century. The diversity of traditional phenomenology is apparent in the Encyclopedia of Phenomenology (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997, Dordrecht and Boston), which features separate articles on some seven types of phenomenology. (1) Transcendental constitutive phenomenology studies how objects are constituted in pure or transcendental consciousness, setting aside questions of any relation to the natural world around us. (2) Naturalistic constitutive phenomenology studies how consciousness constitutes or takes things in the world of nature, assuming with the natural attitude that consciousness is part of nature. (3) Existential phenomenology studies concrete human existence, including our experience of free choice or action in concrete situations. (4) Generative historicist phenomenology studies how meaning, as found in our experience, is generated in historical processes of collective experience over time. (5) Genetic phenomenology studies the genesis of meanings of things within one's own stream of experience. (6) Hermeneutical phenomenology studies interpretive structures of experience, how we understand and

engage things around us in our human world, including ourselves and others. (7) Realistic phenomenology studies the structure of consciousness and intentionality, assuming it occurs in a real world that is largely external to consciousness and not somehow brought into being by consciousness.

The most famous of the classical phenomenologists were Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. In these four thinkers we find different conceptions of phenomenology, different methods, and different results. A brief sketch of their differences will capture both a crucial period in the history of phenomenology and a sense of the diversity of the field of phenomenology.

In his Logical Investigations (1900–01) Husserl outlined a complex system of philosophy, moving from logic to philosophy of language, to ontology (theory of universals and parts of wholes), to a phenomenological theory of intentionality, and finally to a phenomenological theory of knowledge. Then in Ideas I (1913) he focused squarely on phenomenology itself. Husserl defined phenomenology as "the science of the essence of consciousness", centered on the defining trait of intentionality, approached explicitly "in the first person". (See Husserl, Ideas I, ¤¤33ff.) In this spirit, we may say phenomenology is the study of consciousness—that is, conscious experience of various types—as experienced from the first-person point of view. In this discipline we study different forms of experience just as we experience them, from the perspective of the subject living through or performing them. Thus, we characterize experiences of seeing, hearing, imagining, thinking, feeling (i.e., emotion), wishing, desiring, willing, and also acting, that is, embodied volitional activities of walking, talking, cooking, carpentering, etc. However, not just any characterization of an experience will do. Phenomenological analysis of a given type of experience will feature the ways in which we ourselves would experience that form of conscious activity. And the leading property of our familiar types of experience is their intentionality, their being a consciousness of or about something, something experienced or presented or engaged in a certain way. How I see or conceptualize or understand the object I am

dealing with defines the meaning of that object in my current experience. Thus, phenomenology features a study of meaning, in a wide sense that includes more than what is expressed in language.

In Ideas I Husserl presented phenomenology with a transcendental turn. In part this means that Husserl took on the Kantian idiom of "transcendental idealism", looking for conditions of the possibility of knowledge, or of consciousness generally, and arguably turning away from any reality beyond phenomena. But Husserl's transcendental turn also involved his discovery of the method of epoché (from the Greek skeptics' notion of abstaining from belief). We are to practice phenomenology, Husserl proposed, by "bracketing" the question of the existence of the natural world around us. We thereby turn our attention, in reflection, to the structure of our own conscious experience. Our first key result is the observation that each act of consciousness is a consciousness of something, that is, intentional, or directed toward something. Consider my visual experience wherein I see a tree across the square. In phenomenological reflection, we need not concern ourselves with whether the tree exists: my experience is of a tree whether or not such a tree exists. However, we do need to concern ourselves with how the object is meant or intended. I see a Eucalyptus tree, not a Yucca tree; I see that object as a Eucalyptus, with a certain shape, with bark stripping off, etc. Thus, bracketing the tree itself, we turn our attention to my experience of the tree, and specifically to the content or meaning in my experience. This tree-as-perceived Husserl calls the noema or noematic sense of the experience.

Philosophers succeeding Husserl debated the proper characterization of phenomenology, arguing over its results and its methods. Adolf Reinach, an early student of Husserl's (who died in World War I), argued that phenomenology should remain allied with a realist ontology, as in Husserl's Logical Investigations. Roman Ingarden, a Polish phenomenologist of the next generation, continued the resistance to Husserl's turn to transcendental idealism. For such philosophers, phenomenology should not bracket questions of being or ontology, as the

method of epoché would suggest. And they were not alone. Martin Heidegger studied Husserl's early writings, worked as Assistant to Husserl in 1916, and in 1928 succeeded Husserl in the prestigious chair at the University of Freiburg. Heidegger had his own ideas about phenomenology.

In Being and Time (1927) Heidegger unfurled his rendition of phenomenology. For Heidegger, we and our activities are always "in the world", our being is being-in-the-world, so we do not study our activities by bracketing the world, rather we interpret our activities and the meaning things have for us by looking to our contextual relations to things in the world. Indeed, for Heidegger, phenomenology resolves into what he called "fundamental ontology". We must distinguish beings from their being, and we begin our investigation of the meaning of being in our own case, examining our own existence in the activity of "Dasein" (that being whose being is in each case my own). Heidegger resisted Husserl's neo-Cartesian emphasis on consciousness and subjectivity, including how perception presents things around us. By contrast, Heidegger held that our more basic ways of relating to things are in practical activities like hammering, where the phenomenology reveals our situation in a context of equipment and in being-with-others.

In Being and Time Heidegger approached phenomenology, in a quasi-poetic idiom, through the root meanings of "logos" and "phenomena", so that phenomenology is defined as the art or practice of "letting things show themselves". In Heidegger's inimitable linguistic play on the Greek roots, " 'phenomenology' means …—to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself." (See Heidegger, Being and Time, 1927, ¦ 7C.) Here Heidegger explicitly parodies Husserl's call, "To the things themselves!", or "To the phenomena themselves!" Heidegger went on to emphasize practical forms of comportment or better relating (Verhalten) as in hammering a nail, as opposed to representational forms of intentionality as in seeing or thinking about a hammer. Much of Being and Time develops an

existential interpretation of our modes of being including, famously, our being-toward-death.

In a very different style, in clear analytical prose, in the text of a lecture course called The Basic Problems of Phenomenology (1927), Heidegger traced the question of the meaning of being from Aristotle through many other thinkers into the issues of phenomenology. Our understanding of beings and their being comes ultimately through phenomenology. Here the connection with classical issues of ontology is more apparent, and consonant with Husserl's vision in the Logical Investigations (an early source of inspiration for Heidegger). One of Heidegger's most innovative ideas was his conception of the "ground" of being, looking to modes of being more fundamental than the things around us (from trees to hammers). Heidegger questioned the contemporary concern with technology, and his writing might suggest that our scientific theories are historical artifacts that we use in technological practice, rather than systems of ideal truth (as Husserl had held). Our deep understanding of being, in our own case, comes rather from phenomenology, Heidegger held.

In the 1930s phenomenology migrated from Austrian and then German philosophy into French philosophy. The way had been paved in Marcel Proust's In Search of Lost Time, in which the narrator recounts in close detail his vivid recollections of past experiences, including his famous associations with the smell of freshly baked madeleines. This sensibility to experience traces to Descartes' work, and French phenomenology has been an effort to preserve the central thrust of Descartes' insights while rejecting mind-body dualism. The experience of one's own body, or one's lived or living body, has been an important motif in many French philosophers of the 20th century.

In the novel Nausea (1936) Jean-Paul Sartre described a bizarre course of experience in which the protagonist, writing in the first person, describes how ordinary objects lose their meaning until he encounters pure being at the foot of a chestnut tree, and in that moment recovers his sense of his

own freedom. In Being and Nothingness (1943, written partly while a prisoner of war), Sartre developed his conception of phenomenological ontology. Consciousness is a consciousness of objects, as Husserl had stressed. In Sartre's model of intentionality, the central player in consciousness is a phenomenon, and the occurrence of a phenomenon just is a consciousness-of-an-object. The chestnut tree I see is, for Sartre, such a phenomenon in my consciousness. Indeed, all things in the world, as we normally experience them, are phenomena, beneath or behind which lies their "being-in-itself". Consciousness, by contrast, has "being-for-itself", since each consciousness is not only a consciousness-of-its-object but also a pre-reflective consciousness-of-itself (conscience de soi). Yet for Sartre, unlike Husserl, the "I" or self is nothing but a sequence of acts of consciousness, notably including radically free choices (like a Humean bundle of perceptions).

For Sartre, the practice of phenomenology proceeds by a deliberate reflection on the structure of consciousness. Sartre's method is in effect a literary style of interpretive description of different types of experience in relevant situations—a practice that does not really fit the methodological proposals of either Husserl or Heidegger, but makes use of Sartre's great literary skill. (Sartre wrote many plays and novels and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.)

Sartre's phenomenology in Being and Nothingness became the philosophical foundation for his popular philosophy of existentialism, sketched in his famous lecture "Existentialism is a Humanism" (1945). In Being and Nothingness Sartre emphasized the experience of freedom of choice, especially the project of choosing one's self, the defining pattern of one's past actions. Through vivid description of the "look" of the Other, Sartre laid groundwork for the contemporary political significance of the concept of the Other (as in other groups or ethnicities). Indeed, in The Second Sex (1949) Simone de Beauvoir, Sartre's life-long companion, launched contemporary feminism with her nuanced account of the perceived role of women as Other.

## Notes

In 1940s Paris, Maurice Merleau-Ponty joined with Sartre and Beauvoir in developing phenomenology. In Phenomenology of Perception (1945) Merleau-Ponty developed a rich variety of phenomenology emphasizing the role of the body in human experience. Unlike Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre, Merleau-Ponty looked to experimental psychology, analyzing the reported experience of amputees who felt sensations in a phantom limb. Merleau-Ponty rejected both associationist psychology, focused on correlations between sensation and stimulus, and intellectualist psychology, focused on rational construction of the world in the mind. (Think of the behaviorist and computationalist models of mind in more recent decades of empirical psychology.) Instead, Merleau-Ponty focused on the "body image", our experience of our own body and its significance in our activities. Extending Husserl's account of the lived body (as opposed to the physical body), Merleau-Ponty resisted the traditional Cartesian separation of mind and body. For the body image is neither in the mental realm nor in the mechanical-physical realm. Rather, my body is, as it were, me in my engaged action with things I perceive including other people.

The scope of Phenomenology of Perception is characteristic of the breadth of classical phenomenology, not least because Merleau-Ponty drew (with generosity) on Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre while fashioning his own innovative vision of phenomenology. His phenomenology addressed the role of attention in the phenomenal field, the experience of the body, the spatiality of the body, the motility of the body, the body in sexual being and in speech, other selves, temporality, and the character of freedom so important in French existentialism. Near the end of a chapter on the cogito (Descartes' "I think, therefore I am"), Merleau-Ponty succinctly captures his embodied, existential form of phenomenology, writing:

Insofar as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity [= consciousness] is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because the

subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world. [408]
In short, consciousness is embodied (in the world), and equally body is infused with consciousness (with cognition of the world).

In the years since Husserl, Heidegger, et al. wrote, phenomenologists have dug into all these classical issues, including intentionality, temporal awareness, intersubjectivity, practical intentionality, and the social and linguistic contexts of human activity. Interpretation of historical texts by Husserl et al. has played a prominent role in this work, both because the texts are rich and difficult and because the historical dimension is itself part of the practice of continental European philosophy. Since the 1960s, philosophers trained in the methods of analytic philosophy have also dug into the foundations of phenomenology, with an eye to 20th century work in philosophy of logic, language, and mind.

Phenomenology was already linked with logical and semantic theory in Husserl's Logical Investigations. Analytic phenomenology picks up on that connection. In particular, Dagfinn Føllesdal and J. N. Mohanty have explored historical and conceptual relations between Husserl's phenomenology and Frege's logical semantics (in Frege's "On Sense and Reference", 1892). For Frege, an expression refers to an object by way of a sense: thus, two expressions (say, "the morning star" and "the evening star") may refer to the same object (Venus) but express different senses with different manners of presentation. For Husserl, similarly, an experience (or act of consciousness) intends or refers to an object by way of a noema or noematic sense: thus, two experiences may refer to the same object but have different noematic senses involving different ways of presenting the object (for example, in seeing the same object from different sides). Indeed, for Husserl, the theory of intentionality is a generalization of the theory of linguistic reference: as linguistic reference is mediated by sense, so intentional reference is mediated by noematic sense.

More recently, analytic philosophers of mind have rediscovered phenomenological issues of mental representation, intentionality, consciousness, sensory experience, intentional content, and context-of-thought. Some of these analytic philosophers of mind hark back to William James and Franz Brentano at the origins of modern psychology, and some look to empirical research in today's cognitive neuroscience. Some researchers have begun to combine phenomenological issues with issues of neuroscience and behavioral studies and mathematical modeling. Such studies will extend the methods of traditional phenomenology as the Zeitgeist moves on. We address philosophy of mind below.

## 3.6 PHENOMENOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY, LOGIC, ETHICS

The discipline of phenomenology forms one basic field in philosophy among others. How is phenomenology distinguished from, and related to, other fields in philosophy?

Traditionally, philosophy includes at least four core fields or disciplines: ontology, epistemology, ethics, logic. Suppose phenomenology joins that list. Consider then these elementary definitions of field:

Ontology is the study of beings or their being—what is.
Epistemology is the study of knowledge—how we know.
Logic is the study of valid reasoning—how to reason.
Ethics is the study of right and wrong—how we should act.
Phenomenology is the study of our experience—how we experience.
The domains of study in these five fields are clearly different, and they seem to call for different methods of study.

Philosophers have sometimes argued that one of these fields is "first philosophy", the most fundamental discipline, on which all philosophy or all knowledge or wisdom rests. Historically (it may be argued), Socrates and Plato put ethics first, then Aristotle put metaphysics or ontology first,

then Descartes put epistemology first, then Russell put logic first, and then Husserl (in his later transcendental phase) put phenomenology first.

Consider epistemology. As we saw, phenomenology helps to define the phenomena on which knowledge claims rest, according to modern epistemology. On the other hand, phenomenology itself claims to achieve knowledge about the nature of consciousness, a distinctive kind of first-person knowledge, through a form of intuition.

Consider logic. As we saw, logical theory of meaning led Husserl into the theory of intentionality, the heart of phenomenology. On one account, phenomenology explicates the intentional or semantic force of ideal meanings, and propositional meanings are central to logical theory. But logical structure is expressed in language, either ordinary language or symbolic languages like those of predicate logic or mathematics or computer systems. It remains an important issue of debate where and whether language shapes specific forms of experience (thought, perception, emotion) and their content or meaning. So there is an important (if disputed) relation between phenomenology and logico-linguistic theory, especially philosophical logic and philosophy of language (as opposed to mathematical logic per se).

Consider ontology. Phenomenology studies (among other things) the nature of consciousness, which is a central issue in metaphysics or ontology, and one that leads into the traditional mind-body problem. Husserlian methodology would bracket the question of the existence of the surrounding world, thereby separating phenomenology from the ontology of the world. Yet Husserl's phenomenology presupposes theory about species and individuals (universals and particulars), relations of part and whole, and ideal meanings—all parts of ontology.

Now consider ethics. Phenomenology might play a role in ethics by offering analyses of the structure of will, valuing, happiness, and care for others (in empathy and sympathy). Historically, though, ethics has been on the horizon of phenomenology. Husserl largely avoided ethics in his

major works, though he featured the role of practical concerns in the structure of the life-world or of Geist (spirit, or culture, as in Zeitgeist), and he once delivered a course of lectures giving ethics (like logic) a basic place in philosophy, indicating the importance of the phenomenology of sympathy in grounding ethics. In Being and Time Heidegger claimed not to pursue ethics while discussing phenomena ranging from care, conscience, and guilt to "fallenness" and "authenticity" (all phenomena with theological echoes). In Being and Nothingness Sartre analyzed with subtlety the logical problem of "bad faith", yet he developed an ontology of value as produced by willing in good faith (which sounds like a revised Kantian foundation for morality). Beauvoir sketched an existentialist ethics, and Sartre left unpublished notebooks on ethics. However, an explicitly phenomenological approach to ethics emerged in the works of Emannuel Levinas, a Lithuanian phenomenologist who heard Husserl and Heidegger in Freiburg before moving to Paris. In Totality and Infinity (1961), modifying themes drawn from Husserl and Heidegger, Levinas focused on the significance of the "face" of the other, explicitly developing grounds for ethics in this range of phenomenology, writing an impressionistic style of prose with allusions to religious experience.

Allied with ethics are political and social philosophy. Sartre and Merleau-Ponty were politically engaged in 1940s Paris, and their existential philosophies (phenomenologically based) suggest a political theory based in individual freedom. Sartre later sought an explicit blend of existentialism with Marxism. Still, political theory has remained on the borders of phenomenology. Social theory, however, has been closer to phenomenology as such. Husserl analyzed the phenomenological structure of the life-world and Geist generally, including our role in social activity. Heidegger stressed social practice, which he found more primordial than individual consciousness. Alfred Schutz developed a phenomenology of the social world. Sartre continued the phenomenological appraisal of the meaning of the other, the fundamental social formation. Moving outward from phenomenological issues, Michel Foucault studied the genesis and meaning of social institutions, from prisons to insane asylums. And Jacques Derrida has long practiced

a kind of phenomenology of language, seeking social meaning in the "deconstruction" of wide-ranging texts. Aspects of French "poststructuralist" theory are sometimes interpreted as broadly phenomenological, but such issues are beyond the present purview.

Classical phenomenology, then, ties into certain areas of epistemology, logic, and ontology, and leads into parts of ethical, social, and political theory.

**Check Your Progress 2**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Write about the History and Varieties of Phenomenology.

   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……
   …….

2. Write about Phenomenology and Ontology, Epistemology, Logic, Ethics.

   ……
   ……
   ……

## 3.7 LET US SUM UP

Associated with ethics are political and social values. Sartre and Merleau-Ponty were politically engaged in 1940s Paris, and their existential philosophies (phenomenologically based) suggest a political theory based in individual freedom. Sartre later sought an explicit blend of existentialism with Marxism. Still, political theory has remained on the borders of phenomenology. Social theory, however, has been closer to phenomenology as such. Husserl analyzed the phenomenological

structure of the life-world and Geist generally, including our role in social activity. Heidegger stressed social practice, which he found more primordial than individual consciousness. Alfred Schutz developed a phenomenology of the social world. Sartre continued the phenomenological appraisal of the meaning of the other, the fundamental social formation. Moving outward from phenomenological issues, Michel Foucault studied the genesis and meaning of social institutions, from prisons to insane asylums. And Jacques Derrida has long practiced a kind of phenomenology of language, seeking social meaning in the "deconstruction" of wide-ranging texts. Aspects of French "poststructuralist" theory are sometimes interpreted as broadly phenomenological, but such issues are beyond the present purview.

## 3.8 KEY WORDS

**Deconstruction**: Originated by the philosopher Jacques Derrida, deconstruction is an approach to understanding the relationship between text and meaning. Derrida's approach consisted of conducting readings of texts looking for things that run counter to the intended meaning or structural unity of a particular text.

## 3.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What is Phenomenology?
2. Discuss about the Discipline of Phenomenology
3. Discuss the development from Phenomena to Phenomenology.
4. Write about the History and Varieties of Phenomenology
5. Write about Phenomenology and Ontology, Epistemology, Logic, Ethics.

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## 3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1. See Section 3.2
2. See Section 3.3
3. See Section 3.4

**Check Your Progress 2**

1. See Section 3.5
2. See Section 3.6

# UNIT 4: PHENOMENOLOGY - A RIGOROUS SCIENCE

**STRUCTURE**



## 4.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind
- Phenomenology in Contemporary Consciousness Theory
- Phenomenology and Natural Science
- General Implications
- Layers of Experience
- Phenomenology and Specific Sciences

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Phenomenology provides an excellent framework for a comprehensive understanding of the natural sciences. It treats inquiry first and foremost as a process of looking and discovering rather than assuming and

deducing. In looking and discovering, an object always appears to a someone, either an individual or community; and the ways an object appears and the state of the individual or community to which it appears are correlated.

To use the simplest of examples involving ordinary perception, when I see a cup, I see it only through a single profile. Yet to perceive it as real rather than a hallucination or prop is to apprehend it as having other profiles that will show themselves as I walk around it, pick it up, and so forth. No act of perception – not even a God's – can grasp all of a thing's profiles at once. The real is always more than what we can perceive.

Phenomenology of science treats discovery as an instrumentally mediated form of perception. When researchers detect the existence of a new particle or asteroid, it assumes these will appear in other ways in other circumstances – and this can be confirmed or disconfirmed only by looking, in some suitably broad sense. It is obvious to scientists that electrons appear differently when addressed by different instrumentation (for example, wave-particle duality), and therefore that any conceptual grasp of the phenomenon involves instrumental mediation and anticipation. Not only is there no "view from nowhere" on such phenomena, but there is also no position from which we can zoom in on every available profile. There is no one privileged perception and the instrumentally mediated "positions" from which we perceive constantly change.

Phenomenology looks at science from various "focal lengths." Close up, it looks at laboratory life; at attitudes, practices, and objects in the laboratory. It also pulls back the focus and looks at forms of mediation – how things like instruments, theories, laboratories, and various other practices mediate scientific perception. It can pull the focus back still further and look at how scientific research itself is contextualized, in an environment full of ethical and political motivations and power relations. Phenomenology has also made specific contributions to understanding relativity, quantum mechanics, and evolution.

## 4.2 PHENOMENOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

It ought to be obvious that phenomenology has a lot to say in the area called philosophy of mind. Yet the traditions of phenomenology and analytic philosophy of mind have not been closely joined, despite overlapping areas of interest. So it is appropriate to close this survey of phenomenology by addressing philosophy of mind, one of the most vigorously debated areas in recent philosophy.

The tradition of analytic philosophy began, early in the 20th century, with analyses of language, notably in the works of Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Then in The Concept of Mind (1949) Gilbert Ryle developed a series of analyses of language about different mental states, including sensation, belief, and will. Though Ryle is commonly deemed a philosopher of ordinary language, Ryle himself said The Concept of Mind could be called phenomenology. In effect, Ryle analyzed our phenomenological understanding of mental states as reflected in ordinary language about the mind. From this linguistic phenomenology Ryle argued that Cartesian mind-body dualism involves a category mistake (the logic or grammar of mental verbs—"believe", "see", etc.—does not mean that we ascribe belief, sensation, etc., to "the ghost in the machine"). With Ryle's rejection of mind-body dualism, the mind-body problem was re-awakened: what is the ontology of mind vis-à-vis body, and how are mind and body related?

René Descartes, in his epoch-making Meditations on First Philosophy (1641), had argued that minds and bodies are two distinct kinds of being or substance with two distinct kinds of attributes or modes: bodies are characterized by spatiotemporal physical properties, while minds are characterized by properties of thinking (including seeing, feeling, etc.). Centuries later, phenomenology would find, with Brentano and Husserl, that mental acts are characterized by consciousness and intentionality, while natural science would find that physical systems are characterized by mass and force, ultimately by gravitational, electromagnetic, and quantum fields. Where do we find consciousness and intentionality in the quantum-electromagnetic-gravitational field that, by hypothesis, orders everything in the natural world in which we humans and our minds exist?

That is the mind-body problem today. In short, phenomenology by any other name lies at the heart of the contemporary mind-body problem.

After Ryle, philosophers sought a more explicit and generally naturalistic ontology of mind. In the 1950s materialism was argued anew, urging that mental states are identical with states of the central nervous system. The classical identity theory holds that each token mental state (in a particular person's mind at a particular time) is identical with a token brain state (in that person's brain at that time). A stronger materialism holds, instead, that each type of mental state is identical with a type of brain state. But materialism does not fit comfortably with phenomenology. For it is not obvious how conscious mental states as we experience them—sensations, thoughts, emotions—can simply be the complex neural states that somehow subserve or implement them. If mental states and neural states are simply identical, in token or in type, where in our scientific theory of mind does the phenomenology occur—is it not simply replaced by neuroscience? And yet experience is part of what is to be explained by neuroscience.

In the late 1960s and 1970s the computer model of mind set in, and functionalism became the dominant model of mind. On this model, mind is not what the brain consists in (electrochemical transactions in neurons in vast complexes). Instead, mind is what brains do: their function of mediating between information coming into the organism and behavior proceeding from the organism. Thus, a mental state is a functional state of the brain or of the human (or animal) organism. More specifically, on a favorite variation of functionalism, the mind is a computing system: mind is to brain as software is to hardware; thoughts are just programs running on the brain's "wetware". Since the 1970s the cognitive sciences—from experimental studies of cognition to neuroscience—have tended toward a mix of materialism and functionalism. Gradually, however, philosophers found that phenomenological aspects of the mind pose problems for the functionalist paradigm too.

In the early 1970s Thomas Nagel argued in "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" (1974) that consciousness itself—especially the subjective character of what it is like to have a certain type of experience—escapes physical theory. Many philosophers pressed the case that sensory qualia—what it is like to feel pain, to see red, etc.—are not addressed or explained by a physical account of either brain structure or brain function. Consciousness has properties of its own. And yet, we know, it is closely tied to the brain. And, at some level of description, neural activities implement computation.

In the 1980s John Searle argued in Intentionality (1983) (and further in The Rediscovery of the Mind (1991)) that intentionality and consciousness are essential properties of mental states. For Searle, our brains produce mental states with properties of consciousness and intentionality, and this is all part of our biology, yet consciousness and intentionality require a "first-person" ontology. Searle also argued that computers simulate but do not have mental states characterized by intentionality. As Searle argued, a computer system has a syntax (processing symbols of certain shapes) but has no semantics (the symbols lack meaning: we interpret the symbols). In this way Searle rejected both materialism and functionalism, while insisting that mind is a biological property of organisms like us: our brains "secrete" consciousness.

The analysis of consciousness and intentionality is central to phenomenology as appraised above, and Searle's theory of intentionality reads like a modernized version of Husserl's. (Contemporary logical theory takes the form of stating truth conditions for propositions, and Searle characterizes a mental state's intentionality by specifying its "satisfaction conditions"). However, there is an important difference in background theory. For Searle explicitly assumes the basic worldview of natural science, holding that consciousness is part of nature. But Husserl explicitly brackets that assumption, and later phenomenologists—including Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty—seem to seek a certain sanctuary for phenomenology beyond the natural sciences. And yet phenomenology itself should be largely neutral about further theories of how experience arises, notably from brain activity.

Since the late 1980s, and especially the late 1990s, a variety of writers working in philosophy of mind have focused on the fundamental character of consciousness, ultimately a phenomenological issue. Does consciousness always and essentially involve self-consciousness, or consciousness-of-consciousness, as Brentano, Husserl, and Sartre held (in varying detail)? If so, then every act of consciousness either includes or is adjoined by a consciousness-of-that-consciousness. Does that self-consciousness take the form of an internal self-monitoring? If so, is that monitoring of a higher order, where each act of consciousness is joined by a further mental act monitoring the base act? Or is such monitoring of the same order as the base act, a proper part of the act without which the act would not be conscious? A variety of models of this self-consciousness have been developed, some explicitly drawing on or adapting views in Brentano, Husserl, and Sartre. Two recent collections address these issues: David Woodruff Smith and Amie L. Thomasson (editors), Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind (2005), and Uriah Kriegel and Kenneth Williford (editors), Self-Representational Approaches to Consciousness (2006).

The philosophy of mind may be factored into the following disciplines or ranges of theory relevant to mind:

1. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced, analyzing the structure—the types, intentional forms and meanings, dynamics, and (certain) enabling conditions—of perception, thought, imagination, emotion, and volition and action.
2. Neuroscience studies the neural activities that serve as biological substrate to the various types of mental activity, including conscious experience. Neuroscience will be framed by evolutionary biology (explaining how neural phenomena evolved) and ultimately by basic physics (explaining how biological phenomena are grounded in physical phenomena). Here lie the intricacies of the natural sciences. Part of what the

sciences are accountable for is the structure of experience, analyzed by phenomenology.

3. Cultural analysis studies the social practices that help to shape or serve as cultural substrate of the various types of mental activity, including conscious experience, typically manifest in embodied action. Here we study the import of language and other social practices, including background attitudes or assumptions, sometimes involving particular political systems.
4. Ontology of mind studies the ontological type of mental activity in general, ranging from perception (which involves causal input from environment to experience) to volitional action (which involves causal output from volition to bodily movement).

This division of labor in the theory of mind can be seen as an extension of Brentano's original distinction between descriptive and genetic psychology. Phenomenology offers descriptive analyses of mental phenomena, while neuroscience (and wider biology and ultimately physics) offers models of explanation of what causes or gives rise to mental phenomena. Cultural theory offers analyses of social activities and their impact on experience, including ways language shapes our thought, emotion, and motivation. And ontology frames all these results within a basic scheme of the structure of the world, including our own minds.

The ontological distinction among the form, appearance, and substrate of an activity of consciousness is detailed in D. W. Smith, Mind World (2004), in the essay "Three Facets of Consciousness".

Meanwhile, from an epistemological standpoint, all these ranges of theory about mind begin with how we observe and reason about and seek to explain phenomena we encounter in the world. And that is where phenomenology begins. Moreover, how we understand each piece of theory, including theory about mind, is central to the theory of intentionality, as it were, the semantics of thought and experience in general. And that is the heart of phenomenology.

## 4.3 PHENOMENOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY CONSCIOUSNESS THEORY

Phenomenological issues, by any other name, have played a prominent role in very recent philosophy of mind. Amplifying the theme of the previous section, we note two such issues: the form of inner awareness that ostensibly makes a mental activity conscious, and the phenomenal character of conscious cognitive mental activity in thought, and perception, and action.

Ever since Nagel's 1974 article, "What Is It Like to be a Bat?", the notion of what-it-is-like to experience a mental state or activity has posed a challenge to reductive materialism and functionalism in theory of mind. This subjective phenomenal character of consciousness is held to be constitutive or definitive of consciousness. What is the form of that phenomenal character we find in consciousness?

A prominent line of analysis holds that the phenomenal character of a mental activity consists in a certain form of awareness of that activity, an awareness that by definition renders it conscious. Since the 1980s a variety of models of that awareness have been developed. As noted above, there are models that define this awareness as a higher-order monitoring, either an inner perception of the activity (a form of inner sense per Kant) or inner consciousness (per Brentano), or an inner thought about the activity. A further model analyzes such awareness as an integral part of the experience, a form of self-representation within the experience. (Again, see Kriegel and Williford (eds.) (2006).)

A somewhat different model comes arguably closer to the form of self-consciousness sought by Brentano, Husserl, and Sartre. On the "modal" model, inner awareness of an experience takes the form of an integral reflexive awareness of "this very experience". That form of awareness is held to be a constitutive element of the experience that renders it conscious. As Sartre put the claim, self-consciousness is constitutive of consciousness, but that self-consciousness is "pre-reflective". This

reflexive awareness is not, then, part of a separable higher-order monitoring, but rather built into consciousness per se. On the modal model, this awareness is part of the way the experience unfolds: subjectively, phenomenally, consciously. This model is elaborated in D. W. Smith (2004), Mind World, in the essay "Return to Consciousness" (and elsewhere).

Whatever may be the precise form of phenomenal character, we would ask how that character distributes over mental life. What is phenomenal in different types of mental activity? Here arise issues of cognitive phenomenology. Is phenomenality restricted to the "feel" of sensory experience? Or is phenomenality present also in cognitive experiences of thinking such-and-such, or of perception bearing conceptual as well as sensory content, or also in volitional or conative bodily action? These issues are explored in Bayne and Montague (eds.) (2011), Cognitive Phenomenology.

A restrictive view holds that only sensory experience has a proper phenomenal character, a what-it-is-like. Seeing a color, hearing a tone, smelling an odor, feeling a pain—these types of conscious experience have a phenomenal character, but no others do, on this view. A stringent empiricism might limit phenomenal experience to pure sensations, though Hume himself presumably recognized phenomenal "ideas" beyond pure sense "impressions". A somewhat more expansive view would hold that perceptual experience has a distinctive phenomenal character even where sensation is informed by concepts. Seeing that yellow canary, hearing that clear Middle C on a Steinway piano, smelling the sharp odor of anise, feeling a pain of the jab of the doctor's needle in receiving an injection—these types of conscious experience have a character of what-it-is-like, a character informed by conceptual content that is also "felt", on this view. A Kantian account of conceptual-sensory experience, or "intuition", would endorse a phenomenal character in these types of experience. Indeed, "phenomena", in the Kantian idiom, are precisely things as they appear in consciousness, so of course their appearance has a phenomenal character.

Now, a much more expansive view would hold that every conscious experience has a distinctive phenomenal character. Thinking that 17 is a prime number, thinking that the red in the sunset is caused by the sun's light waves being bent by the atmosphere, thinking that Kant was more right than Hume about the grounds of knowledge, thinking that economic principles are also political—even such highly cognitive activities have a character of what-it-is-like to so think, according to this expansive view.

Classical phenomenologists like Husserl and Merleau-Ponty surely assumed an expansive view of phenomenal consciousness. As noted above, the "phenomena" that are the focus of phenomenology were assumed to present a rich character of lived experience. Even Heidegger, while de-emphasizing consciousness (the Cartesian sin!), dwelt on "phenomena" as what appears or shows up to us (to "Dasein") in our everyday activities such as hammering a nail. Like Merleau-Ponty, Gurwitsch (1964) explicitly studies the "phenomenal field", embracing all that is presented in our experience. Arguably, for these thinkers, every type of conscious experience has its distinctive phenomenal character, its "phenomenology"—and the task of phenomenology (the discipline) is to analyze that character. Note that in recent debates the phenomenal character of an experience is often called its "phenomenology"—whereas, in the established idiom, the term "phenomenology" names the discipline that studies such "phenomenology".

Since intentionality is a crucial property of consciousness, according to Brentano, Husserl, et al., the character of intentionality itself would count as phenomenal, as part of what-it-is-like to experience a given type of intentional experience. But it is not only intentional perception and thought that have their distinctive phenomenal characters. Embodied action also would have a distinctive phenomenal character, involving "lived" characters of kinesthetic sensation as well as conceptual volitional content, say, in the feel of kicking a soccer ball. The "lived body" is precisely the body as experienced in everyday embodied volitional action such as running or kicking a ball or even speaking.

Husserl wrote at length about the "lived body" (Leib), in Ideas II, and Merleau-Ponty followed suit with rich analyses of embodied perception and action, in Phenomenology of Perception. In Bayne and Montague (eds.) (2011) see the article on conative phenomenology by Terence Horgan, and in Smith and Thomasson (eds.) (2005) see articles by Charles Siewert and Sean Kelly.

But now a problems remains. Intentionality essentially involves meaning, so the question arises how meaning appears in phenomenal character. Importantly, the content of a conscious experience typically carries a horizon of background meaning, meaning that is largely implicit rather than explicit in experience. But then a wide range of content carried by an experience would not have a consciously felt phenomenal character. So it may well be argued. Here is a line of phenomenological theory for another day.

**Check Your Progress 1**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss the Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind.

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2. Discuss the Phenomenology in Contemporary Consciousness Theory.

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## 4.4 PHENOMENOLOGY AND NATURAL SCIENCE

Phenomenology provides an excellent starting point, perhaps the only adequate starting point, for a comprehensive understanding of the natural sciences: their existence, practices, methods, products, and cultural niches. The reason is that, for a phenomenologist, inquiry is first and foremost a question of looking and discovering rather than assuming and deducing. In looking and discovering, an object is always given to a someone – be it an individual or community – and the object and its manners of givenness are correlated. In the special terminology of phenomenology, this is the doctrine of intentionality (for example, see Cairns 1999). This doctrine has nothing to do with the distinction between "inner" and "outer" experiences, but is a simple fact of perception. To use the time-honored phenomenological example, even when I see an ordinary object such as a cup, I apprehend it only through a single appearance or profile. Yet for me to perceive it as a real object – rather than a hallucination or prop – I apprehend it as having other profiles that will show themselves as I walk around it, pick it up, and so forth, each profile flowing into the next in an orderly, systematic way. I do more than expect or deduce these profiles; the act of perceiving a cup contains anticipations of other acts in which the same object will be experienced in other ways. That's what gives my experience of the world its depth and density. Perhaps I will discover that my original perception was misled, and my anticipations were mere assumptions; still, I discover this only through looking and discovering – through sampling other profiles. In science, too, when researchers propose the existence of a new particle or asteroid, such a proposal involves anticipations of that entity appearing in other ways in other circumstances, anticipations that can be confirmed or disconfirmed only by looking, in some suitably broad sense (Crease 1993). In ordinary perception, each appearance and profile (noema) is correlated with a particular position of the one who apprehends it (noesis); a change in either one (the cup turning, the person moving) affects the profile apprehended. This is called the noetic-noematic correlation. In science, the positioning of the observer is

technologically mediated; what a particle or cell looks like depends in part on the state of instrumentation that mediates the observation.

Another core doctrine of phenomenology is the lifeworld (Crease 2011). Human beings, that is, engage the world in different ways. For instance, they seek wealth, fame, pleasure, companionship, happiness, or "the good". They do this as children, adolescents, parents, merchants, athletes, teachers, and administrators. All these ways of being are modifications of a matrix of practical attachments that human beings have to the world that precedes any cognitive understanding. The lifeworld is the technical term phenomenologists have for this matrix. The lifeworld is the soil out of which grow various ways of being, including science. Understanding photosynthesis or quantum field theory, for instance, is only one – and very rare – way that human beings interact with plants or matter, and not the default setting. Humans have to be trained to see the world that way; they have to pay a special kind of attention and pursue a special kind of inquiry. Thus the subject-inquirer (again, whether individual or community) is always bound up with what is being inquired into by practical engagements that precede the inquiry, engagements that can be altered by and in the wake of the inquiry. It is terribly tempting for metaphysicians to "kick away the ladder of lived experience" from scientific ontology as a means to gain some sort of privileged access to the world that bypasses lifeworld experience, but this condemns science to being "empty fictions" (Vallor 2009).

The aim of phenomenology is to unearth invariants in noetic-noematic correlations, to make forms or structures of experience appear that are hidden in ordinary, unreflective life, or the natural attitude. Again, the parallel with scientific methodology is uncanny; scientific inquiry aims to find hidden forms or structures of the world by varying, repeating, or otherwise changing interventions into nature to see what remains the same throughout. Phenomenologists seek invariant structures at several different phases or levels – including that of the investigator, the laboratory, and the lifeworld - and can examine not only each phase or level, but the relation of each to the others. Over the last hundred years,

this has generated a vast and diverse body of literature (Ginev 2006; Kockelmans & Kisiel 1970; Chasan 1992; Hardy and Embree 1992; McGuire and Tuchanska 2001; Gutting 2005).

Historical Overview

Phenomenology started out, in Husserl's hands, well-positioned to develop an account of science. After all, Husserl was at the University of Göttingen during the years when David Hilbert, Felix Klein, and Emmy Noether were developing and extending the notion of invariance and group theory. Husserl not only had a deep appreciation for mathematics and natural science, but his approach was allied in many key respects with theirs, for he extended the notion of invariance to perception by viewing the experience of an object as of something that remains the same in the flux of changing sensory conditions produced by changing physical conditions. This may seem far-removed from the domain of mathematics but it is not. Klein's Erlanger program viewed mathematical objects as not representable geometrically all at once but rather in definite and particular ways, depending on the planes on which they were projected; the mathematical object remained the same throughout different projections. In an analogous way, Husserl's phenomenological program viewed a sensuously apprehended object as not given to an experiencing subject all at once but rather via a series of adumbrations or profiles, one at a time, that depend on the respective positioning of subject and object. The "same" object – even light of a certain wavelength – can look very different to human observers in different conditions. What is different about Husserl's program, and may make it seem removed from the mathematical context, is that these profiles are not mathematical projections but lifeworld experiences. What remained to be added to the phenomenological approach to create a fuller framework for a natural philosophy of science was a notion of perceptual fulfillment under laboratory conditions, and of the theoretical planning and instrumental mediation leading to the observing of a scientific object. The "same" structure – for example, a cell – will look very

different using microscopes of different magnification and quality, and phenomenology easily provides an account for this (Crease 2009).

Despite this promising beginning, many phenomenologists after Husserl turned away from the sciences, sometimes even displaying a certain paternalistic and superior attitude towards them as impoverished forms of revealing. This is unwarranted. Husserl's objection to rationalistic science in the Crisis of the European Sciences was after all not to science but to the Galilean assumption that the ontology of nature could be provided by mathematics alone, bypassing the lifeworld (Gurwitsch 1966, Heelan 1987). And Heidegger's objection, in Being and Time, most charitably considered, was not to theoretical knowledge, but to the forgetting of the fact that it is a founded mode in the lifeworld, to be interpreted not merely as an aid to disclosure but as a special and specialized mode of access to the real itself. Others to follow, including Gadamer and Merleau-Ponty, for various reasons did not pursue the significance of phenomenology for natural science.

Science also lagged behind other areas of phenomenological inquiry for historical reasons. The dramatic success of Einstein's theory of general relativity, in 1919, brought "a watershed for subsequent philosophy of science" that proved to be detrimental to the prospects of phenomenology for science (Ryckman 2005). Kant's puzzling and ambiguous doctrine of the schematism – according to which intuitions, which are a product of sensibility, and categories, which are a product of understanding, are synthesized by rules or schemata to produce experience – had nurtured two very different approaches to the philosophy of science. One, taken by logical empiricists, rejected the schematism and treated sensibility and the understanding as independent, and the line between the intuitive and the conceptual as that between experienced physical objects and abstract mathematical frameworks. The empiricists saw these two as linked by rules of coordination that applied the latter to the former. Such coordination – the subjective contribution of mind to knowledge – produced objective knowledge. The other, more phenomenological route was to pursue the insight that experience is possible only thanks to the

simultaneous co-working of intuitions and concepts. While some forms and categories are subject to replacement, producing a "relativized a priori" (my conception of things like electrons, cells, and simultaneity may change) such forms and categories make experience possible. Objective knowledge arises not by an arbitrary application of concepts to intuitions – it is not just a decision of consciousness – but is a function of the fulfillment of physical conditions of possible conscious experience; scientists look at photographic plates or information collected by detectors in laboriously prepared conditions that assure them that such information is meaningful and not noise. Husserl's phenomenological approach to transcendental structures, though, must be contrasted with Kant's, for while Kant's transcendental concepts are deduced, Husserl's are reflectively observed and described. However, following the stunning announcement of the success of general relativity in 1919, which seemed to destroy transcendental assumptions about at least the Euclidean form of space and about absolute time, logical empiricists were quick to claim it vindicated their approach and refuted not only Kant but all transcendental philosophy. "Through Einstein … the Kantian position is untenable," Schlick declared, "and empiricist philosophy has gained one of its most brilliant triumphs." But the alleged vanquishing of transcendental philosophy and triumph of logical empiricism's claims to understand science was due to "rhetoric and successful propaganda" rather than argument (Ryckman 2005). For as other transcendental philosophers such as Ernst Cassirer, and philosophically sophisticated scientists such as Hermann Weyl, realized, in making claims about the forms of possible phenomena general relativity called for what amounted to a revision, rather than a refutation, of Kant's doctrine; how we may experience spatiality in ordinary life remains unaffected by Einstein's theory. But the careers of both Cassirer and Weyl took them away from such questions, and nobody else took their place.

Science and Perception

One way of exhibiting the deep link between phenomenology and science is to note that phenomenology is concerned with the difference

between local effects and global structures in perception. To use the time-honored example of perceiving a cup through a profile again: Grasping it under that particular adumbration or profile is a local effect, though what I intend is a global structure – the phenomenon – with multiple horizons of profiles. Phenomenology aims to exhibit how the phenomenon is constituted in describing these horizons of profiles. But this of course is closely related to the aim of science, which seeks to describe how phenomena (for example, electrons) appear differently in different contexts – and even, in the case of general relativity, incorporates a notion of invariance into the very notion of objectivity itself (Ryckman 2005). An objective state of affairs, that is, is one that has the same description regardless of whether the frame of reference from which it is observed is accelerating or not.

In science, however, perceiving (observing) is mediated by theory and instruments. Thanks to theories, the lawlike behavior of scientific phenomena (for example, how electrons behave in different conditions) is represented or "programmed" and then correlated with instrumental techniques and practices so that a phenomenon appears. The theory (for example, electromagnetism) thus structures both the performance process thanks to which the phenomenon appears, and the phenomenon itself. Read noetically, with respect to production, the theory is something to be performed; read noematically, with respect to the product, it describes the object appearing in performance. A theory does not correspond to a scientific phenomenon; rather, the phenomenon fulfills or does not fulfill the expectations of its observation raised by the theory. Is this an electron beam or not? To decide that, its behavior has to be evaluated. Theory provides a language that the experimenter can use for describing or recognizing or identifying the profiles. For the theorist, the semantics of the language is mathematical; for the experimenter, the semantics are descriptive and the objects described are not mathematical objects but phenomena – bodily presences in the world. Thus the dual semantics of science (Heelan 1988); a scientific word (such as 'electron') can refer to both an abstract term in a theory and to a physical phenomenon in a laboratory. The difference is akin to that between a 'C' in a musical score

and a 'C' heard in a concert hall. Conflating these two usages has confused many a philosopher of science. But our perception of the physical phenomenon in the laboratory has been mediated by the instruments used to produce and measure it (Ihde 1990).

By adding theoretical and experimental mediation to Husserl's account of what is "constitutive" of perceptual horizons (Husserl 2001, from where the following quotations are taken except where noted), one generates a framework for a phenomenological account of science. To grasp a scientific object, like a perceptual object, as a presence in the world, as "objective," means, strangely enough, to grasp it as never totally given, but as having an unbounded number of profiles that are not simultaneously grasped. Such an object is embedded in a system of "referential implications" available to us to explore over time. And it is rarely grasped with Cartesian clarity the first time around, but "calls out to us" and "pushes us" towards appearances not simultaneously given. A new property, for example parity violation, is detected in one area of particle physics – but if it shows up here it should also show up there even more intensely and dramatically. Entities, that is, show themselves as having further sides to be explored, and as amenable to better and better instrumentation. Phenomena even as it were call attention to their special features – strangeness in elementary particles, DNA in cells, gamma ray bursters amongst astronomical bodies – and recommends these features to us for further exploration. "There is a constant process of anticipation, of preunderstanding." With sufficient apprehension of sampled profiles, "The unfamiliar object is … transformed …into a familiar object." This involves development both of an inner horizon of profiles already apprehended, already sampled, and an external of not-yet apprehended profiles. But the object is never fully grasped in its complete presence, horizons remain, and the most one can hope for is for a thing to be given optimally in terms of the interests for which it is approached. And because theory and instruments are always changing, the same object will always be grasped with new profiles. Thus, Husserl's phenomenological account readily handles the often vexing question in traditional philosophy of science of how "the same"

experiment can be "repeated." It equally readily handles the even more troublesome puzzle in traditional approaches of how successive theories or practices can refer to the same object. For just as the same object can be apprehended "horizontally" in different instrumental contexts at the same time, it can also be apprehended "vertically" by successively more developed instrumentation. Husserl, for instance, refers to the "open horizon of conceivable improvement to be further pursued" (Husserl Crisis #9a). Newer, more advanced instruments will pick out the same entity (for example, an electron), yield new values for measurements of the same quantities, and open up new domains in which new phenomena will appear amid the ones that now appear on the threshold. Today's discovery is tomorrow's background.

The basic account of perception given above has been further elaborated in the context of group theory by Ernst Cassirer in a remarkable article (Cassirer 1944). Cassirer extends the attempts of Helmholtz, Poincaré and others to apply the mathematical concept of group to perception in a way that makes it suitable to the philosophy of science. Group theory may seem far from the perceptual world, Cassirer says. But the perceptual world, like the mathematical world, is structured; it possesses perceptual constancy in a way that cannot be reduced to "a mere mosaic, an aggregate of scattered sensations" but involve a certain kind of invariance. Perception is integrated into a total experience in which keeping track of "dissimilarity rather than similarity" is a hallmark of the same object. The cup is going to look different as the light changes and as I move about it. "As the particular changes its position in the context, it changes its "aspect." Thus, Cassirer writes, "the 'possibility of the object' depends upon the formation of certain invariants in the flux of sense-impressions, no matter whether these be invariants of perception or of geometrical thought, or of physical theory. The positing of something endowed with objective existence and nature depends on the formation of constants of the kinds mentioned …. The truth is that the search for constancy, the tendency toward certain invariants, constitutes a characteristic feature and immanent function of perception. This function is as much a condition of perception of objective existence as it is a

condition of objective knowledge." The constitutive factor of objective knowledge, Cassirer concludes, "manifests itself in the possibility of forming invariants." Again, one needs to flesh out such an approach with account of fulfillment as mediated both theoretically and practically.

## 4.5 GENERAL IMPLICATIONS

a. The Priority of Meaning over Technique.

In contrast to positivist-inspired and much mainstream philosophy of science, a phenomenological approach does not view science as pieced together at the outset from praxes, techniques, and methods. Praxes, techniques, and methods – as well as data and results – come into being by interpretation. The generation of meaning does not move from part to whole, but via a back-and-forth (hermeneutical) process in which phenomena are projected upon an already-existing framework of meaning, the assumptions of which are at least partially brought into question, and by this action further reviewed and refined within the ongoing process of interpretation. This process is amply illustrated by episode after episode in the history of science. Relativity theory evolved as a response to problems and developments experienced by scientists working within Newtonian theory.

b. The Priority of the Practical over the Theoretical

The framework of meaning mentioned above in terms of which phenomena are interpreted is not comprised merely of tools, texts, and ideas, but involves a culturally and historically determined engagement with the world which is prior to the subject and object separation. On the one hand, this means that the meanings generated by science are not ahistorical forms or natural kinds that have a transcendent origin. On the other hand, it means that these meanings are also not arbitrary or mere artifacts of discourse; science has a "historical space" in which meanings are realized or not realized. Results are right or wrong; theories are adjudicated as true or false. Later, as the historical space changes, the "same" theory (or more fully developed versions thereof) may be confirmed by different results inconsistent with previous confirmations of the earlier version. What a "cell" is may look very different depending

on the techniques and instruments used to apprehend it, but what is happening is not a wholesale replacement of one picture or theory by another, but expanding and evolving knowledge (Crease 2009).

c. The Priority of the Practical over the Theoretical

Truth always involves a disclosure of something to someone in a particular cultural and historical context. Even scientific knowledge can never completely transcend these culturally and historically determined involvements, leaving them behind as if scientific knowledge consisted in abstractions viewed from nowhere in particular. The particularity of the phenomena disclosed by science is often disguised by the fact that they can show themselves in many different cultural and historical contexts if the laboratory conditions are right, giving rise to the illusion of disembodied knowledge.

**Check Your Progress 2**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Describe Phenomenology and Natural Science.

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2. Discuss the General Implications.

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# 4.6 LAYERS OF EXPERIENCE

These three implications suggest a way of ordering the kinds of contributions that a phenomenology can make to the philosophy of science. For there are several different phases – focal lengths, one might say – at which to set one's phenomenology, and it is important to distinguish between them. The focal length can be trained within the laboratory on laboratory life, and investigate the attitudes, practices, and objects encountered in the laboratory. These, however, are nested in the laboratory environment and in the structure of scientific knowledge, which is their exterior expression. Another phase concerns the forms of mediation, both theoretical and instrumental, and how these contextualize the phase just mentioned of attitudes, practices, and objects, and how these are related to their exterior. This phase is nested in turn in another kind of environment, the lifeworld itself, with its ethical and political motivations and power relations. The contributions of phenomenology to the philosophy of science is first of all to describe these phases and how they are nested in each other, and then to describe and characterize each. A philosophical account of science cannot begin, nor is it complete, without a description of these phases.

a. First Phase: Laboratory Life

One phase has to do with specific attitudes, practices, or objects encountered by a researcher doing research in the laboratory environment – with the phenomenology of laboratory perception. Inquiry is one issue here. Conventional textbooks often treat the history of science as a sequence of beliefs about the state of the world, as if it were like a series of snapshots. This creates problems having to do with accounting for how these beliefs change, how they connect up, and what such change implies about continuity of science. It also rings artificial from the standpoint of laboratory practice. A phenomenological approach, by contrast, considers the path of science as rather like an evolving perception, as a continual process that cannot be neatly dissected into what's in question and what not, what you believe and what you do not. Affects of research is another issue. The moment of experience involves more than knowledge, global or local, more than iterations and

reiterations. Affects like wonder, astonishment, surprise, incredulity, fascination, and puzzlement are important to inquiry, in mobilizing the transformation of the discourse and our basic way of being related to a field of inquiry. They indicate to us the presence of something more than what's formulated, yet also not arbitrary. When something unexpected happens, it is not a matter of drawing a conceptual blank. When something unexpected and puzzling happens in the lab, it involves a discomfort from running into something that you think you should understand and you do not. Taking that discomfort with you is essential to what transformations ensue. Other key issues of the phenomenology of laboratory experience include trust, communication, data, measurement, and experiment (Crease 1993). Experiment is an especially important topic. For there is nothing automatic about experimentation; experiments are first and foremost material events in the world. Events to not produce numbers – they do not measure themselves – but do so only when an action is planned, prepared, and witnessed. An experiment, therefore, has the character of a performance, and like all performances is a historically and culturally situated hermeneutical process. Scientific objects that appear in laboratory performances may have to be brought into focus, somewhat like the ship that Merleau-Ponty describes that has run aground on the shore, whose pieces are at first mixed confusingly with the background, filling us with a vague tension and unease, until our sight is abruptly recast and we see a ship, accompanied by release of the tension and unease (Crease 1998). In the laboratory, however, what is at first latent in the background and then recognized as an entity belongs to an actively structured process. We are staging what we are trying to recognize, and the way we are staging it may interfere with our recognition and the experiment may have to be restaged to bring the object into better focus.

b. Second Phase: Forms of Mediation

Second order features have to do with understanding the contextualization of the laboratory itself. For the laboratory is a special kind of environment. The laboratory is like a garden, walled off to a large

extent from the wider and wilder surrounding environment outside. Special things are grown in it that may not appear in the outside world, but yet are related to them, and which help us understand the outside world. To some extent, the laboratory can be examined as the product or embodiment of forms discursive formations imposing power and unconditioned knowledge claims (Rouse 1987). But only to a limited extent. For the laboratory is not like an institution in which all practices are supposed to work in the same way without changing. It thus cannot be understood by studying discursive formations of power and knowledge exclusively; it is unlike a prison or military camp. A laboratory is a place designed to make it possible to stage performances that show themselves at times as disruptive of discourse, to explore such performances and make sure there really is a disruption, and then to foster creation of a new discourse.

c. Third Phase: Contextualization of Research

A third phase has to do with the contextualization of research itself, with approaches to the whole of the world, and with understanding why human beings have come to privilege certain kinds of inquiry over others. The lifeworld – a kind of horizon or atmosphere in which we think, pre-loaded with powerful metaphors and images and deeply embedded habits of thought – has its own character and changes over time. This character affects everyone in it, scientists and philosophers who think about science. The conditions of the lifeworld can, for instance, seduce us into thinking that only the measurable is the real. This is the kind of layer addressed by Husserl's Crisis (Husserl 1970), Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology," (Heidegger 1977) and so forth. The distinction between the second and third phases thus parallels the distinction in sociology of science between micro-sociology and macro-sociology.

## 4.7 PHENOMENOLOGY AND SPECIFIC SCIENCES

Phenomenology has also been shown to contribute to understanding certain features or developments in contemporary theories which seem of particular significance for science itself, including relativity, quantum mechanics, and evolution.

a. Relativity

Ryckman (2005) highlights the role of phenomenology in understanding the structure and implications of general relativity and of certain other developments in contemporary physics. The key has to do with the role of general covariance, or the requirement that objects must be specified without any reference to a dynamical background space-time setting. Fields, that is, are not properties of space-time points or regions, they are those points and regions. The result of the requirement of general covariance is thus to remove the physical objectivity of space and time as independent of the mass and energy distribution that shapes the geometry of physical space and time. This, Ryckman writes, is arguably its "most philosophically significant aspect," for it specifies "what is a possible object of fundamental physical theory." The point was digested by transcendental philosophers who could understand relativity. One was Cassirer, who saw that covariance could not be treated as a principle of coordination between intuitions and formalisms, and thus was not part of the "subjective" contribution to science, as Schlick and his follower Hans Reichenbach were doing. Rather, it amounted to a restriction on what was allowed as a possible object of field theory to begin with. The requirement of general covariance meant that relativity was about a universe in which objects did not flit about on a space-time stage, but were that stage. Ryckman's book also demonstrates the role of phenomenology in Weyl's classic treatment of relativity, and in his formulation of the gauge principle governing the identity of units of measurement. Phenomenology thus played an important role in the articulation of general relativity, and certain concepts central to modern physics.

b. Quantum Mechanics

Phenomenology may also contribute to explaining the famous disparity between the clarity and correctness of the theory and the obscurity and inaccuracy of the language used to speak about its meaning. In Quantum Mechanics and Objectivity (Heelan 1965) and other writings (Heelan 1975), Heelan applies phenomenological tools to this issue. His approach is partly Heideggerian and partly Husserlian. What is Heideggerian is the insistence on the moment prior to object-constitution, the self-aware context or horizon or world or open space in which something appears. The actual appear-ing (or phenomenon) to the self is a second moment. This Heelan analyses in a Husserlian way by studying the intentionality structure of object constitution and insisting on the duality therein of its (embodied subjective) noetic and (embodied objective) noematic poles. "The noetic aspect is an open field of connected scientific questions addressed by a self-aware situated researcher to empirical experience; the noematic aspect is the response obtained from the situated scientific experiment by the experiencing researcher. The totality of actual and possible answers constitutes a horizon of actual and possible objects of human knowledge and this we call a World." (Heelan 1965, x; also 3-4). The world then becomes the source of meaning of the word "real," which is defined as what can appear as an object in the world. The ever-changing and always historical laboratory environment with all its ever-to-be-updated instrumentation and technologies belongs to the noetic pole; it is what makes the objects of science real by bringing them into the world in the act of measurement. Measure-ment involves "an interaction with a measuring instrument capable of yielding macroscopic sensible data, and a theory capable of explaining what it is that is measured and why the sensible data are observable symbols of it" (Heelan 1965, 30-1). The difference between quantum and classical physics does not lie in the intervention of the observer's subjectivity but in the nature of the quantum object: "[W]hile in classical physics this is an idealised normative (and hence abstract) object, in quantum physics the object is an individual instance of its idealised norm" (Heelan 1965, xii). For while in classical physics deviations of variables from their ideal norms are treated independently in a statistically based theory of errors,

the variations (statistical distribution) of quantum measurements are systematically linked in one formalism. The apparent puzzle raised by the "reduction of the wave packet" is thus explained via an account of measurement. In the "orthodox" interpretation, the wave function is taken to be the "true" reality, and the act of measurement is seen as changing the incoming wave packet into one of its component eigen functions by an anonymous random choice. The sensible outcome of this change is the eigenvalue of the outgoing wave function which is read from the measuring instrument. (An eigen function, very simply, is a function which has the property that, when an operation is performed on it, the result is that function multiplied by a constant, which is called the eigenvalue.) The agent of this transformation is the human spirit or mind as a doer of mathematics. Heelan also sees this process as depending on the conscious choice and participation of the scientist-subject, but through a much different process. The formulae relate, not to the ideal object in an absolute sense, apart from all human history, culture, and language, but to the physical situation in which the real object is placed, yielding a particular instance of an ensemble or system that admits of numerous potential experimental realizations. The reduction of the wave packet then "is nothing more than the expression of the scientist's choice and implementation of a measuring process; the post-measurement outcome is different from the means used to prepare the pure state" prior to the implementation of the measurement (Heelan 1965, 184). The wave function describes a situation which is imperfectly described as a fact of the real world; it describes a field of possibilities. That does not mean there is more-to-be-discovered ("hidden variables") which will make it a part of the real world, nor that only human participation is able to bring it into the real world, but that what becomes a fact of the real world does so by being fleshed out by an instrumental environment to one or another complementary presentations. Heelan's work therefore shows the value of Continental approaches to the philosophy of science, and exposes the shortcomings of approaches to the philosophy of science which relegate such themes to "somewhere between mysticism and crossword puzzles" (Heelan 1965, x).

c. Evolution

One of the -most significant discover-ies of 20th century phe-nomenology was of what is variously called em-bodiment, lived body, flesh, or animate form, the experiences of which are that of a unified, self-aware being, and which cannot be understood apart from reflection on con-crete human experience. The body is not a bridge that connects subject and world, but rather a primordial and unsurpassab-le unity productive of there being persons and worlds at all. Husserl was aware even of the significance of evolution and move-ment.

His use of the expression "animate organism" betrays a recognition that he was discussing "something not exclusive to humans, that is, something broader and more funda-mental than human animate organism" (Sheets-Johnstone 1999, 132); thus, a need to discuss matters across the evolutionary spec-trum. Failing to examine our evolutionary heritage, in fact, means misconceiving the wellsprin-gs of our humanity (Sheets-Johnstone 1999). Biologists who developed phenomenological treatments of animal behavior include von Uxhull, to whom Heidegger refers in the section on animals in Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics, and Adolph Portmann, both of whom discussed the animal's umwelt. And Sheets-Johnstone has emphasized that phenome-nology needs to -examine not only the ontogenet-ic dimension B infant behavior B but also the phylogenetic one. ------If we treat human animate form as unique we shirk our phenomenologic-al duties and end up with incomplete and distorted accounts containing implicit and unexamined notions. "[G]enuine understandings of consciousness demand close and serious study of evolution as a history of animate form" (Sheets-Johnstone 1999, 42).

**Check Your Progress 3**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. What are the Layers of Experience?

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2. What is Phenomenology and Specific Sciences?

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## 4.8 LET US SUM UP

Developing a phenomenological account of science is important for the philosophy of science insofar as it has the potential to move us beyond a dead-end in which that discipline has entrapped itself. The dead-end involves having to choose between: on the one hand, assuming that a fixed, stable order pre-exists human beings that is uncovered or approximated in scientific activity; and on the other hand, assuming that the order is imposed by the outside. Each approach is threatened, though in different ways, by the prospect of having to incorporate a role for history and culture. Phenomenology is not as threatened, for its core doctrine of intentionality implies that parts are only understood against the background of wholes and objects against the background of their horizons, and that while we discover objects as invariants within horizons, we also discover ourselves as those worldly embodied presences to which the objects appear. It thus provides an adequate philosophical foundation for reintroducing history and culture into the philosophy of the natural sciences.

## 4.9 KEY WORDS

**Contemporary**: Contemporary history, in English-language historiography, is a subset of modern history which describes the historical period from approximately 1945 to the present.

**Consciousness**: Consciousness at its simplest refers to "sentience or awareness of internal or external existence".

## 4.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind.
2. Discuss the Phenomenology in Contemporary Consciousness Theory
3. Describe Phenomenology and Natural Science
4. Discuss the General Implications.
5. What are the Layers of Experience?
6. What is Phenomenology and Specific Sciences?

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## 4.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1. See Section 4.2
2. See Section 4.3
3. See Section 4.4

**Check Your Progress 2**

1. See Section 4.5
2. See Section 4.6

**Check Your Progress 3**

1. See Section 4.7
2. See Section 4.8

# UNIT 5: EDMUND HUSSERL

**STRUCTURE**



## 5.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To develop the Edmund Husserl's thought
- To find out the natural world's thesis
- To know the Essence and essential intuition.

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Edmund Husserl was the principal founder of phenomenology—and thus one of the most influential philosophers of the 20th century. He has made important contributions to almost all areas of philosophy and anticipated central ideas of its neighbouring disciplines such as linguistics, sociology and cognitive psychology.

Husserl was born in Prossnitz (Moravia) on April 8th, 1859. His parents were non-orthodox Jews; Husserl himself and his wife would later convert to Protestantism. They had three children, one of whom died in World War I. In the years 1876–78 Husserl studied astronomy in

Leipzig, where he also attended courses of lectures in mathematics, physics and philosophy. Among other things, he heard Wilhelm Wundt's lectures on philosophy. (Wundt was the originator of the first institute for experimental psychology.) Husserl's mentor was Thomas Masaryk, a former student of Brentano's, who was later to become the first president of Czechoslovakia. In 1878–81 Husserl continued his studies in mathematics, physics and philosophy in Berlin. His mathematics teachers there included Leopold Kronecker and Karl Weierstrass, whose scientific ethos Husserl was particularly impressed with. However, he took his PhD in mathematics in Vienna (January 1883), with a thesis on the theory of variations (Variationstheorie). After that he returned to Berlin, to become Weierstrass' assistant. When Weierstrass got seriously ill, Masaryk suggested that Husserl go back to Vienna, to study philosophy with Franz Brentano, the author of Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint (1874). After a brief military service in Vienna, Husserl followed Masaryk's advice and studied with Brentano from 1884–86. Brentano's lectures on psychology and logic had a lasting impact on Husserl, as had his general vision of a strictly scientific philosophy. Brentano then recommended Husserl to his pupil Carl Stumpf in Halle, who is perhaps best known for his Psychology of Tone (two volumes, 1883/90). This recommendation enabled Husserl to prepare and submit his habilitation dissertation On the Concept of Number (1887) with Stumpf.

That thesis was later integrated into Husserl's first published monograph, Philosophy of Arithmetic, which appeared in 1891. In this work, Husserl combined his mathematical, psychological and philosophical competencies to attempt a psychological foundation of arithmetic (see Willard 1984, pp. 38–118; Bell 1990, pp. 31–84). The book was, however, criticized for its underlying psychologism in a review by Gottlob Frege. It seems that Husserl took that criticism very seriously (see Føllesdal 1958), although it is far from clear that the author of Philosophy of Arithmetic regards logic as a branch of psychology, as "strong psychologism" (Mohanty 1982, p. 20) has it. In any case, Husserl sharply attacked that kind of psychologism (raising about eighteen

objections in total; see Soldati 1994, pp. 117 ff) and developed the philosophical method he is nowadays famous for: phenomenology.
In 1900/01 his first phenomenological work was published in two volumes, titled Logical Investigations. The first volume contains a forceful attack against psychologism, whereas the (much larger) second volume consists of six "descriptive-psychological" and "epistemological" investigations into (I) expression and meaning, (II) universals, (III) the formal ontology of parts and wholes (mereology), (IV) the "syntactical" and mereological structure of meaning, (V) the nature and structure of intentionality as well as (VI) the interrelation of truth, intuition and cognition. Husserl now adheres to a version of platonism that he derived from ideas of Hermann Lotze and especially Bernard Bolzano, where he embeds platonism about meaning and mental content in a theory of intentional consciousness (see Beyer 1996).

In the first decade of the 20th century, Husserl considerably refined and modified his method into what he called "transcendental phenomenology". This method has us focus on the essential structures that allow the objects naively taken for granted in the "natural attitude" (which is characteristic of both our everyday life and ordinary science) to "constitute themselves" in consciousness. (Among those who influenced him in this regard are Descartes, Hume and Kant.) As Husserl explains in detail in his second major work, Ideas (1913), the resulting perspective on the realm of intentional consciousness is supposed to enable the phenomenologist to develop a radically unprejudiced justification of his (or her) basic views on the world and himself and explore their rational interconnections.

Husserl developed these ideas in Göttingen, where—thanks to his Logical Investigations and the support by Wilhelm Dilthey, who admired that work and recommended Husserl to the Prussian ministry of culture—he received an associate professorship ("Extraordinariat", later turned into a "Persönliches Ordinariat") in 1901. From 1910/11 and 1913, respectively, he served as founding (co-)editor of Logos (in the first issue of which his programmatic article "Philosophy as a Rigorous

Science" appeared, containing a critique of naturalism) and of the Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Research (opening with his Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy). Husserl stayed in Göttingen until 1916. It is here that he made his most important philosophical discoveries (cf. Mohanty 1995), such as the transcendental-phenomenological method, the phenomenological structure of time-consciousness, the fundamental role of the notion of intersubjectivity in our conceptual system, the horizon-structure of our singular empirical thought, and more. In later works—most notably in On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1928), Formal and Transcendental Logic (1929), Cartesian Meditations (1931), The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology (1954) and Experience and Judgement (1939)—these results were developed further and put into new contexts, such as the path-breaking project of linking the basic notions of science back to their conceptual roots in the pre-scientific (regions of the) "lifeworld" (Crisis).

In the year 1916 Husserl became Heinrich Rickert's successor as full professor ("Ordinarius") in Freiburg/Breisgau, where (among many other things) he worked on passive synthesis (cf. Husserliana, vol. XI, XXXI). He gave four lectures on Phenomenological Method and Phenomenological Philosophy at University College, London, in 1922 (cf. Husserliana, vol. XXXV). In 1923 he received a call to Berlin, which he rejected. Husserl retired in 1928, his successor being his (and Rickert's) former assistant Martin Heidegger (whose major work Being and Time had been published in Husserl's Yearbook in 1927). In 1929 he accepted an invitation to Paris. His lectures there were published as Cartesian Meditations in 1931. In the same year, Husserl gave a number of talks on "Phenomenology and Anthropology", in which he criticized his two "antipodes", Heidegger and Max Scheler (cf. Husserl 1997). In 1933 Hitler took over in Germany. Husserl received a call to Los Angeles but rejected. Because of his Jewish ancestors, he became more and more humiliated and isolated. In 1935 he gave a series of invited

lectures in Prague, resulting in his last major work, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology.

Edmund Husserl died on April 27, 1938 in Freiburg. His manuscripts (more than 40000 pages in total) were rescued by the Franciscan Herman Leo Van Breda, who brought them to Leuven (Belgium), where the first Husserl archive was founded in 1939. (Today, there are further archives in Freiburg, Cologne, Paris, New York and Pittsburgh.) Since 1950 the Husserl archives are editing Husserl's collected works, Husserliana.

## 5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF HIS THOUGHT

Pure logic, meaning, intuitive fulfillment and intentionality

As a philosopher with a mathematical background, Husserl was interested in developing a general theory of inferential systems, which (following Bolzano) he conceived of as a theory of science, on the ground that every science (including mathematics) can be looked upon as a system of propositions that are interconnected by a set of inferential relations. Following John S. Mill, he argues in Logical Investigations that the best way to study the nature of such propositional systems is to start with their linguistic manifestations, i.e., (sets of) sentences and (assertive) utterances thereof.

How are we to analyse these sentences and the propositions they express? Husserl's approach is to study the units of consciousness that the respective speaker presents himself as having—that he “gives voice to”—in expressing the proposition in question (for instance, while writing a mathematical textbook or giving a lecture). These units of consciousness he labels intentional acts or intentional experiences, since they always represent something as something—thus exhibiting what Brentano called intentionality. According to Husserl, there are non-intentional units of consciousness as well. (He quotes pain as an example.) What distinguishes intentional from non-intentional experiences is the former's having intentional content.

Even objectless (i.e., empty) intentional experiences like your thought of the winged horse Pegasus have content. On Husserl's view, that thought simply lacks a corresponding object; the intentional act is "merely as of", but not really of, an object. Husserl rejects "representationalist" accounts of intentionality, such as the mental image theory, according to which intentional experiences represent intra-mental pictorial representations of objects, where like other pictures such images may exist without there being a depicted object in the actual world. For Husserl, this view leads to a "false duplication" of objects represented in the veridical case; and it already presupposes what an adequate conception of pictorial representation is yet to accomplish: an explanation of what it is that makes the underlying "phantasy content", or phantasm, "the [r]epresenting image of something or other" (Husserl 1994, p. 347; Husserliana, vol. XXII, pp. 305f). It is precisely an intentional content that does the trick here (as in all cases of intentional consciousness), according to Husserl, in a way to be explained in more detail by his phenomenology of consciousness.

In the case of propositional acts, i.e., units of consciousness that can be given voice to by a complete sentence (paradigmatically, a declarative sentence), Husserl identifies their content with the propositional meaning expressed by that sentence. In the case of their non-propositional but still intentional parts, he identifies the corresponding intentional content with a sub-propositional meaning. For example, the judgement "Napoleon is a Frenchman" contains an act of thinking of Napoleon whose intentional content is the sub-propositional meaning expressed by the name "Napoleon". (Accordingly, the judgement can be looked upon as an act of ascribing the property of being French to the referent of that name.) Experiences like this, which can be given voice to by either a singular or a general term, are called "nominal acts" (as opposed to the propositional acts containing them). Their contents are called "nominal meanings".

Husserl regards both propositional and nominal meanings as the subject-matter of "pure logic" or "logic in the wide sense"—the study of (i) what distinguishes sense (alias meaning) from nonsense (this part of pure logic

being called “pure grammar”) and (ii) which of the senses delivered by pure grammar are logically consistent and which of them are not (this part of pure logic being labelled “logic in the narrow sense”).

An important and still largely unexplored claim of Husserl's is that any logically consistent meaning can in principle be subjectively fulfilled, more or less adequately, by a unified intuition, such as an act of continuous perception or intuitive imagination, where the structure and other essential features of the meaning in question can be read off from the respective mode of intuitive fulfillment. Inconsistent meanings can be singled out and studied by means of (reflection upon) corresponding experiences of intuitive conflict, like for instance the discrete switching back and forth between a duck-head-imagination and a rabbit-head-imagination in the case of an attempted intuitive imagination of a duck-head that is at the same time a rabbit-head. Some meanings are inconsistent for formal-logical reasons. According to Husserl, all analytically false propositions belong to this category. Other meanings are inconsistent because they conflict with some general material a priori truth, also called “essential law”. The proposition expressed by the sentence “There are perceptual objects whose surface is both (visibly) completely green and completely red at the same time” is a case in point.

Meanings generally and propositions in particular exist independently of their actually functioning as intentional content. Thus, true propositions such as the Pythagorean theorem can be discovered. Propositions and their components are abstract, i.e., atemporal, objects. However, what does it mean to grasp a proposition or, more generally, a sense? How can an abstract object become the content of an intentional act? Combining ideas of Bolzano and Lotze, Husserl answers this question by taking recourse to the notion of an ideal (i.e., abstract) species or type, as follows. Propositions and other meanings are ideal species that can be (but do not have to be) instantiated by certain particular features, i.e., dependent parts, of intentional acts. Those species are also called “ideal matters”. The particular features instantiating an ideal matter—Husserl refers to them as “moments of matter”—are laid bare by

phenomenological description, a reflection-based (or introspective) analysis taking into account both the linguistic expression(s) (if any) and the modes of (possible) intuitive fulfillment or conflict associated with the respective experience.

Since phenomenological description yields ideal species, it involves what Husserl was later (notably in Ideas) to call "eidetic reduction", i.e., an unfolding of abstract features shared by appropriate sets of fictitious or real-life examples, by way, e.g., of free imaginative variation on an arbitrarily chosen initial example (for the method of "free variation", see Experience and Judgement, sec. 87).

Phenomenological description also yields the "moment of quality" of the intentional experience under investigation, i.e., the particular feature instantiating its psychological mode (judgement, conscious deliberation, conscious desire, conscious hope, etc.), which roughly corresponds to the speech act mode of an utterance giving voice to that experience. Furthermore, the description yields relations of "foundation", i.e., one-sided or mutual relative existential dependencies between (1) the experience in question and other experiences and (2) the particular descriptive features of the experience. Thus, an experience of pleasure about a given event is one-sidedly founded, relative to the stream of consciousness it belongs to, in a particular belief-state to the effect that this event has occurred. (The relativization to a particular stream of consciousness makes sure that both founded and founding experience occur in the same person's mind.) Like all foundation relations, this one holds in virtue of an essential law, to the effect that conscious pleasure about some state of affairs requires a corresponding (and simultaneous) belief. Quite generally, a given object a of type F is founded in a particular object b of type G (where a is different from b and F is different from G) relative to a particular whole c of type H if and only if (i) there is an essential law in virtue of which it holds that for any object x of type F there is an object y of type G and a whole z of type H, such that both x and y are (proper) parts of z, and (ii) both a and b are (proper)

parts of c. Of course, the notion of an essential law needs further clarification.

3. Indexicality and propositional content

However, as Husserl was well aware, the species-theory of content faces at least one serious objection. This objection concerns utterances that are "essentially occasional", i.e., systematically context-sensitive, expressions like "I am here now" and the 'indexical' experiences they give voice to. If the intentional content of an indexical experience is to serve as a (sub-)propositional content, it must uniquely determine the object (if any) that the respective experience refers to. That is to say: if two indexical experiences display the same intentional content, they must refer to the same object (if any). It seems, though, that the moments of matter of two such experiences can instantiate the same ideal matter—the same type of (particular) content—whilst representing different objects. If you and I both think "I am here", our respective thoughts share the same type of content, or so it would seem, but they represent different states of affairs. In order to accommodate this observation, Husserl draws a distinction between, on the one hand, the "general meaning function" of an utterance (which corresponds to what David Kaplan calls "character", roughly: the linguistic meaning of the expression used) and, on the other hand, the "respective meaning" (i.e., the propositional or sub-propositional content expressed in the relevant context of utterance). However, it is doubtful whether this distinction really helps Husserl overcome the difficulty the phenomenon of context-sensitivity poses for his species-theory of content. If intentional contents are ideal matters in the sense of types of particular matters, and if this kind of type may remain constant while the intentional object and hence the (sub-)propositional content differs, then surely intentional contents thus conceived cannot always function as (sub-)propositional contents, as Husserl's theory would have it. Rather, there must be another intentional content involved, namely the "respective meaning", which serves as the (sub-)propositional content of the indexical experience. And this content does not appear to be an ideal species. (It may be argued, however, that even (sub-)propositional contents of indexical utterances can be

instantiated multiply in thought and speech, thus qualifying as ideal species after all. But the crucial question is whether this holds true in complete generality: consider the above example “I am here now”.)

However that may be, Husserl construes (sub-)propositional contents (“respective meanings”) as two-factored, with the general meaning function plus the relevant context of utterance (if any) determining the content in question. And at least in the case of indexical experiences he seems to identify their intentional contents with these two-factored contents, for he holds that intentional content, which is referred to as “noematic sense” or “noematic nucleus” in Ideas, uniquely determines reference, i.e., intentional object. (For the claim that noematic sense is contextually determined respective meaning rather than general meaning function—which rules out any internalist reading; see Section 4 below—cf. Husserliana, vol. XX/1, pp. 74–78; see also Husserliana, vol. XXVI, p. 212, fn.) Some scholars even go as far as to claim that Husserl defines the noematic sense as “a certain person, object, event, state of affairs which presents itself, taken exactly as it present itself or as it is intended” (Gurwitsch 1982, pp. 61 f.; cp. Sokolowski 1987; for a much-discussed critique of Gurwitsch's interpretation see Føllesdal 1969).

4. Singularity, consciousness and horizon-intentionality

Husserl sees quite clearly that indexical experiences (just as experiences given voice to by means of genuine proper names) are characterized, among other things, by their singularity: they represent a particular object, or set of objects, x, such that x is to be regarded as the intentional object of the respective experience in all relevant possible worlds (i.e., in all actual or counterfactual circumstances relative to which we are determining the object represented by that experience). Thus, for instance, in sec. 47 of Ideas, he describes what an experiencing subject, at a given time, in the light of his (or her) current indexical experiences, considers to be “the actual world” as a “special case” of a whole manifold of “possible worlds” each of which corresponds to a possible future course of experience (possible, that is, relative to the indexical experience in question). These (actual or potential) future experiences

can be said to be (more or less) anticipated by the experiencing subject at the respective time, and they constitute what Husserl calls the "intentional horizon" of the indexical experience in the light of whose intentional content they are anticipated (cf. Smith and McIntyre 1982). For example, if you see something as a table, you will expect it to appear to you in certain ways if you go around and observe it.

What binds together the intentional horizon of a given indexical experience? According to Husserl, all of the (actual or potential) experiences constituting that horizon share a sense of identity through time, which sense he labels as the determinable X they belong to. As a first approximation, two experiences of a given subject belong to the same determinable X if and only if the subject believes them to represent the same object. (For a related criterion of intersubjective identity of determinable X, see Beyer 2000, sec. 7.) Hence, experiences belonging to a determinable X must be accompanied by at least one higher-order belief. This view fits in well with the thesis (shared, at least in part, by so-called dispositional higher-order belief theories of consciousness) that intentional experiences automatically give rise to (i.e., motivate) momentary dispositions to make corresponding reflective higher-order judgements, based on something like inner perception, thus constituting a form of implicit or "pre-reflective self-consciousness" (to use Sartre's term).

It is controversial whether such a dispositional higher-order view may be ascribed to Husserl (see Zahavi 2015, sec. 1). It should be uncontroversial that on his view the motivational basis of the relevant higher-order dispositional beliefs must already display the essential feature of consciousness independently of occurrent higher-order thought in order to be available for such thought in the first place (see Beyer 2011, p. 44). This becomes clear on a close study of Husserl's work on "inner time-consciousness" (see the entry on phenomenological approaches to self-consciousness; also see Section 6 below). However, there is ample textual evidence showing that he regards the availability to inner perception (in the sense of a "real possibility" or "practical ability";

see Section 8 below) and to accordingly motivated reflective higher-order judgements (in which a hitherto "latent Ego" becomes "patent") as an essential feature of consciousness, constituting its "mode of being" (cf. Hua III/1, p. 77, l. 27-35; p. 95, l. 36-38; Hua VIII, p. 90).

The determinable X a given indexical experience belongs to, with respect to certain other experiences, helps us answer the question of what determines the reference of that experience, if not its ideal meaning species alone. In order to take the role played by the determinable X into account properly, we have to employ a Husserlian research strategy that could be called the dynamic method. That is to say, we have to look upon intentional acts as momentary components of certain transtemporal cognitive structures—dynamic intentional structures—in which one and the same object or state of affairs is represented throughout a period of time during which the subject's cognitive perspective upon that object or state of affairs is constantly changing (see, e.g., Ideas, sec. 86). (Typical examples of dynamic intentional structures include continuous observations—which represent Husserl's standard example—as well as those totalities of successive judgements, or momentary belief-states, that actualize one and the same continuous belief. For instance, my judgement that yesterday was Thursday actualizes the same belief as the judgement I could have given voice to yesterday by “Today is Thursday”.) Consequently, the determinable X is apt to lead us back through time towards the original situation where the reference of the relevant unified series of successive intentional horizons was fixed, like for instance the occasion of the subject's first perceptual encounter with a particular object: the corresponding perceptual experience will belong to the same determinable X as all of the (remaining) experiences belonging to the relevant series. In a more recent terminology, one may say that in this perceptual situation the subject has opened a mental file about a particular object (cf. Perry 1980).

In a research manuscript from 1913 Husserl refers to mental files associated with proper names as “individual notions (Eigenbegriffe)” (cf. Husserliana, vol. XX/2, p. 358), characterizing them as being infinitely

"open" and "in flux" (cf. ibid., p. 359). Now it is the "referent" of the relevant mental file, or individual notion, that will normally count as the common intentional object of the experiences bound together in a unified series of successive intentional horizons in which the object "constitutes itself" empirically. (In cases where the "referent" of a mental file changes across time—i.e., is unnoticedly replaced by another object—the situation becomes more complicated. The same goes for cases of perceptual judgements leading to, or taken by the respective subject to be confirming, entries into an already existing file. See Beyer 2000, sec. 7.) Note that "constitution" so conceived does not mean creation.

On this reading of Husserl's notion of the determinable X, there is a link, at least in the case of proper names and in the ubiqituous indexical case, between intentional content (including determinable X) on the one hand, and extra-mental reality on the other, such that intentional content thus understood determines reference in much the same way more recent externalist theories of content would have it, i.e. in such a way that the referent can in turn be said to help determine the intentional content (see Beyer 2000, 2001; cf. also Husserl's discussion of Twin Earth in Husserliana, vol. XXVI, p. 212). Notice, however, that Husserl does not naively take the existence of an extra-mental referent for granted. Instead, he asks which structures of consciousness entitle us to represent the world as containing particular objects transcending what is currently given to us in experience (see Sections 7 and 8 below).

Husserl can thus be read (or at least be rationally reconstructed) as both an early direct reference theorist (headword: singularity) and a non-naive externalist about intentional content and (respective) meaning.

The dynamic method has us look upon noematic Sinn under the "functional aspect" of how it enables us to keep the intentional object "in mind (im Sinn)" (Husserliana, vol. II/1, pp. 196 ff), instead of viewing it merely statically as a psychological type or species to be instantiated by isolated moments of consciousness. It makes us regard any content of the latter sort, particularly "static perceptual content", as a mere "abstraction

from dynamic content" (Mulligan 1995, pp. 195, 197). This may help to explain why the species-theory of content had become less important to Husserl by the time he wrote Ideas.

## 5.3 THE NATURAL WORLD THESIS

The phenomenological epoché

An externalist reading (or rational reconstruction) of Husserl's theory of content might, however, be taken to conflict with the methodological constraints posed by the phenomenological epoché, which—together with the dynamic method and eidetic reduction—builds the essential core of the transcendental-phenomenological method introduced in Ideas.

Husserl developed the method of epoché or "bracketing" around 1906. It may be regarded as a radicalization of the methodological constraint, already to be found in Logical Investigations, that any phenomenological description proper is to be performed from a first person point of view, so as to ensure that the respective item is described exactly as is experienced, or intended, by the subject. Now from a first-person point of view, one cannot, of course, decide whether in a case of what one takes to be, say, an act of perception one is currently performing, there actually is an object that one is perceptually confronted with. For instance, it is well possible that one is hallucinating. From a first-person point of view, there is no difference to be made out between the veridical and the non-veridical case—for the simple reason that one cannot at the same time fall victim to and detect a perceptual error or misrepresentation. In the non-veridical case, too, a transcendent object appears to "constitute itself" in consciousness. It is for such reasons that Husserl demanded (in Ideas) that in a phenomenological description proper the existence of the object(s) (if any) satisfying the content of the intentional act described must be "bracketed". That is to say, the phenomenological description of a given act and, in particular, the phenomenological specification of its intentional content, must not rely upon the correctness of any existence assumption concerning the object(s) (if any) the respective act is about. Thus, the epoché has us focus on those aspects of our intentional acts and their contents that do

not depend on the existence of a represented object out there in the extra-mental world.

On closer inspection, however, Husserl actually draws upon two different versions of the epoché, which versions he does not separate as clearly as one might have hoped: the "universal epoché" on the one hand, and a weaker "local epoché" (as one could label it) on the other. The former version (as described in Ideas) seems to require the phenomenologist to put all his existence assumptions regarding the external world into brackets at once, at any point, whereas the weaker version merely requires him to bracket particular existence assumptions, depending on the respective "transcendental guide (Leitfaden)", i.e., on the issue to be clarified phenomenologically. This is supposed to enable the phenomenologist to make explicit his reasons for the bracketed existence assumptions, or for assumptions based upon them, such as, e.g., the presupposition that a given creature is a subject undergoing such-an-such an experience. (In Section 7 we shall see that Husserl draws upon empathy in this connection.)

Only the universal epoché seems to conflict with our externalist reading: if no extra-mental existence assumptions whatsoever are admitted at any point, then phenomenologically there cannot be object-dependent intentional contents, as externalism would have it. By contrast, there may be some such contents, even many of them, without intentional content generally having to be dependent on a particular extra-mental object. Which leaves enough room for the method of local epoché to apply to any given particular case, as will become clear in Section 6.

6. Epoché, perceptual noema, hýle, time-consciousness and phenomenological reduction

The point of the local epoché can perhaps best be brought out if we follow Husserl in applying it to the case of perceptual experience. The phenomenologist is supposed to perform his descriptions from a first-person point of view, so as to ensure that the respective item is described exactly as it is experienced. Now in the case of perceptual experience one

cannot, of course, both fall victim to and at the same time discover a particular perceptual error; it is always possible that one is subject to an illusion or even a hallucination, so that one's perceptual experience is not veridical. If one is hallucinating, there is really no object of perception. However, phenomenologically the experience one undergoes is exactly the same as if one were successfully perceiving an external object.

Therefore, the (adequacy of a) phenomenological description of a perceptual experience should be independent of whether for the experience under investigation there is an object it represents or not. Either way, there will at least be a perceptual content (if not the same content on both sides, though). It is this content that Husserl calls the perceptual noema. Thanks to its noema, even a hallucination is an intentional act, an experience "as of" an object. Phenomenological description is concerned with those aspects of the noema that remain the same irrespective of whether the experience in question is veridical or not. Thus, our phenomenologist must not employ—he (or she) must "bracket"—his belief in the existence of the perceptual object.

However, this lands him in a methodological dilemma. If, on the one hand, the phenomenologist leaves the "natural attitude" and brackets his corresponding existence-belief, he cannot at the same time perform the perceptual experience he wishes to investigate. (This is the first horn of the dilemma.) For, as Husserl himself stresses (cf. Ideas, sec. 90, 109), the existence-belief is an indispensable part of the perceptual phenomenon: such experiences are essentially thetic, i.e., there can be no such thing as a perceptual experience without "belief-character" (cf. 5th Logical Investigation, sec. 23). If, on the other hand, our phenomenologist makes use of that belief, then he is bound to violate the constraints put upon him by the local epoché: he cannot but fail to assume the phenomenological attitude. (This is the second horn.)

There are at least three possible ways out of this dilemma. First, the phenomenologist could choose the first horn of the dilemma, but analyse an earlier perceptual experience of his, one that he now remembers. He

just has to make sure here not to employ his earlier (and perhaps still persisting) belief in the existence of a perceptual object. Secondly, he could again decide in favour of the first horn and analyse a perceptual experience that he merely intuitively imagines himself to have. (For Husserl's view on imagination see esp. Husserliana, vol. XXIII.) Thirdly, he could instead choose the second horn, keep employing his existence-belief, but make a kind of "pragmatic ascent" and describe the perceptual experience in such a way that the description, i.e., the speech act thus performed, does not presuppose the existence of a perceptual object. (The following sort of description may serve that function: "I am demonstratively identifying a so-and-so"; "I am performing an act of this-meaning under the aspect so-and-so".)

It is not entirely clear if Husserl considers all of these strategies to be admissible. The second one is certainly in line with the important methodological role he ascribes to "phantasy", i.e., mere intuitive imagination, when it comes to eidetic reduction, which in turn constitutes an important part of the phenomenological method. The third strategy—pragmatic ascent—fits in well with the way he uses to specify the common element of the noema of both veridical perceptions and corresponding hallucinations (see, e.g., the first-person description of someone's experience of "this blooming tree there in space" presented in sec. 90 of Ideas; also see ibid., sec. 89 f.).

Now we can apply the local epoché to specify the noema of both veridical perceptions and hallucinations so as to bring out their singularity. Already in his 1894 essay "Intentional Objects" (cf. Husserliana, vol. XXII; English translation of a somewhat different version of the essay in: Rollinger 1999) Husserl stressed that objectless representations such as hallucinations can in a sense be characterized as "representing an intentional object", provided that this characterization is understood to be made "under an existential assumption", as follows: "If the act of hallucination were veridical, it would successfully represent such-and-such an object (under such-and-such aspects)". Something similar goes with regard to the singularity of a hallucinatory experience's

noema: if such an experience were veridical, it would, in virtue of its noema, represent a particular perceptual object in all relevant possible worlds (see Section 3 above). Thus, we can provide an existentially neutral specification of the noema of a (veridical, illusory or hallucinatory) perceptual experience, just as local epoché demands, and still bring out the singular character of their content that Husserl has done so much to uncover, especially in his investigations into indexicality and the role of the determinable X in our constitution of spatio-temporal reality. The specification might run as follows: The noema of a perceptual experience i is such that either (1) there is an object x that i represents in virtue of its noema, where x is to be regarded as the referent of i in all relevant possible worlds, or (2) there would be an object meeting condition (1) if i were veridical. Condition (2) enables us to make sense of the behaviour of a speaker/thinker making counterfactual assumptions about an object which he, unknowingly, merely hallucinates, or of quantifying into modal statements about that alleged object (cf. Beyer 2000, pp. 26–31). Notice that on the above-proposed externalist reading of Husserl's notion of intentional content, the noema will differ depending on whether condition (1) or (2) is satisfied. Nevertheless, our noematic specification meets the requirements of local epoché, as it does not rely on the existence of a particular perceptual object. If there is no such object, condition (2) will be satisfied—provided that we are dealing with a perceptual experience. The rationale behind condition (2) is that even in the non-veridical case an individual notion (a mental file) and consequently a unified series of intentional horizons gets activated, on the basis of the same sensory material, or hýle (see the following paragraph), as in the veridical case.

It should be noted that according to Husserl the complete noema of a perceptual experience contains an additional element, to be distinguished from the intentional content, notably its "thetic" or "positing" character, i.e., its quality. Moreover, the manner in which the perceptual object (if any) presents (or would present) itself includes the sensual matter or "hýle" underlying the respective perceptual experience. Typical examples of hýle include sense impressions (i.e., sensory experiences),

as opposed to the perceptual experiences based upon them. Thus, to take Jastrow's/Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit head as an example, the perception of a duck-head may be founded in the same sense impressions or hýle as the perception of a rabbit-head (cf. Føllesdal 1988, pp. 108 f.). (For Husserl all remaining intuitive acts are likewise founded in something like hýle, which he labels as their "intuitive representational content". In the case of acts of phantasy, he refers to the intuitive representational content as "phantasma".) Husserl regards sense impressions as non-conceptual in nature. It is only the intentional content of a perceptual experience that "forms" its underlying hýle so as to yield a conceptual representation of the perceptual object. Husserl compares this process of conceptual "forming" of sensual matter to the interpretation of a linguistic expression, but this comparison should not mislead us to conclude that he subscribes to a sense-datum theory of perception (see Section 2 above, headword: mental image theory). Rather, his view on perception is best characterized as a sophisticated version of direct (i.e., non-representationalist) realism.

Finally, we should note that on Husserl's view there is a further important dimension to perceptual experience, in that it displays a phenomenological deep- or micro-structure constituted by time-consciousness (Husserliana, vol. X, XXXIII; also see Miller 1984). This merely seemingly unconscious structure is essentially indexical in character and consists, at a given time, of both retentions, i.e., acts of immediate memory of what has been perceived "just a moment ago", original impressions, i.e., acts of awareness of what is perceived "right now", and protentions, i.e., immediate anticipations of what will be perceived "in a moment". It is by such momentary structures of retentions, original impressions and protentions that moments of time are continuously constituted (and reconstituted) as past, present and future, respectively, so that it looks to the experiencing subject as if time were permanently flowing off.

This deep-structure of intentional consciousness comes to light in the course of what Husserl calls the "phenomenological reduction"

(Husserliana, vol. XIII, pp. 432 ff), which uses the method of epoché in order to make coherent sense, in terms of the essential horizon-structure of consciousness, of the transcendence of objective reality. The most global form of epoché is employed when this reality in total is bracketed. There is still something left at this point, though, which must not, and cannot, be bracketed: the temporal flow of one's "present" experience, constituted by current retentions and original impressions. These recurrent temporal features of the horizon-structure of consciousness cannot be meaningfully doubted. They provide a kind of hýle for "inner perception" and corresponding reflective judgements, but it is a very special kind of hýle: one that is a proper part of the "perceived" item and does not get conceptually "formed" in the course of perception (reflecting the fact that unlike spatio-temporal objects, lived experiences "do not adumbrate themselves"; cf. Husserliana, vol. III/1, p. 88). Hence, there is no epistemically problematic gap between experience and object in this case, which therefore provides an adequate starting point for the phenomenological reduction, that may now proceed further by using holistic justification strategies. After all, intentional consciousness has now been shown to be coherently structured at its phenomenologically deepest level.

7. Empathy, intersubjectivity and lifeworld

One of the main themes of transcendental phenomenology is intersubjectivity. Among other things, it is discussed in considerable detail in the 5th of the Cartesian Meditations and in the manuscripts published in vol. XIII-XV of Husserliana. (A particularly important critique of Husserl's view on intersubjectivity from a sociological viewpoint is found in Schütz 1966.)

According to Husserl, intersubjective experience plays a fundamental role in our constitution of both ourselves as objectively existing subjects, other experiencing subjects, and the objective spatio-temporal world. Transcendental phenomenology attempts to reconstruct the rational structures underlying—and making possible—these constitutive achievements.

From a first-person point of view, intersubjectivity comes in when we undergo acts of empathy. Intersubjective experience is empathic experience; it occurs in the course of our conscious attribution of intentional acts to other subjects, in the course of which we put ourselves into the other one's shoes. In order to study this kind of experience from the phenomenological attitude, we must bracket our belief in the existence of the respective target of our act-ascription qua experiencing subject and ask ourselves which of our further beliefs justify that existence-belief as well as our act-ascription. It is these further beliefs that make up the rational structure underlying our intersubjective experience. Since it takes phenomenological investigation to lay bare these beliefs, they must be first and foremost unconscious when we experience the world in the natural attitude.

Among the fundamental beliefs thus uncovered by Husserl is the belief (or expectation) that a being that looks and behaves more or less like myself, i.e., displays traits more or less familiar from my own case, will generally perceive things from an egocentric viewpoint similar to my own (“here”, “over there”, “to my left”, “in front of me”, etc.), in the sense that I would roughly look upon things the way he does if I were in his shoes and perceived them from his perspective. This belief allows me to ascribe intentional acts to others immediately or “appresentatively”, i.e., without having to draw an inference, say, by analogy with my own case. So the belief in question must lie quite at the bedrock of my belief-system. It forms a part of the already pregiven (and generally unreflected) intentional background, or “lifeworld” (cf. Crisis), against which my practice of act-ascription and all constitutive achievements based upon that practice make sense in the first place, and in terms of which they get their ultimate justification.

Husserl's notion of lifeworld is a difficult (and at the same time important) one. It can roughly be thought of in two different (but arguably compatible) ways: (1) in terms of belief and (2) in terms of

something like socially, culturally or evolutionarily established (but nevertheless abstract) sense or meaning.

(1) If we restrict ourselves to a single subject of experience, the lifeworld can be looked upon as the rational structure underlying his (or her) "natural attitude". That is to say: a given subject's lifeworld consists of the beliefs against which his everyday attitude towards himself, the objective world and others receive their ultimate justification. (However, in principle not even beliefs forming part of a subject's lifeworld are immune to revision. Hence, Husserl must not be regarded as an epistemological foundationalist; see Føllesdal 1988.)

(2a) If we consider a single community of subjects, their common lifeworld, or "homeworld", can be looked upon, by first approximation, as the system of senses or meanings constituting their common language, or "form of life" (Wittgenstein), given that they conceive of the world and themselves in the categories provided by this language.

(2b) If we consider subjects belonging to different communities, we can look upon their common lifeworld as the general framework, or "a priori structure", of senses or meanings that allows for the mutual translation of their respective languages (with their different associated "homeworlds") into one another.

The term "lifeworld" thus denotes the way the members of one or more social groups (cultures, linguistic communities) use to structure the world into objects (Husserliana, vol. VI, pp. 126–138, 140–145). The respective lifeworld is claimed to "predelineate" a "world-horizon" of potential future experiences that are to be (more or less) expected for a given group member at a given time, under various conditions, where the resulting sequences of anticipated experiences can be looked upon as corresponding to different "possible worlds and environments" (Husserliana, vol. III/1, p. 100). These expectations follow typical patterns, as the lifeworld is fixed by a system of (first and foremost implicit) intersubjective standards, or conventions, that determine what

counts as “normal” or “standard” observation under “normal” conditions (Husserliana, vol. XV, pp. 135 ff, 142) and thus as a source of epistemic justification. Some of these standards are restricted to a particular culture or “homeworld” (Husserliana, vol. XV, pp. 141 f, 227–236), whereas others determine a “general structure” that is “a priori” in being “unconditionally valid for all subjects”, defining “that on which normal Europeans, normal Hindus, Chinese, etc., agree in spite of all relativity” (Husserliana, vol. VI, p. 142). Husserl quotes universally accepted facts about “spatial shape, motion, sense-quality” as well as our prescientific notions of “spatiotemporality”, “body” and “causality” as examples (ibid.). These conceptions determine the general structure of all particular thing-concepts that are such that any creature sharing the essential structures of intentional consciousness will be capable of forming and grasping them, respectively, under different lifeworldly conditions.

The notion of lifeworld was already introduced in the posthumously published second volume of Ideas, under the heading of “Umwelt”, to be translated as “surrounding world” or “environment”. Husserl there characterizes the environment as a world of entities that are “meaningful” to us in that they exercise “motivating” force on us and present themselves to us under egocentric aspects. Any subject taking the “personalistic attitude” builds the center of an environment containing such objects. The personalistic attitude is “the attitude we are always in when we live with one another, talk to one another, shake hands with one another in greeting, or are related to one another in love and aversion, in disposition and action, in discourse and discussion” (Husserliana, vol. IV, p. 183; Husserl 1989, p. 192). The central notion of Husserl's “Umweltanalyse” is the concept of motivation, whose application he explains as follows: “how did I hit upon that, what brought me to it? That questions like these can be raised characterizes all motivation in general” (Husserliana, vol. IV, p. 222; Husserl 1989, p. 234, with translation change). The entities exercising motivating force on us owe their corresponding “meaning” or significance to certain forms of intentional consciousness and intersubjective processes. Thus, to quote one of Husserl's examples, “I see coal as heating material; I recognize it and

recognize it as useful and as used for heating, as appropriate for and as destined to produce warmth. [...] I can use [a combustible object] as fuel; it has value for me as a possible source of heat. That is, it has value for me with respect to the fact that with it I can produce the heating of a room and thereby pleasant sensations of warmth for myself and others. [...] Others also apprehend it in the same way, and it acquires an intersubjective use-value and in a social context is appreciated and is valuable as serving such and such a purpose, as useful to man, etc." (Husserliana, vol. IV, pp. 186f; Husserl 1989, pp. 196f).

On Husserl's view, it is precisely this "subjective-relative lifeworld", or environment, that provides the "grounding soil" of the more objective world of science (Husserliana, vol. VI, p. 134), in the twofold sense that (i) scientific conceptions owe their (sub-)propositional content and thus their reference to reality to the prescientific notions they are supposed to "naturalize" and that, consequently, (ii) when things get into flux in science, when a crisis occurs, all that is left to appeal to in order to defend new scientific approaches against their rivals is the prescientific lifeworld, as manifested in our according intuitive acceptances (for references cf. Føllesdal 1990a, pp. 139 f). This view offers an alternative to the "naturalistic" stance taken by many analytic philosophers today.

One of the constitutive achievements based upon my lifeworldly determined practice of act-ascription is my self-image as a full-fledged person existing as a psycho-physical element of the objective, spatio-temporal order. This self-image can be justified by what Edith Stein, in a PhD thesis on empathy supervised by Husserl (Stein 1917), has labelled as iterated empathy, where I put myself into the other subject's shoes, i.e., (consciously) simulate him, under the aspect that he (or she) in turn puts himself into my shoes. In this way, I can figure out that in order for the other subject to be able to ascribe intentional acts to me, he has to identify me bodily, as a flesh-and-blood human being, with its egocentric viewpoint necessarily differing from his own. This brings home to me that my egocentric perspective is just one among many, and that from all foreign perspectives I appear as a physical object among others in a

spatio-temporal world. So the following criterion of subject-identity at a given time applies both to myself and to others: one human living body, one experiencing subject. However, Husserl does not at all want to deny that we also ascribe experiences, even intentional ones, to non-human animals. This becomes the more difficult and problematic, though, the less bodily and behavioural similarity obtains between them and ourselves.

Before finally turning to the question of what "objectivity" amounts to in this connection, let us notice that in Husserl's eyes something like empathy also forms the basis of both our practical, aesthetical and moral evaluations and of what might be called intercultural understanding, i.e., the constitution of a "foreign world" against the background of one's own "homeworld", i.e., one's own familiar (but, again, generally unreflected) cultural heritage (cf. Husserliana, vol. XV). Husserl studied many of these phenomena in detail, and he even outlined the beginnings of a phenomenological ethics and value theory (cf. Husserliana, vol. XXVIII, XXXVII). In this context, he formulates a "categorical imperative" that makes recourse to the notion of lifeworld, or environment, as follows: Always act in such a way that your action contributes as well as possible to the best (the most valuable) you recognize yourself to be able to achieve in your life, given your individual abilities and environment (cf. Husserliana, vol. XXXVII, pp. 251 ff). Note that on Husserl's view the will of a free agent, capable of following this imperative, is always already embedded in a "volitional context" predelineating the open "future horizon" of a "full individual life" that the agent is currently able to lead (Husserliana, vol. XXXVII, p. 252), thus qualifying as a dynamic intentional structure.

8. The intersubjective constitution of objectivity and the case for "transcendental idealism"

Even the objective spatio-temporal world, which represents a significant part of our everyday lifeworld, is constituted intersubjectively, says Husserl. (The same holds true for its spatio-temporal framework, consisting of objective time and space.) How so? Husserl starts (again,

from a first-person viewpoint) from a “solipsistic” abstraction of the notion of a spatio-temporal object which differs from that notion in that it does not presuppose that any other subject can observe such an object from his (or her) own perspective. His question is what justifies us (i.e., each of us for him- or herself) in the assumption of an objective reality consisting of such objects, given only this “solipsistic” conception of a spatio-temporal thing (or event) as our starting point. On Husserl's view, “the crucial further step” in order to answer this question consists in disclosing the dimension that opens up when the epistemic justification, or “motivation”, of intersubjective experience, or empathy, is additionally taken into account and made explicit (Husserliana, vol. VII, p. 435).

Roughly, his argument goes as follows. In order for me to be able to put myself into someone else's shoes and simulate his (or her) perspective upon his surrounding spatio-temporal world, I cannot but assume that this world coincides with my own, at least to a large extent; although the aspects under which the other subject represents the world must be different, as they depend on his own egocentric viewpoint. Hence, I must presuppose that the spatio-temporal objects forming my own world exist independently of my subjective perspective and the particular experiences I perform; they must, in other words, be conceived of as part of an objective reality. This result fits in well with—in fact, it serves to explain—Husserl's view, already stressed in Ideas, that perceptual objects are “transcendent” in that at any given moment they display an inexhaustive number of unperceived (and largely even unexpected) features, only some of which will become manifest—will be intuitively presented—in the further course of observation.

However, according to Husserl this does not mean that the objective world thus constituted in intersubjective experience is to be regarded as completely independent of the aspects under which we represent the world. For on his view another condition for the possibility of intersubjective experience is precisely the assumption that by and large the other subject structures the world into objects in the same style I

myself do. It is partly for this reason that Husserl can be said to adhere to a version of both “realism” and “idealism” at the same time.

Another, related, reason is that Husserl's argument for realism is developed in a context in which he defends what he refers to as "transcendental idealism" (a terminological choice he would later regret; see Føllesdal 1990a, 128). During the years in which his transcendental phenomenology took shape, he developed a number of "proofs" of this position, most of which are based upon his conception of a "real possibility" regarding cognition or the acquisition of knowledge. By a "real possibility", Husserl understands a possibility that is such that "something—more or less— 'speaks in favour of it'" (Hua XX/1, p. 178). Real possibilities are, in other words, conceived of as more or less (rationally) motivated possibilities; and Husserl understands motivation in such a way that it is always someone who is motivated a certain way (cf. Hua IV, p. 222). This is why Husserl subscribes to the following dependency thesis: The real possibility to acquire (empirical) knowledge regarding a contingent object A (possible world, individual thing, state of affairs involving such thing; cf. Hua XXXVI, pp. 139f) "requires" an "epistemic subject", which "either experiences A, or acquires knowledge regarding A on the basis of experience, or else has the practical possibility (or the practical ability) to experience A and acquire knowledge regarding it" (Hua XXXVI, p. 139). Husserl also adheres to the following correlation thesis with regard to empirical reality and real epistemic possibility: If a contingent object A is real (really exists), then the real (as opposed to the merely logical) possibility obtains to acquire knowledge regarding A (cf. Hua XXXVI, p. 138, l. 35-36). From these two propositions—the dependency and the correlation thesis—he derives the conclusion that the existence of a contingent object A requires "the necessary co-existence of a subject either acquiring knowledge" regarding A "or having the ability to do so" (Hua XXXVI, pp. 139f). This is nothing but "[t]he thesis of transcendental idealism [...]: A nature without co-existing subjects of possible experience regarding it is unthinkable; possible subjects of experience are not enough" (Hua XXXVI, p. 156).

Husserl seems to regard real possibilities as epistemic dispositions (habitualities), or abilities, that require an actual "substrate" (cf. Hua XXXVI, p. 139). At the same time, he stresses that "surely no human being and no animal" must exist in the actual world (adding that their non-existence would however already result in a "change of the world") (cf. Hua XXXVI, p. 121). One way to make sense of this would be to weaken the dependency thesis, and the requirement of an actual substrate, and to merely require what might be called real higher-order possibilities—possibilities for acquiring epistemic dispositions in counterfactual (or actual) cases where epistemic subjects would be co-existing—that may remain unactualized but could be actualized by someone properly taking into account a multitude of individual epistemic perspectives, by means of intersubjective experience. But even under this reconstruction there remains a sense in which the criteria of real possibility and reality constitution, and the corresponding structure of the real world, are dependent on a "pure Ego", on Husserl's view: What counts as a real possibility, or as epistemically justified, is dependent on the phenomenological subjects reflecting about such counterfactual cases in the methodological context of the transcendental reduction and the results they arrive at in this context.

## 5.4 ESSENCE AND ESSENTIAL INTUITION

Intuition is informed by the essential suchness of the depths into which it has plunged. It is the breath of flowing awareness that occurs through stillness when preconceptions are out of the way. It is a song that arises in the dance between an immersion into what is before one and a clear connection of the heart and third eye chakras. The heart is a bridge of information from the root to the crown, from the earth and from that which is beyond. Through its allowing embrace, the heart is the melting pot and integrator, and each chakra is like a receptacle of another aspect of awareness in interfacing with the world. Intuition is inclusive of past knowledge without being tied to past knowledge. It is the result of deep listening within and a grace of inspiration in connection with that which

inspires it. Intuition is the grace of a yoga of awareness with knowledge, and of the silence that informs and allows for that. A function of intuition is self-trust. Conditions of intuition are the fire that burns at the heart of inner stillness and silence.

In the visual and performing arts and music, intuition can be a subliminal arm of inspiration, aesthetics and taste. It informs composition, the harmonies that resonate and the accents that contrast. In invention and all forms of creativity, intuition informs vision and expression in connection with the zeitgeist and collective consciousness. It propels and is propelled by expansion and an evolution of consciousness.

Intuition is a yet-to-be-realized voice whispering to be recognized. It echoes wisdom of the soul because like soul, it looks at the conditions and play of time through a timeless eternal awareness.

Sometimes transrational knowings such as psychic perception and whatever cannot be proven, such as higher truth consciousness, are called "intuition." These trans-rational knowings are sometimes hidden behind what we can more easily prove or recognize, or what we are less embarrassed to call "intuition."

Intuition is the voice of one's innate creative intelligence in communion with its surrounding conditions.

**Check Your Progress 1**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. How to develop the Edmund Husserl’s thought?

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2. How do you find out the natural world's thesis?

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3. How do you know the Essence and essential intuition?

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## 5.5 LET US SUM UP

Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl April 1859 – 27 April 1938) was a German philosopher who established the school of phenomenology. In his early work, he elaborated critiques of historicism and of psychologism in logic based on analyses of intentionality. In his mature work, he sought to develop a systematic foundational science based on the so-called phenomenological reduction. Arguing that transcendental consciousness sets the limits of all possible knowledge, Husserl redefined phenomenology as a transcendental-idealist philosophy. Husserl's thought profoundly influenced the landscape of 20th-century philosophy, and he remains a notable figure in contemporary philosophy and beyond.

Husserl studied mathematics under the tutelage of Karl Weierstrass and Leo Königsberger, and philosophy under Franz Brentano and Carl Stumpf. He taught philosophy as a Privatdozent at Halle from 1887, then as professor, first at Göttingen from 1901, then at Freiburg from 1916 until he retired in 1928, after which he remained highly productive. In 1933, due to racial laws, having been born to a Jewish family, he was

expelled from the library of the University of Freiburg, and months later resigned from the Deutsche Akademie. Following an illness, he died in Freiburg in 1938.

## 5.6 KEY WORDS

**Essence**: In philosophy, essence is the property or set of properties that make an entity or substance what it fundamentally is, and which it has by necessity, and without which it loses its identity.

**Psychologism**: Psychologism is a philosophical position, according to which psychology plays a central role in grounding or explaining some other, non-psychological type of fact or law.

## 5.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How to develop the Edmund Husserl's thought?
2. How do you find out the natural world's thesis?
3. How do you know the Essence and essential intuition?

## 5.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES


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## 5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1. See Section 5.2
2. See Section 5.3
3. See Section 5.4

# UNIT 6: PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION AND ITS STAGES

**STRUCTURE**



## 6.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- The Phenomenological Reduction
- Historical Background of the Phenomenological Reduction
- The Epistemological Problem the Phenomenological Reduction Aims to Solve
- The Analysis That Disclosed the Need for the Reduction
- The Structure, Nature and Performance of the Phenomenological Reduction
- How the Reduction Solves the Epistemological Problem.

# 6.1 INTRODUCTION

There is an experience in which it is possible for us to come to the world with no knowledge or preconceptions in hand; it is the experience of astonishment. The "knowing" we have in this experience stands in stark contrast to the "knowing" we have in our everyday lives, where we come to the world with theory and "knowledge" in hand, our minds already made up before we ever engage the world. However, in the experience of astonishment, our everyday "knowing," when compared to the "knowing" that we experience in astonishment, is shown up as a pale epistemological imposter and is reduced to mere opinion by comparison.

The phenomenological reduction is at once a description and prescription of a technique that allows one to voluntarily sustain the awakening force of astonishment so that conceptual cognition can be carried throughout intentional analysis, thus bringing the "knowing" of astonishment into our everyday experience. It is by virtue of the "knowing" perspective generated by the proper performance of the phenomenological reduction that phenomenology claims to offer such a radical standpoint on the world phenomenon; indeed, it claims to offer a perspective that is so radical, it becomes the standard of rigor whereby every other perspective is judged and by which they are grounded. In what follows there will be close attention paid to correctly understanding the rigorous nature of the phenomenological reduction, the epistemological problem that spawned it, how that problem is solved by the phenomenological reduction, and the truly radical nature of the technique itself.

In other words, the phenomenological reduction is properly understood as a regimen designed to transform a philosopher into a phenomenologist by virtue of the attainment of a certain perspective on the world phenomenon. The path to the attainment of this perspective is a species of meditation, requiring rigorous, persistent effort and is no mere mental exercise. It is a species of meditation because, unlike ordinary meditation, which involves only the mind, this more radical form requires the participation of the entire individual and initially brings about a radical transformation of the individual performing it similar to a

religious conversion. Husserl discovered the need for such a regimen once it became clear to him that the foundation upon which scientific inquiry rested was compromised by the very framework of science itself and the psychological assumptions of the scientist; the phenomenological reduction is the technique whereby the phenomenologist puts him or herself in a position to provide adequately rigorous grounds for scientific or any other kind of inquiry.

## 6.2 THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION

The phenomenological reduction is the meditative practice described by Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, whereby one, as a phenomenologist, is able to liberate oneself from the captivation in which one is held by all that one accepts as being the case. According to Husserl, once one is liberated from this captivation-in-an-acceptedness, one is able to view the world as a world of essences, free from any contamination that presuppositions of conceptual framework or psyche might contribute. Many have variously misunderstood the practice of the phenomenological reduction, not in the sense that what they are doing is wrong, but in the sense that they do not take what they do far enough; this article will acquaint the reader with the extent to which Husserl and Fink's original account intended the performance of the reduction to be taken.

The procedure of the phenomenological reduction emerges in Husserl's thought as a necessary requirement of the solution he proposed to a problem that he, himself, had raised with respect to the adequacy of the foundation upon which scientific inquiry rests. Thus, if we are ever to achieve an appropriate level of appreciation for the procedure of the phenomenological reduction, we must begin by acquainting ourselves with the role that Husserl sees it playing in his overall project of giving the sciences an adequate epistemological foundation. This problem of the foundation of scientific inquiry spans Husserl's entire career from his early to later work; we see its beginning arguments in Logical Investigations, one of his earlier works, and we also see it playing a

prominent role later in his career as it dominates one of his latest works, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. Accordingly, this article will take as themes for its major divisions: 1) the historical background of the phenomenological reduction, 2) Husserl's analysis of the foundation of scientific inquiry that demonstrates a need for the phenomenological reduction, and 3) The Structure, Nature, and Performance of the Phenomenological Reduction.

The section on the historical background of the phenomenological reduction will serve to show that this procedure does not arrive as "a bolt out of the blue," as it were; rather, it appears as the logically required solution to a specific problem. The problem that it addresses is the problem of the adequacy of the foundations of scientific inquiry. To illustrate Husserl's misgivings with the foundations of scientific inquiry, consider the logical relationship between the axioms of geometry and its theorems and proofs. The point of doing proofs in geometry is to show that each theorem of geometry is adequately grounded in the axioms, that which is taken as being "given" in geometry. In scientific inquiry, what scientists take as being given is the natural world and the things in that world; consequently, those things and the world itself are never questioned but taken to be the logical bedrock upon which the subsequent scientific investigations are based. In other words, scientists take the world to be their axioms; and it is this axiomatic status that Husserl throws into question when he shows that the results of scientific investigation are a function of both the architectonics of scientific hypotheses and the psychological coloring of the investigating scientist. For this reason, Husserl says that if we are ever to be able to access the pure world so that it can act as a proper foundation, we must strip away both of these qualifications and return to the "things themselves" [die Sache selbst]. That is, we must return to the world as it is before it is contaminated by either the categories of scientific inquiry or the psychological assumptions of the scientist. The phenomenological reduction is the technique whereby this stripping away occurs; and the technique itself has two moments: the first Husserl names epoché, using

the Greek term for abstention, and the second is referred to as the reduction proper, an inquiring back into consciousness.

## 6.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION

a. Husserl's Early Works

Since the main burden of this article lies in the specific area of the phenomenological reduction, it is not necessary to go into great detail regarding Husserl's early work beyond noting that it dealt almost exclusively with mathematics and logic; and that it is the ground out of which his later thought grew. In his Philosophy of Arithmetic (1891), Husserl questions the psychological origin of basic arithmetical concepts such as unity, multiplicity, and number; a project that he pursues later into the Prolegomena to the Logical Investigations. In the former work, Husserl gives us an analysis of the origin of the authentic concept of number, i.e., number to be conceived intuitionally. It is here that Husserl pays special attention to the question of the foundation of abstraction for the basic arithmetical concepts. Thus, we find that Husserl's early efforts at providing a subjective complement to objective logic led him to investigate the general a priori of correlation of cognition, of the sense of cognition and the object of cognition, and led him also to conceive an absolute science designed as a universal analysis of constitution in which the origins of objectivity in transcendental subjectivity are elucidated.

A crucial element of Husserl's early work in the Philosophy of Arithmetic is his critique of psychologism; it is this critique that is continued in his Logical Investigations and which sets the stage for the emancipation of the formal-logical objects and laws from psychological determinations, as was the then-current view. However, this liberation was not Husserl's ultimate goal, but merely the preparatory work for understanding the connection between pure logic and concrete (psychical, or rather phenomenological) processes of thinking, between ideal conditions of cognition and temporally individuated acts of thinking.

b. Husserl's Later Works

It is owing to this goal that Husserl's later work moves quickly away from the strictly logical and mathematical character of his early work and takes on the more transcendental character of his later work. Thus, the trend of Husserl's thought moves from his critique of the psychologistic account of mathematical and logical objects to transcendental subjectivity by means of his persistent questioning of the foundation of knowledge. It is important to note that his questioning of the foundation of knowledge is not the same as the quest for certainty that characterizes much of modernist thought—to which some philosophers believe Husserl's American contemporary, John Dewey in his The Quest for Certainty, presented successful objections. Rather, Husserl's quest was not for certainty but for the founding of the conditions for the possibility of knowledge. That is, he was not searching for an answer to the question: How do we know the tree is in the quad? He was seeking an answer to the question: How does it come about that consciousness can make contact with the tree in the quad? This is what was meant above when mention was made that Husserl's ultimate goal was to understand the connection between pure logic and concrete processes of thinking.

In his dogged pursuit of an answer to this question, Husserl is pushed from the then current psychological theory to the object; from the object back to consciousness, and finally all the way back to transcendental consciousness and the emergence of the "ultimate question of phenomenology" regarding the phenomenology of phenomenology. It is this question of the phenomenology of phenomenology that dominates the inquiry into the nature of the phenomenological reduction that we find in Sixth Cartesian Meditation and in the articles that Eugen Fink wrote around 1933 and 1934 in his attempt to further explain the phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl. However, what we need is a more finely tuned elucidation of the epistemological problem that was the initial impetus driving Husserl's early efforts.

## 6.4 THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEM THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION AIMS TO SOLVE

The prevailing epistemology in Husserl's time was a neo-Kantian position; indeed, it was owing to the criticism brought against phenomenology by this cadre of philosophers that Eugen Fink was constrained to publish his very important article, "The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism" in the journal, Kant-Studien; Fink uses the locution "contemporary criticism" in his title as a euphemism for "neo-Kantians." Roughly put, the Kantian epistemological model is one that strives to ameliorate the stark contrast between the position Descartes put forward and the one brought about by the criticism of his position in the writings of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, to name a few; that is, Kant's position is one that seeks an irenic modulation between the rationalists and the empiricists. Kant's epistemology, however conciliatory toward each camp, still leaned heavily on certain aspects of Descartes' thought; notably, the distinction between consciousness and object (mind and body), albeit in Kant's terms this distinction was taken up as a distinction between a noumenal world and a phenomenal world—a difference that Kant bridged by means of the categories. The categories themselves were arrived at by asking the question: what would have to be the case in order for our experience of the world to be as it is? This question is commonly referred to as the question determining the conditions for the possibility of experience and more specifically as the Transcendental Deduction.

Husserl's epistemological insight is that there is no such distinction between consciousness and object, as had been assumed by Descartes and subsequently taken up in a slightly different form by Kant. In Husserl's thought, the terms "noesis" and "noema" do not so much identify distinct items set over against each other (e.g. consciousness and object) as much as they provide a linguistic vehicle to speak about the interpenetration of each by the other as aspects of a more inclusive whole, the Life-world—understood in its broadest sense. A key point made by Fink in his article for the neo-Kantians is that when we think of

the world, it is always a world already containing us thinking it; this fact is overlooked by the Kantian picture of the world; a picture which assumes a perspective that is neither consciousness nor world but which sets each over against the other. For Kant, this imagined perspective is what gives us access to the distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal worlds; ironically, it is also this perspective that makes the transcendental deduction necessary, since the distinction between noumenal and phenomenal is a state of affairs to which we do not have direct access and must, of necessity, deduce it.

Husserl constructs his epistemological position by first noticing the very obvious fact that all consciousness is consciousness of something; and it is this insight that establishes the relationship between the noesis and noema. If knowledge is ever to be established at all, it must be established in consciousness; the epistemological problem, then, for Husserl is to describe consciousness, since without consciousness, no knowledge is possible. Or, to put a more Kantian spin on it, consciousness itself is the condition for the possibility of knowledge. Furthermore, since we are always already in a world, the first task of epistemology is to properly and accurately describe what is already the case; and we can do this only if we begin with a thorough examination of consciousness itself and carry that examination all the way back to the "I" in the "I Am." Husserl speaks of going "back" [ruckfrage] because we must begin where we are; and where we are includes a sense of self whose identity is temporarily seated in the sedimented layers of consciousness built up through our temporal experiences. Hence, if we are to encounter the "I" we must dig back down through those layers or we must continually present ourselves with the question: who is "I"? as we consider the great variety of things with which we have identified. This questioning back is the method of the phenomenological reduction and aims to lay bare the "I"—the condition for the possibility of knowledge.

It is important to keep in mind that Husserl's phenomenology did not arise out of the questioning of an assumption in the same way that much

of the history of thought has progressed; rather, it was developed, as so many discoveries are, pursuant to a particular experience, namely, the experience of the world and self that one has if one determinedly seeks to experience the "I"; and, Hume notwithstanding, such an experience is possible.

**Check Your Progress 1**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss about the Phenomenological Reduction.

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2. Write about Historical Background of the Phenomenological Reduction.

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3. Discuss about Epistemological Problem the Phenomenological Reduction Aims to Solve.

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## 6.5 THE ANALYSIS THAT DISCLOSED THE NEED FOR THE REDUCTION

Although it is generally conceded that Husserl's thought underwent a significant transformation from his early interests in logic and mathematics, as indicated in his "On the Concept of Number" and his Philosophy of Arithmetic, to his later transcendental interests, as indicated by The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, the actual "turning point" is not so generally accepted. This is due, in part, to the fact that Husserl's work can be viewed developmentally both according to the chronological appearance of his work and according to its systematic connections. Thus, the "development" of his thought can be seen either in terms of his published work, i.e., chronologically, or in terms of key systematic methodological concepts. Viewed chronologically, Bernet, Kern, and Marbach (Bernet, 1989) put the beginning of the split around 1915-1917, the last years Husserl spent at Göttingen, but is only clearly seen in the early years of Husserl's teaching at Freiburg (around 1917-1921) (p.1); but considered systematically, they say that the partition relates to the consistent extension of the research program of phenomenological philosophy towards a genetic-explanatory phenomenology as a supplement to the hitherto carried-out static-descriptive phenomenology (p.1). The terms "static," "genetic," and "generative" phenomenology refer to aspects of phenomenology that come into play after the reduction has been performed; however, they articulate distinctions that must be kept clearly in mind when evaluating phenomenological analyses.

In the early phases of his thinking, Husserl was concerned chiefly with the phenomenological-descriptive analysis of specific types of experiences and their correlates as well as with describing general structures of consciousness; he also aimed at the foundation and elaboration of the corresponding methodology (phenomenological reflection, reduction, and eidetics) (p.1). Similarly in the later phases of his thought, there is the attempt by means of genetic phenomenology to elucidate the concrete unification of experiencing in the personal ego and in the transcendental community of egos, or monads, as well as in the constitution of the correlative surrounding worlds and of the one world common to all (p.2).

For the purposes of tracing the development of the phenomenological reduction, I take the relevant period of the transformation of Husserl's thought from early to late to be between 1900 and 1913; the two volumes of Logical Investigations were published in 1900 and 1901 but it wasn't until the appearance of The Idea of Phenomenology in 1907 that many of the characteristic themes of phenomenology were explicitly articulated. This little volume was soon followed by the publication of "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" in 1911; and that by the publication of Ideas I in 1913, where the most explicit treatment, up to that time, of the main phenomenological themes is given.

a. The Self-Refutation of the Sciences

In order to grasp the full import of the move that Husserl makes to phenomenology, we must understand the arguments that motivate that move; and we get a glimpse of those arguments in his "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" published in 1911. In that article, Husserl's chief aim is epistemological and expresses itself first as a critique of the natural sciences and psychology and then as an adumbration of a technique that later, in 1913 with the publication of Ideen I, would be termed the "epoché " or the "reduction."

Husserl begins his critique of the natural sciences by noting certain absurdities that become evident when such naturalism is adopted in an effort to "naturalize" consciousness and reason; these absurdities are both theoretical and practical. Husserl says that when "the formal-logical principles, the so-called 'laws of thought,' are interpreted by naturalism as natural laws of thinking," there occurs a kind of "inevitable" absurdity owing to an inherent inconsistency involved in the naturalist position. His claim in this article alludes to the more fully formed argument from volume 1 of his Logical Investigations (Husserl, 1970), which will be summarized here.

The natural sciences are empirical sciences and, as such, deal only with empirical facts. Thus, when the formal-logical principles are subsumed

under the "laws of Nature" as "laws of thought," this makes the "law of thought" just one among many of the empirical laws of nature. However, Husserl notes that "the only way in which a natural law can be established and justified, is by induction from the singular facts of experience" (p.99). Furthermore, induction does not establish the holding of the law, "only the greater or lesser probability of its holding; the probability, and not the law, is justified by insight" (p.99). This means that logical laws must, without exception, rank as mere probabilities; yet, as he then notes, "nothing, however, seems plainer than that the laws of 'pure logic' all have a priori validity" (p.99). That is to say, the laws of 'pure logic' are established and justified, not by induction, but by apodictic inner evidence; insight justifies their truth itself. Thus, as Husserl remarks in "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science" (1965) that "naturalism refutes itself" (p.80). It is this theoretical absurdity that leads to a similar absurdity in practice.

The absurdity in practice, says Husserl, becomes apparent when we notice that the naturalist is "dominated by the purpose of making scientifically known whatever is genuine truth, the genuinely beautiful and good; he wants to know how to determine what is its universal essence and the method by which it is to be obtained in the particular case" (pp.80-81). Thus, the naturalist believes that through natural science and through a philosophy based on the same science the goal has been attained; but, says Husserl, the naturalist is going on presuppositions; indeed, to the extent that he theorizes at all, it is just to that extent "that he objectively sets up values to which value judgments are to correspond, and likewise in setting up any practical rules according to which each one is to be guided in his willing and in his conduct" (p.81). It is this state of affairs that drives Husserl to the observation that the naturalist is "idealist and objectivist in the way he acts"; since both of these cannot be true at the same time, the naturalist is involved in an absurdity (p.80).

Husserl claims that the natural scientist is not outwardly aware of these absurdities owing to the fact that he "naturalizes reason" and, on this

account, is blinded by prejudice. He adds, "One who sees only empirical science will not be particularly disturbed by absurd consequences that cannot be proved empirically to contradict facts of nature" (pp.81-82). This is not to say that Husserl is arguing against science as such, to the contrary, he says that there is "in all modern life no more powerfully, more irresistibly progressing idea than that of science" and that "with regard to its legitimate aims, it is all-embracing. Looked upon in its ideal perfection, it would be reason itself, which could have no other authority equal or superior to itself" (p.82). The problem is that naturalism, which wanted to establish philosophy both on a basis of strict science and as a strict science, appears completely discredited along with its method. To this point in the argument, Husserl has simply shown that the foundation upon which scientific inquiry rests is self-contradictory and fails to offer adequate grounding. So, if the natural scientist cannot provide us with a "rigorous science" then what is needed and to whom can we look?

b. The Reduction Prefigured

Husserl's idea is that the problems belonging to the domain of a "strict science," namely, theoretical, axiological, and practical problems, give us a clue themselves as to the method required for their solution. He says, "through a clarification of the problems and through penetration into their pure sense, the methods adequate to these problems, because demanded by their very essence, must impose themselves on us" (p.83). It is for this reason that the refutation of naturalism based on its consequences that he just finished accomplishes very little for him, what is important is the principiant critique of the foundations of naturalism; and by this he means that he wants to direct a critical analysis at the philosophy that believes "it has definitely attained the rank of an exact science" (p.84). So what Husserl will be putting to the test is the relative strength of the term "exact" when it is used in this context. It is not the case that Husserl thinks that a science of nature does not produce important results; he thinks it does. The problem, as Husserl sees it, is that a science of nature is inadequate if it is not ultimately grounded in a strictly scientific philosophy. Husserl is not criticizing the results of

science (the structural design and dignity of the house that science built) but only the foundation upon which those results rest.

With respect to the foundation, Husserl says that all natural science is naïve in regard to its point of departure because the nature that it investigates "is for it simply there." In other words, the things that natural science investigates are its foundation because they mark the point of departure for natural science. These things are simply taken for granted uncritically as being there and "it is the aim of natural science to know these unquestioned data in an objectively valid, strictly scientific manner" (p.85). The same holds true for psychology in its domain of consciousness. It is the task of psychology "to explore this psychic element scientifically within the psychophysical nexus of nature, to determine it in an objectively valid way, to discover the laws according to which it develops and changes, comes into being and disappears" (p.86). Even where psychology, as an empirical science, concerns itself with determinations of bare events of consciousness and not with dependencies that are psychophysical, "those events are thought of, nevertheless, as belonging to nature, that is, as belonging to human or brute consciousnesses that for their part have an unquestioned and co-apprehended connection with human and brute organisms" (p.86). Thus, he states that "every psychological judgment involves the existential positing of physical nature, whether expressly or not" (p.86).

This uncritical acceptance is also reflected in the naïveté that characterizes natural science since at every place in its procedure it accepts nature as given and relies upon it when it performs experiments. Thus, ultimately, every method of experiential science leads back precisely to experience. But isolated experience is of no worth to science; rather, "it is in the methodical disposition and connection of experiences, in the interplay of experience and thought which has its rigid logical laws, that valid experience is distinguished from invalid, that each experience is accorded its level of validity, and that objectively valid knowledge as such, knowledge of nature, is worked out" (p.87). Although this critique of experience is satisfactory, says Husserl, as long

as we remain within natural science and think according to its point of view, a completely different critique of experience is still possible and indispensable. It is a critique that places in question all experience as such as well as the sort of thinking proper to empirical science (p.87).

For Husserl, this is a critique that raises questions such as: "how can experience as consciousness give or contact an object? How can experiences be mutually legitimated or corrected by means of each other, and not merely replace each other or confirm each other subjectively? How can the play of a consciousness whose logic is empirical make objectively valid statements, valid for things that are in and for themselves? Why are the playing rules, so to speak, of consciousness not irrelevant for things?" It is by means of these questions that Husserl hopes to highlight his major concern of how it is that natural science can be comprehensible in every case, "to the extent that it pretends at every step to posit and to know a nature that is in itself—in itself in opposition to the subjective flow of consciousness" (p.88). He says that these questions become riddles as soon as reflection upon them becomes serious and that epistemology has been the traditional discipline to which these questions were referred, but epistemology has not answered the call in a manner "scientifically clear, unanimous, and decisive."

To Husserl, this all points to the absurdity of a theory of knowledge that is based on any psychological theory of knowledge. He punctuates this claim by noting that if certain riddles are inherent, in principle, to natural science, then "it is self-evident that the solution of these riddles according to premises and conclusions in principle transcends natural science." He adds that "to expect from natural science itself the solution of any one of the problems inherent in it as such—thus inhering through and through, from beginning to end—or even merely to suppose that it could contribute to the solution of such a problem any premises whatsoever, is to be involved in a vicious circle" (pp.88-89).

With this being the case, it becomes clear to Husserl that every scientific, as well as every pre-scientific, application of nature "must in principle

remain excluded in a theory of knowledge that is to retain its univocal sense. So, too, must all expressions that imply thetic existential positings of things in the framework of space, time, causality, etc. This obviously applies also to all existential positings with regard to the empirical being of the investigator, of his psychical faculties, and the like" (p.89). It is here, in this passage, that we see the formal beginnings of what will later be termed the "epoché " and "reduction" in Ideen I.

Husserl is advocating a theory of knowledge that will investigate the problems of the relationship between consciousness and being in a way that excludes, not only the "thetic existential positings of things in the framework of space, time, causality, etc.," but also the "existential positings" and "psychical faculties" of the investigator. In other words, he wants to separate the subject matter he is investigating from both the theoretical framework of science and the coloring with which any investigator might qualify it. But to do so, knowledge theory can have before its eyes "only being as the correlate of consciousness: as perceived, remembered, expected, represented pictorially, imagined, identified, distinguished, believed, opined, evaluated, etc." And for Husserl, this means that the investigation must be directed "toward a scientific essential knowledge of consciousness, toward that which consciousness itself 'is' according to its essence in all its distinguishable forms" (p.89). Husserl also notes that the investigation must also be directed toward "what consciousness 'means,' as well as toward the different ways in which—in accord with the essence of the aforementioned forms—it intends the objective, now clearly, now obscurely, now by presenting or by presentifying, now symbolically or pictorially, now simply, now mediated in thought, now in this or that mode of attention, and so in countless other forms, and how ultimately it 'demonstrates' the objective as that which is 'validly,' 'really'" (p.89).

To summarize, what Husserl wants to do is to provide an unshakable ground for science, so as to make it "rigorous" and "exact." He dismisses the efforts of both science and psychology to provide such a ground owing to the fact that the "riddles" inherent in each necessarily put the

solution outside of their reach. He also notes that the traditional discipline of epistemology has failed to do this and suggests that what is needed is an investigation that is directed toward "a scientific essential knowledge of consciousness, toward that which consciousness itself 'is' according to its essence in all its distinguishable forms." Furthermore, this can only be done if we separate the matter in question from the qualifications imposed on it by either the theoretical framework of science or the existential "positings" of the investigator. In other words, we must return to the matters in question, as they are themselves; and the procedure whereby this is accomplished is phenomenology, specifically, the phenomenological reduction.

## 6.6 THE STRUCTURE, NATURE AND PERFORMANCE OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION

a. The Structure of the Phenomenological Reduction

i. The Two Moments of the Phenomenological Reduction

What actually occurs when one undertakes to perform the reduction can be discerned by giving careful attention to the things Husserl and Fink have said about it; but let me first address some terminological concerns regarding two key concepts. In Sixth Cartesian Meditation (Fink, 1995), Fink tells us "epoché and the action of the reduction proper are the two internal basic moments of the phenomenological reduction, mutually required and mutually conditioned" (p.41). This passage alerts us to the fact that the locution, phenomenological reduction, denotes two separate "moments," each of which requires and conditions the other. Thus, in speaking of "the reduction" one needs to be careful to specify whether it is the reduction proper, which is only one of the two moments, that is meant, or whether one means the entire operation of the phenomenological reduction.

Let me also draw attention to the term "moments" here because, in order to get an accurate conception and understanding of the phenomenological reduction, we must see that it is not done in two "steps." The moments are internal logical moments and do not refer to two "steps" that one

might take to conclude the procedure as one might do, for example, in waxing a floor: where the first step is to strip off the old wax and the second step is to apply the new wax; steps imply a temporal individuation that is not true of the moments of the phenomenological reduction. Husserl's term, epoché, the negative move whereby we bracket the world, is not a "step" that we do "first" in an effort to prepare ourselves for the later "step," reduction proper; rather, the bracketing and the move whereby we drive the self back upon itself, the reduction proper, occur together.

There were many during his day who misunderstood what Husserl and Fink were trying to communicate; and I think part of what might have contributed to this misunderstanding is that Husserl's readers thought that the reduction was a "two-step" process conducted wholly within the realm of the mind or imagination, not requiring any other kind of bodily participation.

1) The Epoché

Husserl's insight is that we live our lives in what he terms a "captivation-in-an-acceptedness;" that is to say, we live our lives in an unquestioning sort of way by being wholly taken up in the unbroken belief-performance of our customary life in the world. We take for granted our bodies, the culture, gravity, our everyday language, logic and a myriad other facets of our existence. All of this together is present to every individual in every moment and makes up what Fink terms "human immanence"; everyone accepts it and this acceptance is what keeps us in captivity. The epoché is a procedure whereby we no longer accept it. Hence, Fink notes in Sixth Cartesian Meditation: "This self consciousness develops in that the onlooker that comes to himself in the epoché reduces 'bracketed' human immanence by explicit inquiry back behind the acceptednesses in self-apperception that hold regarding humanness, that is, regarding one's belonging to the world; and thus he lays bare transcendental experiential life and the transcendental having of the world" (p.40). Husserl has referred to this variously as "bracketing" or "putting out of action" but it boils down to the same thing, we must somehow come to see ourselves

as no longer of this world, where "this world" means to capture all that we currently accept.

At this point it may prove prudent to head off some possible misunderstandings with respect to the epoché. Perhaps the most frequent error made with respect to the epoché is made in regards to its role in the abstention of belief in the world. Here it is important to realize two things: the first is that withdrawal of belief in the world is not a denial of the world. It should not be considered that the abstention of belief in the world's existence is the same as the denial of its existence; indeed, the whole point of the epoché is that it is neither an affirmation nor a denial in the existence of the world. In fact, says Fink, "the misunderstanding that takes the phenomenological epoché to be a straightforwardly thematic abstention from belief (instead of understanding it as transcendentally reflective!) not only has the consequence that we believe we have to fear the loss of the thematic field, but is also intimately connected with a misunderstanding of the reductive return to constituting consciousness" (p.43). The second thing has to do with who it is that is doing the abstaining and this directly concerns the moment of the reduction proper.

2) The Reduction Proper

The second moment of the phenomenological reduction is what Fink terms the "reduction proper;" he says, "under the concept of 'action of reduction proper' we can understand all the transcendental insights in which we blast open captivation-in-an-acceptedness and first recognize the acceptedness as an acceptedness in the first place" (p.41). If the epoché is the name for whatever method we use to free ourselves from the captivity of the unquestioned acceptance of the everyday world, then the reduction is the recognition of that acceptance as an acceptance. Fink adds, "abstention from belief can only be radical and universal when that which falls under disconnection by the epoché comes to be clearly seen precisely as a belief-construct, as an acceptedness." It is the seeing of the acceptance as an acceptance that is the indication of having achieved a transcendental insight; it is transcendental precisely because it is an

insight from outside the acceptedness that is holding us captive. It should be kept in mind that the "seeing" to which Fink refers is not a "knowing that" we live in captivation-in-an-acceptedness, since this can be achieved in the here and now by simply believing that Fink is telling the truth; the kind of "seeing" to which Fink refers is rather more like the kind of seeing that occurs when one discovers that the mud on the carpet was put there by oneself and not by another, as was first suspected.

Thus, as Fink points out, it is through the reductive insight into the transcendental being-sense of the world as "acceptedness" that "the radicality of the phenomenological epoché first becomes possible;" but "on the other hand, the reduction consistently performed and maintained, first gives methodic certainty to the reductive regress" (p.41). Taken together, the epoché and the reduction proper comprise the technique referred to as the phenomenological reduction; since these two moments cannot occur independently, it is easy to see how the single term, "reduction," can come to be the term of preference to denote the whole of the phenomenological reduction.

Fink also brings out a misunderstanding relating to the reduction proper, which is that it is taken as a species of speculation: "hand in hand with this misunderstanding of the epoché goes a falsification of the sense of the action of reduction proper (the move back behind the self-objectivation of transcendental subjectivity). The latter is rejected as speculative construction, for instance when one says: in actuality the phenomenologist has no other theme than human inwardness" (p.47). To think that there is such reinterpretation or speculation is to miss the point of the reduction proper, that is, it is to miss the fact that what it does is interrogate man and the world and makes them the theme of a transcendental clarification—it is precisely the world phenomenon, or "being", which is bracketed.

According to Fink and Husserl, the phenomenological reduction consists in these two "moments" of epoché and reduction proper; epoché is the "moment" in which we abandon the acceptedness of the world that holds

us captive and the reduction proper indicates the "moment" in which we come to the transcendental insight that the acceptedness of the world is an acceptedness and not an absolute. The structure of the phenomenological reduction has belonging to it the human I standing in the natural attitude, the transcendental constituting I, and the transcendental phenomenologizing I, also called the onlooker or spectator. Fink says that "the reducing I is the phenomenological onlooker. This means he is, first, the one practicing the epoché and then the one who reduces, in the strict sense" (p.39).

Thus, it is by means of the epoché and reduction proper that the human I becomes distinguished from the constituting I; it is by abandoning our acceptance of the world that we are enabled to see it as captivating and hold it as a theme. It is from this perspective that the phenomenologist is able to see the world without the framework of science or the psychological assumptions of the individual.

b. The Nature of the Phenomenological Reduction

The phenomenological reduction is a radical, rigorous, and transformative meditative technique. To illustrate this, let me turn to comments that Fink makes in his "What Does the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl Want to Accomplish: The Phenomenological Idea of Laying a Ground" (Fink, 1966/1972; German/English).

i. Self-Meditation Radicalized

The most important point to be made in reference to the nature of the phenomenological reduction is that it is a meditative technique and not a mere mental or imaginative technique. Furthermore, it is a self-meditation that has been radicalized. Fink introduces this in his discussion of laying a ground. He says that "the laying-of-a-ground of a philosophy is the original beginning of the philosopher himself, not with and for others but for himself alone; it is the disclosing of the ground which is capable of bearing the totality of a philosophical interpretation of the world" (p.161/11). In this passage we can plainly see that the ground of which Fink is speaking is not considered to be propositions,

ideas, or anything else of that sort; rather the ground is precisely the philosopher him or herself. Thus, Fink says, "it is a fateful error to suppose that the principles, in accordance with which a ground-laying of philosophy is to proceed, would be present—transported, as it were, from the conflict of philosophers—as a normative ideal prior to and outside of philosophy" (p.161/11). Hence, regardless of "how such a ground-laying is carried out—be it as a return to the concealed, a priori law-giving of reason, or be it as a progression towards essentials, and the like—the meditation [die Besinnung], in which such a ground-laying is carried out, is always the first, fundamental decision of a philosophizing" (p.161/11).

Unless the term "meditation," as Fink uses it in this context, springs out at one when reading it, the heart of this passage is likely to be misunderstood. Here there is a clear connection being established between some meditative practice [Besinnung] and the laying of a ground for philosophy. It is important to draw attention to this feature since we typically think of axioms or assumptions when we assay to discern the foundation of a philosophy; but Fink is making a clear break with that practice, holding instead that the first, fundamental decision of a philosophizing is "the meditation, in which a ground-laying is carried out" ["immer ist die Besinnung, in der sich eine solche Grundlegung vollzieht, die erste grundsätzliche Entscheidung eines Philosophierens."] (p.162/11).

Fink adds to this by noting that "the commencement of the idea of laying-a-ground, which determines a philosophy, is always already the implicit (and perhaps only obscurely conscious) fore-grasp upon the system. Thus in embryonic form, the idea of the system is sketched out in the idea of laying-a-ground" (p.162/11). In other words, the idea of the ground-laying works itself out in whatever philosophy it grounds; the philosophy is itself pre-figured in the ground-laying and reflects it.

He explains this pre-figuring further by saying that, in the case of the philosophy of Husserl, the idea of the ground-laying working itself out "can, at first, be made understandable from the pathos of

phenomenology, that is, from the deportment of the human existence lying at its ground" (p.162/11). Fink allows that this pathos is "in no way a specifically 'phenomenological' one, but is, rather, the constant pathos of every philosophy which, when taken seriously in a particular, inexorable way, must lead to phenomenology itself" (p.162/11). Indeed, this pathos is "nothing other than the world-wide storm of the passion of thinking which, extending out into the totality of entities and grasping it, subjects it to the spirit" (p.163/11). Fink is saying here that the will, as the pathos of philosophy, is "resolved to understand the world out of the spirit [die Welt aus dem Geist zu verstehen]," which does not mean the "naïve belief in a pre-given and present-at-hand 'spiritual sense' of the world, but solely the willingness to bring the spirit first to its realization precisely through the knowledge of the All of entities" (p.163/12).

Although this passage would seem to indicate the crassest "intellectualism," since it seems to be saying that knowledge is the main operative process, Fink is insistent that neither the "'rationalistically' claimed self-certainty of the spirit" (here read Descartes), nor "the fascination with chaos" (read Nietzsche) that "all too easily is transformed into a defeatism of reason," captures what he means. Rather, he says, "precisely in the face of chaos, standing fast against it, the philosopher ventures the spiritual conquering of the entity; he raises the claim of a radical and universal knowledge of the world" (p.164/12). If we inquire as to how it is possible that spirit can maintain itself and its claim, or whether it has itself already become a "ground experience"; whether we "Know what authentically is 'spirit'" or what the true power of philosophizing existence is, Fink tells us: "Understanding itself in the passion of thinking, the pathos of the one who is philosophizing is cast back upon itself: it radicalizes itself into self-meditation [Selbstbesinnung], as into the way in which the spirit [der Geist] experiences itself. The phenomenological philosophy of Husserl lives in the pathos of that self-realization of the spirit [der Geist] which takes place in self-meditation" (p.164/13). Indeed, "the idea of the ground-laying of philosophy peculiar to phenomenology is the idea of the pure

and persistent self meditation [der reinen und konsequenten Selbstbesinnung]" (p.164/13).

Although, as Fink notes, in the subjective mode of self-meditation, every philosophy carries out the business of laying a ground; "phenomenology is also materially grounded exclusively on self-meditation [gründet auch sachlich ausschließlich auf Selbstbesinnung]" (p.164/13). What Fink means here by using the term "exclusively" is that "from the very beginning phenomenology foregoes ever abandoning the deportment of pure self-meditation in favor of an objective deportment. It wants to be grounded solely upon the results of a radical and persistent self-meditation and to establish upon them the entirety of its philosophical system" (p. 164/13). Hence, for phenomenology, self-meditation is not a "mere subjective method for disclosing, as the ground and basis of the philosophical interpretation of the world, an objectivity sketched out in our spirit, for example, the objective essence of reason; rather it re-delineates the sole fundamental realm in which the philosophical problem of the world can arise" (p.164/13). Thus, in phenomenology "the concept of 'ground,' in return to which the philosophical grasping of the world realizes itself, has lost its usual 'objective' sense precisely through the persistent adherence to self-meditation, carried out with a certain radicalism of 'purity,' as the exclusive thematic source of philosophy" (p.165/13). Fink adds: "The ground, posited in the phenomenological idea of laying-a-ground, is the 'self' which uncovers itself only in pure self-meditation" (p.165/13-14).

The general logical form of this argument will reappear in 1954 with the publishing of The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. There the argument is made that the sciences not only take the everyday life-world for granted, the everyday life-world is actually the ground for all that the sciences do because it is from there that they take their starting point. In a similar move of reasoning, the argument in this article is aimed at drawing attention to the obvious fact that the philosopher is always the real ground for any philosophy; and that if we wish, as it were, to ground that ground, we must embark on a

procedure of self-meditation—indeed, if rigor is to be maintained, we are required to undertake such a course of action.

Of course, a number of questions immediately surround the suggestion of "self-meditation," all of which derive from "the naïve and familiar, pre-given concept of 'self-meditation'"; but it is precisely this concept that must be transformed, says Fink: "the dimension of philosophy can be attained only in the radical change of self-meditation from the indeterminateness of the preliminary, still unclarified concept into the determined phenomenological setting" (p.165/14). Thus, the former questions are now transformed into questions such as: How can this change be accomplished, and what must the nature of self-meditation be, such that, precisely in the thematization of the self, the question of the totality of entities is included and traced out in its fundamental solution? Fink's response is that to this there is only one answer: "the transformation of the idea of the common self-meditation happens eo ipso in an extremely intensified taking of self-meditation seriously. The seriousness demanded here wants nothing less than to expose the spirit to a ground-experience which will bring it back into the power of the essence that is purely proper to it. In the self-meditation radicalized into the 'phenomenological reduction,' the spirit should accomplish a movement towards itself, should come unto itself" (p.165/14). But in what sense is this self-meditation radical?

ii. Radical, Rigorous, and Transformative

Some today have misunderstood the phenomenological reduction and it is probable that this failure to grasp what Husserl has discovered is partly owing to the radical nature of Husserl's project being completely missed. Fink pieces together the very analysis of the reduction that is wanted here if we are ever to disabuse ourselves of the view that the reduction is nothing more than a mere incantation or formal condition—a mental exercise.

This type of misunderstanding of the nature of phenomenology is not something new; Fink himself made explicit reference to its breadth, even

as late as 1934 when this article was originally published, saying: "The contemporary judgment of the phenomenological philosophy of Husserl fails, almost without exception, to recognize its true meaning" (Accomplish, p. 6). He then cites examples, noting that "Husserl is judged, admired and reproached sometimes as an eidetician and logician, at other times as a theoretician of knowledge, on the one hand, as an ontologist giving word to the 'matters themselves,' and, on the other hand, as an 'Idealist.' Thereby, every such Interpretation is capable, with moderate violence, of 'proving' itself from his writings. The authentic and central meaning of Edmund Husserl's philosophy is today still unknown" (p. 6). Fink attributes this lack of authentic understanding, not to a lack of willingness to understand on the part of the community of readers, but, to the essence of phenomenology itself. So, the important question is: what is it about the essence of phenomenology that makes it so difficult for the devotee to come away with an authentic understanding of it?

According to Fink, we find the answer to this question by considering the fact that the appropriation of the true meaning of phenomenology "cannot at all come about within the horizon of our natural deportment of knowledge. Access to phenomenology demands a radical reversal of our total existence reaching into our depths, a change of every pre-scientifically-immediate comportment to world and things as well as of the disposition of our life lying at the basis of all scientific and traditionally-philosophical attitudes of knowledge" (p. 6).

Nearly everyone, who has had even a casual acquaintance with Husserl's writings, has read something akin to this passage somewhere, claiming the radicality of what phenomenology attempts. Husserl is continually drawing our attention to the radical nature of phenomenology and how it affects all of our scientific knowledge and understanding; indeed, emphasizing how it grounds that very knowledge and understanding. The important thing to notice in regards to such passages, however, is that the misunderstanding of phenomenology arises precisely because the notions of the term "radical," which are employed by the would-be readers as a

hermeneutical guide in their efforts to come to an authentic appreciation of the practice of phenomenology, fail to capture all that Husserl intends by his use of it—and this in spite of the fact that he, time and again, tells us that his use of the term "radical" is new.

Consider, for instance, Husserl's introduction to the Cartesian Meditations where he expounds on the need for a "radical new beginning" of philosophy saying, "to renew with greater intensity the radicalness of their spirit, the radicalness of self-responsibility, to make that radicalness true for the first time by enhancing it to the last degree…" (Cartesian Meditations, p. 6). Husserl's emphatic demand that the radicalness become true "for the first time" indicates that his sense of "radical" is much more radical than might ordinarily be thought. Again, in Sixth Cartesian Meditation we read, "This is the problem of the proper methodological character of the phenomenological fore-knowledge that first makes it possible to pose the radical questions—in a new sense of 'radical'—, to provide the motive for performing the phenomenological reduction" (Sixth, p. 36). Here we see an explicit mention of the fact that the term "radical" is being employed in a "new" sense.

Thus, when some of misunderstand the reduction, they, most probably, are not taking seriously Husserl's claim of radicality, i.e., they have not understood exactly how extreme Husserl's sense of the term is. If they, however, take a close look at Fink's development and analysis of phenomenology in this article and by pay close attention to the intensity of the language he uses in relation to it, we can remedy this deficiency quite easily; but not without also considering the rigor required to perform the phenomenological reduction.

One important feature of the way Fink sets up his discussion of the ground and his illustration of the rigor required in the performance of the phenomenological reduction is his dramatic use of Plato's allegory of the cave. He says, "the violence, tension and struggle of the accomplishment of philosophizing symbolized in this allegory also determines the phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl" (Accomplish, p.

160/9). If there is any doubt as to how we should understand the terms "violence" and "struggle," as he uses them in this context, Fink dispatches it immediately with the following: "The philosophical 'unchaining,' the tearing oneself free from the power of one's naïve submission to the world, the stepping-forth from out of that familiarity with entities which always provides us with security, in one word, the phenomenological 'epoché,' is anything but a noncommittal, 'merely' theoretical, intellectual act; it is rather a spiritual movement of one's self encompassing the entire man and, as an attack upon the 'state-of-motionlessness' supporting us in our depths, the pain of a fundamental transformation down to our roots" (p. 160-1/9). It should be clear that Fink's use of terms such as "violence," "struggle," "unchaining," "pain," and "fundamental transformation" indicate a much more rigorous project than armchair philosophy has been wont to allow up to this point. But what is it that makes it so rigorous; what is it that we do when we perform the phenomenological reduction?

We get a preliminary description of what is required from Fink: "Our era can really attain to Husserl's philosophy, which down to today is still unknown and ungrasped, only by ascending out of the cave of world-constraint, by passing through the pain of self-releasement—and not through 'critiques' that are thoroughly bound to the naïve understanding of the world, enslaved to the natural thought-habits and entangled in the pre-constituted word-meanings of the everyday and scientific language" (p. 161/10). Here, again, we find familiar language; language that might have been encountered in any number of Husserl's other writings, but what is of interest to us in this passage is the picture of what it is we are "ascending out of." In this regard, it is helpful to recall the phrase used in Sixth Cartesian Meditation to describe the same thing, namely, "captivation-in-an-acceptedness." The situation Fink is describing is this: the lives that we live in our everyday world are lived in toto with that world, i.e., the world, as we understand it, is part of what makes us who we think we are; and, conversely, the world is only what it is (what we think it is) by virtue of having us in it, because when we think of the totality of the world, we must remember that it is a totality already

containing us thinking it. Hence, we (the world and ourselves) hold each other mutually captive by virtue of what we accept—the acceptednesses—to be true. This reflexive containment is part of what Fink means when he says, "To know the world by returning to a 'transcendence' which once again contains the world within it signifies the realization of a transcendental knowledge of the world. This is the sole sense in which phenomenology is to be considered as a 'transcendental philosophy'" (Criticism, p. 100).

With this statement we finally arrive at the core of what Fink means to communicate; the phenomenological reduction is self-meditation radicalized. On its face, his statement may seem to involve the presupposition that the self is already estranged from its own essence; however, as Fink points out, "phenomenology does not begin with a 'presupposition'; rather, by an extreme enhancement and transformation of the natural self-meditation, it leads to the ground-experience which opens-up not only the concealed-authentic essence of the spirit, but also the authentic sense of the natural sphere from out of which self-meditation comes forth" (Accomplish, p. 166/14-15). The ground-experience, furthermore, can succeed "only when, with the most extreme sharpness and consequence, every naïve claiming of the mundane-ontological self-understanding is cut off, when the spirit is forced back upon itself to Interpret itself purely as that 'self' which is the bearer and accomplisher of the valuation of every natural 'self-understanding'" (p. 169/17-18). This view is already made explicit in direct connection with the phenomenological onlooker in Fink's discussion in Sixth Cartesian Meditation (pp. 39-40). The meditation does not bring the reducing "I" into being; the reducing "I" is disclosed once the shrouding cover of human being is removed. That is, by un-humanizing ourselves we discover the reducing "I"—the phenomenological onlooker who is the one practicing the epoché.

Now we can more clearly grasp the meaning of Fink's statement; when he speaks of spirit being "forced back upon itself," the "itself" is the phenomenological onlooker—spirit; and the radicalization of self-

meditation is the procedure whereby we discover what Husserl earlier referred to as "I am, this life is." This is "radicalization" precisely because it is to be done without any reference to the mundane. Let me explain, the world is familiarly and horizonally pre-given to us in its totality; furthermore, we are pre-given in it. So, the mundane-ontological self-interpretedness of the spirit is a moment in the totality of the pre-givenness of the world. Hence, if we use any element of the mundane-ontological interpretedness of the world, we have not exercised a "radical" shift. In order for the shift to be truly radical in Husserl's sense, no element of the mundane can enter into either the motivation for self-meditation or into the ground of it—in the sense of an understanding of the essence of spirit prior to the ground-experience that brings spirit to itself. What we want to accomplish is a radical shift in which the spirit (phenomenological onlooker) is forced back upon itself to interpret itself purely as that "self" that is the bearer (as the human ego) and accomplisher (transcendental constituting ego) of the valuation of the entirety of the mundane-ontological self-interpretedness.

The radical nature of the phenomenological reduction seems to have been greatly underdetermined by some and that we can only get a truly accurate picture of what Husserl means by taking seriously his claim that, not only is the reduction radical, but it is radical in a "new" sense of that term; this "new" radicality is linked directly to self-meditation that has been radicalized—radicalized, that is, insofar as it is a self-meditation that is "forced back upon itself to Interpret itself purely as that 'self' which is the bearer and accomplisher of the valuation of every natural 'self-understanding.'" One practical way to grasp what it means for the self to be "forced back upon itself to interpret itself purely as that 'self' which is the bearer and accomplisher of the valuation of every natural 'self-understanding,'" is to understand this 'self' as the "I" in "I am." Let us now take a closer look at exactly how this technique is performed.

c. The Performance of the Phenomenological Reduction

Husserl criticizes scientific inquiry on the grounds that it does not have a philosophically rigorous foundation. The reason it does not have a philosophically rigorous foundation is because it has failed to take into consideration the fact that both the framework of its own inquiry (that is, the assumptions of time, space, causality, etc.) and the psychological assumptions of the individual scientist act to color its findings. Since there has to be a way that consciousness can contact the objective world, then the rigorous philosophical grounding that is wanted must be disclosed in this relationship. Hence, what is needed is a way to examine consciousness as it is in itself, free from the scientific framework and psychological assumptions. This procedure is the phenomenological reduction and the term "reduction" is a term that Husserl uses to indicate a reflective inquiring back into consciousness; it is an interrogation conducted by consciousness into itself. In the idiom of our own everyday parlance, we might phrase this inquiry as an exercise in determining who the "I" is whenever we say "I AM." Indeed, the path that we naturally follow in seeking an answer to this question leads precisely to the kind of interrogation of the self by the self that Husserl and Fink both claim to be ingredient in the performance of the reduction.

i. Self-Meditation

Phrases such as "resolved to understand the world out of the spirit," "spiritual movement," "religious conversion," "fundamental transformation," "ground experience," "un-humanize," and "meditation" are all leading clues as to how this technique should be understood and performed. We know that the technique is similar to the ordinary self-meditation, only radicalized; we know that it requires strenuous effort and, once completed, brings a transformation similar to a religious conversion. We also know that in the process we are "un-humanized" yet have the "entire man" encompassed. These leading clues not only direct our steps in the performance of the technique, but also give us criteria by which to judge our attempts. For instance, if we think we have performed the reduction, then we should feel as though we have experienced a religious transformation; if we do not feel that way, then chances are our technique was faulty and we did not perform it after all.

If we are to build up a picture of this technique we must begin by assuming that Husserl and Fink have an authentic discovery that they are trying to communicate and that their choice of terms to describe this experience is not careless. The title of Fink's article gives us the framework we need to complete this task. He tells us right away that he is interested in the idea of laying a ground. Laying a ground is another way of saying that preparation is being made; indeed, the ground that is laid is preparing the way for the phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl; and the ground in question is the philosopher. Fink is telling us that the philosopher is the ground for phenomenology and that the philosopher, as ground, needs preparation. What is it that prepares the philosopher to be the ground for phenomenology? It is the phenomenological reduction. The phenomenological reduction prepares the philosopher to be a phenomenologist in the same way that the experience associated with religious conversion prepares the devotee to live the religious life. Husserl says in the Crisis: "the total phenomenological attitude and the epoché belonging to it are destined in essence to effect…a complete personal transformation, comparable in the beginning to a religious conversion, which then, however, over and above this, bears within itself the significance of the greatest existential transformation which is assigned as a task to mankind as such" (p.137).

The phenomenological reduction is properly understood as a regimen designed to transform a philosopher into a phenomenologist by virtue of the attainment of a certain perspective on the world phenomenon. The path to the attainment of this perspective is a species of meditation, requiring rigorous and persistent effort. It is a species of meditation because, unlike ordinary meditation, which involves only the mind, this more radical form requires the participation of the entire individual, including, as Fink says, "the pathos of the one who is philosophizing." However, because it is a species of meditation, one can assume the basic starting point of stilling the body, mind, and emotions while sitting in a comfortable position, having made provisions not to be disturbed. What is aimed at with these outward preparations is the goal of taking as much

of the world "out of play" as possible, leaving only the meditative task to occupy one's attention.

Once settled in this comfort, the "inquiring back" into consciousness may begin; it is the having of the self as the only object of meditation that makes this a self-meditation. Since what we are after is a self-meditation, the focus of attention is on the self and the radicalization of this meditation consists in one relentlessly pushing back and forcing the self onto itself. This can be done by repeatedly affirming, not merely saying, "I am" to oneself while trying to experience or "catch" the "I" in the present instead of remembering it. In the attempt to experience the "I" in the present, one will be forced to feel the I-ness of it; this is why Fink says the performance of the technique encompasses the "entire man" and speaks of the "pathos of the one who is philosophizing."

In the course of this practice, one will become aware of the three "I"s: the human ego, the constituting ego, and the onlooker, or spectator. It is unlikely that much progress will be made on the first attempt; however, each try makes the return easier until there will come a day when you feel your consciousness rising (or yourself sinking) and the brightness of the world around you seems to be increasing. At that point you will know "I AM" and your perspective on the world will be the one that Husserl has promised—you will be a phenomenologist and will never be the same again. Indeed, Fink says that "the phenomenological 'epoché,' is anything but a noncommittal, 'merely' theoretical, intellectual act; it is rather a spiritual [geistig] movement of one's self encompassing the entire man and, as an attack upon the 'state-of-motionlessness' supporting us in our depths, the pain of a fundamental transformation down to our roots" (Accomplish, p. 9). Adding that in the epoché "the transcendental tendency that awakens in man and drives him to inhibit all acceptednesses nullifies man himself; man un-humanizes [entmenscht] himself" (Sixth, 40). It should be clear from these passages that whatever is involved in the epoché, it is certainly no mere mental exercise; and if we take Fink and Husserl at their word, it is a "spiritual movement of one's self encompassing the entire man," which would indicate a far

more radical effort than seems indicated by some who treat the phenomenological reduction as something no more strenuous than exercising the imagination or reciting an incantation.

## 6.7 HOW THE REDUCTION SOLVES THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEM

a. The Problem of Constitution

I have already noted that in his Philosophy of Arithmetic Husserl found serious fault with psychologism in his efforts to emancipate ideal objects from psychology and demonstrate their independence. With this critique, however, came the following question: How do the ideal objects come to be given? This is simply the question concerning the correlation of subject and object noted above with respect to the tree and the quad. In his "The Decisive Phases in the Development of Husserl's Philosophy," Walter Biemel addresses this very concern and brings his considerable familiarity with Husserl's works to bear upon it. He offers the following quotation from the Nachlass (F I 36, B1.19a f.) for consideration: "When it is made evident that ideal objects, despite the fact that they are formed in consciousness, have their own being in themselves, there still remains an enormous task which has never been seriously viewed or taken up, namely, the task of making this unique correlation between the ideal objects which belong to the sphere of pure logic and the subjective psychical experience conceived as a formative activity a theme for investigation. When a psychical subject such as I, this thinking being, performs certain (and surely not arbitrary but quite specifically structured) psychical activities in my own psychical life, then a successive formation and production of meaning is enacted according to which the number-form in question, the truth in question, or the conclusion and proof in question…emerges as the successively developing product."

Biemel uses this quotation to make the point that in it Husserl expresses his real concern and the real theme of his phenomenology; Biemel draws our attention to the parenthetical phrase concerning psychical activities, namely, "(and surely not arbitrary but quite specifically structured)," to

make the point that "the subject cannot arbitrarily constitute (and surely the issue here is that of constitution) any meaning whatsoever; rather are the constitutive acts dependent upon the essence of the objects in question." In other words, if we are to consider the essence of the number three, for example, it is not the case that the essence of that number, contra psychologism, is dependent upon what psychical activities are required in order to form the number; rather, in order to understand the meaning of the number three, "we must perform determinate acts of collective connecting, otherwise the meaning of 3 in general will remain entirely closed to us. There is something like the number three for us when we can perform the collecting-unifying activity in which three become capable of being presented." This does not mean that the essence of the number three would be arbitrarily determined by this activity so that the number would in each case change according to the manner in which one constitutes it. "Either I perform the acts which disclose the essence of the number three, with the result that for me there is something like three, or I do not perform them and then there is no 3 except for those who have performed this activity." This "collecting-unifying activity" is the activity of constitution.

Biemel reminds us that the problem of constitution is the source of many a misunderstanding and adds, "the ordinary use of 'constitution' equates it with any kind of production, but 'constitution' in the strong sense is more of a 'restitution' than a constitution insofar as the subject 'restores' what is already there, but this, however, requires the performance of certain activities." Citing a letter from Husserl to Hocking dated January 25, 1903, Biemel drives his point home: "Regarding the meaning of the concept of constitution employed in the Logical Investigations Husserl states: 'The recurring expression that 'objects are constituted' in an act always signifies the property of an act which makes the object present (vorstellig): not 'constitution' in the usual sense.'" Hence, the best way to discuss the concept of constitution, says Biemel, is to discuss it as the-becoming-present-of-an-object; and the acts which make this becoming-present possible, which set it in motion, are the constituting acts. Or, as Husserl would put it in his Formal and Transcendental Logic, "This

manner of givenness—givenness as something coming from such original activity—is nothing other than the way of their being 'perceived' which uniquely belongs to them."

This problem of constitution first appears in the Logical Investigations and continues to be one of the basic problems of phenomenology; however, the interest in it here is that constitution figures prominently in the resolution of the epistemological problem.

b. The Reduction and the Theme of Philosophy

In his "The Problem of the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl," Fink allows that access to the fundamental problem of Husserl's phenomenology is uncertain owing to the fact that the fundamental problem of any philosophy is often not identical with the particular questions with which its literature begins. Indeed, the fundamental problem may often even await a proper formulation; one that can emerge only after the philosopher's later stages of the development of his or her own thought are reworked. And although Husserl's thought started with the sense-formation of mathematics and logic, these interests do not comprise what Fink terms the genuine problem or theme of phenomenology.

This very zigzag process of moving back and forth from one stage to the whole and back again within which the formulation of the genuine problem occurs discloses a distinction between two types of knowing. The first type is one in which we are engaged in a developmental process that will answer certain formulatable questions; that is, it is an expecting-to-know that is characterized chiefly by the fact that it advances an already established body of knowledge—in short, it is a knowing about knowledge that is lacking. For instance, in archaeology we might plan digs in areas surrounding certain cities expecting to add to our stock of knowledge about the ancient life in that setting in order to fill in known gaps in our accounts. This is knowledge of what is lacking.

This type of knowing is not, however, the type of knowing that emerges in the zigzag process to which I just referred. The type of knowing prevalent in the zigzag process is one in which what is obvious becomes questionable; not in the sense of creating arbitrary doubts or from the mere mistrust of the human mind; rather, questionable because, as Fink says, "philosophy is an experience that man has of himself and the existent;" and it is owing to this that the origin of philosophical problems is wonder. This means that "problem" in the philosophical sense is not an expecting-to-know on the basis of a path to knowledge but rather the formation of an expecting-to-know. Philosophy is, therefore, the shaking of the ground which bears human familiarity with the existent; it is the shaking of the basis which forms the presupposition for the progressive augmentation of knowledge, i.e., the shaking of the basis of expecting-to-know of the first type. It is the very unsettling of the foundations of knowledge and the questioning of the existent qua existent as well as the questioning of the nature of truth.

The astonishment in question is just the very experience that man has of himself and the existent that is the foundation needed for epistemology; because it is in this wonder that the "unsettling idea of a genuine mode of knowing the existent suddenly emerges from beneath the ordered, familiar world in which we are at home and about which we have fixed meanings concerning things, man and God, meanings which make certainty in life possible." It is a "genuine mode" precisely because it is not already decided what the nature of the existent and the nature of truth are; after all, it cannot be original if the original formation of the ideas of "existent" and "truth" has already occurred; whether it is decided through a lengthy effort belonging to the past of human spirit or through the inconspicuous obviousness of the natural world-view. In other words, the only "knowing" that is original is the "knowing" that properly belongs to astonishment; because it is only in astonishment that man experiences the complete collapse of his traditional knowledge and pre-acquaintance with the world and with things; a collapse that is due entirely to a new confronting of the existent and a new projection of the senses of "being" and "truth." We should be sensitive to Fink's use of the term "original"

here because the way he uses it in this passage heralds the sense of "founding" invoked in the way phenomenology provides a ground for epistemology.

Fink has told us that the astonishment in which philosophy begins is in no way "merely a 'disposition,' a feeling." Rather, "it is the fundamental disposition of pure thought; it is original theory." What Fink means to communicate with this is that in astonishment a change and transformation of knowing occurs such that what we already know is reduced to mere opinion and that even the very nature of knowing is altered. In other words, Fink marks a distinction between the "knowing" that stands in need of a foundation and the "knowing" that does the founding. The knowing that does the founding is the original knowing of astonishment; it is original precisely because it does not come to the existent and truth with conceptions in hand, having already decided their nature; and the door to sustained astonishment is opened by the rigorous performance of the phenomenological reduction.

It should not be inferred from this passage that there is anything whimsical about the way astonishment proclaims the existent; as though, for example, that being and truth are presented as mere conventions. Rather, what is wanted is the ability to, as Fink says, sustain and develop astonishment "by the awakening force of conceptual cognition" because it is the extent of the creative force of wonder that ultimately determines the rank and achievement of a philosophy. It is precisely this burden that is borne by the phenomenological reduction, which aims at voluntarily awakening the force of conceptual cognition and sustaining it throughout intentional analysis. Thus, it is borne out as was noted above that philosophy does not begin with an assumption but an experience; namely, the experience of having performed the phenomenological reduction. This experience is the astonishment in which original knowing occurs; and it is upon original knowing that the "knowing" of the existent, or epistemology, is grounded.

**Check Your Progress 2**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Do analysis That Disclosed the Need for the Reduction.

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2. Discuss Structure, Nature and Performance of the Phenomenological Reduction.

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3. How the Reduction Solves the Epistemological Problem?

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## 6.8 LET US SUM UP

To summarize this unit, we can able to say, this relation, in which a physical experience is the condition for the possibility of thought, is not new to philosophy; logical analysis crucially depends upon one having the ability (experience) to be aware of logical connections; absent this ability, as Wittgenstein has also noticed, there is nothing we can do to atone for it in the individual—the individual either sees the logical connections or does not. It is the experience of being aware of, and noticing, logical connections that really grounds logical analysis. So, too, with the phenomenological reduction; without the experience of astonishment granted by having successfully performed the phenomenological reduction, no epistemology can be truly grounded

because every epistemological claim must sometime trace itself back to the original knowledge; and the original knowledge can be had only in astonishment, the very fruit of accurately performing the phenomenological reduction. In other words, the ground for epistemology is, in the final analysis, the philosopher's own astonishment; if this astonishment is voluntarily taken up and sustained, as in the performance of the phenomenological reduction, then the report of what is disclosed in that experience can be entered into the stock of human knowledge as an epistemological datum. And, in the same way that the validity of any logical argument is verified by each individual at every step by seeing for him or herself whether each step follows logically from the previous step by invoking one's own ability to recognize logical connections, every epistemological datum must be similarly verified by the phenomenologist returning to astonishment through the phenomenological reduction and comparing the results achieved with those at hand. What is needed to assure consistent results and the scientific rigor Husserl said properly belonged to phenomenology is a more careful adherence to the rigorous conditions of performing the phenomenological reduction by phenomenologists so that it does not deteriorate into the psychologistic practice of free association or mere mental exercise; it is, after all, a rigorous meditative exercise requiring the struggle of the whole person.

## 6.9 KEY WORDS

**Psychologistic**: Psychologism is a philosophical position, according to which psychology plays a central role in grounding or explaining some other, non-psychological type of fact or law.

**Reduction**: **Reduction** is a chemical reaction that involves the gaining of electrons by one of the atoms involved in the reaction between two chemicals. The term refers to the element that accepts electrons, as the oxidation state of the element that gains electrons is lowered.

## 6.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss about the Phenomenological Reduction.

2. Write about Historical Background of the Phenomenological Reduction.
3. Discuss about Epistemological Problem the Phenomenological Reduction Aims to Solve.
4. Do analysis That Disclosed the Need for the Reduction.
5. Discuss Structure, Nature and Performance of the Phenomenological Reduction.
6. How the Reduction Solves the Epistemological Problem?

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## 6.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

4. See Section 6.2
5. See Section 6.3
6. See Section 6.4

**Check Your Progress 2**

3. See Section 6.5

See Section 6.6

4. See Section 6.7

# UNIT 7: PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION AND YOGIC MEDITATION: COMMONALITIES AND DIVERGENCIES

**STRUCTURE**



## 7.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- The Indian Tradition of Thought
- The Notion of the Observing Self
- The Phenomenological Reduction(s)
- Yogic Meditation

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Husserl, the epoché and the phenomenological reduction(s) are the most essential methodological tools in terms of conducting the radical reflexion of consciousness that is necessary to free us from the various conditioned presuppositions (needs, habits, hexis, etc.) that, in our "natural attitude" (natürliche Einstellung), largely determine and

direct our experience of the world and ourselves, thus preventing us from seeing things as they "really" are—i.e., as "pure phenomena". In other words, Husserl's method aims to cleanse or purge the mind in such a way that one's experiences are no longer affected by the various factors that separate the experiencing subject from "the things themselves" (die Sachen selbst).

Only when the mind is "purified" in this manner can the experiencer reach phenomenology's goal of absolute freedom from presuppositions and prejudices (Voraussetzungsloskeit), which is a necessary precondition for the ultimate achievement of so-called apodictically true and certain knowledge. 7 Arguing for what appears to be a very similar goal, the opening aphorisms of Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras state that "yoga is the inhibition of the modifications of the mind [which establishes] the Seer in his own essential and fundamental nature. In other states, there is assimilation (of the Seer) with [those] modifications" (1:2-4). Miller (1996: ix) claims that Patañjali "… seeks a new perspective on the nature of knowing – a way to clear the mind of accumulated experiences and memories", and such an observation can as readily be applied to Husserl. The paper ends by pointing out a dilemma (or, perhaps, inconsistency) that appears to come along with the serious acceptance of phenomenological theory and method as a means for achieving the type of "pure" absolute unprejudiced and apodictically true knowledge that Husserl claims to be his goal. This dilemma roughly consists of the fact that Husserl's theory prevents him from continuing his reductions all the way to their inevitable (and unavoidable?) end. In other words, if one were to consistently carry phenomenological reduction to its natural end, it would logically bring one to the point of becoming freed from (or going beyond) the phenomenological-theoretical point of departure itself—an end that Husserl appears to have never achieved. Put a bit differently, although phenomenology should have been pure method, it became theory instead. This sort of dilemma, on the other hand, is one that the yogi can potentially avoid.

## 7.2 THE INDIAN TRADITION OF THOUGHT

Before entering the main topic of this article, let me set the stage by outlining my views on the principle theme of Indian thought, which from the Upaniṣads (approx. 700-500 BCE) onwards appears to have been largely existential (cf. Sander & Andersson 2010). By this I mean that throughout its history, Indian philosophy's primary effort has been to describe, analyze and explain the human predicament, and especially the temporality and historicity of mankind. In this regard, human beings are viewed as entities that are conditioned by a multiplicity of inner and outer factors, with the central problem being to surmount (or become "liberated" from) these various "determinants" and achieve an unconditioned, non-temporal, non-historical state of existence (mokṣa).9 Here it should be noted that the primary aim of this sort of analysis was not to attain a precise, coherent theory of the human being, but rather to comprehend the extent to which consciousness 10 has been conditioned and, most significantly, to ascertain the nature of that which potentially exists beyond (or outside of) the determinations of the temporal world—i.e., what it would mean to be a wholly free and unconditioned living being. This is one reason that long before the Western development of deep psychology, Indian thinkers had already initiated a detailed functional examination of the human mind (or consciousness) and its formative role in our experience of self and world. What they discovered in this regard was that while the "outer" (cultural, social, etc.) determinants were relatively easy to identify, comprehend and overcome, the major challenge to the achievement of a completely liberated life (the goal of the yogi) involved understanding the structure and organization (vāsanās) of the normally unconscious, deeply rooted properties of one's own mind (needs, dispositions, motivations, impulses, etc. (saṁskāras)) and then methodically transcending them.11 Here it is important to emphasize once again that among Indian thinkers, knowledge of the various characteristics of consciousness and its role in the determination of the self, its experiences and so forth was never an end in itself, something of only theoretical or academic interest. On the contrary, it was consistently pursued for practical use in the process of self-

liberation. Knowledge of consciousness, in other words, was primarily of instrumental value, as a means for controlling and mastering the mind: mokṣa was the superior goal, and everything else was subordinate to this. As such, the main attraction for Western philosophers and psychologist that have looked to Indian thought has not been in its theories of consciousness, but rather in its methods and techniques for "de-conditioning" (Eliade), "de-automatizing" (Deikman) or liberating the mind from its normally unconscious, automatically operating determining factors and processes. Indeed, it is likely in this area that Western psychologists, phenomenologists and philosophers have most to learn from Indian thinkers. From this we now turn to the concept māyā, which, as is commonly known, holds great importance in Indian thought. While the term's etymology and meaning has been much discussed, a dominating view seems to be that it originates from the IndoEuropean root ma, which means to make, produce, create, measure, form or build.

Whatever the truth about its etymology, māyā has been used within many darśana to indicate "mirage", "phantom", "magic", "coming into being", "unreal(it)" and "(cosmic) illusion". To my understanding, māyā is unreal or illusory primarily because it "comes into being" and is characterized by "changeableness" and "temporality", and thus cannot be an aspect of Being. And because all temporal entities carry the seed of their own destruction, so to speak, they are incapable of providing complete satisfaction, at least according to most darśanas. Early on, Indian thinkers became aware of the relation between illusion, temporality and human suffering, making this one of their principal themes. Although this relation was often expressed in "cosmic terms", a closer reading indicates that, as a rule, the problem of human suffering and disharmony was conceived as being determined by historic-temporal structures and categories of experience that prevented one from experiencing and living in harmony with "Reality", or ens realisimum. "Being in māyā" is thus roughly equivalent to what many Western thinkers have described as "being in false consciousness" or "being an ideological subject", meaning being helplessly embedded in the thought and knowledge determinants of one's own epochal, geographical, social,

cultural, etc. location. Māyā means, in other words, that the life-world we experience and exist in is only relative, contingent and not the really real thing.16 Accordingly, to live in māyā is to live with a "gap" between "what our senses receive" and "what our mind experiences"—between Reality As It Is and reality as we experience it through our historically, culturally and socially derived patterns of interpretation.17 It is not too difficult to imagine that those who seriously (existentially) embrace this perspective will likely experience a sense of dissatisfaction with mundane historic-temporal existence and long to experience and live within the framework of True reality. To summarize, although māyā clearly indicates cosmic illusion, the term also, and above all, indicates temporality and historicity: existence and coming into being not only on the scale of the eternal cosmos, but also in terms of mundane time and history.

Given this, it appears that the problem that much of the Indian philosophy has been more or less grappling with over the centuries revolves around the following paradoxical situation:

1. On the one hand, we human beings are born into a world that in all relevant respects has been already "mapped out" for us by our predecessors, meaning that we enter into a situation containing pre-constituted historic-cultural patterns of interpretation that we then naively and unreflectively adopt via one or another process of socialization. In this way we are handed and deeply internalize a specific definition of reality that comes along with a host of equally specific (if relative) preconceptions, prejudices, beliefs, values, norms, rules and so forth, all of which remain largely invisible. This "invisibility" is one reason that it is so difficult to transcend our own pattern of interpretation: we are normally unaware that something is there that needs to be overcome! The pattern of interpretation, in other words, has become (in a Kantian sense) a transcendental structure of the mind (consciousness)—i.e., an a priori element of experience that conditions knowledge. This is why the contingent life-world that one naively

experiences through one's pattern of interpretation is normally experienced as "the world, or reality, itself".19 In the natural attitude there is generally no consideration that the fundamental features of the world can be different than they appear to be through one's pattern of interpretation, with most people uncritically, spontaneously and naively assuming that their perceptions and experiences are placing them in (more or less) direct contact with an independent, orderly and meaningful outer world that roughly corresponds with their own experience of it. They are, in short, prisoners of their historic-cultural-biographical situation;

2. On the other hand, we know (by way of the history of science, among other things) that we "doom" ourselves to ideology, irrationality, mistakes and delusion when we naively and unreflectively embrace and live in accordance with the historiccultural pattern of interpretation that we have automatically inherited. Thus, one that seeks to escape this fate through the achievement of trans-historical, trans-cultural (or universal) Knowledge of self and world must acquire a method by which to become aware of, and free from, the mind's contingent determinations. The serious seeker of truth, in other words, must find a means to a position from which he can "look back with wonder at the long and tedious journey which he has completed in the realm of Time while all the time he was living in the Eternal", as expressed by Taming (1961: xiii). To my understanding, both phenomenology and yoga constitute at least the attempt to create a pathway to what Husserl describes as "being without bias or prejudice" (Voraussetzungsloskeit), and thereby to "the pure – and, so to speak, still dumb – psychological experience, which now must be made to utter its own sense with no adulteration" (1950: 77)—i.e., experience that is not structured or processed by "concepts" (the empirical prerequisite for apodictic knowledge).

## 7.3 THE NOTION OF THE OBSERVING SELF

The attempt to establish a philosophical dialogue between phenomenology and yoga entails numerous challenges, and thus stands a good chance of leaving the adherents of both systems with some sense of disappointment.23 One such challenge is purely terminological in the sense that both traditions are rather fond of using particular (if not peculiar) technical nomenclatures that outsiders can perceive as being almost intentionally obscure, esoteric and as incomprehensible; as "the emperor's new clothes" in H.C Andersen's classic fable. My own and others view on this matter is that despite their apparent terminological conceits, both traditions have achieved important knowledge, understandings and discoveries that are worthy of attention and pursuit, including what many within these disciplines regard as their greatest discovery: "the mind (consciousness) as witness" or "the observing self" (to borrow a phrase from Diekman). The conception of the mind as witness emphasizes that "beyond" our experience (or the content of our consciousness) lays a "pure, transcendental consciousness" (or ego) that is liberated from all historic-temporalbiographic structures and determinants – the consciousness of the "enlightened" being. The experience of one that has emancipated his/her mind (consciousness) from this network of delimiting conditions, and thus tasted true freedom, is (in James' words) "ineffable" (Sander 1988, sect. 2.9). It is this sort of conquest of consciousness—this absolute freedom, isolation and perfect spontaneity that, in my view, constitutes the ultimate goal of Indian philosophical as well as Husserlian phenomenological theories, methods and techniques. And among these, the Sāṁkhya yoga darśana is certainly one of the earliest and most accessible examples.

**Check Your Progress 1**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.

(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. Discuss the Indian Tradition of Thought.

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2. Discuss the Notion of the Observing Self.

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## 7.4 THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION(S)

The most essential ingredients of the phenomenological method27 are the epoché (the parenthesizing (einklammerung) of our ordinary knowledge, beliefs, etc. about the world) and the phenomenological reduction (the philosophical technique by which normally experienced realities become pure phenomena (bloße Phänomen)). Taken together, these two moments of the method can be said to constitute the transcendental phenomenological reduction.28 Beginning with his 1913 publication of Ideen I, Husserl would always emphasize that phenomenology is a reflexive activity. In light of this understanding, the transcendental phenomenological reduction can be conceived as the conversion of the natural, non-reflexive attitude (natürliche Einstellung) to one that is reflexive and counter-natural (widernatürlich), meaning a special kind of phenomenological reflexive attitude. Regarding the epoché, it can be basically conceived as the starting point of the radical reflexion of consciousness (and its roles and functions) that Husserl considered necessary to free the mind from the above-described conditions, presuppositions, assumptions and various other determinants that ordinarily (in the natural attitude) govern our experience of the world and ourselves. The aim is to problematize, "bracket" or de-activate our

belief in a world that exists independently of our consciousness as well as in the various objects, laws, rules, theories, norms, value systems, etc. that ordinarily prevent us from experiencing, seeing or intuiting "the things themselves" (die Sachen selbst). Here it is important to emphasize that this constitutes not a denial of the objective world and its "content", but merely a suspension of judgment concerning whether or not that world factually exists. In short, the epoché is a necessary step (or methodological tool) in the process of neutralizing, de-automatizing and/or cancelling the natural attitude, thus making it possible for us to experience things in a "pure" way, meaning exactly as they present themselves to us. The moment of the epoché is thus a prerequisite for the moment of the transcendental phenomenological reduction, which consists of reducing all mundane existences (the entire natural world) to "pure phenomena" (bloße Phänomene): those (irreal and ideal) entities of meaning (noemata) 29 that are the phenomenologist's true object of study. Thus, and once again, the phenomenological reduction consists of converting our naïve, natural, preanalytical or pre-reflective attitude into one that is reflexive or counter-natural, something that is frequently depicted as seeing the world "with new eyes", "from a new perspective" or "in a new light", and can be described as the returning (or bringing back) of the world to our consciousness of it. Theoretically, when such a reduction has been properly executed, thus purifying our naïve experience of so-called independent reality, we have achieved what Husserl calls "a transcendental attitude or outlook", which transforms (or better, reveals) all mundane existences as phenomena; what remains is only our consciousness of the world, which Husserl terms, "the transcendental." The reduction, in other words, is "transcendental" because it causes a reversal in which all mundane existences are "meditatively" withdrawn onto consciousness and "phenomenological" because it transforms all mundane existences into "pure phenomena". With this, according to Husserl, we should be able to intuit the pure meaning or essence (eidos) of every object in a direct and immediate way (cf. 1950 sect. 8, 1962: 155). Such essences are pure, self-evident universals, or general concepts, that present our consciousness with pure possibilities whose validity is independent of (normal) experience. In this

way, the phenomenological reduction is the methodological tool that opens the phenomenological field for study; it is "the avenue of access to phenomenology and its objects", to borrow a phrase from Gurwitsch (1966: 175). The new attitude arising from the phenomenological reduction contains a critical dimension as well, in that what was once (naively) experienced as clear, simply and unambiguous "reality" now turns out to be a complex of "mere possibilities" (bloße Möglichkeiten)—i.e., undetermined experiences in need of clarification. This reflexivity helps not only to uncover (or perhaps recover) the entire content of consciousness, but also to distinguish that which is "given in itself" (selbstgegeben) from that which comes only from "opinion" (Mitmeinung). In other words, it enables us to separate that which is genuinely given from components that are supplied (appresented) by our own consciousness via (pre-predicative) "interpretation" (appresentational filling) based upon earlier experiences, knowledge, expectations and so forth. In this way, we learn to distinguish between what our senses perceive and what our mind experiences, thus creating (by way of the reduction) a "universe totally without prejudice" (Universum absoluter Vorurteilslosigkeit) (1950 sect. 15). From this it should be clear that rather than diminishing, discarding or detracting from our experiences, the reduction factually enhances them, meaning that through its ability to uncover or de-automatize previously anonymous material, it provides us with both new and (perhaps more importantly) previously unnoticed data. In other words, one important function (or effect) of the method is to expose implicit aspects of consciousness that are normally invisible to the naïve experiencer; the method facilitates the "uncovering of the potentialities 'implicit' in actualities of consciousness" (1950: 83, cf. sect. 20). Given this background, phenomenology can be roughly characterized as a descriptive study of the total contents or meanings (noemata) that constitute our consciousness (or mind) as well as its meaning-giving and other activities. According to Husserl, the most important discovery that comes along with making consciousness (or mind) the object of phenomenological examination is that it is always "directed towards something": a tree, a stretch of time, a number, a feeling, a ghost, a devil

or a god. In other words, consciousness is seen to always intend something other than itself (with a different mode of being than itself), but that it intentionally includes, encloses or contains. Every thought is a thought of something (has its "thought object"), every wish is a wish for something (has its wished-for object) and so forth. Husserl defines "intentionality" as "the unique peculiarity of [all human] experience 'to be the consciousness of something'", 34 noting it to be "an essential peculiarity of the sphere of experience in general, since all experiences in one way or another participate in intentionality.…It is intentionality which characterizes consciousness in the pregnant sense of the term" (1976 sect. 84, s.187, cf. sect. 36, ss. 73 f, sect. 146, ss. 337).

In Husserl's view, this intentional (meaninggiving) moment must be acknowledged as a special and irreducible element of consciousness. Without this intentional moment, our perceptions (experiences) would be blind, as they would be empty without sensation (1984 V sect. 14). Husserl refers to mental phenomena that are "intentional" in the above sense as "acts of consciousness"—or, in short, "acts". An intentional act is thus a mental phenomenon in which an object is intended or meant; every intentional act presents the subject with an object (a meaning or a noema). Given this, it follows that where there is an act that is characterized by certain determinable properties there will also be an object (a noema) that is characterized by those same determinable properties; and more importantly, the properties of the object are determined by the property of the consciousness in which it exists. In other words, to say that an act is directed towards (intentionally includes, is related to or "has") an object (a noema) is only to say that the act in question has the properties in virtue of which the experience is just such as it is. To say that an act is directed towards (or has as its object) the deity Shiva, for example, can be viewed as a metaphorical way of expressing that the act in question has the specific properties by virtue of which the person who "has" the act can be correctly said to be thinking about or seeing the deity Śiva. 36 According to phenomenology, the key to accessing and understanding an object is to access and understand the structure and function of the consciousness that determines or constitutes

that object. It is this “purifying” of consciousness from all (empirical) historic-cultural-biographical contingencies that the epoché and the reduction are ideally supposed to engender, thus affording one the possibility to create a “universe absolutely free from prejudice”—the precondition for the achievement of apodictic knowledge. Here, regardless of the objections of Husserl and others, it seems fairly clear that the distance from this to so-called transcendental idealism is not very great and that transcendental idealism is the logical end of the phenomenological project. Be that as it may, it nonetheless appears that it is this process of moving from the epoché to the intentional and constitutional analysis that constitutes the “transcendental phenomenological reduction”, which, in turn, allows us to access our pure, transcendental consciousness or ego. Instead of the universal doubt of Descartes, then, Husserl proposes this universal "epoché". A new scientific domain is thus determined. All the sciences that refer to the natural world are also eliminated: no use is made of their propositions and results. They may only be assumed in brackets, and not as propositions presuming validity. That which remains when the entire world is eliminated (including us with all ´cogitare´) is ´pure´ or ´transcendental´ consciousness. That is the phenomenological residuum (Farber 1943: 527). In other words, the transcendental phenomenological reduction culminates in the realization of pure subjectivity, and from there the task becomes to access and comprehend—via some form of immediate, direct and conceptually unmediated intuition (or insight)—how this pure self (this “transcendental ego”) constitutes objects and functions as the source of all objectivity.38 For phenomenology, then, the only existing objectivity is that which is constituted, experienced or, if you prefer, subjective (cf. Sander 1988a del III, spec. sect. 3.1.5, 3.5.3., 3.6.6. and 3.6.7). Accordingly, the endeavor of the reductions is to free (purify) consciousness from all the contingent contents and structures for the world that “imprison” us, so as to reach unprejudiced, presuppositionless and absolutely certain knowledge of the dumb (pure and true) essence (eidos) of reality. Husserl, however, never attempted to bring this purifying process to its natural, logical end: the ultimate purifying of consciousness from all activities and all content. For him,

even the "pure" transcendental consciousness was an intentional (constituting) "consciousness of something". Given Husserl's point of departure and his aim of employing reduction not as end in itself, but rather as a means of achieving apodictic knowledge about something, this is both understandable and legitimate. This notwithstanding, it should be at least theoretically possible for the phenomenologist to pursue the reductions such that they enable her/him to move beyond intentional consciousness(consciousness of something) to wholly undifferentiated and empty consciousness—i.e., the "experience of emptiness" or, in the terminology of Forman, the "pure conscious event" (PCE) (cf. Sander 1988 part IV, sect. 4.4.1).39 Regardless of whether or not such an extreme reduction would be "useful" in terms of resolving Husserl's original epistemological problem (the problem of explaining the relation between an act of knowing and its object), it appears philosophically indefensible to a priori delimit the Husserlian method by discounting the possibility of its' enabling the achievement of such a "pre-reflexive" state. Indeed, it is just this pre-reflexive transcendental subjectivity, this experience of absolute emptiness, this cessation of all psychophysical activity, sensation and experience that appears to be the final aim of the yoga system we are about to discuss, meaning the condition (asamprajñāta samādhi) of total withdrawal (nirodha) from the world.

## 7.5 YOGIC MEDITATION

The yoga system's prescribed method for accessing one's true nature (ātmasiddhi) and thereby achieving liberation (mokṣa) is rooted in Sāṁkhya philosophy's conception of man and the universe, which asserts a basic dualism.40 The universe, it is said, consists of twenty-five elements, twenty-four of which are manifestations of prakṛti (from pra≈ before and kṛti≈ creation), an unconscious, indiscriminate and insentient material substance of which everything that exists within the causality of time and space consists or, rather, can be derived and explained. Prakṛti is the root cause of the perceivable material world; everything that we can experience has evolved or developed out of prakṛti—or "procreatix", the intriguing Latin translation suggested by Veeraswamy Krishnaraj

(2002: 12). And beyond prakṛti there is puruṣa, the twenty-fifth principle consisting of absolute, pure, unchangeable, unconscious and inactive consciousness (or subject), which is devoid of properties and characteristics.41Puruṣa, which constitutes the true "I", "self" or "soul", is described by Radhakrishnan (1931 Vol. II: 313) as "mirrors with nothing to reflect".Prakṛti consists of pure, unconscious and inert material form, incapable of generating action and "energy" by itself. It is only when it comes in touch with the consciousness of puruṣa, the energetic principle, that it becomes productive. In this regard, prakṛti can be conceived as the objective principle of reality and puruṣa can be conceived as its subjective principle, with the important difference being that whereas prakṛti (as the basic cause of material reality) is said to manifest all the universe's physical and mental objects and entities, puruṣa is said to neither transform nor develop, even though its involvement is absolutely essential to prakṛti's transformational and developmental functions. Another difference is that unlike prakṛti, there are a vast, even "uncountable", number of puruṣas. Indeed, each sentient being that is involved in the realm of saṁsāra (the endless cycle of repeated birth and death) has (or rather is) its own puruṣa. In this regard, it is the union of prakṛti and puruṣa that constitutes what we normally describe as an individual (sentient) being. An experience or a consciousness of something arises in the contact between puruṣa and prakṛti, meaning that everything real and ideal that one can experience in empirical reality (be it an object, a sound, a feeling, an emotion, a thought, a memory or a dream) is comprised of prakṛti. From this, of course, it follows that prakṛti is also the entirety of the empirical self, meaning the sum of our inborn abilities, dispositions, etc., in combination with all our various experiences and the manner of their organization in consciousness or the mind.43 Moreover, since puruṣa exists beyond and prakṛti exists within time, space and causality (at least in terms of its secondary manifestations), the two can neither affect nor "mix" with each other. Puruṣa is indeed conceived as being a totally isolated (kaivalya) and passive "witness" (sākṣin) (like a mirror that only reflects), while prakṛti is conceived as being all the phenomena that are being witnessed (or reflected). As such, puruṣa can be no more affected

by prakṛti than a mirror can be affected by the images it reflects. Puruṣa, according to Sāṁkhya, is the "essence of consciousness", that which forms the very foundation or basis for every "consciousness of something". It is the pure "observing self" (or "subjective consciousness"), which exists beyond all contents, beyond our senses and intellect, and thus cannot be "observed" or "known" like an ordinary object of perception or experience. Ordinary consciousness is always a consciousness of something, but cannot observe itself (or be its own object of investigation), except, of course, in a retrospectively reflective manner; whatever meaning is ascribed to a PCE must be imposed after the experience has occurred (cf. Zaner 1970 ch. 3). The problem of the generally unenlightened is that through the workings of ahaṁkāra they are wrongly identifying with the reflection of prakṛti in puruṣa rather than with puruṣa proper. This is what provides them with the sense of being an empirical self within time and space and binds them to the cycle repeated birth and death, with its concomitant sufferings and dissatisfactions. The intention of the yoga system is to eliminate this ignorance (avidyā) through the achievement of genuine insight (prajñā) into the factually nature of reality.44 Yoga's fundamental purpose can thus be roughly restated as follows: to realize by the practice of a specific method that we are in reality puruṣa, the pure conscious observer, and are thus not really a self within prakṛti. It is only when we are enlightened as to the true condition of ourselves and the world that we can achieve liberation from our suffering (mokṣa). According to the Yoga Sūtras, the technique involves reining in and acquiring personal mastery over the mind and senses such that the "real" ego (puruṣa) is able to detach itself from everything extraneous, thereby discovering its true identity. To achieve such mastery and insight, however, requires great concentrative and meditative abilities, and thus the candidate (sādhaka) must first practice certain physical and mental exercises that enable the following of the various moral and other prescriptions that are required by the yoga system—e.g., bodily and mental purity, truthfulness, self-control, moderation, contentedness, non-violence, non-enviousness, non-covetousness and so forth. Taken together, these exercises and regulative principles are known as the yoga system's first five "limbs" (aṅgas):

yama (≈ death, regulation or abstention), niyama (≈ observance, moral duties), 45 āsana (bodily posture), prāṇāyāma (≈ breathing regulation or technique), and pratyāhāra (≈ liberating the senses from their objects or internalization of the senses). Command of the first two limbs eliminates distractions arising from uncontrolled thoughts, desires and emotions. Āsana and prāṇāyāma remove disturbances caused by a lack of control over the physical body. The function of pratyāhāra is to free the consciousness or mind from distractions conveyed by the sense organs, to teach the mind not to be distracted by sense-impressions from the external world. According to Patañjali, when full command of the first five aṅgas has been achieved, the sādhaka will then be in a position to undertake the concentrative and meditative practices of yoga: to see without hearing, hear without seeing, neither see nor hear and so forth. In my view, these preparatory yogic exercises basically correspond with the technique of suspending the natural attitude within phenomenology. When, through the mastery of the five aṅgas, the sādhaka is freed from all distractions, hindrances, obstacles and/or "afflictions of the mind" (kleśas) 46, his/her consciousness is now prepared to direct its full and undistracted attention to any given object such that (s)he is able to purely comprehend and experience it. In order to reach this state of completely pure (transcendental) intuiting, however, (s)he must also learn to master the three levels of concentration that constitute the last three of Patañjali's yogāṅgas: dhāraṇā (≈ concentration, fixating), dhyāna (≈ contemplation, meditation), and Samādhi (≈ absorption). The attainment of samādhi is the first, but not the final, goal of yogic meditation, despite the vast attention it receives in popular books on yoga. In reality, it is only a necessary step on the pathway to kaivalya ("detachment" or "perfection through integration"), alternatively known as mokṣa, or ultimate liberation from all afflictions of the mind. To attain this state, the yogi must first aspire to be free from all forms of desire, hankering and attraction, with the final aim of giving up even the desire to be free of desire: "By non-attachment even to that, on the very seed of bondage being destroyed, follows kaivalya" (Yoga Sūtras III:51). In the final Sūtras (IV: 34), kaivalya is described as "the state (of Enlightenment) following remergence of the Guṇas because of their becoming devoid of

the object of Puruṣa: In this state the Puruṣa is established in his Real nature which is pure Consciousness." The attainment of kaivalya entails first learning to master the eight levels of concentration (or jñāna)that precede the highest stage of nirodha (≈ cessation), the state of consciousness (or mind) in which all fluctuations (vṛtti)) of prakṛti have ceased. It is as a consequence of this state that one can achieve insight into the absolute separateness of puruṣa from prakṛti. Kaivalya, in other words, is that state in which puruṣa is entirely free from prakṛti—an ineffable state that is impossible to describe in propositional terms (Sander 1988, part II, sect. 2.9).47 At this juncture, some description about the three last yogāṅgas needs to be mentioned:

Dhāraṇā ("Concentration", "Holding Steady" or "Single Focus"). "Concentration is the confining of the mind within a limited mental area (object of concentration)" (Yoga Sūtras III: 1). In its normal condition, our mind wanders from object to object and is continuously associated with (and colored by) various judgments or "attitudes" (among other doxic and sentic positionalities (Sander 1988, part III, sect. 3.6.2.2)). The aim of dhāraṇā is thus to suspend all judgment while constantly fixing the mind on one object and promptly bringing it back under control whenever it inevitably wanders. The success of this vigilant practice is measured by how often one is distracted from the object of concentration; when the number of interruptions and the time it takes to return to concentration is greatly diminished, success in dhāraṇā is considered to have been achieved.

object (chosen for meditation) is contemplation" (Yoga Sūtras III: 2). The movement from dhāraṇā to dhyāna takes place after being able to uninterruptedly fix the mind on one object for a long period of time without its wandering. In understanding this, the concept of pratyaya can be helpful. Pratyaya refers to that which occupies the full focus of a subject's attention at a given moment; it is the center or object of focus of a subject's entire field of perception, such, and only such, as it is given to consciousness and appears in strict descriptive analysis. Pratyaya, in other words, rather than being the total content of a field of perception or

consciousness, is only its object of focus.48 Here it will suffice to say that while the mind in its normal condition is constantly shifting from one pratyaya to another, in dhāraṇā this tendency is greatly diminished, and in dhyāna it is more or less diminished to nil

In dhyāna, "field" and "margin" data are severely restricted and not allowed to affect the meaning of the pratyaya. Although these data do not belong to the pratyaya proper and is only part of its background or context, they nonetheless exists in consciousness and, in normal acts, co-determines the meaning of the pratyaya (Sander 1988, spec. part III, sect. 3.2.7). The only relation these background data has to dhyāna is that they co-exist with the pratyaya and (in marginal acts) are experienced at the same time (in what Schütz calls "the counterpointal structure of mind" (1970: 12, 120)). For all practical purposes, the mind in dhyāna can be said to have one, and only one, content (object, meaning, noema). It should be noted, however, that while the mind continues to flicker and vary despite its strict focus and restrictedness, this variability is occurring wholly within the frame of the chosen pratyaya—i.e., as various forms of pratyaya development.49 This should be viewed not as a deficiency in the practice of dhyāna, but rather as a means of examining the object of concentration in all its aspects (which is part of the practice). In sum, the state of dhyāna has been reach when one can uninterruptedly fix the mind on a chosen pratyaya for long periods of time without being distracted. The success of this practice can be measured by the degree of mental effort that is required to maintain one's focus on the pratyaya and the promptness with which one is able to regain one's concentration when it is lost. When the practice of dhyāna has matured to a point at which the mind has become basically unwavering in its concentration, one can be said to have mastered this level of the yoga process.

Samādhi. (Absorption). "The same (contemplation) when there is consciousness only of the object of meditation and not of itself (the mind) is samādhi " (Yoga SūtrasIII:3). Because this Sūtras (together with Sūtras s I: 17 and I: 18) can be considered the most important in terms of understanding the ultimate objective of Patañjali's yoga system, it is

need of a somewhat lengthier discussion.50 Let me begin with the term itself. In general, samādhi refers to the process (coming after the mastery of dhyāna) by which one enters ever more deeply into the normally inaccessible regions or strata of consciousness, with the aim of ultimately transcending and liberating oneself from all the content of the mind (consciousness) and attaining total union with (or absorption in) pure consciousness (puruṣa) itself— the state that Sāṁkhya philosophy refers to as that which is really real (ens realisimum). In the progressive movement towards the goal of total liberation from all that conditions and limits the mind (consciousness), one is required to pass through various types (or stages) of samādhi. Once all saṁskāras have been transcended, the yogi's consciousness attains the state of kaivalya and can function in perfect and absolute freedom. It is to achieve this end that the yogi must master the various levels of concentration known as samādhi. For present purpose, I will here only discuss the two most important stages: samprajñāta and asamprajñāta samādhi. Samprajñāta samādhi literarily means "samādhi with prajñā" and (as the prefix "a" in Sanskrit generally indicates "not") asamprajñāta samādhi means "not samādhi with prajñā". This, however, should not be viewed as indicating that asamprajñāta samādhi is without prajñā, meaning that this stage of samādhi is also associated with prajñā (samprajñā), but in a way that is distinct from samprajñāta samādhi. The difference between the two is based upon whether or not a pratyaya exists in the sādhaka's field of consciousness. In other words, the two forms of samādhi can be roughly characterized as differentiated samādhi with pratyaya and undifferentiated samādhi without pratyaya, respectively. Let us first examine samprajñāta samādhi. It begins with mastering the level of dhyāna (well described above), which culminates in the ability to wholly and undeviatingly fix the mind on a particular pratyaya, and to do so in a purely descriptive manner, without involving judgments, attitudes and/or "positings" vis-à-vis that object.

This capacity, however, is still not enough to attain the "pure seeing" of the "pure essence" of the object that is the goal of samprajñāta samādhi. In order for the pratyaya to "shine in its pure existential originality" one

hurdle remains to be overcome: the sādhaka's awareness of him/herself as an experiencing subject. According to Patañjali (as well as Husserl and Schütz) not only do we ordinary experiencers naïvely, automatically, pre-reflexively and prepredicatively infer that the objects of our experience have a real (transcendent) existence beyond our consciousness of them, we also as naïvely, automatically, prereflexively and pre-predicatively infer from the existence of the objects of experience that there is a thinking, perceiving subject, ego or "I" that is having the experience; in other words, we are having the experience that our experience is our experience. This sense of "I" (ahaṁkāra) is constantly present in the ordinary untrained mind, creating the distinction between subject and object, between "self" and "world". It is this sense of "I" that is responsible for our constantly falling into the Cartesian fallacy and is moreover considered to be one of the most prominent causes of mundane disharmony and suffering. Due to ahaṁkāra, for example, we falsely identify with the temporal, changing empirical self and perceive its conditions as our own, with expressions such as "I suffer" and "I enjoy" being examples of this false identification. Here it can be noted that the movement from dhyāna to samādhi entails the removal of this last covering of ahaṁkāra, thus opening the door to ultimate truth or reality. It is this extinguishing of self-experience or self-consciousness that Patañjali terms svarūpa śūnyam iva, roughly, the "disappearance of the essential nature of mind, as if". Let us describe in a bit more detail what this can mean. According to Patañjali, everything that appears before consciousness has two forms: rūpa and svarūpa. The former of these denotes the outer, superficial, temporary and nonessential aspect of the object while the latter denotes its inner, essential substance, form or nature. As applied to consciousness in the dhyāna process, it is the rūpa form (object consciousness) that constitutes pratyaya and it is through the rūpa form that pratyaya takes its expressions. The svarūpa form, for its part, consists of the mind's (residue) consciousness of its own role and activity in the dhyāna process, the mind's consciousness of itself as mind (or subject), the pure subjective nature of consciousness. When the yogi passes from dhāraṇā to dhyāna, and concentration on the object of meditation increases, the mind's consciousness of itself (as

subject) decreases to a corresponding degree. The mind's consciousness of its own svarūpa form is thus still present in the stage of dhyāna, if only in a weak form. It is only after entering the stage of samādhi that this last residue of self-, I-, or ego-consciousness completely disappears, allowing the object of concentration to entirely and unwaveringly absorb the mind (consciousness).

This can be conceived as a "fusion" or merging of the mind (the subject) with its object, meaning that these two cease to exist as separate entities, leaving only pure object (or rūpa) consciousness, which cannot be characterized as an "object" in the normal sense of the term, the sense in which a subject is presupposed to stand out from or exist in relation to it. In this case, it is as if the structure of the subject and the structure of the object coincide. Such a state is described in much of the literature on mysticism as an experience of unity or a unifying vision The term śūnyam can mean "emptiness", "void", "empty", "nothingness" or "zero". In relation to the discussion at hand, the last meaning is perhaps the most appropriate, since we are here referring to reducing something to its "zero limit" rather than emptying it of all content. What factually occurs in the transition from dhāraṇā to dhyāna is that the mind (consciousness) is constantly "filled up with" and not "emptied of" the object of meditation. What svarūpa śūnyam refers to is the reduction of "I-consciousness" (and thus the reduction of the activities of ahaṁkāra) to zero—i.e., to a "pure, uniquely unmediated object experience".56 And within the framework of the activities of ahaṁkāra we include all the functions of the mind (consciousness) that are based upon it (e.g., manas, the mind's registering function, and buddhi, its discriminating and judging function), along with their role in the constitution of the meaning of their objects. It is, moreover, to prevent us from concluding that svarūpa permanently disappears when we attain samādhi that Patañjali adds the word iva, "as if". Samādhi, in other words, consists of a nullification of svarūpa that endures only for as long as one is in that state. As soon as one withdraws from the state of samādhi and returns to the normal plane of consciousness, one's temporarily suspended sense of "I-ness" returns as well. According to Patañjali, the yogi in samprajñāta

samādhi gains access to a suprarational form of insight or wisdom regarding the chosen object of meditation. This "knowledge", known as prajñā, is considered to be a "pure", "direct", "immediate" and conceptually unmediated apprehension of reality in itself that is completely free from the interference of linguistic factors and the normal constitutional processes of consciousness (including all of its retentional, protentional and appresentational functions).58 It consists, in other words, of direct and immediate contact with the true essence or "suchness" of Reality, in the sense that the experiencing subject, being free from all determinations and distractions (including the sense of "I-ness"), never goes beyond what is in itself given in the pure experience "as such". This type experience can be conceived as one in which the subject remains or resides in the pure experience itself, in the sense that (s)he does not constitute the object "as such" as an experience of an object for a subject; neither does (s)he form any (existential, normative, etc.) opinions or judgments nor activate any dispositional reactions in its regard.

This is typically described as "the experience unitary consciousness", "the fusion of subject and object" and the like. Here it should be clear that in proposing that one is able to reduce all the constitutive, appresentational, etc. functions of the mind (consciousness) to zero, Patañjali has moved beyond what Husserl ever claimed to be possible. What he proposes is an experience of an object in which nothing is hidden and nothing is supplemented or added. It is, in other words, an experience in which one obtains absolute, complete, evident and apodictic knowledge about the object, and not only about its "surface aspects", but also about its "inner" essential nature. With this, the experiencer can be said to have transcended all physical and psychological as well as historic-cultural-biographical determinants and presuppositions regarding his/her experience. Furthermore, the supra-mundane knowledge (prajñā) that is obtained in true samprajñāta samādhi is not merely a new theoretical understanding of the object, but rather a practical form of knowledge that has a concrete existential impact on the manner in which one experiences, thinks, feels and acts

thereafter. Prajñā, in other words, is obligatory in the sense that it centrally affects and transforms the attitudes, commitments, behaviors and actions of those that have achieved it. It is of a type that once having been achieved it cannot be omitted from one's personality and life—from one's pattern of interpretation for the world and oneself. In some sense, the individual has become a new person in a new life-world. And because prajñā contains this practical dimension, the insight or realization it brings regarding the real existence of things is also said to liberate the individual from false opinions and conceptions and obliges her/him to apply this newfound "knowledge" and freedom within the framework of her/his concrete- practical life. According to Patañjali, prajñā is more of an agent's than an observer's knowledge.

This notwithstanding, it is difficult to avoid thinking that the transcendental phenomenological reduction (and thus the entire transcendental phenomenological endeavor) involves the following ("can'thave-your-cake-and-eat-it") contradiction: On the one hand, Husserl's theoretical aim of establishing a strict, foundational science can only be achieved within a matrix in which the subject-object distinction (or dualism) is upheld, and on the other, the method by which to accomplish this aim (the transcendental phenomenological reduction), when carried to its furthest limit, leads to the very collapse of that selfsame distinction—and thus, in one sense, to mysticism. The yogi's apparent avoidance of this dilemma seems based on the fact that both his theoretical-methodological aims and his criteria for "intellectual honesty" are different from those of the phenomenologist. As has been several times noted above, the yogi's aim is the cessation (or negation) of reflexive consciousness in order to attain pure empty consciousness (nirvīja samādhi) and be able to achieve dharmamegha-samādhi and ultimately kaivalya and mokṣa—which are practical-existential rather than scientific-theoretical goals. In this sense, the yogi is free to traverse the reductive path to its very end, finally discovering (or so it is claimed) that just as (s)he has negated everything else, (s)he can also negate the last residue of (empirical) egoinvolvement (or "I-ness") in the object that is being experienced and unite with the pure transcendental ego (puruṣa).

And by doing so, (s)he is left with only the pure experience of pure consciousness "as such". It is no longer an experience of something and there is nobody who is having it. When these "remnants of the experience" are reduced to nil, the yogi is said to have achieved asamprajñāta samādhi. A final matter that deserves attention concerns whether by halting the reduction at an earlier stage, the phenomenologist gains any advantaged over the yogi in terms of the intelligibility of his/her findings and the strength of his/her truth claims to others. Here again, however, it appears that the yogi is in the better position, since, from the outset, (s)he openly declares his/her intuiting to be "mystical" (suprarational), and thus impossible to entirely comprehend, communicate72 and validate via the conceptual schemes and rational categories of any given mundane science (a fact the phenomenologist must to some degree fudge). This is not meant to suggest, however, that the yogi has nothing meaningful to say about the efficacy of his/her techniques. On the contrary, those interested in attempting to comprehend and validate the claims of the yogic process are invited to practice the techniques themselves, and judge them accordingly. The claim is, in other words, that the yoga system can be understood and validated only by practicing it, and fully comprehended only by the advanced practitioner. What then of the phenomenologists in this regard? Here I would argue that, unlike the yogi, their contradictory stance vis-à-vis phenomenology once again draws them into a dilemma: on the one hand they claim (like Lauer above) that phenomenology is, and must be, a rational, scientific discipline (if not a type of "super-science") and on the other they claim (like Ihde and Heidegger73) that it is impossible to (completely) comprehend the transcendental phenomenological project and validate its results without practicing it oneself (i.e., without being a trained phenomenologist).74This, combined with the fact that phenomenologists are generally quite fastidious when it comes to describing their method in concrete, practical terms, gives phenomenology an air of "mysticism", at least in the eyes of many nonphenomenological philosophers. In this particular area, whereas the yoga system provides detailed descriptions and instructions regarding its methods and how to perform them (even to the point of holding courses),

phenomenology remain basically silent, leaving it up to interested parties to find their own way. To the extent that both the yogic and the phenomenological schools are such that it is impossible to completely comprehend and validate the results of their methods without practicing them, and that yogic practice is described in far more explicit and systematic terms, the matter of which is the more scientific and which is the more mystical is not merely rhetorical. From my perspective, the primary difference between these two "schools" lies not in their respective methods or techniques, but rather in the ultimate aims and objectives they are endeavoring to achieve: for phenomenology, the aim is to achieve absolutely true, unprejudiced and apodictic knowledge so as to build an irrefutable and unshakable foundation for all rigorous science; and, for the yoga system, the aim is to alleviate what is perceived to be the root cause of human suffering and misery, to resolve the predicament of unenlightened human existence.

**Check Your Progress 2**

Notes: (a) Space is given below for your answer.
(b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

3. What is meant by Phenomenological Reduction(s)?

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4. Discuss the Yogic Meditation.

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## 7.6 LET US SUM UP

The above sketch should at least make it plain that there are various similarities between the systems of Husserl and Patañjali despite the fact that their motives and aims appear to have been quite different. Both systems, for example, aspire to achieve absolutely direct, unbiased, unmediated, unprejudiced, certain and self-evident (apodictic) knowledge, and both claim that such knowledge can be achieved by practicing a certain "process of purification": for Husserl, the transcendental phenomenological reduction; and, for Patañjali, the eight limbs of yoga (yogāṅgas). Both, moreover, claim that the knowledge achieved through their specific method is different and superior to "normal" "rational" knowledge: it is available via a unique form of intuiting or "gazing" (Wesensanschauung) that is neither associated with nor "contaminated" by contingent theories, concepts, etc., as is "normal" empiricalscientific knowledge.66 Both also seem to argue that their respective forms of intuiting consist of some sort of non-, a- or supra-rational (although not irrational!) form of knowledge. "Supra-rational" is perhaps the best way of putting this, even though Husserl would probably not have been happy with the term. Although both projects also appear to have as their epistemological objective the attainment of a direct, evident and unequivocal intuition and revelation of all the various pre-conditions for knowledge as well as the achievement of absolutely certain (apodictic) knowledge about "the things themselves" (as and only as they are), I am in agreement with Kockelmans (1976: 223f), who considers Husserl's own conviction to have been that "a consistent phenomenology must turn its back on every established theory, on all traditional, prejudiced, and ´metaphysical´ views in order to gain access to a pure and primordial experience in which the ´things themselves´ appear to us in a genuinely original way". In my view, this is as close to "the thing in itself" as it is possible to get. Husserl's opinion also seems to be that it is this sort of knowledge that should be the basis and foundation of all sciences. Or, to quote Queintin Lauer: The novelty lies in Husserl´s insistence that intuition, in the full sense of the term, is the presence to consciousness of an essence, with all that that implies by way of necessity and universal validity. Phenomenological intuition is

essential intuition, which is to say an intellectual intuition, the impossibility of which Kant had so vigorously asserted. It is plain to see, then, that such an intuition must be something more than the simple view contained in perception or imaginative representation, even though these latter acts are the examples from which the notion of intuition is derived. For Husserl intuition means more than empirical contact with an object. On the other hand, it is not some sort of mystical penetration into a world of essences' inaccessible to merely rational thought. (Quoted in: Kockelmans 1967: 153, (italics mine.)) At the beginning of this article I mentioned that phenomenology ends up in a dilemma that the theory of yoga is able to avoid; it is also probable that Husserl (like Lauer above) would dispute my claim that his intuition carries the potential of providing some sort of "mystical" knowledge. These two claims are connected. As I see it, the dilemma that Husserl and phenomenologist such as Lauer fall into is that, on the one hand, they ascribe to a particular conception of science (i.e., that it is meant to be rational, intellectually honest and so forth), 67 and on the other, they realize that their own epistemological aims and objectives fail to meet the test of this definition.68 To put it plainly, it seems that something like the yoga system is what many phenomenologists would factually like phenomenology to be, but without being able to say so out loud, lest they be accused of being unscientific and "mystical". This dilemma can already be seen in relation to Patañjali's description of samprajñāta samādhi: roughly, as indicated above, the contact between and merging of the transcendental subject and its object in their pure existences. With the exception of the "merging", this, according to my understanding, is exactly what Husserl intends to achieve with his transcendental phenomenological reduction. It is intended, as we have seen, to reduce the subject to pure, transcendental subjectivity so as to make it possible for him/her to non-prejudicially and non-judgmentally intuit his/her object as well as the role of his/her own consciousness in the constitution of objects as they are "in themselves". 69 For Husserl, however, even the transcendental subject is a reflecting subject, even if the reflexion it is involved in is a special "transcendental phenomenological reflexion" (Husserl 1950, sect. 15). For him, in other words, the objects always

remain intentional objects, objects for a subject, and thus the subjectobject dualism is never fully transcended or abolished within his system. This limitation appears to prevent Husserl from reaching all the way to an entirely and totally direct, immediate, unmitigated and unmediated intuition of an object: the thing itself (die Sachen Selbst). In this regard, it seems that the reason Husserl could not "bring himself" to carry his phenomenological reduction to the point at which noesis and noema "merge" into one unity,70 thus breaking down the doctrine of intentionality and making it impossible to talk about subject on the one hand and object on the other, is that he primarily viewed the reductions as a logical-epistemological tool in his attempt to establish a strict, unbiased science that would constitute the foundation for all other sciences.71 And since non-intentional experiences provide no knowledge and have no epistemological value (apart from what Forman has termed "knowledgeby-identity"), these were of little use in terms of Husserl's overarching aim. Husserl's shortfall in not carrying his reductions to what I consider to be their logical end (or "zero-limit"), however, need not necessarily be viewed as a shortcoming of the phenomenological project. As in all cases, the degree to which one considers it useful to apply a given theoretical-methodological tool is wholly dependent on the objectives that one has in mind.

## 7.7 KEY WORDS

**Tradition**: A tradition is a belief or behavior passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. Common examples include holidays or impractical but socially meaningful clothes, but the idea has also been applied to social norms such as greetings.

## 7.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the Indian Tradition of Thought.
2. Discuss the Notion of the Observing Self.
3. What is meant by Phenomenological Reduction(s)?
4. Discuss the Yogic Meditation.

## 7.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES


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## 7.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1`**

1. See Section 7.2
2. See Section 7.3

**Check Your Progress 2**

1. See Section 7.4
2. See Section 7.5