

**TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE SELF: HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGY
AS EGOLGY AND LEVINAS' PHILOSOPHY
OF RESPONSIBLE SUBJECTIVITY**

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by

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APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation entitled "TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE SELF: HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGY AS EGOLGY AND LEVINAS' PHILOSOPHY OF RESPONSIBLE SUBJECTIVITY" prepared and submitted by Ms. Virginia L. Jayme in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy has been examined and is recommended for acceptance and approval for ORAL EXAMINATION.

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• this work
is dedicated to
THE OTHER

philosophy
is the wisdom of love.

emmanuel levinas*

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i attempt to guide, not to instruct,
but merely to show and to describe what I see.
all i claim is the right to speak according
to my best lights--primarily to myself and
correspondingly to others--as one who lived
through a philosophical experience
in all its seriousness.

edmund husserl*

the metaphor of the "curvature
of intersubjective space" signifies
the divine intention of all
truth.

emmanuel levinas*

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the delphic motto,
"know thyself" has gained a new
signification. positive science is a
science lost in the world. i must lose
the world by epoché, in order to regain
it by a universal self-examination.
"noli foras ire." says augustine, "in te
redi. in interiore homine habitat
veritas."

edmund husserl*

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The self is undoubtedly a mystery. It is the reality with which one is most intimately related. Yet, there are times when one finds a "stranger" in himself; and there are moments when one feels he is not in touch with his own self. In the face of the mysterious presence of the self, one will inevitably raise the question "What is truly the self?" or "Who is really the self?" This question invites one to reflect deeply on the self in order to discover its essential reality.

The man who is immersed in the practical concerns of daily life usually takes the self for granted. However, there are occasions when one takes a break from his day to day activities and devotes time for self-examination. In doing this, he arrives at meaningful insights into the self and these inspire him to carry on in life.

But one can also reflect on the insights attained by the many disciplines which methodically or systematically explore the reality of the self. In the process, he broadens, deepens, or enriches his own understanding of the self.

One who directs his attention to the philosophical discipline will find that the self plays a vital part in the philosophic quest for truth. For the self is necessarily

involved in the highly personal endeavor of searching for a deeper knowledge and a fuller grasp of reality. Moreover, the self easily becomes the focus of the philosophical inquiry; it is immediately taken as the point of departure in the search for ultimate truth. For the self is closest to oneself and it never fails to arouse that sense of wonder which continually stimulates and sustains philosophical reflection.

The reality of the self is particularly explored in philosophy not only for the sake of self-discovery but also for the purpose of understanding reality in its totality. Through his own life, man comes into contact with all the others in the entire spectrum of reality. In his very own self, one discovers a privileged point of entry into the other realms of being. Hence, the self is regarded as a central point of reference in the philosophical exploration of reality.

Anyone who examines the philosophies that have emerged in the course of the history of philosophical speculation will realize that the self is indeed a recurring theme in philosophy; and it really occupies a prominent and privileged position in many philosophies. This will be particularly clear to anyone who delves into the thought of two contemporary philosophers--Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and Emmanuel Levinas (1906-).

The self or the ego is the focus of the philosophical reflections of Husserl and Levinas. It lies at the very core of the writings of these two philosophers. It is a theme that already generated quite a number of scholarly studies, but it continues to provide an impetus for a philosophical exploration of their works. A study of this very important theme will be pursued in this dissertation. More specifically, an attempt will be made in the present study to explore the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas, examine their views on the ego or the self and compare their perspectives on this particular reality.

To situate Husserl and Levinas in the whole movement of the history of philosophy, to point out the historical antecedent of their conceptions of the self, and to show their affinity with other thinkers who also recognize the importance of the self in the philosophic quest, a brief historical survey is given in the following section.

Historical Background

Man's endeavour to grow in his knowledge of himself is manifest clearly in the emergence and development of many studies that deal with the self. In these fields of study, the self is approached from different points of view. For this reason, there is a broad spectrum of meanings associated with the reality of the self.

In ordinary language, the self is designated by the expression "Ego", "I", "subject" or "me". There are, however, nuances of meanings attached to each of these expressions in the different fields of study dealing with the self.

In psychology, the self is the "I" as experienced by the individual.¹ The speculation on the "soul" in early psychology has been replaced by the preoccupation with the notion of the self in modern psychology.² This is the case particularly in many personality theories where the concept of self is a central feature.³ However, these theories take the self in varied ways: it is the ego or I—that portion of the personality which is in contact with the external world through perception;⁴ it is the totality of the conscious as well as unconscious contents, and it dwarfs the ego in scope and contents;⁵ it is the person's concept of himself which determines his behaviour and relation to the

¹ The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1988), 10:618.

² Ibid.

³ See C. Hall and G. Lindzey, Theories of Personality (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978).

⁴ The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1988 ed., 10:618.

⁵ Ibid., 10:619.

⁶ world; it is a dynamic entity, alive with potentiality.⁷

In sociology, there are also varying conceptions of the self. One is that the self and mind are not part of the innate endowment of the organism but arise in experience and are constructed in a social process, i.e., in interaction among persons.⁸ Another is that the self or self-concept, however inexact or flexible it may be, functions as a guide in social behaviour; and persons tend to act to preserve a desired image of the self.⁹

In philosophy, there are also different perspectives on the ego or the self. The following philosophical views point out the dimensions of meaning associated with the reality of the self:

1. The self is the unity or union of body and soul or matter and spirit; this may be identified with the traditional notion of "psychophysical self," or with the contemporary concepts of "incarnate spirit" and "embodied subjectivity".¹⁰

⁶

Ibid.

⁷

Ibid.

⁸

Ibid., 27:381-382.

⁹

Ibid., 27: 382.

¹⁰

J.F. Donceel, S.J., Philosophical Anthropology (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), pp. 411, 455.

2. The self is "the metaphysical principle of unity underlying subjective experience"; this is often identified with the soul.¹¹
3. The phenomenal self or empirical ego is conceived as "a series of conscious acts and contents which the mind is able to know by direct introspection; this may also refer to the psychological self as "an organization of experience in a dynamic whole"; this is not identified with the bearer of subjective experience but applied to the contents of that experience."¹²
4. The pure or transcendental ego is "the self considered as the non-empirical principle ordinarily unavailable to direct introspection, but inferred from introspective evidence."¹³
5. The true self is the Absolute or ultimate reality and transcendental ground of both self and not-self (i.e., whatever is not included in the individual self).¹⁴

11

D. Runes, ed., The Dictionary of Philosophy (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc.), p. 288.

12

Ibid., p. 88.

13

Ibid., p. 288.

14

Ibid.

15

C. Sharma, Indian Philosophy: A Critical Survey (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1962), pp. 12ff.

The philosophical perspective on the self will be the focus of attention in our survey of the more important philosophies that have emerged in the course of the history of eastern and western thought. Each of the philosophies of the self included in the survey may be related to one of the views cited above.

The historical account will first consider the concept of self in eastern thought. Then, the views on the self in western philosophy will be presented. Only the ideas of representative thinkers in the ancient, medieval and modern period will be included. Particular attention will be directed to Cartesian philosophy and its connection with the movement of phenomenology in contemporary philosophy. In the context of the phenomenological tradition, the concept of the ego or the self in Husserl and Levinas will then be introduced.

The account given here begins with eastern thought. For as Radhakrishnan said, philosophical speculation began earlier in India than in Greece. ¹⁶ But he hastened to add that the contribution which the Indians or the Greeks have made to human knowledge is a human accomplishment and belongs to the whole humanity. To say that philosophy started earlier in India is simply to say that an account of

16

S. Radhakrishnan, History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western, 2 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1952), 1:20.

the beginnings of philosophy must start with Indian thought. However, in doing this, one "does not give any special virtue to India or detract from the glory of Greece."¹⁷

1. The Self in Eastern Thought. Our survey of eastern thought will be confined to Indian, Chinese and Japanese thought. We will show that the self is a central theme in the philosophical reflections of the three major oriental or eastern philosophies.

"See the Self" is the keynote of all schools of Indian philosophy which proceed from the Upanishads--the concluding portion of the Vedas which are regarded as the sacred books of India. Considered as the wellspring of Indian thought and culture, the Upanishads portray the true self as the ultimate reality, the foundation of all existence and the presupposition of all knowledge. The true self rises above the senses, feeling, intellect and will; it is not identified with the body, mind, ego or the empirical self.¹⁸

Viewed as the transcendent ground of the various states of the self, the true self is referred to as Atman--the subjective side of the ultimate reality which is

17

Ibid., 1:26.

18

C. Sharma, op. cit., pp. 7ff.

Brahman. The latter is in turn referred to as the objective side of the same ultimate reality. Matter, self and God are all manifestations of the Absolute which is regarded as the higher Brahman.

19

The true self is Atman; and Atman is Brahman. This doctrine is the secret teaching of the sacred books. This is the greatest contribution of the Upanishads to the understanding of reality.

20

In Indian thought, the only way for the self to attain liberation (moksa) is to have the right knowledge of the self and the only release from the cycle of birth and rebirth (samsara) is to discover the true nature of the self. Knowledge of the true self is the highest form of knowledge; it is the wisdom that the self must strive for in order to attain the state of absolute bliss and undisturbed peace (nirvana).

The teaching of the Upanishads concerning the true self as the ultimate reality inspired all the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy as well as the heterodox schools including Buddhism. But its influence extended to other oriental philosophies since Buddhism was very influential in the shaping of Chinese and Japanese philosophy.

 19

Ibid., p. 15.

20

Radhakrishnan, op. cit., 1:60.

Classical Chinese philosophy includes three major schools of Chinese thought--Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Confucianism is based on the teachings of Confucius and his disciples. In Confucian thought, the central teaching is the perfect development of personality and the proper adjustment of human relations in order to achieve a harmonious life in society.²¹ To find his way to individual perfection and social harmony, the self must acquire the virtues of human heartedness (jen) and righteousness (yi).²² Furthermore, he must live according to the doctrine of the mean--to do unto others what one wishes for oneself.²³

Taoism is based mainly on the teachings of Yang Chu, Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. According to Taoism, the original problem of man is how to preserve himself and avoid harm and danger in the world.²⁴ The early Taoist, Yang Chu, offered the method of "escaping" as a solution to this problem. This points to the life of the recluse who flees from society and hides himself in the mountains and forests.²⁵

21

Ibid., 1:551.

22

Fung Yu-Lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1960), p. 42.

23

Ibid., p. 44.

24

Ibid., p. 65.

25

Ibid.

According to Lao Tzu, however, the solution is for man to seek enlightenment and strive for sageness. And to attain this, one must discover the underlying laws of nature which are ultimately the underlying first principles of being. If one understands these laws and regulates his life in accordance with these laws, then he can turn everything to his advantage and will be free from harm and danger all throughout his life.²⁶

Underlying all the changes of the things in the world is an invariable law which is referred to as the Tao. And the way of Tao is to reconcile opposites and to exhibit unity in diversity.²⁷ "Reversing is the movement of Tao." Thus, if a thing develops certain extreme qualities, these qualities will inevitably revert to their opposites.

Tao is the essence of all things; it is invariable,²⁸ invisible, indestructible and unnameable. Anyone who arrives at this knowledge becomes a sage and attains serenity in life. And to be a sage is to possess the fundamental virtues of non-interference or non-action (wuwei), gentleness, humility and selflessness. The latter is

²⁶

Ibid.

²⁷

Ibid., p. 97.

²⁸

J. Feibleman, Understanding Oriental Philosophy (N.Y.: Horizon Press, c1977), p. 109.

the supreme virtue of the sage who loses himself in the Tao²⁹ in order to be one with the universe. In the thought of another great Taoist, Chuang Tzu, "the perfect man has no self; the spiritual man has no achievement; and the true sage has no name."³⁰ For the Tao is nameless and so the sage who is one with the Tao is also nameless.³¹

Buddhism, which had its roots in India, gained inroads into Chinese thought and developed into something peculiarly Chinese. The development of Chinese Buddhism led to the emergence of ten Chinese Buddhist schools.³² One of the more influential is Ch'an Buddhism which teaches that man must aim at spiritual cultivation in order to achieve Buddhahood. But to realize this, there is no need for deliberate effort (yu-wei); the only method to be practiced is to carry one's ordinary and uneventful day to day tasks without deliberate effort (wu wei) and without a purposeful mind (wu shin).³³ The Ch'an masters speak of this as

29

To Thi Anh, Eastern and Western Cultural Values: Conflict or Harmony (Manila: East Asian Pastoral Institute, 1975), pp. 21ff.

30

Chuang Tzu quoted in Fung Yu-Lan, op. cit., p. 110.

31

Ibid.

32

Radhakrishnan, op. cit., 1:590ff.

33

Fung Yu-Lan, op. cit., pp. 259-260.

34

cultivation through non-cultivation.

To achieve Buddhahood, spiritual cultivation must be climaxed by sudden enlightenment which is actually perfect wisdom. When the disciple is on the verge of sudden enlightenment, the master offers help by applying the method of kung-an--a statement or an action (a yell or a blow with a stick) intended to shock the pupil. Truth is said to be so mysterious and irrational that only a paradoxical answer can reveal it.

35

Under the name of Zen, the Ch'an Buddhist school prospered and flourished in Japan and became the most influential of all the Buddhist sects in Japanese history.

Zen Buddhism also teaches that the individual self must aim at enlightenment (satori). In order to help the disciple attain this, the Zen master employs certain methods. One is the method of koan (from the Chinese kung-an) which involves the use of cryptic questions and blows meant to shock the disciple and bring home the truth to him. Another is the method of zazen which actually consists in simply "sitting in meditation" without thinking of any particular problem or goal, not even that of attaining

 34

Ibid.

35

Ibid., p. 262; Cf. Feibleman, op. cit., p. 135.

36

gradual enlightenment. Zen Buddhists believe that when there is enlightenment, there is tranquility (through the absence of thought) as well as serenity (through the awareness of nothingness). For Zen is essentially an encounter with nothingness and a reconciliation with nothingness which is really what the moment by itself always is.

37

While some Zen masters think that sessions with the disciple must end in enlightenment, others believe that it must issue in a fullness of life through productive living. This final note on Zen Buddhism concludes the survey of the oriental philosophies of the self.

On the basis of what has just been presented, two things may be pointed out: The first is that the self in eastern thought is portrayed as a reality seeking knowledge and enlightenment in order to attain the goal of harmony with a greater reality--this may be society (as in Confucianism), nature or the universe (as in Taoism), or the Absolute (as in Buddhism); only in this life of harmony can the individual self realize its true self.

36

Feibleman, op. cit., p.201; See also A. Watts, The Way of Zen (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1978), pp. 175ff.

37

Feibleman, op. cit., p. 202.

The second point is that for the oriental man, philosophy is not simply a distinctive way of speculating on problems of existence, but a way of life; in a more specific sense, it is a way of liberation. This is not exactly the case with the whole of what is regarded as western philosophy. With respect to western philosophy, we can say that, in general, it has remained true to the etymological sense of "philosophy" in being essentially an intellectual quest for truth. But just like in eastern thought, the self is a central theme in the western mind's philosophical quest for truth.

2. The Self in Western Philosophy. In the western world, philosophy was first pursued by the Greeks. It began with speculations on the phenomenon of change which raised the question concerning the underlying nature of things or the ultimate stuff of the universe. Hence, the first Greek philosophers were cosmologists. The significant shift from the study of nature to that of man himself was brought about by Socrates who is acknowledged as one of the great Greek philosophers.

Inspired by the Delphic motto "know thyself," the philosophy of Socrates (470-399 B.C.) regarded man as the proper subject of thought. Socrates himself was convinced that his task in life was to follow the divine command and fulfill the philosopher's mission of searching into himself

38

and other men. This orientation of Socratic thought was very influential in the development of ancient Greek philosophy which reached its peak in the thought of Plato.

The philosophy of Plato (427-347 B.C.) teaches that man is disposed by his rational nature to strive for infallible and real knowledge. However, attaining this end involves the movement of ascent and descent. This is portrayed in the famous allegory of the Cave in Plato's Republic.³⁹ In the movement of ascent, man carries himself away from the illusory world of sensible and changeable things towards the real world of unchanging forms or ideas which yield true knowledge. For Plato, the knowledge of what is real is the wisdom that every man must aspire for and the virtue that everyone must acquire. However, one must share this wisdom with others by going back to the Cave to liberate those who are still in the darkness of ignorance. In this more difficult movement of descent one declares himself as the true philosopher.

In the philosophy of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), man is regarded as a being oriented toward an end or a good. And the final end or chief good for man in this life is

38

See Plato's Apology, 28e (Hamilton & Cairns, 15).

39

See Plato's Republic, VII, 514bff. (Hamilton & Cairns, 744ff.).

complete and perfect happiness. Aristotle thinks that happiness lies in virtuous activities. And perfect happiness is attained when one's life is regulated by the highest virtue. This is the virtue that perfects reason-- the best, noblest and most sublime part of man. Thus, man's perfect happiness lies in the contemplative life which is essentially the life of the philosopher. Neither pleasure nor honor will make one completely happy; it is the contemplation on the highest and noblest objects that will make one the happiest man and bring him closest to the gods.⁴⁰

Adding a religious and mystical strain to Platonic thought, Plotinus (204-269) taught that man possesses a soul that comes from the World-Soul. The latter proceeds from the Nous or Mind which is the first emanation of the One. Man's goal in life is to return to the One where he came from. And this is made possible by a process of purification whereby man detaches himself from the pleasurable things in this world and lives the life of philosophy and science as preparation for the mystical union with the One or God. This union is attainable momentarily in this life but realized completely and permanently when man's soul is released from his body. In the Neoplatonic thought of Plotinus, the life of the self is a journey, "a flight of

40

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, X, 7 and 8.

41

the lone to the Alone."

In the philosophy of Augustine (354-430), the great philosopher-saint in the early medieval period, man is made to realize the importance of looking into the inner self in the search for truth. "Do not go outside," St. Augustine says, "but return within thyself; for truth resides in the inmost part of man." In understanding the journey into inner space, man discovers the truth about his own self--his nature as a rational soul in a body and his destiny as a being oriented to God. In a soul-searching look into the inner self, man realizes that he is made for God and that his heart is restless until it finds rest in God.

In the case of St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) who is recognized as the most influential thinker in medieval philosophy, man is portrayed as an individual ordained by his rational nature towards God as the highest good or Summum Bonum. As a being endowed with intellect and will,

41

Plotinus, Enneads, VI, 9, 11, in O'Brien's The Essential Plotinus (N.Y.: The New American Library of World Literature Inc., c1964), p. 88.

42

Augustine, De Vera Religione, 39, no. 72, in Przywara's An Augustine Synthesis (N.Y.: Harper Torchbooks, c1958), p. 19.

43

Augustine's Confessions, I, 1 (Oates, I, 3).

44

St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 1, XVII (A. Pegis, II, 27).

man becomes truly and fully his own self in and through God. For Aquinas, the beatific vision of God is the source of the eternal bliss, joy and peace that awaits man in the life to come. It is evident in this doctrine concerning the ultimate end of man that St. Thomas shared the sacramental outlook and other-worldly orientation of the majority of the patristic and scholastic philosophers in the middle ages.

The philosophers just presented do not have exactly the same views concerning the nature of man or the self. But they share certain ideas which might be regarded as characteristic marks of the Greek, patristic or scholastic notion of man or the self. Two of these need to be pointed out.

The first is that these philosophers associate the self with man conceived as a unity or union of body and soul or matter and spirit. But they tend to identify the self with the rational soul or the spiritual aspect of man's nature; moreover, they think that it is the spiritual dimension in man's nature that inclines him to aspire for something beyond the self in order to achieve wholeness and attain a state of happiness or bliss.

The second point is that the ancient and medieval thinkers take the existence of the self as a matter of fact. This naive attitude of presupposing the existence of the self or beginning with just any presupposition was later

surmounted by René Descartes in his revolutionary thought which ushered in the modern period in the history of philosophy.

Acknowledged as the father of modern philosophy, René Descartes (1596-1650) made a radical break from the Scholastic tradition. His philosophy was a serious endeavour to overcome the skeptical tendencies arising from the degenerate forms of scholasticism in the later part of the medieval period.

Recognized as a landmark in the history of philosophy, the pioneering thought of Descartes focused attention on the self as the radical basis of philosophy. Descartes turned away from the world of books as well as from the great book of the world and directed himself back to his own self in order to find out if truth could be found there at all.⁴⁵ Equipped with the rules of his method, he explored the world of the self and discovered the Ego cogito, ego sum-- the first truth that served as the rock-bottom foundation of philosophy and the rest of the sciences.⁴⁶

The Cartesian notion of the ego, self or subject as the basis of all truth is a revolutionary break from the

45

Descartes, Discourse on Method, I (Haldane and Ross, I, 87).

46

Cf. Descartes, Discourse on Method, IV (Haldane and Ross, I, 101); Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, II (Haldane and Ross, I, 150).

traditional Aristotelian-Scholastic philosophy which considered the objective realm of things outside the ego or the self as the criterion of truth. In Descartes, it is not the world outside but the thinking self (ego cogito) which is considered as the measure of all that is real and all that is true.

To a certain extent, Descartes was influenced by his predecessors as far as his notion of the self is concerned. He still regarded man as a union of body and soul; and he also identifies the ego or the self with the mind or soul as thinking substance. But unlike his predecessors, Descartes did not take for granted the existence of the self; rather, he employed the method he devised in order to ascertain the reality of the ego. In the process, he established the indubitable first truth on which he built the whole edifice of philosophy and science.

Descartes' concept of the ego or the self as the unshakeable basis of all truth and reality met opposition from the empiricist philosophies which leaned heavily on the phenomenalist view of the self.

For John Locke (1632-1704), knowledge is entirely based on the senses. This led to his conception of substance as an obscure, indistinct and uncertain support of

the qualities and powers that produce ideas in the mind.⁴⁷
 This in turn raised doubts concerning the ontological basis
 of the identity of the person or the self and resulted in
 his psychological description of personal identity in terms
 of the consciousness accompanying the thinking operations.⁴⁸

David Hume (1711-1776) also gave a phenomenalist
 explanation of the self. He taught that the mind of man is
 no more than a heap or a collection of perceptions supposed
 to be endowed with perfect simplicity and identity.⁴⁹ For
 Hume, there is no idea in philosophy more abstruse than
 that concerning identity or a unitary principle which
 constitutes the person.⁵⁰

While the empiricist view provided the historical
 antecedent of the phenomenalist accounts of the self in
 later utilitarian, pragmatic and positivistic philosophies,
 Descartes' idea of the ego or the self as the source and
 center of truth and meaning became the characteristic mark
 of the rationalistic and idealistic tradition in philosophy.

47

J. Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,
 II, 23, no. 4 (J.A. St. John, I, 425).

48

Ibid., II, 27, no. 10 (J.A. St. John, I, 467ff).

49

D. Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, Book One, ed.
 D.G.C. Macnabb (London: William Collins Sons and Co., Ltd.,
 1962), p. 240.

50

Ibid., p. 258.

This is evident in the thought of Kant, Fichte and Hegel.

For Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the a priori structures of the ego ultimately determine the objectivity of objects. By means of the a priori structures, the ego is able to unify the manifold of sense presentations and make possible the knowledge of objects. As unity of apperception or transcendental consciousness-in-general, the ego is the most fundamental a priori condition for constructing objects of knowledge.

In the case of Johann Fichte (1762-1814), the ego or the self is considered as the source of the whole being of the world. And in the thought of Georg Hegel (1770-1831), the self is viewed as a finite spirit manifesting a significant moment in the life of Absolute Spirit--the reality from which everything derive being and meaning.

The influence of Descartes, however, extends to the contemporary period in the history of philosophy. For the Cartesian concern to establish a radical basis for philosophy served as the underlying motive for the philosophical project that led to the emergence of the phenomenological movement in contemporary philosophy. There is, therefore, a direct line connecting the philosophy of Descartes with phenomenology which is acknowledged as the

most influential of the more recent philosophical move-
 51
 ments. Edmund Husserl and Emmanuel Levinas both belong to
 the phenomenological tradition.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is the initiator of the
 phenomenological movement. He founded the philosophy of
 transcendental phenomenology in order to realize the
 Cartesian ideal of philosophy as a rigorous science built on
 a solid foundation. Husserl thinks that Descartes actually
 failed in attaining that ideal. For he did not strictly
 apply his method; he did not set aside all of his biases and
 presuppositions. Husserl, on his part, applied his
 phenomenological method in a more rigorous manner. In the
 process, he uncovered the pure ego or transcendental sub-
 jectivity as the unshakeable foundation and radical basis
 for philosophy and the rest of the sciences. For Husserl,
 this pure ego is distinct from Descartes' ego cogito or any
 empirical ego which is actually part of the natural world
 that is transcended when one assumes the phenomenological
 standpoint.

51

Cf. I.M. Bochenski, Contemporary European
 Philosophy, trans. D. Nicholl and K. Aschenbrenner (L.A.:
 University of California Press, 1965), p. 28; Cf. also M.F.
 Sciacca, Philosophical Trends in the Contemporary World,
 trans. A Salerno with introd. by R. Caponigri (Notre Dame:
 University Press, c1964), p. 139.

The transcendental phenomenology of Husserl is an egology. It is a philosophy that is centered on the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity as the ultimate ground of all truth and reality, the "universe of all possible meanings,"⁵² and "the true Archimedean point of any genuine philosophy."⁵³ For Husserl, his philosophy will finally overcome skepticism, put an end to the splintering of philosophies and the bickerings among philosophers, and renew man's faith in philosophy and the sciences as his guide in the living of a meaningful life.

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-) also belongs to the phenomenological tradition. His philosophy represents a movement in phenomenology today to re-evaluate Husserl's thought from within the corpus of his writings.⁵⁴ In particular, his philosophy is a critique of egology, totality or any philosophy that confers an absolute status on the self and establishes his identity solely in terms of interiority. For his philosophy stresses the idea that the self is a responsible subject and its basic orientation is not

52

E. Husserl, The Paris Lectures, trans. Peter Koestenbaum (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, c1967), p. 33.

53

kottukapally, "Husserl's Critique of His Cartesian Way," International Philosophical Quarterly, 22 (June, 1982), p. 149.

54

C. Vasey, "Emmanuel Levinas: From Intentionality to Proximity," Philosophy Today, 25 (Fall, 1981), p. 178.

egological but ethical. His description of the "deposition
of sovereignty by the ego"⁵⁵ in the ethical relation directs
our attention to the fundamental character of the self as
responsible subjectivity--a reality whose meaning lies not
in being-for-oneself but in being-for-the-Other, not in
persevering in its own being but in being responsible for
the Other.⁵⁶

Whereas Husserl's phenomenological investigation
discloses the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity as the
ultimate ground of all sense and being, Levinas' philosophy
ventures beyond phenomenology and discovers the self as
a responsible subject who recognizes in another subject the
"source of all right and all meaning."⁵⁷

Husserl's philosophy of transcendental subjectivity
and Levinas' philosophy of responsible subjectivity may be
better understood and fully appreciated when viewed in
relation to each other. This is basically what we intend to
show in this dissertation.

Scholarly researches have already been made on
various aspects of the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas.

55

E. Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, trans. R. Cohen
(Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), p. 52.

56

Ibid., pp. 119-122.

57

Ibid., p. 122.

A review of the more important ones which are related to the present project will be given in the following section.

Review of Related Studies

A list of books and periodical articles related to the present study is given in the bibliography; a list of dissertations on Husserl and Levinas is also included in the appendix. A study that relates the perspectives of Husserl and Levinas on the self is not cited in either list.

There are a number of dissertations dealing with the ego or the self in Husserl's thought. These are summarily presented here.⁵⁸

Eleanore Holveck's work, "Edmund Husserl's Concept of the Ego in the Cartesian Meditations,"⁵⁹ has two parts. The first part argues that the various egos in phenomenology arise from the different phases of the phenomenological method, and that there are various kinds of intentional objects corresponding to the various kinds of essential subjects which intend these objects. The second part

58

These summaries are based on the abstracts included in the Dissertation Abstracts International A: The Humanities and Social Sciences, (Michigan: University Microfilms International). This work will be referred to in the notes as Dissertation Abstracts A.

59

Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1970, Dissertation Abstracts A, 31:6111-6112.

defends Husserl's theory of the ego against various criticisms particularly those of Alfred Schutz and Paul Ricoeur. Sections from the work of Merleau-Ponty, a follower of Husserl in regard to the ego, are often cited in this dissertation; but the author concludes by pointing out that Merleau-Ponty actually diverges from Husserl in many unacceptable ways.

Robert Vandiver Stone's "The-Self-as-Agent-in-the-⁶⁰ World," attempts to offer a new perspective on the dispute among phenomenologists over the question on whether beyond the phenomenal, empirical ego there is also a non-empirical or transcendental subject of consciousness. This is carried out by examining Sartre's Transcendence of the Ego and Husserl's Ideas I.

The study discloses that Sartre's views overlooks the egological character of consciousness while that of Husserl fails to recognize the worldly character of the self. Neither gives an adequate account for the non-objectifying knowledge that the "I" has of its acts when engaged in an activity. Consequently, both views fail to recognize the status of the self as agent in the world. The author devotes a final chapter to a sketch of this more fundamental level of ego-life.

60

Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1972, Dissertation Abstracts A, 34:6051-6052.

Thomas William Attig's "Cartesianism, Certainty and the Cogito in Husserl's Cartesian Meditations,"⁶¹ aims mainly to show the contrast of Husserl's phenomenological philosophy as outlined in the Cartesian Meditations with that of Descartes' Meditations which is the former's inspiration. This dissertation arrives at the conclusion that Husserl's interpretation and criticism of Descartes are sound, but that Husserl's Cogito renders impossible the attainment of absolute certainty. The author suggests that it would be best to retain Husserl's Cogito and to abandon the ideal itself.

In his dissertation, "The Ego and Reduction: A Key to the Development of Husserl's Phenomenology,"⁶² John Dennis Banja presents the idea that the whole of Husserl's phenomenology develops in terms of his attempts to formulate ego and reduction in the most coherent form possible. The verification of the above theme, the author claims, will be a relatively worthwhile contribution in determining and clarifying the extremely impressive yet markedly difficult course of Husserl's phenomenology.

"The Origins of Consciousness: Husserl and Sartre on

61

Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University, 1973, Dissertation Abstracts A, 34:7817.

62

Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1975, Dissertation Abstracts A, 37:1017.

63

the Cogito" is a work by William John Bersley. It is a comparison of two phenomenological philosophies--those of Husserl and Sartre. The author claims that the meaning of self-consciousness is philosophically ambiguous as shown by Husserl's denial and Sartre's affirmation of ego-origin. These philosophically ambiguous descriptions result in an unrealistic philosophical representation of the person. Husserl's notion of the pure ego subverts the person by bracketing the ego in its identifiable concrete worldliness; Sartre, on his part, subverts the personal identifiability of conscious acts by referring to the foundation of these acts as an impersonal "nihilitating activity." The two philosophies of the ego, however, strive to be mutually corrective.

The significance of the thesis is underscored in the combination of these two phenomenological philosophies of the ego which allows the reader to "see" a more realistic conceptual picture of the ego as the concrete author of its acts.

The dissertation, "The I and the Other: A Reformulation of Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditations," by Robert

64

Michael Harlan first states the goal of the last part of Husserl's work which he studied--to demonstrate how there can be consciousness of the other as another subject and of the world as an objective realm shared by a plurality of different subjects, then it proposes a reformulation of the experience of someone else presented in the last part of the Cartesian Meditations.

The reformulation is based on the idea that there is a need to introduce a reduction--one that leads to the presocial, prereflective "subject" of a conscious life prior to the experience of the other as another subject. The equiprimordiality of the sense of the "I", "another", and "objective world" is to be traced to this "subject". It is argued that the consciousness of the self, the other and the objective world is founded on the recognition of behaviour by the other toward objects that do not correspond to the significance they have for the "subject."

In his work, "Egological Investigations," Albert A. Lynzeidetsen⁶⁵ examines and analyzes the views of Husserl on the ego or self and self-identity. Some Kantian themes are given serious consideration but the focus is Husserl's

 64

Ph.D. dissertation, New School for Social Research, 1978, Dissertation Abstracts A, 39:3632-3633.

65

Ph.D. dissertation, University of Miami, 1987, Dissertation Abstracts A, 48:2647.

view. The most salient feature of the work is the clarification of the relation obtaining among the following: apperception, internal time-consciousness and the various senses in which the ego may be posited in the phenomenological reduction. Particular attention is given to the role of apperception and internal time-consciousness in establishing the self-same subject--a self-identical, an abiding and enduring ego. More specifically, the role of memory in integrating an "enduring self" is carefully examined.

In the list of dissertations on Levinas, there is only one that deals with the self. This is Robert Kunze's study "The Origin of the Self: A Presentation of the Philosophy of Levinas from the Standpoint of His Criticism of Heidegger." ⁶⁶ The work criticizes Heidegger's theory of self-hood and introduces Levinas' theory. Heidegger takes all aspects of the self as "equiprimordial within the unity of the existence of Dasein," while Levinas considers three fundamental and irreducible dimensions of the self--the levels of enjoyment, of the home, and of the face-to-face relation to the Other. This study is based solely on

⁶⁶

Ph.D. dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1974, Dissertation Abstracts A, 35:7350-7351.

Levinas' first major work Totality and Infinity.⁶⁷ It does not take into account the new insights contained in the later work Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence.⁶⁸

The works cited deal with the ego or the self in Husserl and Levinas. Some of these related the views of the two philosophers with those of others. The present project which attempts to view Husserl's idea of the self in relation to that of Levinas hopes to add another dimension to the understanding of Husserl and Levinas and promises to offer a worthwhile contribution in the field of philosophical research.

Objectives of the Study

The study that is presently undertaken has the following objectives:

1. to explore the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas by examining a theme that occupies a central place in their works--the ego or the self
2. to show similarities and differences in the perspectives

67

E. Levinas, Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, c1969). Hereafter, this work will be referred to in the footnotes as Totality and Infinity.

68

E. Levinas, Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, c1981). Henceforth, this work will be cited simply in the footnotes as Otherwise than Being.

of both thinkers and hopefully attain a unified view of the reality of the self

3. to indicate the significant development that the fundamental notions of phenomenology and subjectivity have taken in the thought of Levinas who is one of Husserl's successors in the French phenomenological school
4. to point out the relevance of some of Husserl's and Levinas' insights into the self to our life-situation

Importance of the Study

Edmund Husserl and Emmanuel Levinas are undoubtedly two of the more important philosophers in the contemporary philosophical scene. A serious and disciplined examination of their works is necessary in order to understand the phenomenological movement in philosophy. And such understanding is indispensable for a fuller grasp and a better appreciation of the development of philosophy in general.

The ego or the self is a theme that lies at the very heart of the writings of Husserl and Levinas. Hence, the present study which examines their views on this theme will pave the way to an understanding of their phenomenological philosophies. The examination of their perspectives on the self would in turn be valuable in clarifying our own views and attaining a broader and a deeper knowledge concerning

the reality of the self.

The study that is pursued here is highly theoretical and appears to have no direct relevance to the realities and concerns of our time. It seems to have no bearing at all on problems and issues that affect our personal life, our people and our society today. We think, however, that some of the insights of Husserl and Levinas into the reality of the self would be very helpful in dealing with our life-situation and organizing our life-world. A later section of this work intends to bring this out.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses mainly on the perspectives of Husserl and Levinas on the self. It does not consider other themes in their work which have no direct or indirect bearing on the topic under investigation.

The study is also based mainly on the Cartesian ⁶⁹ Meditations of Husserl and on the two major philosophical works of Levinas--Totality and Infinity and Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence. Insights into the reality of the self which are expressed in the other writings of these philosophers are considered to the extent that they clarify

69

E. Husserl, Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, c1960). Henceforth, this work will simply be referred to in the footnotes as Cartesian Meditations.

the views given in the works cited or provide a more profound grasp of the ideas in the writings which are the primary sources being studied.

Furthermore, the study is limited to the exposition or explication of the two philosophers' views on the self. A critical evaluation or appraisal of these views is outside of the scope of the study.

Finally, the present undertaking does not presume to give an exhaustive discussion or make definitive statements concerning the reality being explored. The present project must be viewed as an open-ended search for an understanding of the reality of the self.

Methodology

The methods of interpretive analysis and comparison are used in the present study.

1. Interpretive Analysis. The study first gives an interpretive analysis of the views of Husserl and Levinas on the self as these are expressed in the works cited earlier. It tries to avoid the prevailing tendency to simply summarize the thought of a philosopher. The thrust of the study is to analyze the ideas, expand the expression of the thinker and deepen our knowledge of his thought.

In order to come up with an interpretation that is sympathetic to the thought of the philosophers being studied and come close to the meaning mediated by their works, the texts are examined in their proper context.

In approaching the texts which are the primary sources of the study, the following considerations with respect to interpretation are taken as a general guide:

First of all, we must realize that a text or any work for that matter, possesses an intrinsic historical dimension.⁷¹ A particular experience or question arising at a certain time brought the text into being. In attempting to interpret and understand a text, we must recognize this historicity which places the text at a distance from its reader. The task of hermeneutics, to use the more contemporary expression for interpretation, is to bridge the historical distance and to overcome the reader's estrangement from the text. As Paul Ricoeur puts it, "the purpose of all interpretation is to conquer a remoteness, a distance between (the past cultural) epoch to which a text belongs and the interpreter himself. By overcoming this distance, by making himself contemporary with the text, the exegete can appropriate its meaning to himself; foreign, he

⁷¹

K. Palmer, Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, c1974), p. 250.

72
 makes it familiar, that is, he makes it his own."

Secondly, we move within a personal horizon as we approach the text which is also situated in a particular horizon. The creative bridging of the tension between the horizon of the text and that of the interpreter is an important task of interpretation. The encounter with a text does not necessarily mean negating or giving up one's own horizon but requires a willingness to risk it in a free opening of oneself.⁷³ The encounter in the hermeneutic process essentially involves the dialectical interplay of different horizons. And the true meaning of a text breaks through in the fusion or blending of horizons.⁷⁴ This in turn carries us along the way towards the desired goal of understanding. "The text," says Ricoeur, "is the mediation by which we understand ourselves."⁷⁵ And what Palmer wrote about the purpose of a work of art can likewise be said of a text--"that it discloses being to our self-understanding

72

Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, c1974), pp. 16-17.

73

Palmer, op. cit., p. 244.

74

O. Terrenal, SVD, "An Introduction to Hans-Georg Gadamer's Theory of Interpretation," Sophia, 5 (June-Sept., 1975), p. 32.

75

P. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," Philosophy Today, 17 (Summer, 1973), p. 141.

so that our own world, the horizon in which we live and move and have our whole existence, is broadened and given a greater definition."⁷⁶

Thirdly, in dealing with the text, we must be attentive not only to what the text explicitly says but also to what is not said but comes to light in what was positively expressed.⁷⁷

Finally, we must be aware of the limitations of conceptual knowledge. The richness of the text's experience as well as that of the interpreter's understanding of the text may not be adequately translated into the categories of knowledge and transcend conceptualization.⁷⁸ This suggests that the interpreter must maintain a stance of dialectical openness with respect to the text and view interpretation as an open-ended task.⁷⁹

2. Interpretive Comparison. Interpretation aims at understanding. But there is really no knowledge or understanding without comparison.⁸⁰ For a better grasp of the

76

R. Palmer, op. cit., p. 241.

77

Ibid., p.234.

78

Ibid., p.232.

79

Ibid.

80

J. Locke, op. cit., II, 11, no. 1 (J.A. St. John, I, 270).

ideas under examination, a comparison is necessary. Thus, in the present study, interpretive analysis is followed by an interpretive comparison of the two perspectives presented. In comparing the views of Husserl and Levinas on the self, we take into account Maritain's idea that comparison "consists essentially in setting things side by side on the same plane, confronting one with the other in the same light, seeking points of coincidence and divergence. In this case, the mind moves from one light to another and discovers unity in the very midst of non-coincidence."⁸¹

It is expected that the comparison would enable us not only to point out similarities and differences or continuity and diversity in the two perspectives, but also to attain a unified view and a more profound grasp of the reality of the self.

It is also hoped that the process of comparison would make us realize that a fuller and a deeper understanding would be attained by relating the two philosophies as two perspectives on the same reality rather than by taking either in isolation from the other.

81

J. Maritain, Distinguish to Unite or the Degrees of Knowledge (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1959), p. 292.

Organization of the Study

This introductory chapter (I) will be followed by another chapter (II) which discusses Husserl's phenomenology as an egology. The first part of the chapter will be an introduction to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology as the ideal of a rigorous science. The second part will be a presentation of his perspective on the self.

The next chapter (III) will be an exposition of Levinas' philosophy of responsible subjectivity. A discussion of Levinas' views on the self will be presented after giving an introduction to his philosophy as a critique of western philosophy.

Another chapter (IV) will deal with a comparison of the perspectives of Husserl and Levinas on the self. In comparing the views of the two thinkers concerning the self, the following aspects will be taken into consideration: the identity of the self, the relation between the self and the other, the self and the question of meaning.

The final chapter (V) will present a summary of the salient points established in the whole study. A brief discussion on the relevance of some of the insights of Husserl and Levinas into the self to our life-situation will also be given in this concluding chapter of the study.

CHAPTER II

HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGY AS EGOLGY

Edmund Husserl was one thinker who took philosophy seriously as the vocation of his life. He conveyed to his contemporaries and his students the conviction that he was called upon to carry out a philosophic mission and to devote himself completely to a cause which can easily be discerned as the dynamic force behind his philosophic development. The cause to which he committed himself was to secure the ultimate foundations for philosophy as a scientific enterprise, i.e., to establish philosophy as a rigorous science by going to the "roots" or "beginnings" of all knowledge.⁸² With mixed feelings of pride and humility, Husserl referred to his task as a philosopher to be that of a "true beginner."⁸³ Anyone who aspires to become a philosopher must always be a "beginner." A passage in his Cartesian Meditations clearly expresses this.

. . . Anyone who seriously intends to become a philosopher must "once in his life" withdraw into himself and attempt, within himself to overthrow and build anew all the sciences that, up to then, he has been accepting. Philosophy--wisdom (sagesse)--is the philosopher's quite personal affair. It must arise as his wisdom,

82

H. Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction, 2 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 1:82.

83

Ibid., 1: 76.

as his self-acquired knowledge tending toward universality, a knowledge for which he can answer from the beginning, and at each step, by virtue of his own absolute insights. 84

The concern to develop philosophy as a rigorous science preoccupied Husserl in the whole of his philosophic career and this recurs in all of his writings--from the Logical Investigations which established him irrevocably as a philosopher, to The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology which was the last significant work published before his death. Husserl never wavered in his conviction that philosophy can and must be established as a rigorous science.

An understanding of Husserl's idea of philosophy as a rigorous science provides the indispensable background for a discussion of his phenomenological philosophy of the ego or the self which is a major concern of the present study. Hence, in this particular chapter, an introduction to Husserl's concept of philosophy as a rigorous science will first be given before presenting his philosophical perspective on the ego or the self.

84

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 2.

Husserl's Concept of Philosophy as a Rigorous Science

Man's reason is his specific character as a being who is forever in a constant process of becoming. By means of reason, man attains self-understanding as a being who is responsible for his becoming. In self-reflection and self-responsibility, he shapes his personal and communal life. He strives to become a free and autonomous "I", seeks to realize his innate reason, aims at being true to himself and remaining identical with himself as a reasonable "I."⁸⁵

Through the active life of reason, man comes to the realization that he is rational, that it is rational to strive to be rational, and that this entails a relentless and never-ending struggle towards the life of reason. Reason is precisely that by which man is man, it is his innermost being, what he is aiming at and that alone which can satisfy him and make him "blessed."⁸⁶

Husserl thinks that the highest function of reason in man is self-understanding according to a priori principles that give rise to a "universally, apodictically grounded and grounding science which he identifies as philosophy."⁸⁷

85

Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 338. Henceforth, this work will be referred to in the footnotes as Crisis.

86

Ibid., p. 341.

87

Ibid., pp. 338, 341.

And the task which the philosopher sets before himself--his life-goal--is "universal science of the world, definitive knowledge, the universe of truths in themselves about the world, the world in itself."⁸⁸ This is a science comprising a body of truths grounded in an immediately-self-evident-apodictic truth; its essential traits are consequently totality and infinity--for it is an unending process directed toward the achievement of all that is. Conceived in this sense, the science of philosophy is the telos of reason.⁸⁹

Thus, philosophy is nothing but rationalism through and through; but it is rationalism that has differentiated itself in different stages of the movement of intention and fulfillment; it is "ratio" or reason in the constant process of self-elucidation beginning with the breakthrough of philosophy into mankind. Prior to the birth of philosophy, reason was only in a state of "concealment" and "nocturnal obscurity."⁹⁰ And we can view the philosophies at any particular time in history as the more or less successful attempts to attain the goal of reason which is the infinity and thereby the totality of truths grounded in universal and

88

Ibid., p.335.

89

Ibid., p.341; Ricoeur, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p.153.

90

Husserl, Crisis, p. 338.

91

apodictic evidence.

At the present, however, there is a splintering of philosophies; philosophers speak in many voices and in diverging and conflicting tones; philosophy lacks or has lost its unitary, universal and autonomous character. There may still be congresses and conventions where there is a meeting of philosophers but which unfortunately holds no promise of a meeting of minds.⁹² In our time, philosophy seems to succumb to skepticism, irrationalism and mysticism.⁹³ Or it falls into the pitfalls of objectivism and naturalism which are aberrations of reason or true rationalism and commits the error of taking the scientific character of the mathematical natural sciences as the model of the rigorously scientific philosophy.

Husserl took upon himself the messianic task of bringing philosophy to a turning point through his philosophy of transcendental phenomenology which is as it were "the secret longing of the whole philosophy of modern times."⁹⁴ He developed his phenomenological philosophy as

91

Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, trans. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper and Row, c1963), p.180.

92

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 5.

93

Husserl, Crisis p. 3.

94

Husserl, Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. W.F. Gibson (New York: Collier Books, c1962), p. 166. Hereafter, this work is cited as Ideas.

a rigorous science that can serve as the foundation for the whole of philosophy and the rest of the sciences.

But what specifically are the essential features of philosophy as a rigorous science and which are manifest in the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl? Certain fundamental concerns recur in Husserl's writings and these stand out as the conditions for strict science. These are the ideal of philosophy as a presuppositionless science and the striving for the goal of absolute truth grounded on apodictic evidence.⁹⁵

1. Presuppositionless Science. Anyone who wishes to undertake seriously the task of reforming or even revolutionizing philosophy and establishing it as a rigorous scientific discipline must begin to philosophize without any presupposition at all. He must start by "putting out of play" all previous knowledge of anything and set in brackets all of his beliefs in anything whatsoever. Knowledge pertaining to the existence of the world, whatever may be its source--tradition, science or philosophy--is also set in brackets. This means, in other words, that the sciences and philosophies which relate to the world must be bracketed.⁹⁶

95

Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, p. 25.

96

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 17.

To begin without any presupposition at all is a radical starting point in the realization of a rigorous science. This radical point of departure is made even more revolutionary by the fact that the purging of all presuppositions is constantly carried out in the course of one's philosophizing. This demands an effort of will on the part of the beginning philosopher who must always check himself so that he will not fall back into assuming the naive, uncritical and natural attitude of accepting just any presupposition.

A further implication of the necessity to make a radically new start is that the beginning philosopher must, in a sense, turn his back on the history of thought. Husserl thinks that one need not immerse himself in the history of thought except to familiarize himself with what may be called essentially philosophical problems or to derive the impetus to carry out his own investigations from the reflective considerations of other philosophies and their shortcomings in relation to the ideal. The history of philosophy can be viewed fundamentally as the long preparation for the emergence of Husserl's transcendental
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phenomenology.

Although it is not through philosophies that we

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Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, pp. 34-35.

become philosophers, there is a legitimate need to know different philosophies. Their spiritual contents can inspire us to live the philosophical life if only we know how to peer into them, penetrate the soul of their words and stories which offer wealth and strength of living motivations.⁹⁸ Yet, one must not immerse himself in the history of thought to engage in mere criticism. Doing philosophy eventually demands making a true beginning: a return to the origin is the goal of every philosopher.

René Descartes set the example of beginning to philosophize without presuppositions. But as already pointed out by Husserl himself, he did not rigorously follow his method and was still caught up in certain presuppositions. It remained for Husserl to make the radical and revolutionary return to the roots of philosophy.

2. Universal Knowledge. The whole purpose of overthrowing all presuppositions is to uncover what lies at the root of all our cognitions and the source of all objectively valid and absolutely universal knowledge. This knowledge of the external world must be bracketed for it is infected with facticity, historicity and contingency which are obstacles to the attainment of absolute and universal knowledge. The discovery of the cognitions which are first

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Ibid., p. 146.

in themselves can then become the support of the whole edifice of a genuine science--a systematic universality of knowledge grounded in an indubitable truth.⁹⁹ Science grows with the progressive accumulation of completely verified affirmations built on this solid indubitable foundation of truth.¹⁰⁰ As Husserl himself says, ". . .the idea of science and philosophy involves an order of cognition, proceeding from intrinsically earlier to intrinsically later cognitions; ultimately, then, a beginning and a line of advance that are not to be chosen arbitrarily but have their basis in the nature of things themselves."¹⁰¹

When we suspend belief in the existence of the external world of things, what then will be the basis of knowledge? Husserl answers by saying that the return to the things themselves is actually a return to the subject.

When the things of the world are bracketed and knowledge of them is put out of action, what remains is the transcendental subject--the a priori source of all cognitions, a monadic unity of consciousness that has nothing to do with nature and its spatio-temporal

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, pp. 12ff.

100

Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, p. 39.

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 12.

structure, but has its own "forms."¹⁰² The objects of nature, including the "I" as a body-soul unity, become phenomenal beings in the transcendental ego's flow of intentional acts which forms as it were a stream of a line unlimited at both ends and unified by the subject's consciousness of internal time by which the present aspect of the phenomenal being is connected with all the other aspects by the retention of the past and protention of the future.

When we bracket the world which is the source of all objectivity in the naive objectivistic and naturalistic sciences, objectivity is not lost but secured in the uncovering of the transcendental subject which is actually the ultimate a priori source of all knowledge and objectivity.¹⁰³ The things were not lost but rediscovered, this time as phenomena given in the field of experience of the transcendental subject. This subject, then, becomes the basis of knowledge which is objective, universal and absolute.

Consequently, the distinction between objectivity and

102

Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, p. 108.

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Ibid., p. 116.

subjectivity is obscured if not eliminated. Truth is not essentially a matter of agreement or disagreement between the knowledge of the subject and the object in the external world as this is conceived in traditional epistemology. The objectivity or validity is constituted by the subject; knowledge is validated by the subject and rendered apodictic, absolute and universal.

3. Apodictic Certainty. Science as a body of truths does not simply make judgments, but must ground its judgments. This means it does not accept any judgment or truth as scientific knowledge unless it is grounded completely and perfectly in evidence. It is this evidence which is the source of apodictic certainty and absolutely universal knowledge. And the only source of evidence is intuition or seeing.

In what does evidencing or intuition consist? Evidence, in its extremely broad sense, is an experience of something that is given in consciousness; it is not to be confused with some kind of mystical penetration into the world of essences that are inaccessible to rational thought. It is the intuitive fulfillment of the meaning

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 10.

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Ibid., pp. 12, 15.

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O. Lauer, "On Evidence," in Kockelmans, ed., Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Its Interpretation (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1967), p. 153.

intention which is itself empty. It is a process whereby the objects are brought to "self-givenness" in intuition. As the object is given, the conscious subject intends a meaning. To the multiple and diverse facets of the object there corresponds a multiplicity of aspects, the object remains identical by virtue of the synthesizing activity of the conscious subject--more specifically by its consciousness of internal time.

In the process of the analysis of the immanent acts of consciousness corresponding to the various facets of the object the meaning intention is either verified or not. The sense that the object has for the subject in its reflective regard of the diverse acts correlative to the varied shiftings of the object depends entirely on the subject. The meaning that the object has at any time is constituted by the subject. When the subject, in the course of its investigations, sees the object presenting itself to consciousness, manifesting its necessary and essential being, and the subject sees the impossibility of its being given otherwise, then there is intuition into the essence and the subject possesses evidence. The object meant or intended and the object given in intuition are identified; the subject becomes aware of the identification and the

object (or the judgment on the object) is rendered evident and the meaning intention is converted into meaning fulfilled.¹⁰⁸

To be given to consciousness in evidence is to be given absolutely to consciousness and here is the guarantee for absolute, universal and objective knowledge. The datum of truth obtained in the whole process of the grounding of knowledge is an "abiding acquisition or possession" of the subject.¹⁰⁹ The subject can always return to this datum and repeat the whole process of coming to its possession. This datum of truth can serve as the springboard for a whole new series of evidencing. One can build layers of truths or meanings on the basis of the already grounded judgments or knowledge. This whole activity possesses the qualities of open-endedness and indefiniteness.¹¹⁰ Thus, the true scientific method for philosophy is that of direct intuitive grasp of essences which opens up infinite perspectives for philosophical investigations.¹¹¹ Consequently, the philosophic task of phenomenological description is an infinite

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Ibid., p. 153; Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 10.

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, pp. 10, 60-61.

110

Ibid., p. 60.

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Husserl, Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, p. 16.

112
task.

As the realization of the rigorous science that will serve as the radical basis for the reformation of the sciences, the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl is essentially a presuppositionless science striving for the goal of apodictic certainty and absolutely universal knowledge. And the preceding discussion has introduced us into this essential character of Husserl's philosophy. With this understanding as background, we now move on to discuss Husserl's philosophical conception of the ego or the self. In the process, we present a theme that is assigned a central feature of his transcendental phenomenology which is that of egology. As already indicated, the following discussion is based mainly on Husserl's Cartesian Meditations which contains the fullest articulation of his philosophy of the ego or the self.¹¹³

Husserl's Perspective on the Ego

We have stated earlier in this chapter that Husserl wanted to establish philosophy as a rigorous science by

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Ibid., pp. 162, 180; Cf. also Kates, "Perception and Temporality in Husserl's Phenomenology," Philosophy Today, 14 (Summer, 1970), p. 97.

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Cf. A. Medina, "Husserl on the Nature of the Subject," The New Scholasticism, 45 (Autumn, 1971), p.561.

going to the roots or beginnings of all knowledge and ensuring a solid foundation for philosophy and the sciences.¹¹⁴ To achieve this goal, he developed his philosophy of transcendental phenomenology which is actually an egology for it recognizes in the ego the ultimate source of all knowledge and the radical basis for philosophy and the rest of the sciences. Thus, the understanding of Husserl's views on the ego or the subject provides the key to the understanding of his phenomenological philosophy. Husserl himself thinks that phenomenological self-explication coincides with the whole of his phenomenology. He expresses this clearly in the following passage from the Cartesian Meditations:

Since the monadically concrete ego includes also the whole of actual and potential conscious life, it is clear that the problem of explicating this monadic ego phenomenologically (the problem of his constitution for himself) must include all constitutional problems without exception. Consequently, the phenomenology of this self-constitution coincides with phenomenology as a whole. 115

The preceding passage underscores the idea that the whole of phenomenology is centered on the ego and that phenomenological investigations of this ego necessarily entails the explication of its life activity which is that

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See p. 42 above.

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 68.

of constitution. This explicitly points out to us that Husserl's phenomenology is essentially an egology--a study that is focused on the ego as the root of all knowledge and the universal a priori of all truth. References to Husserl's views on the ego or the self were actually made in the preceding discussions. A fuller treatment of the topic will be given in this second portion of the chapter. Husserl's account of the method that uncovers the ego will first be presented before proceeding to give his account of the meaning of the ego's life of constitution, and finally considering his views concerning the ego and its constitution of the other ego.

1. The Ego as Residue of Phenomenological Reduction or Epoché. In order to realize his philosophical project of going back to the roots of all knowledge and establishing the radical basis for philosophy and the rest of the sciences, Husserl proposes to employ rigorously a method which he calls transcendental-phenomenological reduction or epoché.¹¹⁶ The "regressive inquiry concerning the

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Cf. Husserl, "Phenomenology" (Chisholm, 120ff); Husserl, Ideas, p. 99; R. Schmitt, "Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction," in Lockelmans, ed., op. cit., pp. 58ff.; Cf. also Devettere, "Merleau-Ponty and the Husserlian Reductions," Philosophy Today, 17 (Winter, 1973): 297-310.

ultimate source of all cognitive formations" ¹¹⁷ using the method of phenomenological reduction will lead to the uncovering of the a priori source of all knowledge which Husserl identifies later as the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity.

The method of phenomenological reduction or epoché first of all calls for a transcendence of the natural standpoint which represents our immediate and practical outlook as human beings capable of imagining, judging, ¹¹⁸ feeling and willing. In this natural standpoint, man experiences the world as a totality of objects spread out in ¹¹⁹ space and time. But the world is not only perceived as a world of facts and affairs but also as a world of values, a world of goods, a practical world. ¹²⁰ Things are there to serve the immediate and practical purposes of man.

This natural world does not only encompass the self and its natural and practical relations with the things of the world; it also includes other men perceived as beings

117

Husserl, Experience and Judgment: Investigations In a Genealogy of Logic, trans, J. S. Churchill and K. Ameriks (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, c1973), p. 49. Henceforth, cited as Experience and Judgment.

118

Husserl, Ideas, p. 91.

119

Ibid., pp. 91-92.

120

Ibid., p. 93.

like the self and maintaining the same relatedness to the
 121
 environing world.

With the natural standpoint, we come to understand-
 ings with our neighbors and set up in common an objective
 spatio-temporal fact-world as the world about us that is
 there for all of us, and to which we ourselves nonetheless
 122
 belong. The comprehensive and systematic knowledge of
 this world is the object of all sciences based on the
 natural standpoint.

Epoché, according to Husserl, demands a radical
 change on man's outlook. It calls for the disconnection or
 bracketing of the world conceived as the totality of all
 existing beings including the self and the other subjects.
 This does not mean doubting their existence but it implies
 the "abstention" or suspension of belief in their existence
 and "putting out of play" all knowledge that we have of them
 whether derived from experiences or from the sciences
 123
 investigating this world from the natural standpoint.

In making the epoché, the meditating philosopher does
 not begin with any presupposition at all; he does not make
 assumptions based on naive experience nor accept without

121

Ibid., p. 95.

122

Ibid.

123

Ibid., pp. 99, 100; Husserl, Cartesian
 Meditations, pp. 17ff.

criticism the data from any of the sciences that relate to the natural world. Carrying out the phenomenological reduction more concretely means that we do not give our attention to the things outside; and we set aside all that are said about these things by the many sciences that study them. Then we direct our attention to our own consciousness and to whatever is contained in the field of our consciousness--our thoughts, strivings or feelings.

But what can remain when the whole world--including ourselves and all our thinking--is bracketed? When carried out thoroughly and rigorously, the phenomenological reduction or epoché leaves nothing but the stream of consciousness which is at first naive and anonymous but which upon reflection is recognized as "mine" or that of an ego.

Husserl calls the residue of phenomenological reduction the absolute or pure transcendental ego which then becomes the focus of investigations in the science of phenomenology. ¹²⁴ Husserl says that when we fix our eyes upon the stream of consciousness of the transcendental ego we find "that consciousness in itself has a being of its own which in its absolute uniqueness of nature remains unaffected by the phenomenological disconnexion."

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 17; Husserl, Ideas, p. 154.

It therefore remains over as a 'phenomenological residuum', as a region of Being which is in principle unique, and can become in fact the field of a new science--the science of Phenomenology".¹²⁵

The transcendental ego is prior to the natural world, and, as analysis will show, in and through its essential being the "natural" fact-world comes to be known.¹²⁶ The field of the transcendental ego, as Husserl describes it, is ". . . a realm of 'absolute' Being. It is the original category of Being generally (or, as we would put it, the original region), in which all other regions of Being have their root, to which they are essentially related, on which they are therefore one and all dependent in an essential way."¹²⁷

2. The Ego and Its Transcendental Field of Experience.

The ego that remains after the epoché or reduction is not the ego of the individual man, for this ego was part of the world that was bracketed and put out of action. It is rather the ego in whose stream of consciousness the world itself--as the totality of all beings including the self and

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Husserl, Ideas, p. 102.

126

Ibid.

127

Ibid., p. 194.

128

other men--first acquire meaning and reality. A distinction must be made between two egos--the psychological or empirical ego which is part of the world that was bracketed and the transcendental ego which is the residue of phenomenological reduction.¹²⁹ To identify the transcendental ego with the psychological ego is to fall into the error of psychologism and betray one's failure to make the transcendental turn through the epoché.

It is through the transcendental ego alone that the being of the world, or any being for that matter, can have sense and attain objective validity. The world--whose conceivable non-being does not extinguish the pure being of the ego but rather presupposes it--is termed transcendent, whereas the pure ego itself is termed transcendental. The natural world is the realm of the ontic while the pure ego is the region referred to as the ontological.

Phenomenological reflection on the transcendental ego will reveal its transcendental field of experience, its essential structure which is that of intentionality, and its lifetime task which is that of constituting the world of objects in the process of which it also constitutes itself.

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Husserl, The Paris Lectures, p. 8.

129

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 25; Cf. also D. Carr, "Kant, Husserl and the Non-Empirical Ego," The Journal of Philosophy, 74 (November, 1977): 682-690.

These will be explained in the following discussion.

a. Intentionality: Phenomenological investigations, more specifically transcendental phenomenological reflection, will disclose that the pure ego is not a formless nor an empty entity; rather, it has a necessary and essential feature which is that of intentionality. As a stream of consciousness, the pure or transcendental ego is intentional--this is its universal fundamental property by which it is aware of something or intends an object; as a cogito (conscious ego), its cogitationes (conscious acts) always bear within itself its cogitatum (object of consciousness).¹³⁰ The flow of the stream of consciousness is like that of a line stretching indefinitely and infinitely at both ends.

Whereas in Descartes' philosophy the primary datum discovered by the methodic doubt is the ego-cogito, in Husserl's phenomenology the primordial datum disclosed by phenomenological reduction is the inseparable triad of ego-cogito-cogitatum.¹³¹ Husserl's teacher, Brentano, has already attained this insight into the intentional structure of consciousness; however, the latter did not make the

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 33.

131

Ibid., p. 50.

132

necessary epoché.

Consciousness would not be possible at all unless it is a consciousness of something. This points to two correlative poles of the conscious act of the pure ego. On the one hand, there is the conscious act itself and on the other hand, there is the object of consciousness. To avoid mistaking the "object" of consciousness with the traditional concept of "object" which exists outside in the ontic world, Husserl uses the term "noema" to refer to the object and the term "noesis" to refer to the conscious act that intends the object. "Noesis-noema" belong together inseparably and constitute the two correlative sides of the internal act of the pure ego. Inquiry into consciousness must take account of both although the focus may swing from one to the other end of the pole.

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A description of the noetic act would reveal different modes of consciousness like perception, imagining, recollection, predicating, valuing, purposing as well as differences in terms of the clarity and distinctness of these acts of consciousness.

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A description of the

132

Ibid., p. 41.

133

Ibid., p. 29.

134

Ibid., pp. 33, 36.

noematic side will likewise reveal different modes of being:
 135
 certain and possible being, being present, past or future.

The object that is the noematic term of consciousness is not to be confused with the objects in the world. These things in the ontic world have been bracketed and appear in the transcendental field of experience as phenomena that serve as transcendental clues to the infinite multiplicities
 136
 of possible acts of consciousness.

b. Temporality. An analysis directed to both noematic and noetic sides will disclose another essential aspect of the transcendental ego. Constituting as it were the universal and fundamental form of the ego, this aspect refers to the consciousness of internal time. The following discussion intends to lead us to the understanding of this essential feature of temporality.

Noematic descriptions will show that the object of consciousness has an internal as well as an external
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 horizon. If, for example, a phenomenon given in

135

Ibid., p. 36.

136

Ibid., p. 50; Husserl, The Paris Lectures, p. 16.

137

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 44; Cf. also Husserl's Ideas, pp. 124ff., 180ff., 218ff.; Husserl's Experience and Judgment, pp. 31ff.; Kockelmans, "Intentional and Constitutive Analysis," in Kockelmans, ed., op cit., pp. 142-143; H. Kuhn, "The Phenomenological Concept of 'Horizon'," in M. Farber's Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl (New York: Greenwood Press, c1968), pp. 106-123.

consciousness is that of a book, the internal horizon would include the size, shape, color, contents of the book, etc.; its external horizon would include, among others, its relation to other books, the conditions of the time when it was written, its impact on its readers and so on indefinitely. The consciousness of the object then would be a consciousness of any of the facets included in the horizon. One can look at the front or back cover of the book or focus his attention on any of its pages or contents. There is an act of consciousness involved in every shifting of the object or in every change of the horizon. Each of the phases or shiftings of the object is a cue pointing to an act of consciousness correlative to it, or the horizon changes with every change of the act of consciousness. ¹³⁸

The object, therefore, is not given completely at a particular time. It becomes clarified with the continuous appearing of the many facets precontained in its horizon. The analysis or description of the object explicates those aspects or structures implicit in the horizon of an object. Thus, the horizons are "predelineated potentialities" pointing to possible acts of consciousness that would uncover or explicate this horizon and reduce the indeterminate structure to determinations of the object.

Thus, the object is continuously open to further manifestations, determinations, exploration or explication. Every conscious act actualizes a potential or possible conscious process predelineated by the structure or horizon of the object.¹³⁹

Despite the diversity and multiplicity of shiftings or modes of appearing of the object, the object persists as the same object and remains identical all throughout the changes in the perspective or horizon; it is seen as a unity of its manifold of appearances or facets. What is responsible for this synthetic unity on the noematic side? Husserl explains this by the notion of the consciousness of internal time or temporality by means of which the present act intending an object is connected with past consciousnesses of the same object by retention and with future or possible acts intending the identical object by protention.¹⁴⁰ All the previous, actual and possible consciousness of the object are kept in unity by the ego's consciousness of immanent time.¹⁴¹

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Ibid., p. 45.

140

Ibid., p. 43.

141

An in-depth treatment of inner time-consciousness is given in what is regarded as one of the finest pieces of philosophical investigations--Husserl's The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness, trans. J.S. Churchill (London: Indiana University Press, c1969).

Thus, the multiplicity of the phases of the object do not form a chaotic mass; they are not accidentally glued together, but form a synthetic unity because the consciousness of internal time makes us perceive a mode of awareness as one with all the others.¹⁴²

The synthetic unity on the pole of the manifold of appearances or presentations of the same object has its correlate on the other pole in the synthetic unity of the actual and possible consciousness of one and the same object. The present act of consciousness intending a facet of the object is united with the previous acts as well as with possible acts of consciousness of the same object. This synthesizing unity of conscious acts or processes is again made possible by the consciousness of internal time linking the act "now" with the past by retention and with the future by protention. The possible conscious processes are also predelineated by the internal and external horizons of the object.

The objects here (which refer to the phenomena given in consciousness) may be objects within the ego's sphere of immanent time; these are the conscious acts or processes which belongs to the ego and to which the ego can always return in his analysis and hence, are adequately verifiable.

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 54; Husserl, The Paris Lectures, p. 17.

The objects may also refer to "world objects"; these are external objects appearing as transcendental clues to the conscious acts of the ego, they are not fully and totally given in consciousness at one time and consequently, are only verifiable inadequately in the harmoniousness of its course.¹⁴³ The understanding of the meaning of adequate and inadequate verifiability may be attained by a discussion of the act of evidencing which is an essential feature of the life of the transcendental ego.

c. Intuition Into Essences or Evidencing. The object or noema has a "content" which is its "meaning" or sense.¹⁴⁴ Where does it derive this meaning or how is this meaning constituted?

The objects exist for the ego and has a sense or meaning which is constituted by the ego. The transcendental subject is the universe of all possible sense or meaning; anything external to it is meaningless.¹⁴⁵ The process whereby the meaning of an object is constituted is referred to as evidencing. Evidence is the ground of the apodictic certainty or truth of an object.

When the object appears in consciousness, the ego

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 65.

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Husserl, Ideas, p.333.

145

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 84; Husserl, The Paris Lectures, p. 33.

makes a judgment or intends a meaning. It directs its focus then on the object, investigates it in its various facets or profiles to find out if what is meant is actually the case and verified. If in the process of investigation, the meaning intention agrees with the judged state of the object, then meaning intention is converted into meaning fulfillment.¹⁴⁶ The judgment is grounded and the ego possesses evidence. If the meaning intention is not verified, the ego makes another judgment adjusted to the modes of appearing of the object.

Evidence consists basically in a mental seeing of something itself.¹⁴⁷ In this "mental seeing", the essence of the object is immediately intuited and the object is seen in its essential and necessary being and judged as something that cannot be otherwise. "Truth or the true actuality of objects is to be obtained only from evidence, and that it is evidence alone by virtue of which an 'actually' existing, true, rightly accepted object of whatever form or kind has sense for us--and with all the determinations that for us belong to it under the title of its true nature."¹⁴⁸ It is in the process of evidencing that the meaning or sense of the

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, pp. 10-11.

147

Ibid., pp. 12, 57.

148

Ibid., p. 60.

object is constituted by the ego.

The way to possess evidence is by means of an intuition into the essence of a thing. This may first involve a consideration of the phenomenon as it is actually given in consciousness--in its internal and external horizons, in its different profiles manifest in various shiftings of the acts of the conscious ego. Then, the ego fictively transforms the object. In a free imaginable variation, the object is seen as appearing, for example, in different places and at different times, having a different color or shape. These varying of the object, however, has its limits. It is the essence of the independent object which defines the limits which the contents of the object can vary.¹⁴⁹ A modification of the object (using imagination) which goes beyond the limits imposed by the essence would deprive the object of its concrete character, its independence or its possibility to exist. The essence, thus, expresses the condition which must be realized for the existence of the object to be possible. One can vary the predicates or determinations of the object, but the essential predicates resist variation.¹⁵⁰

Husserl also speaks of this process of fictively

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Emmanuel Levinas, "Intuition of Essences," in Kockelmans, ed., op. cit., p. 95.

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Ibid.

varying the object as "boundless variation--variation that is free, though not excluded by a law rooted in the content's essence--of the contents associated with it, and, in general given with it."¹⁵¹ It is in this process that the essence or eidōs of the thing comes to light. This essence or eidōs is simply the invariable aspect of the object and it always remains even if all its other aspects are changed in varied ways.

Boundless free variation or free imaginable variation is a highly flexible yet subtle philosophical tool of analysis that allows for a full elaboration of the richness of our experience of the object; and insofar as it issues in an adequate intuition into an essence, it is essentially Husserl's phenomenology.¹⁵²

The intuition into the eidōs stabilizes the meaning of the object. The process of constitution, therefore, is guided by the eidōs or essence understood as the foundation of the a priori rules or laws of the object.¹⁵³

The eidōs itself is an intuited universal, pure and

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Husserl, Logical Investigations, trans. J.N. Findlay, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 2:443.

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Dougherty, C.J., "The Common Root of Husserl's and Peirce's Phenomenologies," The New Scholasticism, 54 (Summer, 1980), p. 314.

153

F. Levinas, "Intuition of Essences," in Kockelmans, ed., op. cit., p. 91.

unconditioned--that is, not conditioned by any fact; it is prior to all concepts taken in the sense of verbal significations which must be made to fit the eidos.¹⁵⁴

Analyses of the object are, then, "essential" or "eidetic" analyses.¹⁵⁵ And along with phenomenological reduction, eidetic intuition is the fundamental form of all particular transcendental methods.¹⁵⁶

Eidetic intuition is always an act of reason. "Reason is not an accidental de facto ability, not a title for possible accidental matters of fact, but rather a title for an all-embracing essentially necessary structural form belonging to all transcendental subjectivity."¹⁵⁷

The fact that the constitutive acts of the ego are guided by universal, a priori rules or principles which direct these acts to a systematic and all-embracing ordering of all objects of possible consciousness is the ground for the viability of transcendental phenomenological philosophy as a genuine science that shall be the foundation for all the sciences of matters of fact and for a genuinely

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 71; See also Husserl, Experience and Judgment, pp. 340ff.

155

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 70.

156

Ibid. p. 72.

157

Ibid. p. 57; See also E. Levinas, "Intuition of Essences," in Kockelmans, ed., op. cit., p. 92.

158

universal philosophy as a science of absolute proof.

d. Constitution of Objects as Self-Constitution. The preceding discussion of the field of experience of the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity shows that the latter is not an empty reality. Its life is essentially that of intentionality and its being is identical with its conscious processes or habitualities. Just as there is a synthetic unity of the multiplicities of objects in the noematic pole of consciousness, so also there is a synthetic unity of all the conscious acts intending these objects. The transcendental ego is the identical pole or substrate of the multiplicities of the noetic processes. It is the active and formative subject of consciousness that lives in all its acts of consciousness by which it is related to all object-poles.

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Every process of constituting the meaning or sense of an object results in an eidetic truth or knowledge which becomes an abiding possession of the ego. If, for example, the ego makes a judgment or has a certain conviction about something, it is then defined as an ego with such a judgment or conviction; it is determined by this abiding habitus or

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Husserl, The Paris Lectures, p. 38.

159

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 66.

state to which it can always return as its own unless given up; until then, the ego is determined by this judgment or conviction. The act or process leading to the conviction may have ceased but the convictions, decisions or acts and habitualities are determining properties of the ego; by its own active generating, the ego constitutes itself as a "fixed and abiding" personal ego; the judgments or decisions are only relatively abiding--they can be altered, cancelled, negated--but the ego shows a personal character, a unity of identity all throughout its acts.¹⁶⁰

Thus, the ego constitutes itself, "brick by brick", as it were, with each of its conscious acts and with every objective sense it acquires. As it continually constitutes the meaning of objects, it constitutes itself; as it gains intuition into the eidos of things, the transcendental ego is, at the same time, uncovering or explicitating its eidos ego.¹⁶¹ "The ego can be concrete only in the flowing multiformity of his intentional life, along with the objects meant--and in some cases, constituted as existent for him--in that life."¹⁶² This full concretion of the ego in its intentionalities or in its life of self-

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Ibid., pp. 66-67.

161

Ibid., p. 68.

162

Ibid.

constitution and explication is a never-ending task involving as it does the totality of all that is and the infinite possibilities open to its act of intending. And the ego or the self is always "infinitely more than any of the determinate acts or aspects by which it appears."¹⁶³

Taken in its full concreteness, that is, as containing all the constitutions of all objectivities existing for him--whether immanent or transcendent, ideal or real--the ego mirrors, as it were, the whole universe, and Husserl gives it appropriately the name "monadic ego"--a term which he borrows from Leibniz.¹⁶⁴

The preceding discussions have finally led us to the idea that the monadic ego and its lifetime process of self-constitution is not only the initial but also the sole theme of transcendental phenomenology which accordingly can be described aptly as the science of pure egology. Does this imply that phenomenological investigations must confine us to the solipsistic world of the monadic ego? It seems so. Husserl, however, hastens to add that he intends to show in his later meditations that there exists other egos not merely as worldly phenomena but as other transcendental

163

D. A. Kelly, "Metaphysical Directives in Husserl's Phenomenology," The Modern Schoolman, 48 (November, 1970), p. 12.

164

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 68.

165
ego This will be treated in the following section.

3. The Ego and the Other. Although the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity is the central theme of his phenomenology, Husserl thinks that other egos can be posited as existing and become legitimate themes of phenomenological egology.¹⁶⁶ Hence, the phenomenology of a unique transcendental subjectivity which explicates the ego's experience of another ego and its constitution of an intersubjective transcendental community as the ground for the intersubjective world of nature and culture.¹⁶⁷

The fifth and last part of the Cartesian Meditations attempts to show that the transcendental ego is not a solus ipse. But before giving an account of the ego's experience of another subject and its constitution of the sense "alter ego," the solipsistic objection is first taken up. For solipsism, the metaphysical view that the individual self is "the whole of reality and that the external world and other persons are representations of that self have no independent existence,"¹⁶⁸ is an objection often raised against idealism.

165

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 30.

166

Ibid.

167

Ibid.; Husserl, The Paris Lectures, pp. 34ff.

168

Runes, op. cit., p. 295.

In his theory of intersubjectivity, Husserl responds to
 169
 solipsism.

a. The Solipsistic Objection. The phenomenology of
 Husserl seems to entail solipsism. The phenomenological
 epoché uncovers the transcendental ego as a stream of
 intentional life processes, and the entities constituted by
 these activities and potentialities are inseparable from
 the ego and its concrete life.
 170
 This apparently implies
 that transcendental experience and what is synthetically
 comprised therein, including other egos, are no more than
 phenomenal objects or unities that can be verified in the
 ego's transcendental field of experience.

As a rejoinder to the solipsistic objection, Husserl
 directs our attention to the ego's experience of the Other
 and its awareness of the modes of givenness of the Other.

First of all, given to the consciousness of the ego
 is the experience of an Other as actually existing not
 merely as an animate organism or a "psychophysical" object
 in the world but also as a subject for this world, i.e., the
 Other also experiences me and the world just as I experience

169

D. Carr, "The Fifth Meditation and Husserl's
 Cartesianism," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 34
 (September, 1973), p. 16.

170

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 89.

171

the world and Others.

Secondly, the Other is given in the experience of the world not as a private synthetic formation but as a public or an intersubjective world--something that is there-for-everyone and accessible to everyone with respect to its objects. Moreover, the experienced world appears as existing in itself apart from all experiencing subjects and their world-phenomena. ¹⁷² Implicit in this mode of givenness is the objectivity of the world.

Thirdly, the experience of the Other is also given in the ego's constitution of certain types of objects in the world: the cultural objects like books, tools or works of any kind refer to subjects and their constituting intentionalities, and they also carry with them the experiential sense of being there-for-everyone in a cultural community. ¹⁷³

These noematic-ontic modes of givenness of the Other are data of common sense, but are taken up as transcendental clues for the phenomenological explication of the experience of someone else.

In the task of explicating phenomenologically the

171

Ibid., p. 91.

172

Ibid.,

173

Ibid, p. 92.

ego's experience of the Other, Husserl attempts to show that the sense "alter ego" arises in and from the ego which has been earlier identified as the universe of all possible sense and being.¹⁷⁴ But he also emphasizes that this Other is not merely a phenomenon in the intentional life of the ego; rather, it is constituted as Other and posited as existing in the world of objects.¹⁷⁵

In order for the ego to experience an Other as another ego, the former must carry out the methodological requirement referred to by Husserl as reduction to the sphere of ownness. This is treated in the following discussion.

b. Reduction to the Sphere of Ownness. Husserl

thinks that to proceed rigorously in the transcendental constitution of the other as another subject, the transcendental ego must first explicate what is its own as such, in order that within its own, what is not its own likewise receives existential sense.¹⁷⁶ This implies essentially that the transcendental ego must carry out inside its transcendental field a peculiar kind of epoché called reduction to the sphere of ownness.¹⁷⁷ By means of

174

Above, p. 69.

175

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 30.

176

Ibid., p. 150.

177

Ibid., pp. 92ff.

this peculiar epoché, the ego attempts to delimit within the horizon of its transcendental experience what is peculiarly its own. First of all, what is one's own is designated as non-alien, and then the horizon is freed abstractively from everything that is given as alien or as related immediately or mediately to another subject. The world-phenomenon appearing in the ego's transcendental field of experience is surveyed and freed from all determinations that refer by their sense to an Other.¹⁷⁸

The peculiar abstractive exclusions of anything other or every sense pertaining to another subject leaves a kind of "world" or "nature" distinct from Nature as the theme of the natural sciences but part of the whole of Nature. This owned nature is one's own body--the animate organism in which is given one's psyche or self as a psychophysical unity; given in the latter is the "I", the human or personal ego who operates in this animate organism, and by means of it can experience all of Nature including its own in a reflective relation to itself.¹⁷⁹ The reduction to the sphere of ownness thus singles out from the phenomenon world or from the sum total of nature appearing within the sphere of the transcendental field of the ego the "reduced world" with

178

Ibid., p. 95.

179

Ibid., p. 97.

its unique members--the animate organism or the psychophysical ego, with "body" and "soul" and personal ego. Also occurring in this world are predicates such as "value" predicates of "works" that derive their significance from
 180
 the ego.

It is to be noted that the psychic life of this psychophysical ego--which includes its whole world-experiencing life and consequently its actual and possible experience of what is Other--remains totally unaffected by
 181
 the screening off of what is Other. Included in this psychic being would then be the whole constitution of the world existing for the ego as well as the differentiations of that constitution into systems that constitute what is included in its ownness and those that constitute what is Other.

If what is constituted as part of its peculiar ownness, including the reduced "world", belongs to the concrete essence of the constituting subject as an inseparable internal determination, then this peculiarly own world would be experienced as "inside". The "I", the reduced human ego (psychophysical ego) would distinguish between himself and the surrounding world and would be constituted

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Ibid., p. 98.

181

Ibid.

accordingly as a member of the "world" with a multiplicity of "objects outside" of it. But the "I" constituted all this in its "psyche" and bears it intentionally within itself.¹⁸²

The fundamental concept of "peculiar ownness"--the reduced world of the I or human ego is only negatively and indirectly characterized as non-alien or non-other. Positively and immediately, it is characterized as "the sphere of the actualities and potentialities of the stream of subjective processes," as well as "an open infinite horizon of still undiscovered internal features of my own."¹⁸³ Not only the multiplicity of intentional acts but also the plurality of intentional objects form part of the concrete ownness sphere. These unities include the data of sensation constituted as peculiarly one's own and as "immanent temporalities," the habitualities that become abiding convictions and specifically ego-determinations, and the "transcendental objects" like the objects of "external" sensuousness.¹⁸⁴ The latter are regarded as "immanent transcendencies" in the domain of peculiar ownness and constitute the primordial world belonging to this reduced

182

Ibid., p. 99.

183

Ibid., pp. 100-101.

184

Ibid., p. 104.

primordial sphere in the transcendental field of experience
 --the domain of one's peculiarly own essentiality, of what
 the "I" is itself, in its full concreteness as this monad. ¹⁸⁵

And the ego's universe of peculiar ownness can be uncovered ¹⁸⁶
 by an original explication of its apodictic "ego sum."

Thus, the methodological reduction to the sphere of
 ownness is the definition and articulation of the primordial
 stratum in the transcendental field of experience--the ¹⁸⁷
 primordial ego and the primordial nature. The reduction
 which is a "peculiar epoché" carried out within the ego's
 transcendental field of experience involves a "mundanizing
 self-apperception" ¹⁸⁸ for the phenomenon world is reduced to
 the horizon of the body immersed in, but distinct from, its
 surrounding world or the totality of nature.

Whatever the transcendental ego constituted as non-
 other or peculiarly its own in that first stratum or
 primordial sphere actually belongs to it as a component of
 its own concrete essence. Within this sphere it is possible
 to grasp what is the experience of another subject; by means
 of this ownness sphere, the transcendental ego constitutes

185

Ibid., p. 105.

186

Ibid., p. 104.

187

Ibid., p. 108.

188

Ibid., p. 99.

the Other in the mode "alter ego."¹⁸⁹ The explicitation of this experience is taken up in the following discussion.

c. The Ego's Experience of Another Ego. The reduction to the sphere of ownness is actually the first step carrying the transcendental ego to the experience of the Other or to the constitution of the Other as another ego. As Ricouer puts it, it is "the first link in a chain of significations following along which the ego can first say 'my' ego and then the ego of the 'Other'."¹⁹⁰ Husserl himself speaks of this theory of experiencing someone else as a transcendental theory of so-called "empathy."¹⁹¹

When the sphere of ownness is delimited, it is possible to grasp the sense "other as other" and experience another subject; for the experience of the Other is contrasted with the experience of ownness.

While the experience of the Other is made possible by the ego's own experience of itself as reduced to its ownness, the being-sense attached to the other "wholly transcends" the ego's own being. The whole thrust of Husserl's intentional explication of the ego's experience of

189

Ibid., p. 100.

190

Ricouer, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology, p. 121.

191

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, pp. 92, 135, 146.

another ego is to show that the sense "other" arises in and from the ego; but at the same time points to another ego existing as itself in the world. In attempting to give such an account, Husserl hopes to overcome solipsism without sacrificing egology.

The salient points in the phenomenological explicitation of the experience of the Other are contained in the following passage:

Let us assume that another man, enters our perceptual sphere. Primordially reduced, that signifies: In the perceptual sphere pertaining to my primordial Nature, a body is presented, which, as primordial, is of course only a determining part of myself: an "immanent transcendency." Since, in this Nature and this world, my animate organism is the only body that is or can be constituted originally as an animate organism (a functioning organ), the body over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as an animate organism, must have derived this sense by an apperceptive transfer from my animate organism, and done so in a manner that excludes an actually direct, and hence primordial, showing of the predicates belonging to an animate organism specifically, a showing of them in perception proper. It is clear from the very beginning that only a similarity connecting, within my primordial sphere, that body over there with my body can serve as the motivational basis for the 'analogizing' apprehension of that body as another animate organism. 192

In the preceding passage Husserl expresses in a nutshell how the transcendental ego constitutes the sense "other ego." The various phases of his phenomenological

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Ibid., pp. 110-111.

account will now be considered.

First of all, the verbal sense of "an other" or "another ego" is considered. "Alter" implies "alter ego", and the ego referred to here is the "I" itself constituted within its primordial oneness, and uniquely as the psychophysical unity (the primordial man)--i.e., a personal ego operating immediately in his animate organism and producing effects mediately in the surrounding world; or the subject of the concrete intentional life of a psychic sphere relating to himself and the "world."¹⁹³

Suppose that another man enters the ego's perceptual sphere. This signifies that an Other is experienced as appearing "in person." However, in being there in person, neither the Other's ego nor his subjective processes or appearances, nor anything belonging to the essence of the Other is originally given. If the other's own essence were directly accessible, it would be merely a moment of the ego's own essence and ultimately the Other and the I would be an extension of each other and would thus be the same.¹⁹⁴

Rather, a body appears in the ego's primordial sphere, making present to consciousness the other ego--a "there too" which is not itself and can never become

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Ibid., p. 110.

194

Ibid., p. 109.

"itself-there". In other words, as the body is presented directly or immediately, the other ego is made co-present or appresented.¹⁹⁵ Appresentation occurs even in the experience of the other objects as when a physical thing appresents the rear part; in this case, there is the possibility of verification by a corresponding fulfilling presentation (as when back becomes front). However, such verification is excluded in the kind of appresentation which is supposed to lead over into the original sphere of the other ego.¹⁹⁶ For the other ego which is appresented by the body appearing in the primordial sphere of the ego can never attain actual presence, never become an object of perception proper.¹⁹⁷

How can appresentation of an original sphere, and thereby the sense "someone else" be motivated in the ego's original sphere? Or what is the motivational basis for the appreciation or apprehension of another as another ego that is appresented in the body that is presented in the perceptual sphere?¹⁹⁸

For a clarification on the question raised by Husserl himself, let us try to follow his complicated explication of

195

Ibid.

196

Ibid.

197

Ibid., p. 112.

198

Ibid., p. 109.

the constitution of the sense "other ego."

Apperception is not an inference or a thinking act. Every apperception which points to the sense and horizon of an object given beforehand refers back to a "primal instituting" in which an object with a similar sense became constituted for the first time. Even physical things previously unknown to us are known by reference to a certain type of things already seen before. "Thus, each everyday experience involves an analogizing transfer of an originally instituted objective sense to a new case, with its anticipative apprehension of the object as having a similar sense. To the extent that there was a givenness beforehand,¹⁹⁹ there is such a transfer."

Husserl explicates in three different phases the peculiar case of the analogizing apprehension whereby a body--being similar to the ego's animate body--is apprehended as likewise an animate organism.

First of all, the ego and the alter ego are always and necessarily given in an original "pairing" and the other gets this character of being itself by virtue of the contrastive pairing that necessarily takes place.²⁰⁰

Pairing is a primal form of passive synthesis desig-

199

Ibid., p. 111.

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Ibid., pp. 112, 115.

nated as "association" and contrasted to passive synthesis as "identification". In a pairing association, two data are given as appearing with mutual distinctness but with a certain similarity. As the data undergo pairing, there is an overlaying of each with the objective sense from one to the other.²⁰¹

In the case of the apperception of the alter ego, pairing comes about when the Other enters the ego's perceptual field. Whether it pays attention to itself or turns toward its activity, the "I" as primordial psychophysical ego is always prominent in its primordial field of perception. In particular, the live body is always there, sensuously prominent and equipped with the specific sense of "animate organism." When a body "similar" to one's own enters into phenomenal pairing with the ego's body, a transfer of sense ensues and this body appropriates from the latter the sense "animate organism."²⁰²

Having accounted for another ego by means of pairing association, Husserl brings to our attention some questions: Why is this body or animate organism taken as belonging to another, rather than as a second example of the ego's own body? Why is it that although the Other cannot show himself

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Ibid., pp. 112-113.

²⁰²

Ibid., p. 113.

as himself in the primordial sphere of the ego, the transferred sense points to an Other with existence-status or as a set of "psychic" determinations existing in combination with the body over there?²⁰³ In meeting these questions, Husserl carries us to the second phase of his explicitation of the experience of the Other as another subject.

For Husserl, every experience points to further experiences that would fulfill and verify the appresented horizons; these experiences include potentially verifiable synthesis of harmonious further experiences in the form of non-intuitive anticipations. The experience of someone else, in particular, is continually fulfilled and verified only by means of new appresentations proceeding in a synthetically harmonious fashion, and only by virtue of the manner in which these representations derive existence-value on the basis of their connection with the changing presentations proper which continually appertain to them.²⁰⁴

The experienced animate organism of another continually proves itself as actually the animate organism of another ego, solely in its changing but incessantly harmonious "behaviour" which presents itself fulfillingly in original experience that continually fulfills the intending

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Ibid., p. 114.

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Ibid.

of another subjective life; this occurs all throughout the organism's continuous change in behaviours from phase to phase. In case there is discordance about its behaviour, the organism is experienced as a pseudo-organism.²⁰⁵

The character of the existent "other" is based on this process of verifying or making accessible what is not originally accessible. Whatever is presented or evidently verified originally is something that the "I" is or it belongs to it as peculiarly its own. Whatever is experienced as something which is itself not originally given but which consistently verifies something indicated-- is "other." It is, therefore, conceivable only of something included in the peculiar ownness of the ego. On the basis of its sense constitution, it occurs necessarily as an "intentional modification" of that ego which is the first to be objectivated, or as an intentional modification of the ego's primordial "world." As such, the Other gets the character of "ego" or "self" by virtue of the contrastive pairing that necessarily takes place. "It is clear," says Husserl, "that, with the Other Ego, there is appresented, in an analogizing modification, everything that belongs to his concretion: first, his primordial world, and then his fully concrete ego. In other words, another monad becomes

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Ibid.

constituted appresentatively in mine." ²⁰⁶ This passage points to the idea that the other ego gets the character of being another ego from the self; hence, the sense "other ego" arises in and is derived from the self.

As further clarification of what has been said concerning the sense-constitution of the Other, Husserl cites the case of the past taken as an intentional modification. Just as one's past as a modification of his living present "transcends" his present, the appresented Other's being likewise "transcends" one's own being. ²⁰⁷ Moreover, in one's living present, his past is constituted by virtue of the harmonious memories occurring in this present; likewise, by virtue of appresentations arising in and motivated by contents in the ego's primordial sphere, an alter ego can be constituted in a new type of non-originary presentations ²⁰⁸ which have a new kind of modificatum as their correlate.

A sufficient clarification of the experience of the Other must yield cognition on the basis of which the possibility and scope of a transcendental constitution of the objective world can become evident and transcendental

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Ibid., p. 115.

207

Ibid.

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Ibid.

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phenomenological idealism becomes entirely manifest. Bearing this in mind, we proceed to consider the third phase of the phenomenological explication of the constitution of the alter ego.

In the third phase, Husserl moves in the direction of disengaging the Other, in a sense, from the primordial sphere of the ego. Pairing association as well as verification through harmonious synthesis or concordance of behaviour both involve perceptual experiences. This phase of the explications employs what has been referred to earlier as free imaginable variation or boundless free variation.

The explication begins by pointing out that in reflective awareness, the ego experiences its animate bodily organism as given with the mode "Here" while all the Others have the mode "There." But these orientations can be freely changed by virtue of kinesthesia: The self can vary its position in such a way that it converts any "There" into a "Here", i.e., occupy any spatial locus with its animate

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Ibid., p. 116.

210

Ricouer, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology, p. 121.

211

Above, p. 71.

212
organism.

Husserl considers this as significant in clarifying further the ego's experience of someone else. By means of this change in orientation, the "I" can understand the "Here" for itself as "There" for the Other. Through a distinction between "a body Here" and "a body There", the ego can understand the Other as a subject having the experience the "I" would have if it were "there."

The ego does not perceive the Other as a duplicate of itself and accordingly as having its original sphere or one completely like its own; neither does the "I" apperceive the Other as having, more particularly, the modes of appearance or experiences that belong to the "I" from "here." Rather, the ego apperceives him as having modes of appearances or perceptual experiences like those the "I" should have if it should go over there where the Other is. If I vary my position what mode of appearances would I have? In this case, free imaginable variation is employed.

Moreover, in the ego's own monadic sphere, a body in the mode There is apperceived as another's live body (i.e. as the animate organism of the alter ego) and thereby appresents the Other; and that body indicates the "same"

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 116.

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Ibid., p. 117.

body in the mode Here as the body perceived by the Other in his monadic sphere. It further indicates the "same" body concretely, with all the constitutive intentionality pertaining to its mode of givenness in the Other's experience.²¹⁴

With the effective association going on continually, the appresentation of someone else continually furnishes new appresentational content, i.e., brings the changing contents of the Other to the ego; and this makes possible the continual and consistent confirmation of the intending of another subjective life. The first determinate content given in the appresentation of someone else is formed by the understanding of the Other's organism and his specific behaviour as an organism.²¹⁵ Later, definite contents belonging to the "higher psychic sphere" is indicated somatically and in the way the Other behaves towards the surrounding world such as when he is angry or cheerful. Though diverse, these higher psychic occurrences are made familiar and understood on the basis of one's own familiarity and understanding of the style of his life. In this higher sphere, an understanding uncovers one's own psychic life in its similarity and difference, and brings to the fore new features that are fruitful of new associations.²¹⁶

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Ibid.

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Ibid., p. 119.

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Ibid., p. 120.

The foregoing accounts may be better understood by giving an illustration. Let us suppose that in my field of consciousness, a certain body appears which is constituted as "my body"; in this body my personal ego operates and produces effects in my surrounding world. Let us also suppose that another body appears in my consciousness. This body is later constituted as the body of another ego, more specifically, that of my friend.

The psychic life of my friend and the subjective processes going on in the sphere of her own consciousness are not originally given in my consciousness. What is given as an appearance or a phenomenon in my consciousness is the body of my friend. This body is "paired with" my own. And with this phenomenal pairing, I become aware that there is a "similarity" in the two appearing bodies. Hence, the sense "animate body" which I apply to my own body is applied also to my friend's body appearing as a phenomenon in my consciousness.

I apprehend myself operating in my body and, through it, producing effects in my environing world. By "analogizing transfer" I also apprehend that in the other body presented in my conscious field, another ego (my friend) is also given. In other words, only the body of my friend appears in my perceptual field, but in her body she is co-presented or appresented as another ego or self. Thus, in

the contrastive pairing of my body and that of my friend, another ego or self, i.e. my friend, is constituted.

My friend's animate body appearing in my consciousness is not taken as my own animate body appearing in a different manner, because my friend continually shows herself as another self through the various successive phases of her behaviour which are also given to me in my perceptual field. For example, she appears as more cheerful, more active and more assertive than me.

Furthermore, I become more aware of my friend as another ego or self when I employ my imagination and put myself in her place in order to understand her experiences. For example, I can try to imagine the modes of appearances I would have if I were to move away from "here" and go over "there" where she is. Or I can try to imagine the kind of experiences I would have if I were a social worker like her.

Though different from my own life and experiences, the occurrences in my friend's life which are appresented in my consciousness as modes of appearances are understood in a "paired association" with my own understanding of my own life.

But as indicated earlier, every pairing association is reciprocal; hence, my understanding of what occurs in my friend's world would open up an awareness of similarities

and differences in my own sphere of psychic life and experiences as well as new possibilities of understanding.

The foregoing illustration concludes the discussion on the ego's experience of another ego. In the following section we will show that the definition and articulation of the sphere of ownness which have taken us to the Other likewise lead us over to the constitution of an objective world and to the development of various levels of an intersubjective community.

d. Intersubjective Transcendental Community. The transcendental theory of experiencing someone else--the transcendental theory of so-called "empathy"--contributes to the founding of a transcendental theory of Objective Nature in particular and of the Objective world in general.²¹⁷ Thus, after giving a phenomenological account of the experience of the Other, Husserl proceeds to give an account of the constitution of nature and then of the cultural world where characteristic objects like books, institutions or monuments are correlated with genuine communities of persons.

(1) Intersubjective Nature. Just as in the case of the constitution of the Other, Husserl's phenomenological explicitation of the common world of nature for the ego and the Other takes account of two essential requirements: one

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Ibid., p. 92.

is to derive the being-status of communities from that of the ego; the other is to recognize the novel significations as those of an Other in his own essence.

What is first constituted in the form of community that is at the same time the ground of all intersubjectively common things is a common Nature given in that of the psychophysical ego appearing in paired association with one's own psychophysical ego itself.²¹⁸

Since the other subjectivity appresented in the sphere of the ego has the sense and status of a subject that is Other in its own essence, the establishing of a first community--even that in the form of a common world--seems an enigma or a mystery.

The other organism is first of all a body in the primordial sphere of the ego; it is a synthetic unity belonging to, and inseparable from, the ego itself. The Other ego appresented in his body becomes also an object of consciousness.²¹⁹ But how can we say that the body appearing within the ego's primordial sphere in the mode "There" is the same as the body within his own sphere in the mode "Here"? The two primordial spheres--that which is for the ego an original sphere, and that of the Other which is for

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Ibid., p. 120.

219

Ibid., p. 121.

the ego an appresented sphere--seem to be separated by an unbridgeable abyss. Crossing the distance would mean acquiring an original experience of someone else.²²⁰

The identity that holds between the sense that the body of the Other has for him and the sense that it has for the ego must be recognized as an important basis for the phenomenological account of the constitution of a common world of nature. An understanding of this identification will dissolve the mystery. Husserl thinks that actually the enigma appears only when the two original spheres are already distinguished; the distinction presupposes that experience has done its work and effected a double world.

As indicated already in the account of the ego's experience of another subject, appresentation presupposes a core of presentations; it makes something present by combining associations with perception proper. The fusion results in the functional community of one perception which simultaneously presents and appresents. In the object of this presentative-appresentative perception, we can distinguish that which is strictly perceived and that which is not actually perceived but which is also given there. This kind of perception is transcending, for aside from

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Ibid.

giving what is actually being-there-itself, it points to,
 and posits also, something else as being-there-too.²²¹

In the case of experiencing someone else, appresenta-
 tion exists only in the aforesaid functional community of
 perception. This means that it can appresent only because
 it presents; and what is experienced as presented must
 belong to the unity of the very object appresented.²²² More
 concretely, this implies that we can refer to the moment,
 when what is presented (the animate body appearing here) and
 what is appresented (the Other subject who manifests himself
 there) still form a functional unity in one perception. At
 this particular moment, there are not two realities
 separated by an unbridgeable abyss; rather, there is just
 one and the same reality--the animate body appearing in the
 ego's ownness sphere as perceived yet indicating someone
 else as existing.

In other words, the sense "a body belonging to the
 other ego" or "someone else's animate organism" is implicit
 and prior to the splitting of the noematic content of the
 presentative-appresentative act into the body belonging to
 the ego's primordial sphere and the other ego announcing
 itself as being-there-too. This experience of the

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Ibid., p. 122.

222

Ibid.

inseparability of the two provides the key to the solution of the problem of establishing a common world. An understanding of the identity of the body allows us to understand the identity or commonness of Nature. We will now proceed to give an explicitation of this point.

The natural body present in the primordial sphere of the ego appresents the other ego by virtue of the pairing association with the ego's own animate organism in which the ego itself operates. What is appresented is first of all the other ego's operating in this body and mediately operating in the Nature given to his experience.

The body over here given to the ego and the body there for the Other are not two analogous bodies, but actually an identical body--the central body which is the point of reference for psychic operations or "the zero origin of a point of view."²²³ Now, the ego's whole Nature is the same as that of the Other's. In the ego's primordial sphere, this whole nature is constituted as an identical unity of the manifest modes of givenness or even richer multiplicities which, as changing modes of appearance pertaining to different "senses" or as changeable "perspectives," belong to a particular orientation of the body here

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Ibid., p. 123; See also Ricoeur, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology, p. 132.

224
or there.

The manifold of changing modes of appearances and the plurality of senses or perspectives pertaining to these modes are directly accessible to the ego in its original self-explication.²²⁵

For the other ego appresented in the primordial sphere of the self, the synthetic systems--with all their modes of appearances, actual and possible perceptions and the noematic contents of these--are the same; but the modes of givenness and perceptions and, in part, the objects actually perceived are not the same; rather, the same objects are only those which are thus insofar as they are perceivable by the Other from there. Thus, the other ego has a standpoint orienting his experience in a different way.

But the body of the Other which belongs originally to his own sphere also belongs in a presentative-appresentative manner to the primordial sphere of the ego; this experience allows one to understand that the same object can be viewed under different perspectives, and the same world can be approached from different points of view.

224

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 123.

225

Ibid.

Thus, Husserl says, "we speak of perceiving someone else and then of perceiving the Objective world, perceiving that the Other Ego and I are looking at the same World" ²²⁶ This perceiving occurs exclusively within the ego's sphere of ownness, but the intentionality of this sphere transcends the ego's ownness and within this primordial stratum of the ego what is constituted as existent is another ego. What the ego actually perceives is not a sign or an analogue of itself but someone else grasped originally as the body of a psyche that is itself essentially inaccessible to the ego; but the two comprise ²²⁷ the unity of one psychophysical reality.

The ego recognizes within this intentionality of perceiving the Other a distinction between the ego's primordial sphere and the Other's merely presentiated primordial sphere on the basis of which it can trace the division into two noetic strata and explicate the complexes of associative intentionality. There are actually not two worlds but two strata of one and the same Objective Nature--one stratum primordially constituted, lived through in the original by the ego, and another merely appresented, a second stratum originating from the ego's experience of

226

Ibid., p. 124.

227

Ibid.

someone else. These two strata apply first of all to the Other's animate bodily organism which is, so to speak, the intrinsically first Object just as the other man is constitutionally the first Objective man. ²²⁸

If its experience of someone else is screened off, the ego has only the lower one-layered presentative constitution of the other body within its primordial sphere; when this experience is taken into consideration, the same animate organism--as given to the other ego himself as well as in the other possible modes of appearance--is given to the ego in an appresentationally second superimposed stratum ²²⁹ coinciding synthetically with the primordial stratum.

Every other natural object experienced or experienceable by the ego in the lower stratum receives an appresentational stratum; it is appresented as the same natural object in its possible modes of givenness to the other ego. This applies, "mutatis mutandis" to the other constituted mundanities of the concrete Objective world as it always ²³⁰ exists for us: namely as a world of men and culture.

In the case of the successful apperception of Others, the ego experiences that the world belonging to its appearance-systems is the same as that belonging to the

228

Ibid.

229

Ibid., p. 125.

230

Ibid.

Other's appearance-systems. But appearance-systems are by no means absolutely identical, for there are abnormalities as in the case of the deaf and blind. However, the sense "abnormality" must first of all be understood on the basis of an intrinsically antecedent normality. And the objective world established by virtue of the harmonious confirmation of the apperception constitutions in continually experiencing life, always becomes re-established and also preserved by virtue of the recasting of apperceptions in the course of distinguishing between normality and abnormality or by virtue of the constitution of new unities throughout the changes involved in abnormalities.²³¹

With the foregoing clarifications it should not anymore be enigmatic how the ego can constitute another ego or monad which is at the same time existing as itself; likewise, it should not anymore be mysterious how a nature constituted in the ego is identical with that constituted by someone else or as Husserl puts it in a more precise way-- "how I can identify a Nature constituted in me with one constituted in me as a Nature constituted by someone else."²³² In the last analysis, the mode of synthetic identification provides the key to the understanding of the

²³¹

Ibid., pp. 125-126.

²³²

Ibid., p. 126.

identity between the presented world and the appresented world or the world experienced by an ego and that of the Other.

Husserl gives instructive examples to explain the identification of a world presented and a world presentiated in memory. One is the case of intending an object in separate conscious processes involving repeated presentations of the "same" object in a temporal sequence. An identifying synthesis connects the series of successive perceptions and gives it the character of intending the "same" object. The original is gone, but in repeated presentations I can go back to it and do so with evidence.²³³ This is also the case with the identification of a presented world and an appresented world.

Another case is the constitution of ideal objects--logically ideal objects, such as a theorem or a numerical structure. The same proposition or numerical structure may be repeatedly produced or made evident by recollecting the earlier producing of the structure. Thus, through recollective presentations, I can reproduce the identifying evidence at different moments of my life. This gives ideal objects the character of atemporality; their supratemporality turns out to be omnitemporality--a correlate of the free

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Ibid., pp. 126-127.

234

produceability and reproducibility at all times.

The identifying synthesis in the case of the constitution of ideal objects gives us an idea of what the synthesis of identification can be between two mutually alien experiential spheres--the primordial or the uninterruptedly living self-experience of the concrete ego and that of the Other presentiated therein.

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The identity is effected first of all by the identifying synthesis of the animate body of someone else as presented in the primordial sphere and the same animate body as appresented in the other modes of appearance; and secondly, by the identifying synthesis of the same nature, given and verified primordially and at the same time appresentationally. In the process, a common time form is primarily instituted--in the co-existence of the ego and the Other, their concrete lives, intentionalities, realities, as well as perspectives of an Objective Nature or a common world.

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Husserl thinks that "the temporal community of the constitutively interrelated monads is indissoluble, because

234

Ibid., p. 127.

235

Ibid., p. 128.

236

Ibid.

it is tied up essentially with the constitution of a world ²³⁷ and a world time." As there is only one world, so there is only one time; every primordial time--the private time of each monad--automatically acquires sense in being merely an original mode of appearance of Objective time to a particular subject. But what holds for Objective Nature likewise holds for Objective time: the inner time-consciousness of the primordial monad is the origin of the time appresented in the Other as well as that of the world. For Husserl, the constitution of the common world provides the first step to and the foundation for all the other intersubjective communities the constitution of which is elaborated in the following discussion.

(2) Higher Levels of Intermonadic Communities. The phenomenological account of the constitution of the Objective world clarifies the first and lowest level of community between the ego and the other ego constituted as Other and existing for himself although given only appresentationally to the ego. The constitution of higher levels of intermonadic community proceeds from this constitution of an Objective world. ²³⁸

The explication of these higher levels of community

237

Ibid.

238

Ibid., p. 129.

is preceded by a clarification on the sense in which ego and Other are in separation and in communion. As constituted in the ego, others have the sense and status of monads existing for themselves in the same way that the ego exists for itself; but they are also in communion and, therefore, connected with the ego as concrete ego or monad.²³⁹ However, no really inherent connection leads from the subjective life-processes of one to the Other, so each monad is really and inherently an absolute separate unity. This corresponds to that "real", mundane and spatial separation of the ego's psychophysical existence from that of the Other. But the communion effected in the intentional reaching of the Other into the ego's primordial sphere is not "irreal" in the sense of being present as a dream or phantasy in consciousness. Husserl stresses that "something that exists is in intentional communion with something else that exists"; it is essentially a unique and actual connection or community that makes possible on the transcendental level²⁴⁰ the being of a world, a world of men and things.

Explicating further the meaning of "communion" between ego and Others, Husserl says that the sense of "community of men" implies a mutual being for one another

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Ibid., p. 128.

240

Ibid., p. 129.

resulting in an Objectivating equalization whereby each one
 is experienced as a man among other men.²⁴¹

In its understanding of someone else, the ego penetrates more deeply into the Other's horizon of ownness, and in the process, realizes that its own animate organism appears in the Other's field of perception just as the Other's animate organism likewise appears in the ego's own sphere. Moreover, men are apperceptible as finding others and many others in the realm of actuality as well as in the realm of possibility; thus, openly endless Nature includes an open plurality of men as subjects in communion somehow dispersed in infinite space.²⁴²

A similarly open community of monads designated as transcendental intersubjectivity naturally corresponds in transcendental concreteness to the above mentioned community; it is constituted within the ego as a community constituted also in every other monad as the same community with different subjective modes of appearance but bearing within itself the same objective world.²⁴³ In a more concrete sense, this means that in my own conscious sphere I constitute the "sense" or "meaning" of a certain community

241

Ibid.

242

Ibid., p. 130.

243

Ibid.

of men having modes of experiences concerning a particular world which may be that of nature or a specific culture. In the same manner, another ego constitutes in his own monadic sphere the "sense" of that same community but with different modes of appearances concerning the same objective world.

The world constituted in the transcendental field of the ego or in any imaginable community of monads is necessarily a world of men; moreover, in each particular man, it is constituted intrapsychically, i.e., in intentional processes and potential systems of intentionality.²⁴⁴

The "psychic constitution of the Objective world" would refer for example to the factual and possible experience of the world, an experience belonging to the ego, an ego who experiences itself as a man.

For each man, experience of the world is more or less perfect and always has an open undetermined horizon; and for each one, every Other appears in this horizon not only physically (as body) but also psychophysically (as psyche.)²⁴⁵ The "psychic" constitution of the Objective world makes possible the objectivating equalization²⁴⁶ mentioned earlier. Likewise, it realizes the

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Ibid.

245

Ibid., p. 131.

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Above, p. 112.

specifically human community.

On the basis of the sense of community just indicated, it is easy to understand the possibility of social acts which refer to personal acts of the ego specifically directed to the Other, and establish human personal communication. Social communalization makes possible the constitution within the Objective world of various types of social communities including the scientific, philosophical or religious groups that have the character of "personalities of a higher order."²⁴⁷

For each man and each human community, there is a specifically human surrounding world--a world of culture fashioned out of the same Nature in which everyone lives, a cultural world having human significations, a concrete-life-world in which the relatively and absolutely separate communities live their passive and active lives.²⁴⁸ With the continual change in the human life-world, men themselves also change as persons for they must always be taking on new habitual properties.²⁴⁹

Men belong to a particular cultural community;

247

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 132.

248

Ibid., p. 133.

249

Ibid., p. 135.

accordingly, they constitute different surrounding worlds of culture. This cultural world is somehow accessible to everyone, but not in the absolutely unconditional sense which pertains to that of Nature, the animate organism or the psychophysical man; consequently, its kind of object-²⁵⁰ivity is restricted. For each man understands first of all his concrete surrounding world or culture on the basis of a core and an unrevealed horizon; and he does so as a member of a community fashioning it historically. A deeper understanding that opens the horizon of the past which in turn helps in approaching the present, is essentially attainable by the members of one community, but not by those from another community who wish to enter into relation with the members of this community.²⁵¹

The law of "oriented" constitution which presupposes at various strata, something "primordially," and something "secondarily" constituted, governs the constitution of "worlds" of any kind whatever, beginning with the "immanent" world of the ego's own stream of subjective processes with its openly endless multiplicities, and continuing through the objective worlds with its various levels of objectivation. At each level, the primordial enters, with a new stratum of sense, into the secondarily constituted world

250

Ibid., p. 132.

251

Ibid., p. 133.

necessarily given and discoverable as a horizon of being
that is accessible from the primordial stratum. ²⁵²

This is the case with the cultural world which is given "orientedly" in relation to a zero-member or personality in a particular community, just as the body is the zero-origin from which the ego considers all things. The ego and its culture are primordially given; and the alien culture is accessible only by a kind of "experience of someone else" or a kind of "empathy" by which the ego belonging to a particular culture projects itself into the alien cultural community and its culture. ²⁵³

The transcendental phenomenological explication of the apodictic ego discloses the transcendental sense of the world ultimately in the full concreteness with which it is incessantly the life-world for us all. ²⁵⁴ This points out, according to Ricouer, the direction of Husserl's phenomenological investigations--from the regressive and analytic movement toward the original and radical, to the progressive and synthetic movement toward the concrete; the latter remains firmly subordinated to the former. ²⁵⁵

252

Ibid., pp. 133-134.

253

Ibid., pp. 134-135.

254

Ibid., p. 136.

255

Ricouer, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology, p. 140.

The systematic disclosure is governed by essential necessities or forms and conforms to an essential style which derives its a priori character or necessity first from the transcendental ego and then from the transcendental intersubjectivity which discloses itself in that ego--i.e., from the essential forms of transcendental motivation and constitution. In uncovering these forms, the aforesaid a priori style acquires a rational clarification that has the highest dignity, the dignity of an ultimate, a transcend-²⁵⁶ental intelligibility.

It must be noted that Husserl does not really describe the higher levels of intersubjective communities, but actually leads us through the complicated process of explicating the progression from solipsism to community. Husserl is convinced that actual explications have dismissed the objection that phenomenology lapses into solipsism. For by self-explication, the concretely apprehended transcendental ego grasps himself in his primordial being and likewise grasps other transcendental egos though the latter are not given originally and apodictically but only appresentatively. "'In' myself I experience and know the Other; in me he becomes constituted--appresentatively²⁵⁷ mirrored, not considered as original."

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 136.

257

Ibid., p. 149.

Egology and Radical Philosophy

Husserl's phenomenological transcendental idealism presents itself as an egology or more appropriately a monadology.²⁵⁸ For phenomenological explication shows that the transcendental ego--the only thing that can be posited with absolute apodicticity as existing--is in its full concreteness, a world-experiencing ego in communion with others like itself; a member of a community of monads which is given orientedly starting from the ego itself. In the ego's transcendental field of experience, the Objective world and other monads show themselves consistently to be existent.²⁵⁹

Phenomenological explication further shows that "each monad having the status of a concrete possibility predelineates a compossible universe, a closed 'world of monads,' and that two worlds of monads are impossible just as two possible variants of the ego are . . . impossible."²⁶⁰ Accordingly, only a single universal community which includes the ego and comprises unitarily all the monads and groups of monads can be conceived as co-existent. Hence, there can exist only one Objective space,

258

Ibid., p. 150.

259

Ibid., pp. 139-140.

260

Ibid., p. 141.

261

and only one Objective Nature.

In Husserl's transcendental phenomenological idealism, then, "the intrinsically first being, the being that precedes and bears every worldly Objectivity, is transcendental intersubjectivity: the universe of monads which effects its community in various forms."²⁶² Within the actual monadic sphere and within every conceivable monadic sphere occur all problems related with accidental factualness: death, fate, the possibility of an authentic human life, the meaning of history can be raised in the realm of the transcendental ego and in that of transcendental intersubjectivity which is disclosed in that ego--the universe where everything can have a possible sense.²⁶³

The explication of transcendental subjectivity and its transcendental field of experience is essentially the whole of transcendental phenomenology. This phenomenological philosophy does not only dissolve solipsism but also overcomes skepticism. For in uncovering the absolutely, apodictically grounded evidence of transcendental subjectivity and the transcendental intersubjectivity

261

Ibid., p. 140.

262

Ibid., p. 156.

263

Ibid.

disclosed in its transcendental field of experience, Husserl establishes transcendental phenomenology as a science grounded in an absolute and unshakeable foundation. In Husserl's view, this philosophy finally overcomes the skeptical tendency prevailing in philosophy. It is considered as the beginning philosophy which grows and branches out into particular Objective sciences.²⁶⁴ It actually represents the genuine all-embracing philosophy that overcomes the naiveté of the practical outlook of daily life as well as that of the positivistic sciences. And it brings to fulfillment the Cartesian project that serves as the moving force behind Husserl's transcendental phenomenological philosophy.

Since Husserl's phenomenology leads to ultimate cognitions of being, its results are metaphysical. It is metaphysics in the sense of "transcendental reflection on the ultimate condition of all understanding";²⁶⁵ but it is not metaphysics in the sense of a "historically degenerate metaphysics which by no means conforms to the sense with which metaphysics, as 'first philosophy', was instituted

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Ibid., p. 152.

265

Coreth, "From Hermeneutics to Metaphysics," International Philosophical Quarterly, 11 (June, 1971), p. 259.

originally."²⁶⁶ As a purely intuitive, concrete and apodictic mode of demonstration, phenomenology excludes all metaphysical adventure and all speculative excesses;²⁶⁷ it also excludes every naive metaphysics that operates with absurd things in themselves but does not exclude metaphysics as such.²⁶⁸

For Husserl, the first philosophy or the intrinsically first of the philosophical disciplines on which would be founded intersubjective phenomenology is the "solipsistically" reduced egology--the egology of the primordially reduced ego.²⁶⁹ But as already pointed out, the intrinsically first being that precedes and bears every worldly Objectivity, is transcendental intersubjectivity: the universe of monads which establishes a community in varying forms.²⁷⁰

The path of universal self-examination which is first of all monadic and then intermonadic is necessarily the path that leads to genuine philosophical knowledge--the knowledge

²⁶⁶

Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 139.

²⁶⁷

Ibid.

²⁶⁸

Ibid., p. 155.

²⁶⁹

Ibid.

²⁷⁰

Ibid., p. 156; See above, p. 119.

which is essentially grounded in the highest sense and which will overcome the naive positivity of the sciences. And the task of carrying out the project of establishing philosophy as a rigorous science of universal truth and validity actually rests on the resolution of each one of us to go back to the self in reflection. Husserl's own concluding note in the Cartesian Meditations is a very appropriate conclusion for the treatment given here of the meaning of the ego or the self in the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl:

The Delphic motto, "know thyself" has gained a new signification. Positive science is a science lost in the world. I must lose the world by epoché, in order to regain it by a universal self-examination. "Noli foras ire," says Augustine, "in te redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas." 271

In the foregoing discussions, we have given an introduction to the thought of Edmund Husserl--the founder of the phenomenological movement. His phenomenological philosophy was treated as essentially an egology. His conception of the ideal of a rigorous science was presented in order to provide the indispensable background for a fuller grasp of his perspective on the ego or the self.

In the following chapter, we will present the perspective on the ego or the self of another contemporary

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 157.

phenomenologist who is actually a disciple of Husserl and one of his successors in the French phenomenological school. This philosopher is Emmanuel Levinas.

CHAPTER III

LEVINAS' PHILOSOPHY OF RESPONSIBLE SUBJECTIVITY

Emmanuel Levinas is one of the leading contemporary thinkers and he draws inspiration for his thought both from his Jewish experience as well as from the great literary and philosophic traditions of the West. He is thoroughly familiar with recent phenomenology and existential philosophy. While pursuing studies on philosophy, he followed closely the teachings of his two masters--Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger.

His first published work was his dissertation on The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology which is considered as the first important French analysis of Husserl's thought. His two major philosophical works--Totality and Infinity and Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence--express his original philosophical position and strike along new lines going beyond the transcendental idealism of Husserl and the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger.

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A. Peperzak, "Emmanuel Levinas: Jewish Experience and Philosophy," Philosophy Today, 27 (March, 1983), p. 298.

273

R. Blum, "Emmanuel Levinas' Theory of Commitment," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 44 (December, 1983), p. 145; Levinas also helped to translate Husserl's Cartesian Meditations into French soon after the original lectures were delivered at the Sorbonne in 1929.

In the development of his original and comprehensive philosophy, Levinas leaned on the Western tradition of philosophy for his sources. But he also had deep roots in the Jewish tradition and had developed a reputation as an interpreter of Talmudic thought. ²⁷⁴ These two diverging sources no doubt contributed to the shaping of a philosophy that is peculiarly and uniquely his own. Levinas, however, tries to develop a philosophy that rises above the particular experiences and traditions in which it is rooted and addresses itself to the whole of humanity. ²⁷⁵

But what is precisely Levinas' philosophy? What essential truth or meaning is he communicating in his works? There is no doubt as to the "vast originality of outlook" in his thought. ²⁷⁶ But the complexity of his thought and the wealth of insights contained in his writings make it difficult to define his philosophy. Nevertheless, one particular idea may be singled out as a central theme in his works. This is the significant insight into the Self as a responsible subject. In this chapter, Levinas' philosophy of responsible subjectivity will be presented. As an introduction to his philosophical perspective on the Self, his

274

Ibid.

275

Peperzak, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

276

Gilkey, L., "Comments on Levinas' 'Totalité et Infini,'" Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte en Psychologie, 64 (1972), p. 26.

critique of western philosophy will first be discussed.

Levinas' Critique of Western Philosophy

Any philosophy possesses a historical dimension and stands in a certain relation to the philosophies of the past or arises as a reaction to previous philosophies. It either continues a prevailing philosophical tradition, tears it down without replacing it, or attempts to break from an established tradition and redirect the course of philosophical speculation. Unless it proceeds from a critical reflection on past philosophies and their significance to recurring and current philosophical issues, an emerging philosopher's work may turn out to be gratuitous, repetitious or simply naive.

Levinas, on his part, made critical reflections on western philosophy and hoped to introduce innovations through his own development of phenomenological philosophy.

1. Western Philosophy as Ontology. For Levinas and other French thinkers in his time, the expression "Western philosophy" refers to the knowledge of the average French university professor about European traditions.²⁷⁷ This knowledge identifies the Greek heritage with the works of Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus; it ignores for

²⁷⁷

Peperzak, op. cit., p. 298.

the most part medieval philosophy and emphasizes the modern character of the present culture. Levinas' critique of Western thought is directed not only to the classical texts of philosophers but also to the whole ideology implicit in the western life-style, planning, practice and technology.²⁷⁸

For Levinas, western philosophy is a way of thought that reflects a particular attitude and perspective. He thinks that it has been or is dominantly an ontology;²⁷⁹ and more often, it considers ontology as the first philosophy.²⁸⁰

Ontology is the philosophy of being--the grasping of reality or the comprehension of Being. This implies at the same time "the reduction of the Other to the same by interposition of a middle and neutral term that ensures the comprehension of being."²⁸¹ This middle term or "neutrum" is either history, logos, matter, the highest existent or Being itself.²⁸²

278

Ibid.

279

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 43.

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Ibid., p. 46.

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Ibid., p. 43; See also Levinas, "Signature," Philosophy Today, 10 (Spring, 1966), p. 35.

282

Bouckaert, L., "Ontology and Ethics: Reflections on Levinas' Critique of Heidegger," International Philosophical Quarterly, 10 (September, 1970), p. 403.

It is the Self as a conscious or as a thinking subject that considers all phenomena in their unity and distinction against one horizon. It is the Self that reduces the multiplicity of beings or existents to a common ground or totality that bears everything.²⁸³ And much of the history of European philosophy can be interpreted as an attempt on the part of self-consciousness to arrive at a universal synthesis: i.e., a reduction of all experience and of all that is reasonable, to a totality. Self-consciousness tries to embrace the world, leaves nothing outside and thus becomes absolute thought. Hence, the consciousness of the Self is at the same time the consciousness of the whole.²⁸⁴ Since the totality or the whole is centered on the thinking subject, Levinas sometimes refers to the totality as the Self and he speaks of western philosophy as ontology both as a philosophy of totality and a philosophy of the Self or an egology.²⁸⁵ And this philosophy is characterized by the word "ontology" since the intentional correlate of the Self or the ego coincides with the totality of all beings considered as one being. In this context, even God is seen either as "the Ground, as first or

283

Ibid.

284

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 75.

285

Bouckaert, op. cit., p. 403.

deepest of all beings, or a synonym for the totality insofar as it originates and gathers the parts or 'moments' of which it is composed."²⁸⁶

Ontology is viewed as a theoretical or cognitive relationship. But theory or knowledge can denote the comprehension of being as a way of approaching the known being in such a manner that it effaces the alterity or otherness of the Other.²⁸⁷ This process of cognition is the work of the knower, which recognizes nothing in the Other that could limit it. This mode of depriving the alterity of what is known is accomplished only if the known is approached through a third and a "neutral" term, which cushions the shock of the encounter. This "neutrum" is not itself a being but may appear as Being which is distinct from the existent or as a concept that is thought of.²⁸⁸

Theory, cognition, thematization and conceptualization--all these terms designate the relationship of the Self with Being. This relationship is enacted as ontology, i.e., the neutralizing of the existent in order for the Self to comprehend or grasp it. It is the relationship not with the Other as such but the reduction of the Other to the Self as

286

Peperzak, op. cit., p. 300.

287

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 42.

288

Ibid.

the Same. Thematization and conceptualization involve the possession or suspension of the Other; they affirm the other but negate its independence.²⁸⁹ The movement of thought in ontology points to the definition of freedom: to maintain the Self as the Same against the Other thereby ensuring the autarchy of the Self.

Involving as it does a knowledge whereby the Other is reduced to the Self, western ontology grants primacy to the Self as the Same. One can see everywhere the nostalgia for totality in the form of an egology in western philosophy--²⁹⁰ from Parmenides to Hegel, to Husserl and to Heidegger.

The priority of the Self as the Same was the teaching of Socrates: ". . . to receive nothing of the Other but what is in me, as though from all eternity I was in possession of what comes to me from the outside--to receive nothing or to be free."²⁹¹ The ultimate meaning of freedom here lies in the manifestation of freedom as sovereign reason which neutralizes and encompasses the Other by taking it as a theme or an object, placing it in the light and reducing it

²⁸⁹

Ibid., p. 46.

²⁹⁰

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 76; See also Peperzak, op. cit., p. 298.

²⁹¹

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 43.

to a concept in the Same. Conceptualization effects a surrender of things to intermediaries. For the things, the work of ontology involves apprehending the individual thing as an existent being not in its individuality but in its generality of which alone there can be knowledge or science. Here the relation with the Other is made possible through the mediation of a term one finds in himself. Thus, the Socratic ideal of truth rests on the essential self-sufficiency of the Same, its identification in its sameness; in other words, in its egoism. This points to philosophy only as an egology.²⁹²

An example of totalizing in philosophy may also be found in Hegel's system which is regarded as the completion of the history of philosophy.²⁹³ Eric Weil, one of the most profound interpreters of Hegel cited by Levinas, attests to the fact that, in Hegel's system, every attitude of a rational being is directed towards a category, i.e., a rational being always grasps itself from a new standpoint, and thereby reaches the climax in one category incorporating all standpoints.²⁹⁴

Totality or egology is also visible in phenomeno-

²⁹²

Ibid., pp. 43-44.

²⁹³

Peperzak, op. cit., p. 300.

²⁹⁴

Levinas, "Signature," p. 36.

logical mediation. Here, the being of the existent is taken as the medium of truth. Truth with regard to an existent presupposes a prior openness to Being, the intelligibility of which is based not on its coinciding but on its non-coinciding with the horizon of Being. The existent is viewed against a horizon whereupon it is profiled; and it is comprehended to the extent that thought transcends it. Phenomenology, beginning with Husserl, proposes the idea of horizon which plays the role that the concept does in classical idealism. Just as the individual arises from the concept, the existent likewise arises from a ground that extends beyond it. What explains the non-coinciding of thought with the existent is the luminous horizon of Being. Approached from this horizon, the existing of the existent is converted into intelligibility.²⁹⁵ "To broach the existent from Being," says Levinas, "is simultaneously to let it be and to comprehend it."²⁹⁶ And he thinks that Heidegger's Being and Time argues just one sole thesis: "Being is inseparable from the comprehension of Being (which unfolds as time)."²⁹⁷

Although Levinas regards Heidegger as the greatest

²⁹⁵

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, pp. 44-45.

²⁹⁶

Ibid., p. 45.

²⁹⁷

Ibid.

thinker in our century and as one of the greatest of the whole of western philosophy, he thinks that Heidegger's thought is still dominated by the inclination of ontology toward totalization.²⁹⁸ For Levinas is convinced that the philosophy of Heidegger maintains the primacy of ontology and the supremacy of the Self over the Other. This perception is based mainly on Levinas' reading of Being and Time rather than on the later works which, according to Levinas,²⁹⁹ still remains valuable through the earlier work.

Heidegger wanted to bring about "the destruction of the history of ontology" by asking the forgotten question about Being itself.³⁰⁰ However, Levinas is convinced that Heidegger failed in overcoming western ontology as a philosophy of totality; instead, Heidegger succeeded in developing a philosophy of totality wherein Being is taken as the first and final word.³⁰¹

The core of Heidegger's freedom is the letting be of what is and of being itself; it is a movement whereby we withdraw from the Other in order to receive it and put it

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Peperzak, op. cit., p. 300.

299

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 41.

300

M. Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), pp. 41ff.

301

Bouckaert, op. cit., p. 403; Peperzak, op. cit., p. 300.

within the space of the Self. Thus, freedom in Heidegger is regarded as the ultimate foundation of truth and every grounding of reality; and it is never radically questioned or threatened even by death.³⁰²

Although Heidegger has given up the theoretical structure of Western thought and refuses to give a privilege status to reason and representation, he actually takes ontological truth as the ultimate event of reality.³⁰³ The being of the existent as such which guarantees its independence and extraneity is taken as phosphorescence or luminosity which is dissolved in intelligibility.³⁰⁴ The distinction between Being and beings is situated within the domain of light, and the withdrawal and concealedness of Being are seen as constitutive moments of the lighting process of truth.³⁰⁵ In the reduction of beings to the light, there is also a reduction of the Other to the Self.

The basic features of western ontology forcefully come to the fore in Heidegger's philosophy. These basic features are manifest in the priority given to autonomy over

302

Bouckaert, op. cit., p. 405.

303

Ibid., p. 406.

304

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 45.

305

Bouckaert, op. cit., p. 407.

heteronomy, truth over justice and Being over beings. ³⁰⁶

Levinas summarizes his critique of Heidegger in the following passage:

To affirm the priority of Being over the existent is to already decide the essence of philosophy; it is to subordinate the relation with someone who is an existent, (the ethical relation) to a relation with the Being of the existent, which, impersonal, permits the apprehension, the domination of the existent (a relationship of knowing), subordinates justice to freedom. ³⁰⁷

This passage indicates the fact that granting priority to Being over beings is likewise giving priority to freedom over justice as well as to knowledge over ethics. Giving priority to freedom, truth and being as totality, is allowing ontology to have the final word. And this points to an egological orientation whereby the Other is reduced to the Self.

There are some who think that Levinas' polemic against Heidegger is rather exaggerated and prejudiced by his knowledge of Heidegger's involvement, for some time, with Nazism. ³⁰⁸ However, this should not be given much weight. The philosophical significance of Levinas' critique of Heidegger must be recognized; and this lies in his

306

Ibid., p. 403.

307

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 45.

308

Gans, S., "Ethics or Ontology: Levinas and Heidegger," Philosophy Today, 16 (Summer, 1972), p. 117.

rejection of theoretical or ontological thinking as the
 Self's ultimate relation to reality.³⁰⁹

Levinas strongly opposes a philosophy that posits
 totality as the essential structure of reality because it
 involves the negation of alterity and its reduction to the
 immanence of thought. And this ontological imperialism of
 reducing everything to Self-consciousness ultimately leads
 to the exploitation and appropriation of reality. It is the
 "verbalization of Western power politics and will for
 power."³¹⁰ For, "I think" comes down to "I can."³¹¹
 Ontology, as first philosophy, is a philosophy of injustice.
 It does not call into question the freedom of the Self;
 hence, it gives primacy to freedom (be it freedom of theory)
 before justice. It is a movement within the Same before
 obligation to the Other.³¹²

Against a philosophy that apprehends totality as the
 ultimate structure of reality, Levinas proposes a philosophy
 that respects the multiplicity and uniqueness of existents
 in the totality while being radically withdrawn from it. In
 this pluralistic conception, a transcendent and infinite

309

Bouckaert, op. cit., p. 418.

310

Ibid., p. 407.

311

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 46.

312

Ibid., p. 47.

Other is recognized as irreducible to the Self. This Other is considered as better than being, an exception to essence, outside of being and non-being, or a good over and beyond being. As such, the Other who is absolutely and radically Other cannot be approached ontologically on the level of knowledge or against the luminous horizon of Being. The Other refuses to be comprehended and circumscribed by thought or grasped in terms of the freedom and power of the Self as totality.

The experience of the transcendent and infinite Other as radical alterity that breaks the rupture of totality occurs in a relationship that Levinas describes as ethical--an interpersonal relationship that is "not a matter of thinking the ego and the Other together . . . but a togetherness of face to face."³¹³ For Levinas, ethics rather than ontology is the first philosophy.³¹⁴

2. Ethics as First Philosophy. Levinas' thought represents a break from the traditional notion of ontology as first philosophy and proposes the innovative conception of ethics as the first philosophy. Here, ethics is not conceived as a set of norms or a system of values which are implicitly lived in a community; it refers to a concrete relationship with an irreducible alterity manifest

³¹³

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 77.

³¹⁴

Ibid.

315

in the face of the Other.

The presence of the Other who is irreducible to the Self, calls into question the egological orientation and totalizing moves of the Self, and awakens it to a life of responsible subjectivity. This experience calls into question the spontaneous egoistic moves of the Self, exposes the dogmatic and naive arbitrariness of this spontaneity and
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calls into question its freedom.

Levinas denotes by the term "ethics" "this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the
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Other." As first philosophy, ethics defines the concrete relation to an Other who is beyond essence or otherwise than being. It describes the experience of an Other that cannot be encompassed by thought and consequently inaccessible on the level of theoretical knowledge or ontology. It exposes the radical alterity of that which opposes the freedom and power of the Self as totality. It points to a movement of transcendence towards that which is itself transcendent and approachable only on the ethical level on the basis of

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Cf. Bouckaert, op. cit., p. 402; A. Lingis, "Face-to-Face: A Phenomenological Meditation," International Philosophical Quarterly, 19 (June, 1979), p. 161.

316

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 43.

317

Ibid.

responsibility and goodness.

The experience of the transcendent Other opens the way to the discovery of the Infinite as the epiphany, from which all other realities receive their definitive meaning. The experience of this transcendent and infinite Other signifies to the Self its essential reality as responsible subjectivity. This signification is conveyed to the Self prior to the meaning-giving act of the Self as consciousness.

Thus, it is in the ethical relation where Levinas situates "the most irreducible in experience and that which is the most irreducible of experiences."³¹⁸ In this stratum, we find the ultimate source of truth and meaning. And the meaning signified by the ethical relation is on the level of pre-originary signifyingness or of the saying that is primordial and an-archival, i.e., prior to the origin or beginning. This level subtends and animates the level of the said, of thematization, consciousness, knowledge, theory, ontology, inter-ested existence or totality.

Taking the side of Husserl as against Heidegger, Levinas perceives the task of the philosopher as one of "reduction."³¹⁹ Philosophy involves a movement proceeding

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J. Burke, "The Ethical Significance of the Face," Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, 56 (1982), p. 196.

319

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 28; Levinas, Otherwise than Being, pp.43ff.; Vasey, op. cit., p.193.

from the Self's experience of the totality back to a situation where totality breaks up, a situation that conditions the totality.³²⁰ It entails a movement from the order of the said, consciousness and intentionality, theory or ontology, to the order of the experience of a more primordial signification or saying. More concretely, it carries us to the experience of the "strangeness of the Other" and his irreducibility to the thought or the possession of the Self.³²¹ This experience conveys to the Self the ethical demand of leaving the life of inter-ested existence for that of dis-interested existence as one-for-the-Other involved in obligations and responsibilities.

The reduction does not intend to nullify or deny the reality or the necessity of that which is submitted to it; rather, the reduction must be viewed as the only way of coming to understand and to ground it.³²² Subjectivity or the Self can be understood if we begin with the order of the said, being, theory or ontology; but the meaning of this order can be correctly interpreted only, if we start from the subjectivity of the saying that nourishes it. The reduction works in both directions and allows for the

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 24.

321

Ibid., p. 43.

322

Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 45.

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understanding of both.

Levinas claims that he is moving methodologically within the spirit of Husserl's intentional analysis in his philosophical account of the experience of the Self in relation to that which is other than itself.³²⁴ However, he recognizes the limitations of phenomenology in the face of the Ego's experience of the alterity and infinity of the Other. Here, Levinas acknowledges the inadequacy of phenomenological description and finally categorizes phenomenological language as one with the other egological and totalizing languages of western philosophy.³²⁵

The philosophy of Levinas which begins as a critique of ontology eventually develops into a "phenomenology" of subjectivity which is carried out more specifically as a description of the ethical relation between the Self and the Other which ruptures the totality. It is at the same time carried out as a "phenomenology" of the event of meaning since the ethical relation conveys to the Self the primordial meaning of its subjectivity not in terms of

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Vasey, op. cit., p. 193.

324

Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 183.

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Cf. Vasey, op. cit., p. 193; Lawton, "Levinas' Notion of the 'There is'," Philosophy Today, 20 (Spring, 1976), p. 68.

egoism and totality but in terms of obligations and responsibilities to the Other who also bears the trace of Infinity.

Thus, Levinas says that his philosophy apprehends "subjectivity not at the level of its purely egoist protestation against totality . . . but as founded in the idea of infinity."³²⁶ This philosophy of subjectivity will be treated more fully in the following section. And this treatment shall be based mainly on Levinas' two major philosophical works--Totality and Infinity and Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence.

Levinas' Perspective on the Self

The exposition of Levinas' philosophy of Subjectivity in this study will be guided by the understanding that, for Levinas, the reality of the Self cannot be actually accounted for and fully understood apart from its relation to an Other. The interiority of the Self (what is truly the Self) is explainable ultimately and solely on the basis of its relation to an alterity or exteriority (what is Other than the Self). This basic insight into the meaning of Subjectivity or the Self in the thought of Levinas will be elucidated in the following discussion. The discussion will

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 26.

first deal with the emergence of the Self as a separate existent. This will be followed by a treatment of the egoistic relation between the Self and the Other. The last part of the discussion will be an account of the ethical relation which is constitutive of the essential reality of the Self as responsible subjectivity.

1. The Emergence of the Self: The initial insight into Levinas' philosophy of subjectivity will be attained by following his thought on the Self emerging as a Subject by constituting its inner life in the process of separation. But separation presupposes the relation of immersion into what Levinas calls the "elemental" or the "there is" (il ya). A preliminary consideration of this notion will be made before proceeding to a description of subjectivity emerging from the "there is" in the event of separation.

a. The "Elemental" or the "There Is". The expression "there is" refers to the "elemental", the "indeterminate" or Being as the ground in which the Self finds itself as a Self and from which it emerges in the course of realizing its separate existence.³²⁷

Levinas thinks that phenomenological description which results in an eidetic intuition cannot adequately account for the "there is" for it cannot be appropriated in

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Lawton, op. cit., p. 67.

a concept. It refers to a situation "where no one is and nothing is," i.e., to a situation prior to the cognitive relation and consequently prior to the opposition between the knower and the known.³²⁸ The "there is" points to a pre-personal event in the existence of the Self and consequently inaccessible to reflection or thought. To describe this event or situation, the use of figurative expressions, suggestions and negative propositions is more appropriate than that of expositions or definite assertions.

One may describe the "there is" as sheer being-there or Being that does not refer to any being, but imposes itself as an anonymous, absurd and upsetting presence.³²⁹

It is neither nothingness nor an existence without an existent and which no negation of a particular being can overcome.³³⁰

In one of his earlier works, Levinas tries to describe the "there is" as "horror and panic", and points to its shadow in the phenomena of fatigue, indolence, and effort, where there is "a dread before being, an impotent

³²⁸

Ibid., p. 68.

³²⁹

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 143; Bouckaert, op. cit., p. 410.

³³⁰

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 48; Levinas, "Signature," p. 31.

recoil, an evasion." ³³¹ He also refers to it as the nocturnal dimension of the future. ³³² Metaphorically, he speaks of the determinate being or existent emerging from out of the sphere as a dawn of clarity in the horror or darkness of the "there is." ³³³ Furthermore, he says that one who could point to "something" or a "particular being" has mastery over the "there is." ³³⁴

Levinas attempts to approach the "there is" in terms of a spatial dimension by describing the configuration of the elemental as "content without form" or as "having one side." Yet, the elemental is not like a thing or an object. For one can circle around an object and see its total configuration even if it presents just one side. But when we consider the elemental as having one side, its depth, for example, it extends indefinitely until one loses sight of it and comes to a point where "nothing ends, nothing begins." ³³⁵ Hence, the metaphorical expression just given

³³¹

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 51; the work cited here is Levinas' De l'existent a l'existence (Paris: Vrin, 1947) the English translation of which is not available to the researcher.

³³²

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 142.

³³³

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 51.

³³⁴

Ibid.

³³⁵

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 131.

does not strictly apply to the elemental, and Levinas qualifies the description by referring to the elemental as if it were a medium like water and specifying the proper relation of things or elements in it as bathing or immersion.³³⁶

The elemental is the ground from which things and subjects detach themselves; it is the milieu in which the Self first discovers itself as a Subject of existence.³³⁷ The emergence of the Self as separate existent is an escape from the "there is"; it is a deliverance from the anonymity and indifference of Being. This emergence of the Self is accomplished in the event of separation.

b. Separation as Inner Life. The development of the Self which is at the same time the constitution of its inner life is synonymous with its separation or the realization of

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Ibid., pp. 131-132.

337

In his article on "Levinas' Notion of the 'There Is'," Lawton says that Levinas explicitly relates his notion of the "there is" with Heraclitus' idea of the flux of Being, Levy Bruhl's prelogical participation, and Bergson's idea of nothingness as being crossed out or the presence of absence. And he adds that Levinas refuses to identify this with Sartre's idea of en soi (which is already at 'peace' while the 'there is' is absence of any self--a sans soi); moreover, he says that Levinas does not want the notion to be confused with Heidegger's Geworfenheit (for il ya as primordial milieu in which one bathes is prior to the relation between Being and a being).

its separate existence. It is a process of self-identification and self-affirmation which consists essentially in a relation to the Other.

The Self is a Subject of existence and the subjectivity of the Self goes beyond mere substantiality or independent existence.³³⁸ The Self possesses an inner life--an interiority or ipseity that cannot be fully conceptualized. The constitution of this inner life is the process of realizing an identity for the Self or the Subject that would set it off from other subjects and thereby define it as a separate existent.

Subjectivity is not given at the moment of existence. It is rather something that the Self has to achieve in life. One is not born a Subject but becomes a Subject, and subjectivity originates in the autonomous experience of enjoyment and the legitimate search for economy of existence.

An examination of enjoyment which is constitutive of subjectivity will be made in relation to sensibility which is a mode of enjoyment.

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 113.

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c. Enjoyment and Sensibility.

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Enjoyment is an affective mode of the Subject; but it is an affectivity that is called forth by an Other. Enjoyment, then, is a mode of awareness which, for Levinas, is a form of intentionality. To enjoy is to enter into a relationship with what is other than the Self and to derive therefrom the experience of inward satisfaction and happiness. This is the way in which the Self relates to the contents of life. "Enjoyment," says Levinas, "is the ultimate consciousness of all the contents that fill life--it embraces them." 341

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Sensibility is a mode and an instance of enjoyment; it does not belong to the order of thought but to that of sentiment, i.e., to the affectivity wherein the I arises and pulsates. 343 "Sensibility is the very narrowness of life, the naiveté of the unreflected I, beyond instinct, 344 beneath reason." But it is neither blind reason nor

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Levinas gives a new dimension of meaning to sensibility in his later work--Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence--where it is taken as a modality of the ethical relation.

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 135.

341

Ibid., p. 111.

342

Ibid., p. 135.

343

Ibid.

344

Ibid., p. 138.

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 folly; it is prior to reason. Although intimately associated with affective states, sensibility is not to be regarded as inferior to theoretical or conceptual knowledge; its mode of awareness is that of satisfaction and contentment with the given.

Sensibility as sensation is not identical with "thought thinking of something"; it is rather a way of penetrating into the intimacy of things. The return to the things themselves does not first take place in the conceptual knowledge of something, but in sensibility or sensation which involves immediacy to things.³⁴⁶ In sensation, there is some kind of an instantaneous present which opposes the attempt of consciousness to hold it in thought.

The sense datum that nourishes sensibility comes to gratify a need or respond to a tendency of the Subject; it gives substance and fullness to life. Thus, sensibility or sensation is susceptibility to being affected by sense objects and not just awareness of the qualities of these objects.

Sensibility is a mode of enjoyment concretized by the

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Ibid.

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Vasey, op. cit., p. 185.

body which is a sensitive being. Sensibility is corporeality, incarnate subjectivity or the incarnation of consciousness. And this mode of enjoyment is initially experienced in the satisfaction of the needs of corporeal existence.

d. Need and "Living From". Life implies for the Self or the Subject a need for food and drink, for air to breathe, or for shelter to protect it against the inclemencies of the weather. Arising from the Subject's bodily existence or incarnate subjectivity, these needs are experienced as a lack or an insufficiency and they move the Self to reach out for things that would fill this lack.

The things in the world that satisfy the needs of life are other than the Self. But the "otherness" of these things is only "relative" and not "absolute" or "radical" for these are convertible or reducible to the Self. When reduced to the Self, these are no longer opposed to the Self but become part of the Self. Hence, Levinas describes the movement of the Self with respect to these things as the way of the Same for what is other is transformed into the self-same Self.³⁴⁷

The things that satisfy the needs of the Self and

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, pp. 37-38.

give it satisfaction or enjoyment take form within the medium in which we take hold of them. They are found in space, in the air, on the earth or along the road. The things that can be possessed by the Self are in a milieu that nobody owns and which unfolds its own dimensions. This non-possesseable milieu is identified with either the world or the elements which extend into the shadowy dimension of the indeterminate "there is".³⁴⁸

"Living from" describes the mode of interaction between the Self and the world or the elements in it. This mode of interaction is necessary for the Self so that it can satisfy its needs. "Living from", therefore, implies the dependence of the Self on the things that support its life. But the Self lives not only from objects like food and drink but also from acts such as feeling, thinking, working or living itself. "What I do and what I am is at the same time that from which I live."³⁴⁹

Although it is a need or a necessity for the Self, "living from" is not experienced as a harsh duty but as an enjoyable attachment to the things that support life and provide it with satisfaction and contentment. Since "living from" is called forth by the needs of the Self, enjoyment

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Ibid., pp. 130, 142.

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Ibid., p. 113.

thrives because there are needs. Hence, the Subject is happy to have needs. And a being without needs is outside of happiness and unhappiness.

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e. Freedom in Enjoyment. For the Self, the things from which it lives are not only seen as objects that answer a need but also as objects that offer enjoyment. This implies that in the satisfaction of its needs, the Self is not only preoccupied with his biological or physical existence. Its concern for existence can also be a concern for enjoyment for its own sake. And the Self can make enjoyment the fundamental motive of its concern with the things in life. It can attach meaning to something only insofar as they are objects of enjoyment. Enjoyment can be the ultimate relation to all the things in life.

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Everything can be enjoyed and the Self is by what it enjoys. What the Self finds enjoyable shapes the Self into a particular kind of individual. Thus, one who finds joy in working for the welfare of the people is a well-motivated social worker; or one who takes pleasure in hurting persons is a spiteful sadist. Enjoyment or happiness is, therefore, the principle of individuation. But the individuality or personality of the Self is different from the particularity

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Ibid., pp. 144, 146.

351

Ibid., p. 133.

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of the atoms or the purely material things for these are incapable of experiencing satisfaction or enjoyment. Furthermore, the individuality or ipseity of the "I" is more than that of animals which are also capable of experiencing satisfaction. For in the case of animals, satisfaction is necessarily tied up with the biological needs; but in the case of the Self, enjoyment may be sought for its own sake or associated with other concerns--social, political, philosophical or religious. "To enjoy without utility, in pure loss, gratuitously, without referring to anything else, in pure expenditure--this is the human."³⁵²

In raising its life from the level of biological existence to that of enjoyment for its own sake, the Self asserts its freedom. The Self expresses its freedom in preoccupying itself with things not because they are biologically necessary, but because they are a source of enjoyment or happiness. Moreover, the Self shows its freedom in its choice of enjoyable things. But the freedom of the Self has its limitations. The Self cannot attain all the things that can bring happiness and enjoyment in life; and its possession of enjoyable things is insecure, for the things it possesses and enjoys can be taken away from it or they can cease to be enjoyable. For Levinas, the limitation

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Ibid.

of the freedom of the Self lies in the insecurity of its enjoyment rather than in the fact of its unchosen birth or its situated existence.³⁵³

f. Separation and Economy of Existence. In the course of "living from" and enjoyment, the Self establishes its identity and realizes itself as a separate existent. As pointed out already, enjoyment is the principle of individuation or the basis of identity. And the identity or the ipseity of the I makes it a reality distinct from other selves or subjects. This identity sets it apart from others and makes it a separate existent. And the primordial mode of the separate reality of the Self is "economic existence." This refers to a life motivated by needs and centered on a house or dwelling. Thus, for Levinas, to be separate is to be somewhere--in a dwelling or a home--and to be economically.³⁵⁴

The primary function of the dwelling or the home is to separate or detach the Self from the elemental and the elements. However, the dwelling remains open to the elements and the elements remain at the disposal of the Self.³⁵⁵ The dwelling is a site or a place which is

³⁵³

Ibid., p. 144.

³⁵⁴

Ibid., p. 175.

³⁵⁵

Ibid., p. 156.

actually the primary possession of the Self and it makes possible for the Self to acquire other possessions through its labor. Dwelling or habitation, labor and possession altogether delineate separate existence in the form of economic independence.³⁵⁶

The dwelling that makes labor and possession possible is likewise the condition for the recollection of thoughts. From the home, the Self gains access to the world and its elements not only as things to be possessed and enjoyed but also as objects for thoughtful consideration or disinterested and impassive contemplation.

The home that makes labor and possession possible reflects the egoistic orientation of economic existence which is a mode of the separate reality of the Self. The Self can extend to its relation to the Other, its egoistic and totalizing approaches to the things in the world. But the home also expresses the possibility of transcending egoism. For the Self can overcome its egoistic tendencies by responding to obligations and responsibilities towards the Other. As Levinas himself puts it, "the possibility for the home to open to the Other is as essential to the essence of the home as closed doors and windows."³⁵⁷

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Ibid., p. 150.

³⁵⁷

Ibid., p. 173.

Thus, there are two possible modes of relation between the Self and the Other. Levinas describes one as egoistic and the other as ethical. The egoistic mode of relationship will be presented in the following discussion. The ethical mode of relationship will be treated in a later section.

2. The Egoistic Relation. We have just described how the Self emerges as a separate existent in the form of a corporeal or an incarnate subject, primarily motivated by its needs towards such activities as nourishing itself, engaging in labor or work, acquiring possessions, maintaining a home and striving for an economically secure and comfortable life. In its preoccupation with these activities which offer satisfaction and enjoyment, the Self constitutes its inner life, interiority or subjectivity.

Levinas recognizes in the concern of the Self for satisfaction and enjoyment, a mode of consciousness or a form of intentionality which is egoistic and totalizing. For in the intentionality of enjoyment, the Self relates to an Other with the intention of absorbing or incorporating what is Other into the sphere of the Self. This is manifest particularly in such activities of the Self as nourishing itself, working on things, or accumulating possessions. In all these functions of life, what is Other is reduced to the Self. However, there is another form of intentionality

which also has an egological or totalizing orientation towards the Other. This is the intentionality of representation or thought, which is conditioned by the intentionality of enjoyment. For it is in enjoyment or in self-satisfying sensibility that the Self comes to representation as a mode of its concrete life. ³⁵⁸

In the following discussion, the essential structure of the intentionality of representation or knowledge will be taken up and contrasted with that of enjoyment. Then, the relationships with the Other, which are modeled after representation and enjoyment, will be considered.

a. Representation and Enjoyment. Levinas considers both representation and enjoyment as a necessary part of the movement of separation. However, he thinks that representation is oriented towards a direction different from that of enjoyment. He sees a contrast in the intentional patterns of enjoyment and representation.

Representation is an act of consciousness or knowing. It involves thematization or conceptualization and aims at intelligibility, objectivity, truth or meaning. The act of representation intends an object (noema) viewed as something distinct from the act itself (noesis) that intends it.

Both the object of representation and its intelli-

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Ibid., p. 169; See also Vasey, op. cit., p. 185.

gibility are actually reducible to the noema, i.e., the
 object endowed with meaning by consciousness itself.³⁵⁹
 Hence, representation and intelligibility are equivalent
 notions; and both aim at clarity or truth.³⁶⁰

In representation, an object that is exterior to the
 Self surrenders its whole being to the Self to bring about
 clarity in the thought of this object. In other words, this
 object is at first other than thought, but is given over to
 the consciousness or thought of the Self. Finally, the
 object is made to appear as the work of the thought that
 receives it. The resistance to the Self on the part of the
 object as an exterior being vanishes when the conscious
 subject exercises mastery over the object by reducing it to
 the noema, i.e., the object endowed with a meaning
 constituted by consciousness.³⁶¹

The intelligibility of the object of thought is
 characterized by clarity and it entails the total adequation
 of thought with that which is thought of. Representation is
 thus a kind of vision, which aims at this total adequation;
 it seeks to convert the objects or noemata into the
 immanence of the thought of the Self as a conscious sub-

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 123.

360

Ibid., p. 124.

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Ibid., pp. 123-124.

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ject.

Representation suspends the alterity of the object that is thought of. It entails a non-reciprocal determination wherein only the Self is determining the Other, while the Other introduces no alterity or otherness into the Self. The Self remains the Same despite the many objects that it knows and the diverse acts by which and in which it intends these objects of consciousness. To represent to oneself is to remain the same. Hence, we find in representation an orientation similar to, but not exactly the same as that of, enjoyment, which has been earlier described as the way of the Same.³⁶³

In representation, the exteriority of the object appears upon reflection to be a "sense" or a "meaning" with which the object is endowed by the representing subject making it a noema. Representational intentionality constitutes its object as a noema by endowing it with its meaning as this particular being. It reduces the thing represented to its proper meaning, the existent to a noema, and the intentional object to the very being of the

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Ibid.; Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 60.

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 126; Above, p. 150.

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conscious subject. In short, what is Other to the Self is reduced to a meaning or truth constituted by the thought of the Self. The egological or totalizing orientation of the Self is evident in this intentionality of representation.

In a certain sense, the Self is also determined by its thoughts insofar as it has these thoughts about a particular thing. However, at the very moment of its representation, the conscious Self is "not marked by the past but it utilizes it as a represented and objective element." ³⁶⁵

This means that at the moment it has a particular representation or thought, the Self is not described "as having this thought" but "as thinking of something." Moreover, the "I" which manages its thoughts may be conceived as becoming or ageing in time; but this becoming does not appear on the level of representation which involves no passivity. ³⁶⁶ For in representation, whatever is given to consciousness is reduced to the present; its object that flows on is captured by thought and it is reduced to the instantaneity of thought. Representation gathers the various temporal phases

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Ibid., pp. 124, 127.

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Ibid., p. 125.

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Ibid.

into the present by retention of the past and protention of the future. Levinas speaks of this as the synthesizing or synchronizing activity of consciousness. But to represent is for the Self not just to gather the various temporal phases into the present; it is also to reduce whatever appears as independent of it to the instantaneousness of thought. Levinas, however, stresses that

A movement radically different from thought is manifested when the constitution by thought finds its condition in what it has freely welcomed or refused, when the represented turns into a past that had not traversed the present of representation, as an absolute past not receiving its meaning from memory. 367

In this passage what is pointed out is a limitation in the noematization of the representational form of intentionality. What is hinted at here is a surplus of meaning that cannot be adequately accounted for or contained in thought. This meaning defies the attempt of the representational form of intentionality to reduce it into the synchronic order of consciousness. 368

In a sense, the intentionality of representation is different from the intentionality of enjoyment. For in the

367

Ibid., p. 130.

368

Levinas is referring here to the aspect of diachrony in the ethical relation; this theme which is hinted at in Totality and Infinity is a recurring theme in the later work--Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence.

case of representation, there is non-reciprocal determination wherein the Self constitutes and determines the Other but the Other does not do the same to the Self. In the case of enjoyment, however, there is reciprocal determination. For the Self enters into a relation to what is other or exterior to it in such a way that the Self determines the Other while it is itself determined by it.³⁶⁹

In the intentionality of enjoyment, the Self holds on to what is other and makes it a part of its corporeal existence. This is the case particularly in such activities as nutrition, labor and possession which manifest the intentionality of enjoyment.

The reciprocal determination involved in the intentionality of enjoyment holds true in the mode of relation described earlier as "living from." For in "living from", the Self relates to what is other than itself and transforms this other into a constituent part of the Self. The world from which the Self lives is not merely a spectacle for thoughtful consideration. Since the world nourishes and bathes the Self, it is alimnt and medium for it;³⁷⁰ hence, it is neither a counterpart nor a contemporary of thought, but is its condition.

369

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 128.

370

Ibid., p. 130.

The world from which the Self lives is not given only after its act of representation has, so to speak, spread forth in its consciousness the spectacle of the world. Nor is it given to the Self only when the axiological intentions of consciousness "would have ascribed to this world a value that renders it apt for habitation."³⁷¹ Rather, the world from which the Self lives is not only exterior but also anterior to its representation or thought of it.

If one would apply "constitution" to the intentionality of enjoyment, one has to say that what is being constituted also becomes the condition or nourishment of the very act of constituting. Whatever nourishes life is a condition of the thought which would think of it as its condition. The conditioning is accomplished through the relation between the representing and the represented or the constituting and the constituted--a relation essential to the representational form of the intentionality of consciousness.³⁷²

Representation is conditioned by life; but this relation could be reversed after the event of the Self's separation as a corporeal subject. The conversion of the representational act of constituting into the condition of

371

Ibid.

372

Ibid., p. 128.

its being is realized as soon as the Self opens its eyes and beholds a spectacle or something that it can gaze on.

Levinas thinks that for Husserl intentionality is a universal fact of human existence. He summarizes Husserl's notion of intentionality in the following passage:

Every moment of life (conscious and even unconscious, such as consciousness divines it) is in relation with an other than that moment itself . . . : every perception is a perception of the perceived, every idea an idea of an ideate, every desire of a desired, every emotion an emotion of something moving . . . ; but every obscure thought of our being is also oriented toward something. Every present in its temporal nudity tends toward the future and returns upon the past or resumes that past--is prospection and retrospection. 373

This passage stresses Husserl's idea of intentionality as the orientation of consciousness towards an object, i.e., something thought of, perceived, imagined or desired. Likewise, it stresses Husserl's understanding that every present intention always tends towards the past by retention and towards the future by protention.

Levinas, however, adds that Husserl accorded a privileged status to the intentionality of representation. This is evident in the thesis advanced by Husserl in his early work on phenomenology, namely, that "every intentionality is either a representation or founded on a

373

Ibid., p. 122.

374
 representation." For Husserl, acts of evaluation, emotion or volition are all founded on representations.

Levinas thinks that in the intellectualist view of Husserl, life is subordinated to representation or thought. This view holds that "in order to will it is first necessary to represent to oneself what one wills; in order to desire, represent one's goal to oneself; in order to feel, represent to oneself the object of sentiment; and in order to act, represent to oneself what one will do."³⁷⁵

Levinas, on his part, emphasizes that life moves and dominates thought. For what the subject represents in thought supports and nourishes the life of the Self and its activity as a conscious subject. Thought "lives from" the very being or object that it represents and thereby refers the Self to an exceptional possibility for separated existence; it points to the possibility for the Self to relate to the Other on the theoretical level.³⁷⁶

Both representation and enjoyment belong to the intentional structure of subjectivity. Each has its peculiar features, but both reflect the movement of the Self

374

Ibid.; Husserl's Logical Investigations, 2: 534, 598, 608.

375

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 168.

376

Ibid.

as totality; i.e., in their own ways, they aim at possessing the Other and reducing its otherness or alterity to the reality of the Self. These two forms of intentionality can serve as models in relating with the other Subject in an egoistic and totalizing way.

In the following discussion, the egoistic approaches to the Other will be described, but it will also be pointed out that in the encounter with the other subject or Self, the Self meets an Other that is "absolutely other" or "radically exterior" and opposes the totalizing power of the Self both on the level of thought and of action.

b. The Other's Opposition to Objectifying Vision.

There is a spontaneous move on the part of the Self to approach the Other by thought, to encompass his being in a kind of knowledge conceived as an objective gaze or an impassive contemplation. To approach the Other in such a manner is to circumscribe his being by the sum of determinative qualities that are open to the vision of a spectator. To say that the Other possesses these qualities is to know him objectively. But to say that the reality of the Other is exhaustively represented in the totality of these qualities, is to reduce his status to that of an object whose reality is identified only with the totality of the qualities that can be known by the mere thought of an observer. Such knowledge is an objectifying knowledge of

the Other; i.e., it reduces the Other to the status of a mere object of thought.

Levinas considers the intentionality of representation as an objectifying knowledge. This is implied in his notion of "vision" as "an adequation of the idea with the thing, a comprehension that encompasses."³⁷⁷ knowing, conceived as vision, is

. . . Essentially an adequation of exteriority to interiority; in it exteriority is reabsorbed in the comprehensive soul, and, as an adequate idea, revealed to be a priori, the result of Sinngebung. 378

What Levinas is stressing in this passage is the attitude of representation or vision which takes the Other merely as the theme of an impassive contemplation.³⁷⁹ It confines the reality of the Other to the idea that the Self has of him at any moment. Vision imposes on or projects to the Other the preconceptions of the Self; it circumscribes the being of the Other, transforms it into a mere content or representation of thought, or reduces its reality to the meaning constituted by the Self. Insofar as the Self approaches the Other on the basis of mere vision or repre-

377

Ibid., p. 34.

378

Ibid., p. 295.

379

Ibid., p. 296.

sentation, it exercises a power that destroys the alterity
 380
 or exteriority of the Other.

Relating to the Other, however, is not merely a matter of knowing him or taking him as the theme of the representational form of the intentionality of thought, for there is so much more to the reality of the Other than what can be represented in thought. The reality of the Other exceeds any image or idea that the Self can have of him. The face signifies the peculiar way whereby the Other presents himself as a reality overflowing any idea that the
 381
 Self attributes to the Other. In other words, the Other reveals himself as an inexhaustible center open to an infinite number of possibilities. The more one probes into the reality of the Other, the more it realizes the impossibility of achieving a full knowledge of him. The Other presents himself as really "Other" and irreducible to an object constituted by the thought of the Self thinking of him. The Other cannot be fully thematized or totalized because he is the revelation of Infinity, i.e., of something that goes beyond all bounds. With respect to the Other, there can be no adequation of the Self's thought to the Other's being. And this non-adequation is not due to the

380

Ibid., p. 194.

381

Ibid., pp. 50-51.

obscurity of thought or to the irrationality of the Other; rather, it is due to the Other's manifestation of something transcendent and infinite. This infinity of the Other explains the opposition he offers to any attempt on the part of the Self to relate to the Other merely on the basis of the representational form of intentionality or to approach the Other merely on the level of knowledge or thought. And this is precisely one of the main concerns of Levinas:

. . . To contest the ineradicable conviction of every philosophy that objective knowledge is the ultimate relation of transcendence, that the Other (though he be different from the things) must be known objectively, even if his freedom should deceive this nostalgia for knowledge. 382

But the Other who refuses to be taken as the theme of an objectifying knowledge, likewise refuses to be taken merely as an object to be possessed and dominated by the Self. For the Other can call into question the freedom and power of the Self to do so, and the Other can oppose its attempt to approach and eventually destroy, or do violence to, the Other.

c. The Other's Opposition to Violence. Objectification does not only consist in a vision or representational knowledge of the Other, but also in dealing with the Other in the same manner that one deals with things, i.e.,

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Ibid., p. 89.

as objects. Objectification, in the latter sense, is the exercise of violence on the Other in order to force him to work for the selfish ends of the Self.

Violence is manifest in the use of power that stifles the autonomy of the Other and reduces him to a mere tool recognized and valued only insofar as he fits well into the selfish projects of the Self. Violence also finds expression in the act of inflicting pain and suffering on the Other in order to force him to carry out actions and to play roles in which he betrays his own beliefs or ideals and thus destroys his own self. In deliberately inflicting pain and suffering on the Other, the Self objectifies the Other but keeps him conscious of this objectification whereby he is reduced to a mere object. The awareness that someone else is rejoicing in the suffering he is going through makes the suffering of the Other more painful and humiliating. Levinas thinks that this form of violence is worse than the complete negation or annihilation of the Other. Suffering rather than death is the supreme ordeal of the freedom of the Other.³⁸³

But the Other can oppose the attempts of the Self to exercise power and violence on him. The Other can offer a firm and resolute opposition to the Self in the form of the

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Ibid., p. 239.

"unforeseeableness of his reaction."³⁸⁴ The Self can never be sure what the Other may conceal. Hence, the Self is not totally in control of the Other.

The Other may also offer a different kind of resistance which is no longer a physical force but an ethical force. This is the appeal of the Other, the moral summons which can be read in his face--the "you shall not commit murder."³⁸⁵ This moral order is the source of the ultimate strength of the Other. Yet, this moral force is not actually stronger but better than the totalizing powers of the Self.³⁸⁶

Thus, in meeting another subject, the Self recognizes the limitations of its egoistic or totalizing and destructive approach towards the Other. The Self acknowledges that the Other is neither initially nor ultimately "what is thematized" or "what is grasped,"³⁸⁷ that need and totality are not the ultimate modalities of the subject, and that the egoistic relation to the Other is not constitutive of the essential reality of the Self. For the exercise of

384

Ibid., p. 199.

385

Ibid.

386

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 14.

387

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 172.

the freedom and power of the Self is called into question by the Other who approaches, as it were, from "above" in his height, majesty and transcendence. This approach of the Other initiates the Self into the ethical mode of relationship which is the theme of the following section.

3. The Ethical Relation. The egoistic approach towards the Other which was presented in the preceding discussion does not fully account for the relation between the Self and Other. For there is another mode of the relationship between the Self and the Other which is described as ethical. In and through this ethical relation, the Self constitutes its essential reality as responsible subjectivity.

The ethical relation is not a relation between the Self and a being or an essence that can be thematized and circumscribed by thought. Rather, it is a relationship between the Self and the Other who is beyond essence, better than Being, and a Good over and beyond Being.

The ethical relation is essentially a togetherness of the Self and the Other in the face-to-face encounter. This relation brings out the primary structure of subjectivity, i.e., the essential reality of the Self not as a subsistent existence or a movement of being but as a responsible subject answering to obligations and responsibilities towards the Other. This ethical relation is brought forth

not by the subject's preoccupation with its needs and concern for possessions or enjoyment; rather, it is called forth by the Other who initiates in the Self the movements of desire and transcendence.

a. Desire and Transcendence. The encounter with the Other reveals to the Self modalities which are characteristic of its reality as an existent capable of overcoming its egoistic and totalizing inclinations. These modalities are referred to as desire and transcendence. These are considered as metaphysical movements which open the possibility of a kind of relationship between the Self and the Other which is described as ethical.

For Levinas, the Self is not characterized only by its needs which incline it towards an egoistic and totalizing relation to whatever is outside of itself. In addition to the needs of biological or physical existence, the Self also has higher-level needs which are identified as desire and transcendence.

As already pointed out, the needs of the Self are based on a lack or an insufficiency which moves the Self to reach out for things that would fill this lack. Because of its needs, the subject goes out of itself but eventually goes back to itself. Hence, need is a movement of immanence

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and it is centered on the Self.

Desire, on its part, comes from the Self but it is also called forth by the Other. It is the openness of the Self to an Other who invites it to go out of its own Self and to leave the limiting confines of its own world. It carries the finite reality of the Self towards an Infinite Other that cannot be fully grasped and reduced to the Self. Desire is, therefore, a metaphysical movement of transcendence oriented towards the Other--the Good that is beyond and better than Being.³⁸⁹ This reality which is the object of desire and transcendence cannot be approached theoretically and reduced to a concept or representation of thought or defined in terms of being or essence. The transcendent Other is accessible only on the basis of an ethical relation marked by responsible subjectivity.

b. Responsible Subjectivity. The Self as responsible subject is not simply preoccupied with the practical concerns of satisfying its needs, accumulating possessions and seeking enjoyment. Neither is it just absorbed in the

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Gerber, "Totality and Infinity: Hebraism and Hellenism: The Experiential Ontology of Emmanuel Levinas," Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry, 7 (Fall, 1967), pp. 181-182.

389

Ibid.; See also Levinas, "God and Philosophy," Philosophy Today, 22 (Summer, 1978), p. 135.

theoretical concern of constituting the meanings of objects or comprehending Being. Rather, the Self as responsible subject is the separate existent maintaining a relationship with the Other on the ethical plane. This ethical relation between the Self and the Other is described in terms of the following modalities: signification, proximity, sensibility, de-position, dispossession, substitution, unicity, infinity and justice. All these modalities are manifest in the face-to-face togetherness of the Self and the Other.

(1) The Face and Signification. The meeting of the Self and the Other is a face-to-face relation. For the whole body of the Self expresses itself in the face. And the true reality of the Self breaks forth in the face.

The face approaches with a glance, a word, a gesture or a movement of the whole body. It addresses, expresses an appeal to, and makes demands of the Self. The face should not be merely taken as an object of impassive contemplation, represented by a concept and identified only with its meaning which is constituted by the conscious Self. "A face is not known; it is faced." And facing is a response that is non-representational, non-cognitive or non-reductive.

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 262.

391

Ibid., p. 290.

392

Lingis, op. cit., p. 151.

The face is pre-eminently an expression. The expression in the face is also referred to as a saying, signifyingness, signification, meaning, discourse, speech or language. But what meaning does the Self signify and what response does it require from the Self? As the primordial expression, the face conveys the first word, the first signification and the first evidence.³⁹³

What is immediately manifest in the face is its uprightness as it approaches without defense--i.e., with eyes that are defenseless and a voice that is disarming. The Other can, of course, wear a mask to hide the real expression of the face; but facing is actually unmasking.³⁹⁴ The Other may try to put on poses or to take on a countenance in order to hide the poverty and the nudity of the face.³⁹⁵ The Other, thus, can signify in his face an essential poverty and nudity.

The Other's face that is exposed without defense is menaced. Precisely because it is defenseless, it invites the Self to an act of violence; at the same time, it forbids

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 178; Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 89; Burke, op. cit., p. 201.

³⁹⁴

Lingis, op. cit., p. 151.

³⁹⁵

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 86.

the Self to kill.³⁹⁶ An ethical exigency or a moral demand is, therefore, expressed in the face of the Other. Consequently, the relation to the face is straightaway ethical. And the first word of the face is--"You shall not kill."³⁹⁷ This is a commandment or an order that is spoken, as it were, by the Other as a master or an authority who judges the Self. But the Other's face which conveys this moral order or commandment exposes its essential poverty and destitution. Hence, the Other bears the countenance of "the poor, the stranger, the widow or the orphan"³⁹⁸ as well as that of the master or the judge called to invest and justify the freedom of the Self. The face expresses both the humility and the height of the Other and situates him in a dimension of both abasement and transcendence.

What is, therefore, primordially communicated by the face of the Other is a contestation of the freedom and power of the Self and it is at the same time an appeal to the Self to live the life of responsibility and goodness. The appeal

³⁹⁶

Ibid.

³⁹⁷

Ibid., p. 87.

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 251; Here, Levinas is referring to a biblical theme. See the following passages enjoining the Hebrews to do justice to "the poor, the stranger, the widow or the orphan"--Exodus 22:20-21, 23:9; Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 10:17-19, 24:17-22, 27:19; Jeremiah 7:6, 22:3; Psalm 146.

or contestation expressed in the Other's face is an ethical exigency which constitutes the primordial expression, signification or meaning. "Meaning is the face of the Other, and all recourse to words take place already within the primordial face to face of language."³⁹⁹

Since the face conveys the absolutely primordial meaning, it is the ground or foundation of language or discourse. Since the first evidence or rationality gleams forth in the face of the Other, it conditions reason or thought. Because the face of the Other calls into question the freedom of the Self, it justifies and promotes the responsible exercise of freedom. But although the face of the Other contests and opposes the power of the Self, it also offers new powers to the Self by awakening it to other and better powers: powers of welcome, of full hands, of gift, of hospitality.⁴⁰⁰

The ethical relation is not a symmetrical but an asymmetrical relation. For the Other is not considered as an equal to the Self. Paradoxically, the Other is both more and less than the Self. This is signified by certain polarities in the Self with respect to the Other.⁴⁰¹

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 206.

400

Ibid., p. 205.

401

Gilkey, op. cit., pp. 26-38.

The polarity concerns the height and at the same time the humility of the Other. In his opposition to the egoistic and totalizing moves of the Self, the Other appears absolute, superior and transcendent to the Self. In questioning the power of the Self and summoning it to its duties and obligations to the Other, he is the Self's master and judge. He appears as from a height far transcending the Self. Yet, this transcendent Other has his needs and suffers from a deprivation of the things that can satisfy his needs. This puts the Other in a state of destitution. And in destitution and humility, the Other draws forth from the Self the desire to transcend itself and to respond to the needs of the Other.

A second polarity is that of power and powerlessness in the Other. The Other possesses power because he opposes the egoistic and totalizing attempts of the Self to take him as an object to be completely grasped and controlled. He also manifests his power in challenging the Self to assert its inherent sense for goodness towards Others. Yet, the Other is also powerless, for he approaches the Self without any weapon save the expression of need and destitution in his face.

A final polarity is that of the Other's being both a stranger and a neighbor. The Other is a stranger because the Self does not really know him and has no emotion for him

personally. The relation that the Self maintains with the Other is not based on personal love but on the rigorous demand of justice and goodness. The strangeness of the responsibility imposed on the Self implies that justice and goodness must extend not only to the Self's family and friends but also to anyone else who has the face of Man. The brotherhood or fraternity between the Self and the Other is not based on biological oneness but on the recognition and acceptance of obligations and responsibilities to the Other. Yet, the Other is also a neighbor, i.e., someone who is close to the Self and the concern of the activities of the Self as a responsible subject.

The polarities show that the Other is paradoxically both less and more than the Self. Less, for he appears as one in need and bears the countenance of "the poor, the stranger, the widow or the orphan." More, because the Other judges the Self and challenges it to make use of its power and resources in serving and helping the Other.

The appeal of the Other in his need and destitution arouses the Self's inherent desire for transcendence towards a life of responsible subjectivity. Thus, the Other's appeal does not only limit but also justifies the freedom of the Self and arouses its innate sense of goodness.

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 200.

The Other who speaks to the Self solicits a response. He requires first that the Self answer in its own name. This brings to the Self the realization that its existence consists in obligations and responsibilities. And the Self which faces the Other exposes itself to these obligations and responsibilities; it finds itself in a situation which urgently calls for a decision--to accept or to evade an obligation or a responsibility. The Self has the freedom to shut itself up in the limiting confines of its own world or to hold itself open to the transcendence of the Other and to assume a life of responsible subjectivity. Any response given by the Self already acknowledges the approach and presence of the Other. When the Self responds as a responsible subject to the Other, it enters into a relation which is characterized first of all by proximity and sensibility.

(2) Proximity and Sensibility. Proximity in the ethical relation does not simply refer to a modality of distance or space. It does not merely signify that two objects are beside each other. It is not a relation on the cognitive level whereby the Self is related to the Other as mediated by a concept. Proximity is essentially the face-to-face togetherness of the Self and the Other.⁴⁰³ And

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 101.

this is accomplished by the Self which makes itself present to the Other who approaches the Self.

Proximity implies closeness that removes distance and establishes contact. But it is not only physical closeness in space; neither is it the intentional connection between consciousness and its object. Proximity attaches the Self to the Other but this attachment does not resemble the representational form of the intentionality of knowledge which attaches the object--even if this be a human subject--⁴⁰⁴ to the Self. The relation of proximity is non-representational, non-cognitive and non-reductive. It is a metaphysical and ethical relation with the Other as the neighbor and the brother whom the Self cannot ignore or abandon without having feelings of guilt that disturb the complacency of the Self in its possession and enjoyment of things in the world. Proximity is thus positively and concretely realized by the Other who approaches the Self, addresses it, questions the spontaneous egoistic exercise of its freedom and power, and summons it to establish a relation based on obligations and responsibilities.

Proximity gives birth to an essential signification. It signifies the difference between the Self and the Other. But this awareness of their difference immediately turns

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Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, pp. 96-97.

into the non-indifference of the Self with respect to the Other. Thus, proximity paves the way to communication,
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 agreement, understanding or peace.

Proximity involves sensibility which is not just a cognitive but also an affective function. Sensibility is not so much apprehensiveness about one's own being as susceptibility to being affected by the Other out of concern for the latter's well-being. Sensibility is not merely perception but mainly sensitivity, vulnerability and affectivity. It is sensitivity to the needs of the Other; it is vulnerability to the pain and suffering of the Other; it is affectivity in the sense of susceptibility to being wounded or outraged for the sake of the Other. As sensibility, vulnerability and affectivity, proximity is exposedness to, and passivity in, the presence of the Other. The passivity in proximity makes the Self truly a "subject" in its "exposure" and "subjection" to the Other to the point of giving up its own valued possessions and privileged position or sacrificing its very own Self for the sake of the Other. This implies de-position and dispossession as essential modalities of responsible subjectivity. These are taken up in the following discussion.

(3) De-position and Dispossession.

Responsible subjectivity also entails de-position and dispossession on the part of the Self. The de-position or de-situating of the Self implies first of all the recurrence or return of the Self to itself. Summoned by the Other who calls into question the egoistic and totalizing moves of the freedom of the Self, the Self goes back to itself, de-poses or displaces itself as absolute center of its world, and places its world and possessions at the disposal of the Other. De-position is "the form of a corporeal life devoted to expression and to giving."⁴⁰⁶

The de-position of the Self actually means that it is outside of a situation, without a dwelling place, expelled from everywhere and from itself, extradited to its neighbor and reduced to the reality of one saying to the Other: "Here I am"--one-for-the-Other in responsibility.⁴⁰⁷ Thus, the de-position of the Self implies null-site, restlessness and dis-interested existence in the sense of an existence that is not involved in the struggle of beings to persevere or persist in being.

Responsible subjectivity which involves the de-posing or de-situating of the Self is opposed to the egoistic and

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Ibid., p. 50.

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Ibid., pp. 146, 149, 150.

totalizing tendencies of the Self. It means setting limits to the selfish possession and enjoyment of things in the world; it is being more concerned with giving rather than with getting. For the Other cannot be approached with "empty hands" or a "closed home."

But the act of dispossession or the positive sharing of possessions is not confined to the gift giving of material things. Through language or discourse, the Self and the Other can share each other's world. Real community is established when the Self takes the initiative of welcoming the Other and offering its world as a gift to the Other.⁴⁰⁸ Language or discourse puts in "common" a world which at first belongs only to the Self. It makes possible the disclosure of the uniqueness of the Self and the otherness of the Other. Hence, it accomplishes a pluralistic relation whereby the Self and the Other do not lose their identity and are not reabsorbed into each other while being in mutual relation.

Responsible subjectivity, however, may go beyond the sharing of possessions or the sharing of each other's world. It may ask the Self to give up its own life for the sake of the Other. Being responsible may entail giving to the Other "the bread out of one's own mouth and the coat from one's

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 173.

409 "shoulder" and "making a gift of one's own skin." 410

This implies the exposure of the Self to the responsibility of supporting and expiating for the Other as well as to an obligation which nobody else could assume. This points out to us two other modalities of responsible subjectivity, namely, substitution and unicity. These are treated in the following discussion.

(4) Substitution and Unicity. We have said that in the ethical relation, the Self finds itself faced with the moral exigency or demand to answer for another--for what he is and what he does. This moral demand puts the Self under the obligation to abandon not only its possessions but also its very own Self in substituting for the Other.⁴¹¹ In responding to this obligation, the Self not only plays host to the Other but becomes a hostage for the Other. In assuming the condition of being a hostage and one expiating for the Other, the Self expresses itself truly as a "subject", i.e., a total subjection to the Other to whom and for whom it is responsible. Hence, we find in the act of substituting for another the very heart of responsibility.

409

Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 55.

410

Ibid., p. 138.

411

Ibid., pp. 118, 125.

In substituting for another, the Self puts itself in the place of the Other. This means first of all that the Self displaces, de-poses or de-situates itself by leaving its privileged position and moving into the situation where the Other finds himself. Moreover, substituting for the Other means that the Self offers support to the Other with its very own substance. However, this does not imply the negation or annihilation of the Self; it is not "a flight into the void, but a movement into fullness."⁴¹² For the act of substituting or expiating for the Other constitutes the very meaning or reality of the Self as a responsible subject.

At the very core of its substance, the Self may be identified as a "lung".⁴¹³ This means that the Self holds its life in its "lung." And the very breath of the Self, the very "pneuma of its psyche", i.e., the inspiration of its life is in substituting for the Other. But this inspiration may eventually turn into expiation or expiration--the total sacrifice of the Self for the Other.⁴¹⁴ Thus, the subjectivity of the Subject or the Self finds its fullest expression in its being persecuted and in

412

Ibid., p. 108.

413

Ibid., p. 180.

414

Ibid., p. 116.

submitting to martyrdom for the sake of the Other. The fear in the Self for the death of the Other lies at the basis of responsibility for him. And being responsible for the life and death of the Other is the very meaning of the Self as responsible subjectivity.
415

In substituting or taking the place of an Other, the Self inhabits its own space, then opens itself as space and finally frees itself by leaving the "closure" of its own Self. In substituting for the Other, the Self frees itself from the feeling of "ennui" and the suffocating confinement to its own Self.
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The openness of the Self to space (which makes the openness of all space possible) also means that the Self is without a world, without a place and outside of walls. This implies "null-site" or "utopia" and brings about the experience of restlessness in the Self. This restlessness drives the Self outside of itself and holds it open to the Other.
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The identity or the unicity of the Self is not based on a unique trait of its nature or on a special character of the Self; neither is it based solely on the particularity of

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Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 119.

416

Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 124.

417

Ibid., p. 142.

the Subject's enjoyment of things in life. The uniqueness of the Subject or the Self is in being "involved in responsibility" and responding to its obligations to the Other.⁴¹⁸ In holding itself responsible for the Other or in substituting for the Other, the Self is exposed to an obligation that nobody else could assume. For nobody can take away from the Self its share of obligations in life. The Self may give up certain responsibilities but it cannot give up its obligation to be responsible and good. And the irreplaceability of the Self in its obligations and responsibilities is the very source of its identity or unicity. Here, the Self is one without a double and, therefore, unique. The identity or unicity of the "I" thus comes from its inability to evade or escape from responsibility for what the Self has not wished either for itself or for the Other.⁴¹⁹ The "I" is truly its own unique Self through being for-the-Other in responsibility and goodness.

In its being addressed and contested by the Other, the Self is summoned, singled out, accused for what the Other does, i.e., it is assigned to assume responsibility for the Other. This "accusation" or "assignation" weighs heavily on the Self and obliges it to respond in its own

418

Ibid., p. 139.

419

Ibid., pp. 103, 112, 114, 128.

name. It awakens the Self to the realization that its very existence is exposure to the obligation of bearing responsibility even for the fault of the Other. And this moral exigency singularizes the Subject or the Self. The word "I" really means "Here I am" answering for everything and for everyone.⁴²⁰ And "the Self is a sub-jectum: it is under the weight of the universe, responsible for everything."⁴²¹

This exposure to the undeclinable obligation of being responsible for the Other shows the essential condition or unconditionality of the Self in the state of passivity. From the very start, the "I" is placed in a state of passivity before an undeclinable responsibility; hence, it is in the "accusative" and truly a "self".⁴²² And this passivity of the Self which is essential to its reality is reflected linguistically in the signification of the word "self" (see, 501) as an accusative without a nominative form.⁴²³

The notion of the extraordinary or exceptional responsibility of the Self to the Other which entails the

420

Ibid., p. 114; See also Levinas, "God and Philosophy," p. 141.

421

Levinas, Otherwise than Being p. 116.

422

Ibid., p. 139.

423

Ibid., p. 112.

undeclinable obligation of substituting for the Other may be made meaningful by relating it to the primordial, an-archival, unconditional, absolute and undeclinable responsibility of the Self to the Other.

The original or primordial responsibility of the Self to the Other is an-archival--i.e., "a plot without beginning", prior to every beginning, without an origin, without prior commitment, without a present or before every present, prior to or beyond freedom and non-freedom.⁴²⁴

This means that the Self is assigned a responsibility before it can exercise its freedom to make a choice to accept or evade the responsibility. This puts the Self in a condition of "unavowable innocence."⁴²⁵ This original condition does not refer to the Self in "a state of original sin" on account of which it is made to bear responsibility for what is beyond its fault. Rather, we must refer here to the condition of the Self in "the original goodness of creation."⁴²⁶ And this original condition wherein the Self finds itself before an obligation it cannot decline actually refers to the condition of the Self as a creature.

Levinas accounts for the source of the exceptional responsibility of the Self to the Other by referring to the

424

Ibid., pp. 116, 118, 135, 153.

425

Ibid., p. 121.

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Ibid.

time of creation when the Self is in a condition of passivity. In creation, the Self is in a state of "passivity more passive still than the passivity of matter."⁴²⁷ The passivity of matter is actually receptivity, for it presupposes an already existing substance receiving an activity. But in the case of creation, there is no pre-existing substance that receives the activity of creation. The Self is non-existent prior to its creation. Hence, there is no Self that could receive the activity of creation.⁴²⁸

In being created as a particular creature, the Self is assigned a responsibility at the moment of its creation. This responsibility is the very life of the Self; it is constitutive of the very meaning of its subjectivity. Consequently, this responsibility is not something chosen voluntarily; it is given prior to or before the exercise of freedom (as principle of responsibility), prior to any commitment or contract, or prior to the present or to every present. In this light, we understand that the initial exceptional or extraordinary responsibility which is the source of all other responsibilities is pre-originary, an-

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Ibid., pp. 113-114.

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A. Tallon, "Emmanuel Levinas and the Problem of Ethical Metaphysics," Philosophy Today, 20 (Spring, 1976), note nos. 31 and 32, p. 65.

archical, unconditional, undeclinable, unchosen, absolute or infinite responsibility.

In creation, the Self is already responsible to the Other as it holds itself answerable to the Other who is its Creator. The pre-originary or an-archical responsibility is, therefore, a subjection and an allegiance to the Good over and beyond Being.⁴²⁹ And the essential reality of the Self is goodness. But goodness in the subject or the Self is itself an-archy, i.e., prior to the beginning, outside of freedom or non-freedom, prior to any act of goodness or any act of violence on the part of the Self. In this light, it is meaningful to say that "if no one is good voluntarily, no one is a slave to the Good."⁴³⁰

To recapitulate, responsible subjectivity has been described so far in terms of proximity, sensibility, deposition, dispossession, dis-interested existence, subjection and allegiance to the Good. More particularly or more radically, responsibility implies the non-indifference of the Self to the Other which is an "accusation" or "assignation" that entails substitution and pushes the Self to place itself in the condition of being a hostage for the Other. Responsible subjectivity, however, which involves

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 126.

430

Ibid., p. 138.

the putting of the Self in the place of the Other also entails the putting of the idea of infinity in the Self by the Other. For the Other to whom and for whom the Self is responsible bears witness to the reality of the transcendent and infinite Other. This is the theme in the following section.

(5) The Face and Infinity. In and through the ethical relation, the idea of infinity comes to the Self. The Other who bears testimony to itself as an infinitely transcendent Other conveys this idea to the Self. This truth is an essential signification of the ethical relation.

Infinity breaks through the ethical structure in two ways. It is made manifest in the irreducibility of the Other to the Self as well as in the unsatisfiability of the ethical exigency.⁴³¹

Even as the Self penetrates gradually into the Other's world, it realizes the impossibility of knowing the Other exhaustively. Every meeting with the Other brings out the element of novelty and places him in a new light. The Other's revelation is a continuous unfolding and displacing of each image or idea that the Self has of him. For the Other is incessantly and infinitely withdrawing and

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Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 105.

surpassing his revelations. This is referred to as the movement of infinity on the part of the Other; and this signifies that the Other cannot be reduced into frozen concepts or congealed in words. The reality of the Other expresses a surplus of meaning that cannot be thematized or conceptualized and fully comprehended or circumscribed by the intentionality of thought. And to enter into a relationship with the Other whose reality transcends his successive revelations and refuses to be fully contained and possessed in thought is to have the idea of infinity.

There is also infinity or unendingness with respect to responsibility or to the ethical exigency. At no time can the Self say that it has accomplished all of its duties and obligations. Every response it makes leaves the possibility of an exigency for another response. It finds that obligations and responsibilities increase in the measure that they are satisfied, and that the more it becomes just, the more it becomes responsible. The subject or the Self becomes more responsible, the more it responds to the Other, as though the distance between it and the Other is increased in the measure that their proximity is increased.⁴³²

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, pp. 105, 106, 139, 140.

The Other bears witness to the reality of the infinite Other who is God. For the Infinite is there in the moral order whereby He orders the Self to answer for the Other. The Self who says "Here I am" before the Other actually manifests what the face of that Other signifies to him; and this is the moral command coming from the Infinite Other who is God.⁴³³ This Infinite Other reveals itself through what it is capable of doing in the one who obeys the command, i.e., the Self.⁴³⁴

In saying "Here I am" through the Self, the Infinite enters language. He is manifest as a voice that exposes the Self's exposedness to the Other. The Infinite passes its command to the one who obeys. Thus, the commandment is stated by the one who is ordered.⁴³⁵ Here, there is an inversion of the order of revelation, for what is revealed is made by him who receives it.⁴³⁶ The Infinite who is exterior to the Self becomes an interior voice communicating something to the Other. In the process, the exteriority of the Infinite becomes a signification of the interiority of

433

Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 109.

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 147; See also Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 109.

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 147.

436

Ibid., p. 156.

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 the Self. But it is actually the nonphenomenal Infinite that utters the moral imperative. Hence, all responsibility bears testimony to the Infinite Other who is God.

The approach of the Other and his signification, expression or meaning cannot be thematized and conceptualized or reduced to a representation in consciousness because it is not really a phenomenon but the trace of "Illeity." What is referred to by "Illeity" is the "detachment of the Infinite from the thought that seeks to thematize it and the language that tries to hold it in the said."⁴³⁸ The trace of "Illeity" manifests the invisible Infinite Other. But although the Infinite Other who is God is invisible, the visible Other renders testimony to His reality; although the Infinite Other is nonthematizable, He is attested to by the Other who is His manifestation.

To take the Infinite Other as a phenomenon and a presence would be to circumscribe it as a theme, assign it a beginning in the present of the representational form of the intentionality of consciousness. But as the infinition of infinity, the Infinite Other comes from a past more distant than that which is within the reach of memory and

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Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 109.

438

Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 147.

capable of being lined up with what is presented in
 consciousness.⁴³⁹ The idea of the Infinite Other breaks up
 the structure of consciousness or thought which synthesizes
 the various appearances of a phenomenon and encloses or
 reduces them to the present of consciousness.⁴⁴⁰

Thus, the Infinite Other signifies enigmatically and
 diachronically. For the Infinite Other belongs not just to
 the present but to a remote past and a distant future that
 cannot be rendered present by a concept or representation in
 thought. This enigmatic reality of the Infinite Other is
 referred to as the diachronic dis-order in the ethical. And
 this separates the Infinite Other from all phenomenality,
 appearance, being or essence and renders it inaccessible to
 thematization, representation or the synchronic order of
 consciousness which attempts to synthesize the temporal
 phases into the present by retrospection and propection.

The essential movement of the Self as a conscious
 subject in the presence of being or essence is to thematize,
 re-present, synchronize, synthesize, integrate or totalize.
 But this movement or orientation is not possible in the case
 of the Transcendent and Infinite Other who is outside of
 being and beyond essence. In the presence of the Infinite

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Ibid., p. 144.

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Levinas, "God and Philosophy," p. 133.

Other, the Self experiences restlessness, transcendence or infinity. And the Self as responsible subject realizes that the Infinite Other is approachable meaningfully only on the ethical plane rather than on the ontological or theoretical level.

The ethical relation between the Self and the Other who reveals himself in his height, transcendence and infinity is metaphorically designated as a "curvature of the intersubjective ⁴⁴¹ space." This curvature "inflects distance into elevation" and reflects the presence of God in the Other who approaches the Self. This manifestation of God in the Other explains at a deeper level the asymmetry or dissymmetry in the ethical relation.

The relationship between the Self and the Other who is recognized in his eminence does not imply the subservience of the Self to this Other. For the "I" can feel itself to be the Other of the Other. ⁴⁴² And the responsibility of the Self for all the Others can, and has to manifest itself also in limiting itself. The Self is thus called upon to concern itself with itself. ⁴⁴³ This implies an exigency for the mode of relationship which

441

Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 291.

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Ibid., p. 84.

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 128.

Levinas describes as justice.

(6) The Exigency for Justice. Proximity was earlier described as an essential modality of responsible subjectivity. It signifies the asymmetry or the one-sidedness of the ethical relation.⁴⁴⁴ This asymmetry of the ethical relation implies the primacy of the Other over the Self. For in the ethical relation, the Other imposes on the Self an undecidable and unconditional obligation which even calls for the Self to sacrifice itself in substituting and expiating for the Other. But although the Self can substitute for the Other, it does not necessarily mean that the Other can substitute for the Self. This asymmetry in the ethical relation, however, is corrected in the relation marked by justice which entails the mutual concern of the Self and the Other for obligations and responsibilities to each other.

Justice is established when the "I" that is always for the Other becomes an Other like the Other. This is instituted with the entry of a third party. In the face of the Other that obsesses the Self, all the Others are already present, for "the other is from the first the brother of all the other men."⁴⁴⁵ The third party is other than the Other

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Above, pp. 178ff.

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 158.

and makes the "I" one among Others. And the one before whom and for whom the Self is responsible is in turn responsible to another one. The entry of the third party calls into question the asymmetry of proximity or the one-sidedness of responsibility, and signifies the exigency for an order among responsibilities. It calls for the order of justice which moderates or measures the substitution of the One for the Other.⁴⁴⁶

If responsibility in proximity ordered the Self only to the Other, there would have been no problem, and no questions would have arisen, for consciousness. For the responsibility to the Other is precisely proximity--i.e., prior to every commitment, contract or freedom (as principle of responsibility) and consequently an-archival, i.e., without a beginning, immediacy and antecedent to all questions. But the entry of a third party disturbs the Self and raises problems or questions on the initial one-sidedness of the absolute or unconditional responsibility of the Self to the Other.

The third party is Other than the Other who is the neighbor of the Self; he is another neighbor to the Self, and also a neighbor to the Other. The Other and the third party, both being neighbors and contemporaries to one

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ibid., pp. 158-159.

another, put a distance between the Self and the Other as well as the third party; this introduces a contradiction in the demand for a one-way street of absolute responsibility of the Self for the Other. In the proximity of the Other, all the Others aside from the Other obsesses the Self. This obsessive presence of the many Others to the Self cries out for justice. And Levinas says that justice necessarily requires "comparison, co-existence, contemporaneity, assembling, order, thematization, the visibility of faces, and thus intentionality and the intellect, and . . . the intelligibility of a system."⁴⁴⁷ All these things refer to the work of intentional consciousness required by the exigency for justice. And this work essentially involves the ordering or prioritizing of responsibilities. For the obsessive presence of the Others pushes the Self to carefully consider its responsibilities towards them and to recognize which one calls for immediate attention.

The neighbor who obsesses the Self is a face both comparable and incomparable; incomparable because it is a unique face, yet comparable because it is in relationship with other faces that become visible in the consideration of the Self's consciousness as called forth by the concern for justice. In turn, as a subject incomparable with the Other,

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ibid., p. 157.

the Self is approached as an Other by the Others, i.e., for
 itself. The "I" is an Other for the Others.⁴⁴⁸ And every
 incomparable subject turns into a One among other members of
 society. Thus, the Self and all the Others appear together;
 because of contemporaneity, one can go from the One to the
 Other and from the Other to the One. Such an order where
 the Self and all the Others show themselves and appear
 together at the same time is the condition for the
 possibility of justice.⁴⁴⁹

Out of the simultaneity of the Self and of the Other
 emerges the order of justice introducing an added dimension
 to the an-archival and pre-originary one way relation of the
 proximity of the Self to the Other and thereby making
 possible reciprocity or reversibility in the relation. But
 justice, in which One is an Other for the Other, is not the
 degeneration or limitation of an-archival responsibility; it
 is the institution of an order among responsibilities and
 the plurality of ethical instances and situations.

Nothing lies outside of the control of the
 responsibility of the Self to the Other. Justice, society,
 the State and its institutions, exchanges and work are all

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Ibid., p. 158.

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Vasey, op. cit., p. 191.

comprehensible and justifiable on the basis of proximity.⁴⁵⁰
 Institutions are inevitable and necessary for the exercise
 of justice, but they must be held in check by the initial
 interpersonal relation of proximity.⁴⁵¹

As already pointed out, the an-archic, pre-originary
 "saying" or "meaning" of proximity--the difference between
 the Self and the Other which turns into non-indifference and
 demands substitution, duty without end or unlimited
 responsibility--calls for the order of justice and the work
 of intellectual consciousness. Justice imposes a rational
 order on the unconditional and extraordinary commitment of
 proximity.⁴⁵² This implies that philosophy which imposes
 the rational order is called into thought by justice.⁴⁵³
 Philosophy serves justice "by thematizing the difference and
 reducing the thematized to difference."⁴⁵⁴ More
 specifically, philosophy justifies and criticizes "the laws
 of being and of the city" by relating or grounding them once
 more to the meaning conveyed by the initial ethical relation

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 159.

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Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 90.

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 161.

453

Ibid., p. 162.

454

Ibid., p. 165.

between the Self and the Other, which consists essentially
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 in the non-indifference of the One to the Other.

The preceding account throws light on a relation between philosophy and the ethical relation. As already pointed out, responsible subjectivity is a response to the pre-originary ethical exigency signified in the ethical relation between the Self and the Other; but it also entails a response to the exigency for justice. However, the exercise of justifying and grounding justice on the ethical exigency is the task of philosophy. In this movement of justification, philosophy ensures that what is fixed in the "said", written as laws, or established as a theory, does not betray the original meaning expressed in the anarchical, pre-originary, unconditional responsibility of proximity, which consists essentially in the non-indifference of the Self to the Other; i.e., in the responsibility of the Self to-be-for-the-Other.

The foregoing discussion of Levinas' philosophy of responsible subjectivity will now be clinched with the following notes on the relation between the ethical relation and the event of meaning.

The Ethical Relation and the Event of Meaning

As emphasized in the preceding presentation, the ethical structure points to the essential and primary structure of the Self as a responsible Subject. For the ethical relation which reveals to the Self an Other, who paralyzes its egoistic and totalizing moves, likewise conveys the meaning of the reality of the Self--namely, to be for-the-Other more than to be for-oneself; in other words, to be responsible for the Other rather than to persevere in one's own being. The meaning of the Self's being lies not in inter-ested existence but in dis-interested existence which is an existence that is not preoccupied with persevering or persisting in its own being. And the truth or meaning of the essential reality of the Self is conveyed in the ethical relation or proximity rather than in the theoretical relation of intentionality.

Responsible subjectivity as dis-interested existence has been described in terms of the modalities of desire, transcendence, signification, proximity, de-position, dispossession, substitution, unicity, infinity and justice. At the basis of responsibility is the fear for the death of the Other. Hence, the responsible subject holds himself responsible both for the life and the death of the Other.

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Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 119.

But if one fears for the Other more than for oneself, can one even live at all? Levinas says that the most important question to be asked concerning being is not the question raised by Leibniz and so much commented upon by Heidegger--Why is there being rather than nothing? Rather, one must ultimately raise the following questions: Should I be dedicated to being? By being or persisting in being, do I not kill? Do I have the right to be at all? Is being in the world not taking the place of someone else? Each of these questions put into question the naive and natural perseverance in one's own being.⁴⁵⁷

Contrary to what many reassuring traditions say, being is never its own reason for being, and the famous conatus in suo esse perseverandi is not the source of all right and meaning.⁴⁵⁸ The true meaning of the Self lies in responsible subjectivity which entails the dis-interested existence devoted to what is Other and better than being or to what is beyond essence, rather than the inter-ested existence dedicated to the comprehension of being. And this meaning of the Self as responsible subjectivity gleams forth in the face of the transcendent and infinite Other.

The face of this transcendent and infinite Other is

457

Ibid., pp. 120-121.

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Ibid., p. 122.

the primordial expression and source of all significations. It is the first intelligible thing but it is not contemplated as a concept or an intelligible essence; rather, it is heard as language, i.e., a word or meaning coming from the Other and thereby originating from something exterior to the Self. Hence, it is a meaning or truth that is truly transcendent and irreducible to the immanence of thought in the Self.

Language or discourse is better and more appropriate than comprehension as a way of relating with what cannot be fully contained in thought and remains essentially and infinitely transcendent. For speech cuts across vision; and speaking rather than "letting be" calls forth the Other.⁴⁵⁹

The face as the primordial saying or expression conveys the first word that founds language or discourse. It also signifies the first intelligible that conditions rationally or thought. Rather than awaiting meaning or deriving meaning from the Self, the Other conveys to the Self its identity as responsible subjectivity. This primordial expression conveyed in the ethical relation is prior to the meaning-giving act (Sinngebung) of the intentionally conscious subject. Thus, giving an account of

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 195.

the ethical relation is actually describing the event of meaning.

The account of the ethical relation brings to one's attention the incontestable fact that the synchronic order of intentionality and consciousness cannot completely surmount the diachronic dis-order in the ethical relation. As already pointed out,⁴⁶⁰ the intentional structure of consciousness or thought that synthesizes or synchronizes the various appearances of a phenomenon and reduces these to a concept or representation in thought, cannot adequately deal with the reality or meaning signified by the Other to the Self in the ethical relation. For the Other who approaches the Self is not a phenomenon that can be circumscribed by thought and reduced to the present of the representational form of the intentionality or consciousness; rather, he comes from a remote past and belongs to a distant future. The enigmatic reality of the Other suggests the diachrony of the time of the Other and points to the diachronic dis-order in the ethical relation, which opposes the synchronizing activity of consciousness or thought. For Levinas, the Other is actually the nonphenomenal trace of God as the Transcendent and Infinite Other who refuses to be thematized and fully encompassed by thought. In dealing

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Above, p. 197.

with this nonphenomenality of the Other, Levinas ventures beyond phenomenology.

The primordial expression or signification that is made manifest by the Other to the Self in the ethical relation cannot be fully converted into thematic and systematic discourse. For the reality or the meaning of the Transcendent and Infinite Other which is originally, primordially and an-archically expressed in the ethical relation is continually transformed, dissembled or dissimulated by what is fixed in the "said". The reality of the Transcendent and Infinite Other cannot be fully circumscribed by thought and fully expressed in words; it is never totally absorbed into the order of thought and discourse. What is "said" about this Other is incommensurate to His reality and what he signifies or "says". Hence, it is necessary to continually return from what is thematized or what is "said" to that of the pre-originary "saying" in order to be faithful to the profound manifestation of the Transcendent and Infinite Other in the ethical relation. Levinas thinks that it has always been a temptation for philosophy to exhaustively reduce the meaning which is conveyed by the Transcendent and Infinite Other into the order of thought and discourse. In attempting to accomplish this, Western philosophy in general has failed to recognize the truth that the reality of the infinitely

transcendent Other resists the assembling and synchronizing activity of consciousness or thought. Hence, Levinas thinks that because of its failure to affirm this truth, "the history of Western Philosophy has not been the refutation of skepticism as much as the refutation of transcendence."⁴⁶¹

Western philosophy has been fundamentally an ontology--the comprehension of Being or the comprehension of the multiplicity of existents under a common term such as being or essence. And this is essentially the work of reason, consciousness or the totalizing Self. Levinas breaks from this tradition and proposes that ethics is the first philosophy. However, ethics is not a movement of Being, but of what is otherwise and better than being or of what is an exception to essence;⁴⁶² it is the very possibility, of a Beyond, i.e., of a transcendence towards Goodness.⁴⁶³ Ethics is essentially an account of the ethical relation--the non-thematizable, the approach of the Other, the pre-originary and an-archical "saying" or meaning

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 169.

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For Levinas, the essence of any reality can be fully encompassed by thought and approached on the theoretical or ontological plane. Since the Other cannot really be fully thematized and completely circumscribed by thought, Levinas says that the Other is an exception to essence and accessible only on the ethical level.

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Levinas, "God and Philosophy," p. 137.

that is manifest in the face-to-face togetherness, the diachronic dis-order of proximity, dis-interested existence; i.e., responsible subjectivity in relation with that which bears the trace of infinity and transcendence. This account of what is essentially signified by the ethical relation actually provides the foundation on which one can build an ethics considered as a system of laws or a set of values that could serve as a guide in making decisions with respect to one's situation in life.

For Levinas, the ethical is the most irreducible in experience. It is the stratum of experience which is the locus of all truth and meaning; it is the structure that subtends and animates the order of the "said", essence, intentionality and consciousness, ontology; or inter-ested existence.

But as repeatedly emphasized by Levinas, the pre-originary and an-archical "saying" or signification of the ethical relation cannot be fully grasped on the basis of the "said"; it is often betrayed or obliterated by what is "said". The pre-thematic alterity or exteriority of the Other, the diachronic time of the contact with the Other or the non-presence of the Other to the Self is continually dissembled, dissimulated or transformed by what is "said." What are put forth in a text may be unfaithful to the "pre-text". Thus, it is necessary to go back to the pre-

originary "saying" or signification in order to show the meaning proper to the "saying" that is obscured in the thematization of the "said".⁴⁶⁴ This movement involves a reduction from what is "said" or thematized to the non-thematizable pre-originary and an-archic "saying" or meaning in the ethical relation. And this reduction is the task of philosophy. The "saying" calls for philosophy so that what is beyond essence is not reduced or congealed into an essence or a being that can be circumscribed by thought. And the philosopher's effort of exposing an "ex-ception to essence" or an "otherwise than being" brings home to the Self as a responsible subject the truth or meaning of what is non-thematizable, refractory to the assembling activity or synchronic time of intentionality and consciousness, and irreducible to the immanence of the thought of the Self. Thus, the "said" that signifies this pre-originary, diachronic and enigmatic "saying" remains an insurmountable equivocation. And the reality or meaning of the Transcendent and Infinite Other who signifies what is "said" refuses to be completely translated into systematic theory and discourse. Philosophy must recognize this enigmatic reality and "saying" of the infinitely transcendent Other and acknowledge the impossibility of completely surmounting

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, pp. 43ff.

skepticism and attaining truth and certainty. Thus, Levinas
 points out to us the "invincible force of skepticism"⁴⁶⁵
 and the "skeptical essence of philosophy."⁴⁶⁶

Philosophy is inseparable from skepticism which
 follows it like a shadow.⁴⁶⁷ Skepticism is refuted, but it
 returns. For the truth that is conveyed to the Self by the
 transcendent Other is incessantly withdrawing and
 continually surpassing its revelations. And this truth
 exists only in moments that resist the assembling and
 synchronizing activity of consciousness. Consequently it is
 not accessible on the basis of a life dedicated to the
 comprehension of being; it is attainable only on the basis
 of the ethical life devoted to obligations and respon-
 sibilities to the Infinite Other who is the ex-ception to
 essence and the Good over and beyond being.

The foregoing discussion is definitely not an
 exhaustive presentation of Levinas' philosophy of
 responsible subjectivity. It simply represents an attempt
 to express one's grasp of the profound expression of the
 thought of Levinas concerning the reality of the Self. And

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Ibid., p. 169.

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Levinas, "God and Philosophy," p. 144.

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 168.

it holds itself open to other and deeper expressions of the meaning conveyed in this philosophy. In the following chapter, the thoughts of Emmanuel Levinas particularly on the Self will be related to those of Edmund Husserl.

CHAPTER IV

A COMPARISON OF THE PERSPECTIVES OF HUSSERL AND LEVINAS ON THE SELF

Two philosophical perspectives on the self were presented in the preceding discussions. One was that of Edmund Husserl--the founder of transcendental phenomenological philosophy. The other was that of Emmanuel Levinas--one of the successors of Husserl in the French phenomenological school. The presentations were based mainly on Husserl's Cartesian Meditations and Levinas' two major philosophical works--Totality and Infinity and Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence.

Husserl is rigorously logical and systematic in his writings, but his "usual dry style" and highly complicated logic make it difficult for us to follow in detail the progression of his thought. Levinas, on his part, is "evocative rather than expository" in the presentation of his thought and he usually uses words in their etymological significations. Moreover, he does not express his thought in "a chain of carefully reasoned arguments" but in "semi-poetic, rhapsodic and grammatically elusive meditations around certain central intuitions or metaphors."⁴⁶⁸ Levinas' metaphors are more suggestive of

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Blum, op. cit., p. 146.

poetry than of systematic philosophical reflections.

This peculiar style in Levinas' writings make it rather difficult for us to give a systematic presentation of his ideas.

The above discussions on the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas on the ego or the self tried to adhere closely and faithfully to the logic and language of their works being examined. Certain basic points established in the separate presentations of the two philosophers on the ego or the self will now be compared.

The thrust of the comparison undertaken in this study is to point out similarities and differences in the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas concerning the self. The comparison likewise intends to show the development that the fundamental notions of subjectivity and phenomenology have taken in the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas who is a disciple of Edmund Husserl.

It is hoped that a deeper and fuller understanding will be attained in relating the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas on the ego or the self as two perspectives on the same reality rather than in taking either in isolation from the other. It is likewise hoped that despite differences,

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Ibid., p. 155.

contrasts or divergences in the ideas of the two philosophers concerning the ego or the self, a unified and integrated view of the self will be attained.

The following are the aspects that shall be taken into consideration in relating the philosophical perspectives of Husserl and Levinas on the self: the identity of the self, the relation between the self and the Other, and the self and the question of meaning.

The Identity of the Self

The philosophical quest for the essential reality of the self requires a specific method. The views of Husserl and Levinas concerning the phenomenological method as a way to self-discovery will first be taken up before comparing their insights on the identity of the ego or the self.

1. The Way to Self-Discovery. The phenomenological philosophy intends to provide a methodological basis for all fields of inquiry.⁴⁷⁰ It offers a tool that may be particularly employed in the search for knowledge concerning the reality of the self. Husserl and Levinas both belong to the phenomenological tradition in philosophy. And they are

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Cf. A. Tymieniecka, Phenomenology and Science in Contemporary European Thought, with foreword by I.M. Bochenski (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy, c1962), p.22.

indebted to the phenomenological method in the presentation and development of their insightful theories concerning the ego or the self. However, it must be acknowledged that just as there are many phenomenologists, there are also varying conceptions of the phenomenological method. This is borne out particularly in the case of Husserl and Levinas.

Husserl inaugurated the phenomenological movement in philosophy and at the same time introduced the phenomenological method to bring into fulfillment the Cartesian ideal of philosophy as a rigorous science that would be the radical basis for all scientific disciplines. The attainment of this goal actually coincided with the discovery of the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity as the radical basis of philosophy or the absolutely universal knowledge and apodictic certainty that ensure the unshakeable foundation of philosophy and the rest of the sciences. In Husserl, transcendental phenomenology paved the way to self-discovery.

For Husserl, the phenomenological method refers basically to transcendental reduction and eidetic reduction.⁴⁷¹ Transcendental reduction implies the overcoming of the naive, practical and natural standpoint; it entails the setting aside of prejudices or biases

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Above, pp. 57ff., 69ff.

concerning the objects in the natural world; it calls for the suspension of judgment concerning all knowledge derived from the many sciences or disciplines that relate to the world; it involves a regressive inquiry into the ultimate source of all cognitions. In his rigorous application of this method of transcendental reduction, Husserl succeeded in uncovering the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity as the ultimate basis of all sense and being, and the radical starting point of philosophical and scientific investigations.⁴⁷²

Husserl also employed the method of eidetic reduction which results in the intuitive grasp of the eidos or essence of objects or objectivities in the transcendental field of experience of the ego or the subject. In the intuitive vision of the essences of things, the transcendental ego⁴⁷³ also uncovers or explicates its own eidos ego.

Moreover, the transcendental ego which is guided by universal and a priori rules directs its constitutive activities towards the systematic and all-embracing ordering of all objects of possible consciousness. In this way, the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity grounds the possibility of transcendental phenomenological philosophy as

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Above, pp. 57ff.

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Above, p. 75.

a radical and rigorous science that serves as the unshakeable foundation of all sciences of matters of fact as well as of the genuinely universal philosophy as a science of absolute proof.⁴⁷⁴

Thus, in the case of Husserl's philosophy, the phenomenological method of self-examination, which particularly involves the methods of transcendental reduction and eidetic intuition, discloses the essential structure of transcendental subjectivity and its lifetime task of constitution. The employment of the method eventually leads to a genuinely philosophical knowledge grounded in the highest sense.⁴⁷⁵

Like Husserl, Levinas also makes use of the phenomenological method in his philosophical investigations into the reality of the self. Levinas explicitly acknowledges his indebtedness to the phenomenological method introduced by Husserl. In his work Totality and Infinity, Levinas says that the presentation and development of his notion of subjectivity owe a lot to Husserl's method.⁴⁷⁶ And in his later work Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence, he says that he is actually moving within the

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Above, pp. 73-74.

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Above, pp. 121-122.

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 28.

spirit of Husserl's phenomenological method of intentional
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analysis.

Taking the side of Husserl against Heidegger who rejected transcendental reduction as a method, Levinas stresses that the task of philosophy is essentially one of
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reduction. And for Levinas, reduction also implies a regressive inquiry into that which is the most irreducible in experience which reveals to the self the ultimate source of all truth and meaning. However, Levinas diverges from Husserl on certain points related to the task of reduction.

In the case of Husserl, transcendental reduction implies that we detach ourselves from the world, i.e., we direct our attention only to the stream of our consciousness rather than to the world or any object outside of our consciousness. In the process, we uncover the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity as the basis of all knowledge. Through phenomenological analysis we will also disclose the essential noetic-noematic structure of consciousness or the representational form of the intentionality of the transcendental ego.

But in the case of Levinas, the reduction carries us to a level prior to the subject-object distinction effected

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 183.

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Vasey, op. cit., p. 193.

by consciousness or thought; it brings us to a level prior to the intentionality of consciousness or the pure ego. Levinas' reduction particularly discloses the level of incarnate subjectivity or of the intentionality of the body which relates the subject to the world of objects as medium and aliment. This implies that the reduction does not detach the subject from the world in order to immerse itself in the stream of its own consciousness; rather, it affirms the intentionality of the body as viewed in the relation between the Self and other things, which relation is not only exterior but also anterior to consciousness or thought.

In Husserl, the world is simultaneous with or a contemporary of thought, and ultimately reducible to the immanence of the thought of the ego or the self. The world serves as a spectacle to be rendered as a theme in the representational form of the intentionality of the conscious ego. In Levinas, however, the world is found not only as exterior but also as anterior to the Self. It is discovered first as medium or source of nourishment before it is made an object for contemplation or reflection. Levinas stresses that representation or thought is conditioned by life.⁴⁷⁹

Levinas thinks that the intentionality of incarnate subjectivity subtends the level of the representational form

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Above, pp. 162ff.

of the intentionality of consciousness or thought which is the essential structure of Husserl's transcendental ego. For Levinas, it is as an incarnate subject that the Self first comes to representation as a concrete mode of its life.

Levinas, however, further deepens our understanding of subjectivity of the self by carrying his reduction to a deeper level and showing that the intentional level of incarnate subjectivity is sustained by an ethical structure. This structure refers to a relationship between the self and the Other, who manifests himself in the things which are the objects discoverable in the intentionality of the body as well as in that of thought. ⁴⁸⁰ This ethical relation likewise reveals the nonphenomenal reality of the transcendent and infinite Other, who conveys to the self the self's own essential identity and who also signifies to the self itself as the Other in its role as ultimate source of all truth and meaning.

Levinas rejects the formal structure of thought or the noetic-noematic structure of the representational form in the intentionality of thought to be the ultimate framework of meaning. Levinas thinks that the most

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This will be elaborated in a later section of this chapter.

irreducible in experience which involves the relation between the Self and the Other points to an event or reality that breaks up the formal or intentional (i.e., the noesis-noema) structure of thought. Although Levinas does not deny the theoretical level of the representational form in the intentionality of consciousness where Husserl's transcendental ego is operating, he claims that this theoretical level dissimulates the ethical level which actually "sustains" the former level and "restores its concrete significance" by relating it to that which actually makes it possible.

Levinas diverges from Husserl and ventures beyond Husserlian phenomenology in his description of the ethical structure. In his account, he introduces a method which involves a "deduction--necessary and yet non-analytical."⁴⁸¹

In his writings, these deductions are indicated by such expression as "that is", "precisely", "this accomplishes that", or "this is produced as that".⁴⁸² In the case of his account of the relation between the Self and the Other who is the epiphany of Infinity, Levinas thinks that what he is doing is no longer mere phenomenology but more of a hagiography.⁴⁸³ For the Other is not a phenomenon that

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 28.

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Ibid.

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 166.

appears in consciousness but the nonphenomenal trace of Transcendence and Infinity. •

Thus, Levinas moves within the spirit of Husserl's intentional analysis as he describes certain aspects of the reality of the Self. However, he diverges from Husserl who does not put a limit to the noematization of consciousness. For Levinas, Husserl's phenomenological method is inadequate in accounting for certain events or realities encountered by the Self in its relation to the Other. Levinas goes beyond Husserl in showing the break-up of the formal structure of thought in the face of these events or realities which are inevitably tied up with the reality of the Subject or the Self. In the process, Levinas also shows that the cognitive structure of intentionality is not the ultimate framework of meaning.

In relating the methods of self-discovery employed by Husserl and Levinas, we will find that although Levinas acknowledges the value of the phenomenological method introduced by Husserl, he also recognizes its limitation. In venturing beyond Husserlian phenomenology and by introducing innovations in Husserl's methodological approach to the understanding of the reality of the self, Levinas diverges from the path of phenomenological self-explication taken by Husserl.

What the methods employed by Husserl and Levinas specifically reveal concerning the identity of the self will be treated in the following comparison of their conceptions of the self. The comparison will center on the notions of intentionality and proximity which may be actually taken together as the essential structure of subjectivity or the identity of the self.

2. Intentionality and Proximity. When we relate the views of Husserl and Levinas concerning the essential reality of the ego or the self, we will recognize significant similarities and differences.

The most basic similarity in the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas on the identity of the self lies in the recognition they give to the representational form of intentionality as a significant aspect of the life of the subject. The fundamental difference is based on Levinas' rejection of this representational form of intentionality as the universal and essential structure of subjectivity.

Levinas diverges from Husserl in two ways. First of all, Levinas describes the identity of the ego or the self not only in terms of the representational form of the intentionality of consciousness or thought, but also in terms of the intentionality of the body in sensibility and enjoyment. Secondly, Levinas describes the self at a more fundamental level on the basis of the ethical relation of

proximity which characterizes the self as a responsible subject. The following discussion will clarify these basic differences in the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas on the self.

As already discussed, Husserl rigorously employs the method of transcendental reduction and uncovers the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity which is primordially an intellectual self assuming absolute responsibility for truth. For Husserl, intentionality is the universal structure of the transcendental ego. However, he confines intentionality to that of presentations or representations. Husserl thinks that "every intentional experience is either a presentation or based upon underlying presentations."⁴⁸⁴

For Husserl, representation is accorded a privileged position in the intentional life of the self. It constitutes the essential structure of the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity. It represents the activity which puts the ego in contact with the Other. But this act is above all a theoretical and totalizing act.

In the representational form of the intentionality of consciousness, the transcendental ego gathers the temporal phases into the present by the retention of the past and the

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Husserl, Logical Investigations, 2:534, 598, 608; See also Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 122.

protection of the future. The previous acts as well as the possible acts of consciousness intending other aspects of an object are synthesized with the present act of consciousness which intends an aspect of the same object. And this synthetic unity of all conscious acts or processes is made possible by the consciousness of internal time or by the temporality of the ego which links the present act with those of the past by retrospection and those of the future by prospection. Temporality is, therefore, essentially tied up with intentionality and subjectivity.

Within the framework of the noetic-noematic structure of intentionality, everything is reduced to the noema or meaning constituted by the transcendental ego. This implies that the being of the object is identified with the meaning constituted by the ego in its transcendental field of experience. And this noetic side of the constitution of objects is at the same time self-constitution. As already indicated, the transcendental ego in Husserl is the active and affective subject of consciousness that lives in all the acts of consciousness which relate it to all object-poles.

Moreover, for Husserl, the constitution of the sense or meaning of an object results in an eidetic truth or

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Above, p. 74.

knowledge which becomes an abiding possession of the ego. The convictions, decisions, acts and habitualities actually become determining properties of the ego. However, the judgments or decisions can be altered, negated or given up; hence, they are only relatively abiding. But the ego shows a personal character, an identity or a unity all throughout its acts. By its own active generating, the ego constitutes itself as a fixed and abiding personal ego.⁴⁸⁶

Hence, as the pure ego continually constituted noematically the meaning of objects, it also constitutes noetically its own self; and as it gains an intuitive grasp of the essence or eidos of things, it also uncovers and explicates its own essence or eidos ego.⁴⁸⁷ And when the transcendental ego is taken in its full concreteness, i.e., as containing the constitutions of all objectivities--immanent and transcendent or ideal and real--it mirrors, as it were, the whole universe. For this reason, Husserl gives it the name "monadic" ego.⁴⁸⁸

Levinas acknowledges the theoretical life of the ego or the self as explicated in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Levinas, however, puts into question

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Above, p. 75.

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Ibid.

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Above, p. 76.

Husserl's idea that the representational form of intentionality, temporality and the constituting acts of the pure ego are co-extensive with the whole life of the self and constitutive of the subjectivity of the subject.

Levinas criticizes Husserl for his intellectualism which is evident in his recognition of the representational form of intentionality as the essential structure of the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity. This pure ego sees the world as an object for impassive contemplation; it intends the world of objects and constitutes meanings in the immanence of thought. In Husserl, the self is actually a philosopher--"the dedicated representative of purely theoretical interests."⁴⁸⁹

In his dissertation on Husserl's theory of intuition, Levinas clearly expresses his criticism of the intellectualism of Husserl when he says that

. . . Here we might still reproach Husserl for his intellectualism. If he has come to such a profound idea, namely that in the ontological order the world of science is later than the concrete and vague world of perception and depends upon it, then he was probably still in error in taking his concrete world as a world of perceived objects. Is our first attitude in the presence of the real the attitude of theoretic contemplation? Does the world not manifest itself in its very Being as a field of activity or concern . . . ? 490

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Husserl, Logical Investigations, 2:528.

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Levinas, "Intuition of Essences," in Rockelmans, ed., op. cit., pp. 104-105 (underscoring is supplied).

Levinas diverges from Husserl in developing the thesis that the field of meaning is not co-extensive with the representational form of intentionality, and that the reality of the self is not to be identified with the intentional structure of thought.

Levinas' philosophy defines subjectivity not only in terms of the representational form of the intentionality of thought but also in terms of the intentionality of enjoyment and of the ethical relation of proximity between the Self and the Other. Thus, Levinas' philosophy of the Self exceeds Husserl's phenomenology of the ego not only from the "bottom" (in recognizing the intentionality of enjoyment or incarnate subjectivity) but also from the "top" (in affirming proximity as essential to the ethical life of responsible subjectivity).

In opposition to Husserl's intellectualism, Levinas asserts that subjectivity does not begin to emerge in the representational form of intentionality but in the intentional life of enjoyment and sensibility whereby the Self is constituted as an incarnate subject. There is no subject prior to enjoyment; the subject is born therein.⁴⁹¹

For Levinas, the intentionality of enjoyment is the way of the body or corporeal existence. As a corporeal or

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Vasey, op. cit., p. 185.

incarnate subject, the Self experiences that it has needs and these needs move it to reach out for things that would satisfy it. This orientation of the body has been already defined as "living from".⁴⁹² In "living from", the incarnate subject "crosses over" to the things or elements in the world which support life. "Crossing over" into the world implies that the intentionality of incarnate subjectivity in the form of enjoyment involves a transcendence. But transcendence here is produced as "kinesthesia" whereby thought goes beyond itself, not in encountering objective reality theoretically but in effecting a practical movement of the body.⁴⁹³ Thus, for Levinas, the return to the things themselves does not take place first in the act of being conscious in the intentionality of thought but in the experience of enjoyment which implies the intentionality of sensibility, which involves immediate contact with the objects or elements in the world from which the Self as incarnate subject lives. In the intentionality of enjoyment and sensibility, the relation of the Self to the other things is not characterized by perceiving or handling but by savoring. But Levinas sees in enjoyment and sensibility the pre-theoretical inten-

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Above, p. 150.

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Vasey, op. cit., p. 182.

tionality of the body, that is, the intentionality of the incarnate subject. In the eyes of reason, the contentment of enjoyment or sensibility may seem ridiculous. Be that as it may, sensibility does not have the eyes of reason and neither does it have to answer to reason.

In Levinas' thought, the intentionality of enjoyment manifest experiences that cannot be categorized under the representational form of the intentionality of thought. Its movement neither actively nor passively gathers together the past and the future in the manner that theoretical consciousness does. Rather, its movement is marked by the discontinuous flow of primal sensations, excitations and vibrations which are indifferent to the higher level work of thought; namely, the gathering together, synthesizing, and identifying of the various temporal phases with the present, i.e., with the representation of theoretical consciousness.

Levinas thinks that for the incarnate subject, the world cannot be "put out of play" or considered as if it were not exterior to, and existing apart from, the Self. For the world continually bathes and nourishes the Self as a bodily or an incarnate subject. Levinas sees in the intentionality of enjoyment and of bodily existence the

irrefutable proof of the anteriority and exteriority of the world to the constitutive act of consciousness.

Husserl, on his part, thinks that the world and the things in it can be "put out of play" and the naive belief in their exteriority can be suspended by consciousness or thought. However, whatever is "put out of play" is not really lost or negated; for it can be brought to the level of consciousness and treated as a phenomenal object in the representational form of the intentionality of thought. And this object is reduced to the sense or meaning which is constituted in the immanence and interiority of thought. Insofar as this object can have a sense or meaning only in the constitutive activity of thought, it is neither anterior to nor exterior to consciousness.

Husserl recognizes the egological thrust of the intentionality of representation which reduces its intentional object to the meaning constituted by consciousness or thought. Levinas also acknowledges the egoistic orientation of the intentionality of sensibility and enjoyment whereby the incarnate subject transforms what is other into a constituent part of its own self. Levinas thinks that in representation as well as in enjoyment, what is Other is reduced to the interiority of the Self. Thus, he finds in these two forms of intentionality the models for

the mutual totalizing relation between the Self and the Other.

It must be reiterated at this point that although Levinas affirms Husserl's idea of representation as an essential aspect of the life of the Self, he diverges from Husserl in grounding the representational form of intentionality in the intentionality of sensibility or enjoyment. For it is in enjoyment or in the self-satisfying intentionality of sensibility that the subject constitutes itself as incarnate subjectivity and comes to the intentionality of representation as a concrete mode of its life. And this implies that the Self first relates itself to the elements in the world recognized as objects for enjoyment rather than as things viewed in impassive contemplation.

In acknowledging that the intentionality of sensibility or enjoyment is a condition for the intentionality of representation, which is the life of thought, Levinas deviates from Husserl and announces the end of the idealistic, i.e., the intellectualistic conception of intentionality as well as of subjectivity. Levinas thinks that there are experiences or situations which are irreducible to the representation that the Self may make and have of them. Consequently, subjectivity is no longer definable solely in terms of intentionality understood simply as the representational form of the intentionality of thought.

But Levinas diverges in the second place from Husserl in deepening further his own thought on subjectivity by stressing the idea that the ground for the intentionality of representation and, consequently, of subjectivity lies even deeper than in the intentionality of enjoyment or incarnate subjectivity.

If representation is conditioned by enjoyment, enjoyment itself is conditioned by the ethical relation of proximity. For Levinas, the first event of subjectivity is its being exposed to the Other, i.e., its being linked to an Other, who conveys to the Self its essential reality as responsible subjectivity. This exposedness of the Self to the Other implies proximity which is the essential condition for the possibility of the other specifying modalities of responsible subjectivity.⁴⁹⁵

Unlike Husserl who thinks that the transcendental subject constitutes the Other in the intentionality of thought, Levinas emphasizes that the Self is not only constituted as an incarnate subject "by the Other" in the intentionality of sensibility or enjoyment, but that the Self also exists "for the Other" in the ethical relation of proximity.

It is Levinas' thesis that before things are true or

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See above, pp. 181ff.

false in relation to consciousness, they are possessed by a subject. This means more precisely that the things which are perceived or considered as objects of thought are first of all either objects of possession or things that answer a need and offer enjoyment. But even before the elements or things in the world are pragmatically taken as source of support for life and as objects for enjoyment and possession, they are already manifestations of the Other who produced or created these things. This is evident, for example, when we consider that the clothing we use, the food we eat or the air we breathe come from, and inevitably refer to, an Other. The elements or things in the world are intersubjective and relics or traces of the Other. Thus, the relation between the Self and the things in the world is essentially but implicitly an ethical relation. For, in the first place, this relation actually involves also the relation between the Self and Other who is made manifest in a product or creation. In the second place, the relation is ethical in the sense that the Self is guided by moral considerations in dealing with possessions or objects of enjoyment. To recapitulate, Levinas thinks that the relation between the Self and the objects in the world is at first neither perceptual nor pragmatic but ethical.

In Husserl, subjectivity is defined basically and ultimately in terms of the intentionality of thought,

temporality and the constitutive activity of the transcendental ego. In Levinas, subjectivity is defined secondarily in terms of the intentionality of representation but primarily in terms of that of sensibility and enjoyment. For Levinas, however, subjectivity is essentially and radically characterized by its obligations and responsibilities towards the Other.

In opposition to Husserl's idea that transcendental subjectivity is essentially characterized by the constitutive activity of consciousness, Levinas thinks that what ultimately characterizes the reality of the Self is not activity but passivity. From the very start, the Self is in a condition of passivity. This passivity lies at the heart of the initial and essential exposedness of the Self to the Other and to the meaning which he conveys to the Self.

At the time of its creation, the Self is in a condition of subjection or allegiance to the Good. The Self is assigned the role of an irreplaceable subject with respect to its responsibility towards the Other. This responsibility is not a matter that is chosen by the Self or something that the Self is free to take up or not, because this responsibility is its original condition whereby it is being caught up in proximity to the Other. This condition of being chosen or elected to assume responsibility without being able to decline it shows the subject's initial and

essential condition as a creature. For as a creature, the Self is exposed to the Infinite and Transcendent Other, who is the ultimate source of obligations and responsibilities. This pre-original relation to the Other also expresses the an-archical (i.e., non-originary) condition of the passivity of the Self in its subjection and allegiance to the Other who is The Good.

The condition of being assigned a responsibility which it cannot abandon puts the Self in a restless state, makes it feel ill at ease with itself, and alienates it from itself. Having to respond to the Other and thereby being its own Self only insofar as it responds to the Other, keep the Self from perfectly coinciding with itself. Thus, the essence of the Subject or the Self would be an in-condition, i.e., a condition which is in fact unstable and without a solid and secure base, or a situation wherein the Subject is de-posed or de-situated. It may even point to a condition which calls for the Self to sacrifice itself by substituting and expiating for the Other.

For Levinas, the Self is incessantly disturbed by the presence of the Other, who calls into question the Self's egoistic tendencies and summons the Self to become truly its own Self by responding to obligations and responsibilities towards the Other. The Self likewise finds itself continually intrigued by the Other who manifests the

infinitely transcendent Other as the ultimate source of responsibility.

In Levinas' thought, the first movement of subjectivity is proximity to the Other, which implies its being-exposed to the meaning signified by the Other. But this meaning which is conveyed by the Other is enigmatic. For in spite of proximity, the Other remains remote and distant to the Self. This suggests the elusive presence of the Other or what Levinas describes as the "Illeity" of the Other and the infinition of Infinity.⁴⁹⁶ Consequently, the signification which is conveyed by the Other concerning the essential reality of subjectivity or the Self remains exterior to the order of thought and discourse.

To sum up what has just been said, the Self in Levinas is characterized not merely as a conscious subject constituting objects in the representational form of the intentionality of thought but also as an incarnate subject constituted "by the Other" in the intentionality of enjoyment or sensibility. Furthermore and most fundamentally, Levinas describes the Self as a reality existing "for the Other" in the ethical relation of proximity.

We can say, then, that Levinas is moving away from Husserl in abandoning the idea of defining subjectivity

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Above, pp. 197ff.

solely and primarily in terms of intentionality of thought, interiority and absolute presence to itself. He denies the absoluteness of the Subject and refuses to take the Self as the center around which the world and other egos would be confirmed or constituted. Levinas' philosophy is actually a conscious and explicit attack on the idea of subjectivity in Husserl's thought--namely, the notion of the ego or the self as an absolute sovereign seeking to reduce what is other than itself to be its very possession and to become identical with the Self; i.e., to transform what is Other to a concept or representation in the constituting activity of the thinking Self. For Levinas, the world and the Other precede the constitutive activity of thought; both of these are confirmed in their existence and exteriority by the role they play in the constitution of the Self through the latter's being subjected to them in the ethical relation of proximity.

To recapitulate, the basic contrast in the philosophical perspectives of Husserl and Levinas on the Self lies in this: In Husserl, the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity is conceived basically in terms of the representational form of intentionality which is the theoretical activity of consciousness or thought. Levinas recognizes this representational form of intentionality as only one important aspect of subjectivity. And he defines

the subject essentially on the basis of incarnate subjectivity which is the intentionality of enjoyment and sensibility. However, he goes beyond these two levels and views the reality of the Self at the most fundamental level in terms of the ethical relation of proximity which entails the absolute passivity and unconditional responsibility of the Self in its exposedness to the Other's face from the time of its creation to the moment of its expiration. This ethical relation of proximity actually constitutes the essential reality of the Self as one who is responsible more for the Other than for its own Self.

3. The Intellectual and Moral Self. The comparison of the views of Husserl and Levinas on the Self provides the basis for a unified and integrated view of the Self as a reality that is both intellectual and moral.

Both Husserl and Levinas have given up the idea of defining subjectivity in terms of the traditional concepts of matter and substantiality or the faculties of reason and will. Husserl, for one, identifies the essential structure of transcendental subjectivity with intentionality, temporality and the constitutive activity of theoretical consciousness. Levinas, on his part, describes subjectivity by taking into consideration the intentionality of representation and enjoyment as well as that of the ethical relation of proximity and the responsible activities which this

necessarily entails.

Putting together the central insights in the two philosophies presented gives a portrait of the ego or the self as a reality committed to the intellectual pursuit of truth and to the moral concern for goodness. There is, therefore, an intellectual as well as a moral dimension to the life of the Self. Subjectivity entails responsibility in the pursuit of meaning in its life which is both dedicated to truth and devoted to goodness.

In general, meaning or significance is manifest in all aspects of life. It is either revealed by the Self or conveyed by the Other. In Husserl, it is the self as pure ego or transcendental subjectivity which is the locus of all possible sense or meaning. In Levinas, it is the Other who is recognized as the ultimate source of all truth and meaning.

Husserl's phenomenological philosophy uncovers the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity and discloses its essential structure of intentionality, temporality and constitutive theoretical activity. The intentionality of the ego essentially involves the constitution of the meanings of objects by the thinking subject. While any object is affirmed as distinct from consciousness, it is eventually posited as a product of consciousness. What the object means for the subject--this is a simple way of

expressing the noetic-noematic structure of consciousness or thought. In Husserl, the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity is ultimately the measure of meaning.

The task of constituting and clarifying the sense or meaning of everything is the goal of the theoretical and scientific pursuit of the self in Husserl. Absolute responsibility for all truth or meaning is the moving force and "telos" or goal of reason. And Husserl inaugurated transcendental phenomenology in order to restore this moral basis of the scientific endeavor and the philosophical enterprise.⁴⁹⁷ But Husserl's demand to employ rigorously a method in the philosophical quest for truth and meaning shows that the serious life of thought is not at all easy. It requires effort, discipline and commitment.

In Husserl's intellectualist conception of the self, life is subordinated to thought; in Levinas' idea of responsible subjectivity, the moral concern for responsibility and goodness conditions the theoretical concern for truth and meaning.

To recapitulate, Levinas actually diverges from Husserl in two ways as far as the understanding of the Self is concerned. First of all, he adds another dimension to

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One who is engaged in the scientific or philosophical enterprise takes responsibility in pursuing truth; hence, his pursuit has a moral basis.

intentionality by acknowledging the intentionality of enjoyment. The latter is the basis for the constitution of the Self as an incarnate subject and its emergence as a separate subject engaged in the legitimate but practical pursuit of economic existence and enjoyment. Secondly, Levinas deepens our grasp of the reality of the self by carrying his philosophical reflections to the level where the Self is revealed as a subject who has to accept its obligations and responsibilities to the Other. In this ethical relation of proximity, the Other signifies to the Self its essential meaning as a responsible subject. At this, its deepest level, the Self achieves its identity and its unicity through an ethical relationship with the transcendent and infinite Other who refuses to be fully contained in thought and reduced to the immanence or interiority of the Self. For Levinas, it is the Other who is the primordial bearer of truth and meaning.

But we can integrate the fundamental insights in the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas on the self by considering the subject as a reality definable in terms of its intellectual pursuit of truth as well as its moral concern for goodness. But the ethical dimension must be recognized as the more fundamental aspect of the self. For as a responsible subject, the self is brought to its essential and final reality.

In brief, to be oneself is to serve the Other; to be oneself is to be good. And goodness is the ground for all expression and truth. With Levinas, then, we say that "will opens to reason"⁴⁹⁸ and "morality presides over the work of truth."⁴⁹⁹

The Self and the Other

We attain a fuller understanding of the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas on the self by comparing their views concerning the relation between the self and the Other. In the following comparison, three important points will be considered--the first is the ego's experience of the Other, the second is the egological or egoistic orientation, and the third is the ethical relation.

1. The Ego's Experience of the Other. In Husserl, the transcendental ego is initially solipsistic. This does not imply, however, that it is detached from anything other than itself. For it is actually related to objects that appear as phenomena in its transcendental field of experience. These objects constitute the noematic correlates of the noetic acts of thought. The pure ego likewise constituted the Other ego not merely as a worldly

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 219.

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Ibid., p. 304.

phenomenon but as another transcendental ego. Thus, transcendental intersubjectivity is actually disclosed in the transcendental field of experience of the pure ego or the transcendental subjectivity in Husserl's philosophy.

In Levinas, the Self always bears a relation to an Other. The inner life, interiority or subjectivity of the Self cannot really be explained apart from its relation to "alterity" or "exteriority". In the intentionality of sensibility and enjoyment, the Self relates to the world as the nonpossesseable milieu in which it finds the worldly elements that support life. In the relation of proximity, the Self assumes obligations and responsibilities with respect to the Other. This ethical relation characterizes the essential structure of the Self as responsible subjectivity.

A comparison of the accounts of Husserl and Levinas concerning the ego's experience of the Other shows more differences than similarities. The basic similarity in the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas concerns the role played by incarnate subjectivity in the ego's experience of the Other. In Husserl, the Other is incarnated in the body whereas in Levinas, the Other is incarnated in the face.

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As already pointed out, Husserl thinks that the body of another ego is presented in the ego's field of

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See above, pp. 85ff.

consciousness. Since the "I" experiences its personal ego as given and operating in its own body, the ego apprehends analogically the Other ego as something appresented in the Other's body that is presented in the sphere of consciousness of the ego. Levinas on his part, thinks that the Other is made manifest in his face. The whole body of the Other expresses itself in the face; and his true reality breaks forth in the face. The meeting of the Self and the Other is, therefore, a face-to-face encounter.

The foregoing fundamental similarity in the views of Husserl and Levinas with respect to the part played by incarnate subjectivity in the ego's experiences of the Other is further elucidated in the course of the following discussion of the more significant differences in the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas concerning the ego's experience of the Other.

a) First of all, Husserl and Levinas have different views concerning the question on the manner in which the sense, i.e., the meaning of "another ego" or "another self" arises in the self. For Husserl, the first thing that we ascertain is the pure ego itself and the sense of an "other ego" is later explicated as arising in the ego. As pointed out already, Husserl accounts for the existence of the Other by means of a theory of "empathy" or "analogical

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 apprehension." This account, first of all, requires that the transcendental ego delimit the "sphere of ownness" in order to be able to acquire the sense of the "Other as Other." When what is one's own is delimited, then it is possible to distinguish what is proper, from what is foreign, to the ego or the self. The experience of an Other can then be grasped by contrasting it to the experience of ownness.

Levinas, on his part, thinks that the sense of the "Other" is more primordial than that of the Self, and that the identity of the Self is inevitably tied up with the reality of the Other. For the meeting between the Self and the Other is a face-to-face encounter. The Other is present in the face that approaches the Self. And as he faces the Self, the latter becomes aware of gestures, desires and attitudes that express an Other. The sense of an "Other" arises in the Self because the Other already pronounces "me" as he expresses himself in his face. The first signification or meaning which is conveyed by the Other is expressed in his face, and the first "word" which he says is the one "written" on his face. And the face of the Other is the "existential mirror" in which the face of the Self first

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Above, pp. 85ff.

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appears to itself. For the sense of "Self" emerges as the Self differentiates its own gestures, desires and attitudes from those expressed in and as the face of the Other.

Levinas stresses the idea that even before the Self is fully aware of itself as an "I" and as a separated Self, it is already exposed to and involved with the Others who inhabit its world and help it in the shaping and structuring of its world. This is borne out particularly by the fact that what presents itself, first of all, in the field of consciousness of the infant is the face of the mother who is an Other.

As pointed out already, Levinas thinks that the first event in the life of the Self is its exposedness to the Other. The original subject of experience is not a solipsistic personal or transcendental "I" but an anonymous or undifferentiated "We".⁵⁰³ And the original object of experience is not an isolated sense datum but a social or cultural world referring to and reflecting an Other. The Self's field of experience is initially, essentially and thoroughly intersubjective. Anything that appears in it refers to an Other.

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Cf. Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

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Ibid., p. 202.

Husserl also speaks of certain cultural objects as
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 transcendental clues to the presence of another ego.
 Nevertheless in Husserl, the understanding that the Other is
 given in certain types of objects is not possible without
 the previous knowledge that one's own self is made manifest
 in certain objects. This experience accounts for the analog-
 ical transfer from the ego to the Other of the sense or
 meaning of the notion "manifestation of one's own
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 subjectivity."

In the case of Levinas, there is no question of an
 analogizing transfer of the sense or meaning of an Other
 from the Self to the Other. The exposedness of the Self to
 the Other and the resulting awareness of the Other as Other
 which is accomplished in the face-to-face togetherness
 involved in the ethical relation, serves as the ground,
 rather than the consequent, of the analogical understanding
 of subjectivity.

b) Secondly, Husserl and Levinas also have diverging
 notions on the question whether the Other ego is directly
 given to the Self. In Husserl, it is only the animate body
 of the Other that is presented directly to the Self; but
 with the body that is presented, the Other as another ego is

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Above, p. 79.

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Above, p. 80.

also appresented. However, the apprehension of the Other subject in the given body is based on the analogical apprehension of the body of the Other appearing in the ego's own animate body. As pointed out already, the Self's animate body enters into a phenomenal pairing with the Other's body and this allows for a transfer of sense. The Other's body which appears in the conscious field of the ego appropriates from the latter the sense of an "animate organism." And just as the "I" experiences its own personal ego as given and operating in its own body, so also, the ego or the self apprehends the Other's ego which is appresented in the other body that is presented in the primordial sphere of its thought.⁵⁰⁶

In Husserl, then, the experience of the Other actually means that the ego becomes aware that there is a "presented" element (i.e., the Other's body) and an "appresented" one which the ego intends or means, (i.e., the other person's consciousness or ego). The Other's subjectivity and the way in which this Other constitutes experiences in the field of his own consciousness lies outside the ego's sphere of experience. The Other is a "psyche essentially inaccessible to me originaliter."⁵⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the ego

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Above, pp. 87ff.

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 124.

perceives the Other's body as the body of another ego by the passive synthesis of phenomenal pairing and hence perceives the Other's body as the body of another ego through an analogical apprehension. In other words, the ego combines into one perception what it sees (i.e., another body) and what is inaccessible directly to experience (i.e., the Other's consciousness of himself or his personal life).

For Husserl, then, what is presented and directly given to the Self is only the Other's body; but the Other's self-consciousness is only appresented or indirectly given: neither the Other ego himself nor the subjective processes which appear in the sphere of this Other's own consciousness is given directly to the self.⁵⁰⁸ However, what appears in the Other's own field of experience may be constituted in an appresented second stratum of the ego's own sphere of consciousness.⁵⁰⁹ This actually points to the possibility of constituting the Other in the thought of the ego.

It must be noted at this point that the notion of "appresentation" of the Other ego in the "presentation" of the Other's body implies the "separation" of the self and the Other as monads or unique beings enclosed in themselves, although each of them is experiencing one another as living

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 109.

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Above, pp. 105 and 112.

in a common world. The "common" element is guaranteed by the constitution of the Other's body.

Moreover, the synthesis of the "presented" Other's body and the "appresented" Other's consciousness provides a basis for the explication of Husserl's difficult notion of a community of monads or an intermonadic community constituted mutually by monads existing for themselves precisely as the "I" exists for itself, yet existing also in communion with, and therefore, in relation to, the "I" as a concrete monadic ego.⁵¹⁰ This intermonadic community makes possible the intersubjective constitution of the sense of something for the ego to the sense of that same thing for other egos. This further suggests the possibility of eventually making the Other Ego accessible, though in an indirect way, to the ego.

Whereas in Husserl only the Other's body is directly presented to the ego, in Levinas, the Other as an incarnate subject is experienced in the face-to-face encounter as directly or immediately present to the Self and to its perceptual field. It must be noted that, for Levinas, the body is an incarnate subject or the incarnation of a Self's consciousness. Levinas thinks that the whole body can express the Self as the Face, and that the true essence of

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 128.

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the Self breaks forth in the face.

But the Other who is immediately present to the Self is not known in thought. He is not taken as a phenomenon whose meaning can be constituted by consciousness. He is anterior to any thought that the Self has of him and exterior as well as irreducible to the reality of the Self. The Other is not known but faced; and the face-to-face togetherness of the Self and the Other is an ethical relation. But although the Other is related to the Self, he remains separate from, and transcendent to, the Self. The separation of the Self and the Other accounts for a pluralistic relation wherein the Self asserts its uniqueness and the Other retains his otherness. The radical separation of the Self and the Other precludes their inclusion within a system or a totality wherein the Other is reduced to the Self.

c) Implicit in the foregoing discussion is a third point of contrast in the thought of Husserl and Levinas concerning the ego's experience of the Other. This concerns the question whether the Other can be fully contained in thought. The difference in their views on this matter is based on this: For Husserl, the Other is a phenomenal being

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Above, p. 175.

whereas for Levinas, the visible Other is the nonphenomenal trace of the absolute and infinitely transcendent Other. An elaboration of this will clarify the contrast.

For Husserl, the way in which the transcendental ego constitutes objects such as books or ballpens is different from the way in which it constitutes another ego. In the former case, the object of perception is not given completely at a particular time. It possesses other aspects not yet given to consciousness but which are included in its internal and external horizons.⁵¹² The physical thing that is an object of perception has an indeterminately general horizon. And the phenomenological investigation of such an object and of the world itself are guided by the notion of "total evidence" or "the idea of a perfect experiential evidence,"⁵¹³ a complete synthesis of possible experiences". This implies the possibility of the total adequation of thought and the being of perceptual objects.

However, in the case of the perception of the other egos, there can be no such concept of "total evidence" for there exists a dimension in the Other that "can never attain actual presence."⁵¹⁴ The Other's subjectivity or the way in

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Above, p. 65.

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 62.

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Ibid., p. 112.

which he constitutes experiences within the sphere of his own self-consciousness escapes our perception and cannot be given in our experience originally.⁵¹⁵ But although the Other is "a psyche essentially inaccessible to me originaliter,"⁵¹⁶ he can be given indirectly to the ego. For, as already pointed out, what appears in the Other's own field of experience can be constituted in an appresented second stratum within the ego's own sphere of consciousness. And the experience of someone else is continually fulfilled or verified by means of the phenomenal presentations and appresentations which proceed in synthetically harmonious fashion. The character of the existent Other is based on this continuous process of verifying and making accessible what is not accessible.⁵¹⁷ This suggests that eventually the Other can also be given fully in consciousness.

For Husserl, the Other is also a phenomenon that can be thematized by thought. He can be rendered present to consciousness and the various phases or modes of his appearance or givenness can be retained, synchronized and synthesized by the thinking ego. As a phenomenal being, the Other is subject to the synchronic order of the Ego's

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Ibid., p. 109.

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Ibid., p. 124.

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Above, pp. 91ff.

consciousness and thus he can be fully constituted and totally contained in theoretical thought.

Levinas, on his part, claims that the Other who approaches the Self is not a phenomenon that can be totally rendered present to the Self's consciousness and completely circumscribed by theoretical thought. Levinas holds that the Other who manifests himself through a face-to-face encounter exceeds any thought that the Self can have of him at any moment. The reality of the Other cannot be reduced to a concept or representation of thought. The Other refuses to submit himself to the synthesizing or synchronizing activity of thought, whereby its various temporal phases are gathered together into the present by retention of the past and protention of the future. In short, the Other cannot be conceived in terms of the synchronic order of thought. For the Other comes from a past that is nonrecuperable and he belongs to a future that is nonrepresentable. This makes the Other the nonphenomenal trace of Infinity, as he continually detaches himself from the thought that tries to take hold of him in a concept and from the language that tries to put him in a word. This movement of the Other has already been defined as the "infinite of infinity."⁵¹⁸

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Above, p. 194.

The infinitude of the Other signifies the diachronic aspect of time in the contact of the Self with the Other. For in relating to the Other, the Self finds itself involved in a relationship with a past it cannot catch up with, represent or render present. In Levinas' thought, any Other is not just a finite reality but an Other who bears witness to an Infinitely Transcendent Other. And such an Other is not accessible to the Self on the level of thought but is approachable only on the basis of an ethical relation. The essentially ethical approach of the Self to the Other in Levinas' thought is in contrast to the strongly theoretical orientation of the ego with respect to the Other in Husserl's philosophy.

In the intellectualist view of Husserl, the Other is seen as just another phenomenon that can be taken in as an object for the disinterested consideration of thought. This approach to the Other on the cognitive level reflects the reductive and egological orientation of the pure ego. It reduces the Other to a mere content of consciousness or to just an abstraction of thought. The transcendental ego's first movement with respect to an Other consists in exhaustively finding in itself the meaning of the exteriority of the Other and in converting the latter's being into a noema or a product of the thought of the Self.

In Husserl, the transcendental ego relates to the Other only on the theoretical level. In the course of the ego's relation to the Other, ethico-religious questions on authenticity, fate, death or the meaning of history may indeed arise. But the ego considers these questions or issues as matters that need to be raised to the level of thought, so that their sense or meaning may be clarified or constituted in the Self's transcendental field of experience. And for the transcendental ego, the Other is another ego who can offer another perspective on these questions or issues. In the thought of Husserl, the Other is another ego through which the world can come into view or he is some special locus where another perspective of thought can be displayed. This strongly reflects the theoretical orientation of the ego's relation to the Other in Husserl.

In the thought of Levinas, however, the essential thrust of the subject's experience of the Other is ethical. The Other who approaches the Self is not just known but is encountered face-to-face. The Other is not regarded ultimately as an object that must be thematized or grasped by thought; rather, he is approached as a subject towards whom the Self has obligations and responsibilities. This is because the presence of the Other expresses an appeal to the Self and this appeal made by the Other places an unconditional and absolute demand on the Self to concern

itself with responsibility and goodness toward the Other. The face of the Other calls into question the subject's selfish possession and enjoyment of things in the world and forces it to see that its primary and ultimate reality is to be a responsible subject.

The thoughts of Levinas on the response of the Self to the Other are better clarified by viewing them in relation to those of Husserl. This clarification is given in the following comparison of the views of Husserl with those of Levinas concerning the egological or egoistic orientation and the ethical relation.

2. The Egological or Egoistic Orientation. In the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas, we would find references to the egological or egoistic and totalizing orientation of the Self to the Other.

In the case of Husserl, the egological orientation is shown particularly in the transcendental ego's thematizing and totalizing acts of representation or theoretical knowledge. In these acts, the objects as noematic correlates of the noetic acts are conferred a sense or meaning which is constituted by the Self's consciousness. And the sense or meaning which is constituted eidetically by the conscious ego is that which is identified as true and certain knowledge.

For Husserl, there is no limit to the noetico-noematic constitution by the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity. Even the affective states are interpreted as modifications of representations or as founded on representations. For these are grounded on knowledge or thoughts about values or about one's own Self. Hence, they still remain experiences based on presentations or representations given in the thought of the Self. Likewise, the Other is constituted as another ego in the transcendental field of the experience of the pure ego. Everything attains intelligibility and clarity in the phenomenal field of the transcendental ego. Nothing escapes its grasp. Any being--whether immanent or transcendent, real or ideal--falls within the domain of transcendental subjectivity as the subjectivity that constitutes sense and being. And Husserl adds that if transcendental subjectivity is the universe of all possible sense, what lies outside of it is meaningless or nonsense.⁵¹⁹

Moreover, in the thought of Husserl, the ego assumes primacy over the Other. Even if Others are shown to be existing as other egos, they are always considered in the light of the constituting ego itself. Every thought, including that by which the Other is understood, starts from

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 84.

the ego. As explicated by Husserl, the sense "other ego" arises in and from the ego itself. Unless the "sphere of ownness" is delimited, the ego is not able to differentiate what is proper from what is foreign to itself. For Husserl, the movement of the pure ego is always from what is its "own" to what is "alien". Thus, the strange or alien world of the Other is accessible only by some kind of an "experience of someone else" or a kind of "empathy" by which the ego belonging to a particular community projects itself into the alien community of the Other. This clearly shows the egological orientation of the transcendental ego in Husserl's thought.

In Levinas' thought, the Self has also an egological or egoistic inclination. The Husserlian egoistic and totalizing orientation of the Self is manifest particularly in the representational form of intentionality whereby what is other is converted into a concept or representation in thought. This tendency is also evidently found in the intentionality of enjoyment in Levinas, whereby what is other becomes a constituent part of the Self as incarnate subject; that is, the Other becomes a mere possession or property that can be disposed of in any manner by the Self.

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Ricoeur, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology, p. 138.

These totalizing relations with respect to the things or elements in the world serve as the models for the egoistic and objectifying relationships with the Other. In these relationships, the Self exercises power or violence on the Other in order to make him subservient to itself. In relating to the Other in this way, the Self treats the Other like an object that can be manipulated or controlled. This is the case, for example, when employers exploit their employees or when parents impose their decisions on their children. In this objectifying relation, the Other is not respected for his otherness but is merely regarded as a means that can serve the selfish ends of the Self. Consequently the Other becomes merely an extension of the Self. This, in Levinas, clearly shows an egoistic or totalizing relation whereby the Other is reduced to the Self.⁵²¹

For Levinas, however, the egoistic or totalizing relation is not the essential or ultimate relation of the Self to the Other. This is because the Other can offer opposition or resistance to the power of the Self. And the Self can also overcome or transcend its own egoistic tendency or totalizing inclination by relating with the Other on the ethical level. Levinas sees in the ethical

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See above, pp. 156ff.

relation, the essential, fundamental and ultimate relation of the Self to the Other. For it is in and through this relation that the Self constitutes its own essential reality as a responsible subject. For Levinas, it is in the ethical relation that we find the most irreducible experience and that which grounds the relations based on the intentionalities of enjoyment and of representation.

In the ethical relationship, recognition is given to the Other by the Self not by taking him as a variant of the essence of the ego or by endowing him with the same sense that the Self gives to itself, but by accepting the Self's obligations and responsibilities with respect to the Other. Unlike the relations which are based on the intentionality of enjoyment and representation, the ethical relation is non-totalizing and non-reductive, for it does not reduce the Other to the Self but respects the uniqueness of the Self and the otherness of the Other. This ethical relation will now be taken up as the basis for comparison in the following discussion.

3. The Ethical Relation. The "ethical" is a specifying element in Levinas' philosophy. It is in fact the focus of his discussion on the nature of the Self as a responsible subject. Husserl does not explicitly speak of an ethical relation in his writings. But there are ideas in his philosophy that suggest or refer to an intersubjective

relation which may be considered as related to the ethical relation in Levinas. This is elucidated in the following discussion.

Although Husserl's phenomenology is considered an egology, it does not entail solipsism. Husserl is convinced that the pure ego is viably intersubjective and its constitution of the intersubjective transcendental community provides the ground, where ethico-religious problems can be raised and anything that can have a possible sense can be stated. Husserl mentions, for example, such issues as authenticity, death, fate and the meaning of history as matters that can be clarified in the transcendental field of the experience of monadic egos.⁵²² A concern for these issues or problems implies a concern for an ethical relationship with the Other. There are, however, no phenomenological explicitations on such a relation in Husserl's philosophy. As already indicated, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology does not actually describe intermonadic communities or characterize particular intersubjective relations. What he explicitates in a detailed and complicated manner is the transition from solipsism to community.⁵²³

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Above, p. 119. See also Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 156.

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Above, pp. 85ff., 117.

However, Husserl's phenomenology takes into consideration two characteristic features of the kind of relationship existing between monadic egos. These are the reciprocity of perspectives or standpoints which implies "objectivating equalizations", and the asymmetry of the relationship between the Self and the Other. These features may be regarded as important aspects of the intersubjective relation in Husserl's thought. An elaboration is now to be given of these two features.

As pointed out already, in Husserl's thought, the body of the Other that appears originally in the sphere of his own consciousness belongs in a presentative-appresentative manner to the primordial sphere of the consciousness of the ego. ⁵²⁴ This experience suggests that the same object can be viewed under different points of view. Thus, the ego can pass from the sense that the totality of Nature has for its own Self to the sense which the same totality of Nature has for the Other. On the basis of the ego's knowledge that its own body is the zero-origin, i.e., the basis of a perspective or point of view which gives a specific orientation to its experiences, the ego understands that the Other likewise has another perspective

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Above, pp. 95 and 104.

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which orients the latter's experiences differently.

In Husserl's thought, the ego as subject discovers only from the "side" but not from "above", that the same world can be grasped from different points of view. Within the ego's originary perspective, other perspectives are appresented as different perspectives of the same object and of the same world. Thus, for example, there are not actually two worlds but two different strata of one and the same objective Nature; namely, one as primordially constituted by the ego, and the Other as constituted on the appresented second stratum originating from the ego's experience of someone else. This is the case, for example, when I expand my knowledge concerning our country by considering what others say about places I have not visited and may never see for myself.

In Husserl, the communal perception of the same object and the same world by different conscious egos results in an understanding of something based on different perspectives; however, this implies what Husserl calls "objectivating equalizations."

Husserl thinks that in order to realize this objectivating equalization, the notion of the psychic

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See Ricoeur, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology, p. 133; See also p. 106 above.

constitution of the objective world must be introduced. This aims to show that the ego appears in the world not only as a physical body but also as a psyche, constituting the objective world.

The objectivation of the I as a psyche, that is, the constitution of the sense "ego as psychophysical man" occurs purely in the conscious sphere of the ego. On this level, the Others are also constituted as psyches separate from the Self and offering perspectives different from those of the Self. Thus, on the basis of the constitution of the psyche, "a reciprocity of consciousness" can be constituted. I see myself as a psyche among psyches; i.e., a psyche equalized with, separated from, and tied to, other psyches.

Objectivating equalization involves an "equalization" in the sense that the ego considers the perspectives of the other ego and thereby abolishes its own privileged standpoint. It also means that there is an "objectivation" of the sense "reciprocity of consciousness", which shows that there are Others and that the ego is one among Others. Thus, a community of real men becomes possible.

In Husserl, objectivating equalization and reciprocity of consciousness serve as the condition for higher levels of intersubjectivity, i.e., of relationships which are communalizations in a cultural world. As there can be different perspectives of objective nature which is

the physical world, so also can there be different standpoints on the cultural world. But while there is only one physical world, there are different cultural worlds, with respect to which there can also be a reciprocity of consciousness. Thus, the ego can pass from the sense that a particular social, philosophical or religious group has for itself to the sense that it has for another ego. And the Other can do the same with respect to the same particular group. More concretely, this means that there can be reciprocity between my own perspective of the philosophical association of which I am a member and that of another who is also a member of this association. The sense that this association has for me belongs to the primordial lower stratum of my field of consciousness, whereas the Other's sense of the same association belongs to a secondary stratum appresented in my own field of consciousness.

By means of this reciprocity of perspectives, the ego gains access to the standpoints of the other egos. This leads to a better clarification of the meaning of any thing and to the broadening of the horizon of the ego. However, we must note that it is always from the vantage point of the ego that other perspectives are considered. But the fact that other perspectives are taken into consideration at all suggests that there is an attempt to overcome somehow the egological orientation. But we must admit that the egological outlook still prevails in Husserl.

Another characteristic feature of the relation between the ego and the Other in Husserl is that of asymmetry. This means specifically that the ego assumes primacy over the Other. Husserl's phenomenological explications show that the transcendental ego is the only being that can be absolutely and apodictically posited as existing. Although Others show themselves as existent, it is always starting from the ego that the Other comes to be understood. As already pointed out, the sense of "Other ego" arises in and from the ego itself. The movement of the ego is always from the sphere of "ownness" to that of "otherness".

Just as its body is the zero-origin or basis from which the ego considers all bodies, so too, the ego's community is the zero-member of the entire human community and regarded as the basis in considering another particular human community. The ego and its cultural world, for example, are primordially given while the alien cultural world of the Other is accessible to the ego only by some kind of an "experience of someone else" through "empathy", by which the ego from its own culture projects itself into the alien cultural world of the Other. The strange world of the Other's culture is opposed to the familiar world of one's own culture. This opposition of "here and there" and "the original and the derivative" is inevitable in the

context of Husserl's concept of intersubjective monadic
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 community.

We can say that in Husserl, the intersubjective relation occurs, as it were, on the horizontal plane. For it is always from the "side" but not from "above" that each ego discovers that the same world--physical or cultural--is grasped from different perspectives. And since one cannot consider the relation of the ego and the Other from "above", no single perspective permits one to consider either the totality of the world or the cultural worlds from a position
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 outside of all of them. This suggests the absence in Husserl's thought of a truly transcendent and absolute being outside of the transcendental ego and the totality of the temporal beings which are constituted in the ego's transcendental field of experience. Later developments of Husserl's thought may have given a historical dimension to his thinking and widened his philosophical horizon, but his egological orientation obscured the possibility of any true
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 transcendent that may be identified with God.

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Ricouer, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology, p. 138.

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Ibid.

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See L. Dupré, "Husserl's Thought on God and Faith," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 29 (Dec., 1968), p. 211.

At this juncture, two things need to be reiterated. The first is Husserl's understanding of the relation between the ego and the Other, which remains within an egological framework and which takes the standpoint of the Self as primordial. The second is the fact that, in Husserl, the relation between the ego and the Other is motivated initially and essentially by a theoretical and an epistemological concern. This concern is to clarify the sense which any thing has for the Other and to understand the perspective of the Other with respect to certain questions and issues which include ethico-religious problems. Husserl consistently projects an intellectualist view concerning the relation between the pure ego and the Other.

Unlike Husserl, Levinas thinks that the relation between the Self and the Other is neither initially nor ultimately an egological, egoistic and a totalizing relation. Rather, it is essentially an ethical relationship. In and through this relationship, the Self constitutes its essential reality as a responsible subject and the Other is recognized as the ultimate source of all truth and meaning.

Levinas thinks that in the ethical relation, the Self does not merely know the Other by taking him as the object of the representational form of intentionality, comprehending his reality and reducing him to the immanence

of the thought of the Self. The Other is not simply another ego who can exhibit another perspective of the world. The Other is not a reality which the Self can receive in the Self's own terms and with its own capacities.⁵²⁹ Levinas stresses that in the ethical relation, the Self assumes obligations and responsibilities in response to the moral appeal made by the Other as he approaches the Self. This relation commits the Self to an Other, who is acknowledged in his height, transcendence and infinity. This ethical relation is non-reductive and non-totalizing; for instead of reducing the Other to the Self, it respects the uniqueness of the Self and the otherness of the Other.

The ethical relation in Levinas has already been described in terms of the modalities of proximity, signification, de-position, dispossession, substitution,⁵³⁰ transcendence or infinity, and justice. All these modalities reflect the moral concern of the Self through which it responds to its obligations and responsibilities to the Other. And this ethical concern of the Self in Levinas is in striking contrast to the theoretical orientation of the transcendental ego in Husserl.

Levinas also speaks of a reciprocal relation between

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See Lingis, *op. cit.* p. 162.

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Above, pp. 172ff.

the Self and the Other in his account of the exigency for justice. As already pointed out above in the presentation of Levinas philosophy of the Self, justice calls for the Other to relate itself to the Self also as to an Other, to whom he has obligations and responsibilities. Justice moderates the unlimited responsibility demanded by the ethical exigency which even asks the Self to sacrifice itself for the sake of the Other. Levinas says that justice institutes an order of priorities in the obligations and responsibilities of the Self to Others. However, justice is neither the Self's primary nor ultimate relation to the Other. For justice is comprehensible only on the basis of the primordial ethical demand in the initial interpersonal relation.

If we compare the ideas of Husserl and Levinas concerning "reciprocity", we can say that in Husserl, reciprocity involves ideas and perspectives. In Levinas, the reciprocal relation entails the mutual concern of the Self and the Other for their obligations and responsibilities to each other. Whereas in Husserl reciprocity occurs on the theoretical level, in Levinas, reciprocity takes place on the ethical plane.

In the thought of Levinas, an essential asymmetry or dissymmetry more truthfully describes the relation between the Self and the Other, because the Self and the Other are

not interchangeable. The Other is neither a variant nor a reverse of the Self. The Other is not equal to, but surpasses the Self; for the Other is the manifestation of Transcendence and Infinity.

Diverging from Husserl, who thinks that the meaning of infinity originates in the thought of the Self, Levinas says that the idea of infinity comes from the Other. This idea dawns on the Self when it realizes its inability to comprehend the Other fully and to satisfy the moral exigency which is made manifest in his face but which actually originates from the infinitely transcendent Other.

In Levinas' thought, the asymmetry and paradoxical structure of the intersubjective relation is based on the fact that the Other who approaches the Self is the trace of the infinitely transcendent Other. This means that the Other is "above" the Self. Thus, Levinas speaks of the asymmetry in the relation between the Self and the Other as the "curvature of the intersubjective space."⁵³¹ This curvature points to the height and transcendence of the Other, and reflects the presence of the Other who is God. This also suggests that the meaning conveyed by the Other ultimately comes from God. Whereas in Husserl the Other who is constituted by the pure ego is another ordinary ego and a

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 291.

finite Other, in Levinas the Self relates itself with an Infinite Other. Hence, for Levinas, his description of the ethical relation is not simply a phenomenology but a hagiography.

We can say, then, that in the thought of Levinas there is asymmetry in the relation between the Self and the Other, because the Other is infinitely transcendent to the Self. But in Husserl, the asymmetry in the intersubjective relation is based on the primacy and overall supremacy of the transcendental ego.

To summarize, there is a divergence in the thought of Husserl and Levinas concerning the relation between the Self and the Other. In Husserl, the Self as pure ego is transcendental subjectivity taking absolute responsibility for truth. It sees the Other as another phenomenon that can be thematized and grasped by thought, and it finds in the Other another ego that can exhibit another perspective of the world. Hence, the ego's orientation to the Other is primarily theoretical and egological. In Levinas, however, the Self assumes absolute responsibility for goodness, and relates to the Other by responding to its obligations and responsibilities to the Other. The Self recognizes the nonphenomenal reality of the Other who is the trace of the Infinitely Transcendent Other. Hence, the orientation of the Self to the Other is not basically theoretical and

egological, but fundamentally ethical, essentially non-reductive and non-totalizing. Husserl's egological phenomenology is, therefore, transcended by Levinas philosophy of responsible subjectivity.

The Self and the Question of Meaning

A final basis for the comparison of the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas on the ego or the self is the relation between the self and the question of meaning. This question on meaning is an important concern in the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas.

In the case of Husserl, the preoccupation with the nature of meaning is already evident in his Logical Investigations--the work which irrevocably established his reputation as a philosopher. Husserl's discussion on meaning in this work represents the first attempt towards a phenomenology of meaning.

Levinas is likewise concerned with the question on meaning. He claims that the motivation of the Self in relating to the Other is meaning and not necessarily happiness, for unhappiness may result in doing one's duties and responsibilities to the Other. What Levinas is offering in his philosophy is not so much a phenomenology of either

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See Husserl, Logical Investigations, 1: 4, 269ff.

subjectivity or intersubjectivity as a phenomenology of meaning. From the vantage point of this central insight,⁵³³ all the writings of Levinas may be best appreciated. But it must be admitted that there are many themes in Levinas' works and many obscurities in the principal and secondary themes that can easily sidetrack the reader from the main preoccupation of Levinas in his writings.

The following three points are considered in comparing the views of Husserl and Levinas concerning the relation between the self and the question of meaning: the event of meaning, the source of meaning, and the relation between skepticism and philosophy.

1. The Event of Meaning. We consider here the salient points of the separate accounts of Husserl and Levinas concerning the event of meaning and then point out similarities and differences in their views.

In Husserl, the problem of meaning is enclosed in the analysis of the intentional act of consciousness rather than in the analysis of the intention and extension of terms.⁵³⁴ As we have already shown,⁵³⁵ the intentional or

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See Tallon, op. cit., p. 55.

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See Welton, D., "Intentionality and Language in Husserl's Phenomenology," The Review of Metaphysics, 27 (December, 1973), p. 261.

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Above, pp. 63ff.

noetic act of consciousness has an object or noematic correlate. This object or noema has a "content" which is its sense or meaning.⁵³⁶ In the intentional act, consciousness refers to the object as mediated by its meaning.

Meaning is not, however, something that takes place in consciousness the moment an object or a phenomenon is given in consciousness. Rather, it is constituted by the intentional activity of consciousness. This constitution of consciousness is founded on seeing, intuition or evidence. In the process of evidencing, i.e., in intuiting the essences of things, the meaning-intentions are converted into fulfilled-meanings.⁵³⁷ In Husserl, then, the occurrence of meaning is inevitably tied up with the intentional activity of the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity.

Like Husserl, Levinas thinks that the event of meaning is associated with intentional analysis and the constituting activity of the conscious subject. However, Levinas differs from Husserl on certain points with respect to the event of meaning. First of all, Levinas acknowledges the pre-theoretical intentionality of the body in the experience of sensibility and enjoyment. Hence,

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Husserl, Ideas, p. 333.

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Above, p. 69.

consciousness does not alone have the prerogative of giving meaning to something. Secondly, Levinas thinks that the intentional (noetic-noematic) structure of consciousness cannot fully account for certain realities, which express a surplus of meaning that cannot be contained in thought. Finally, Levinas associates the first occurrence of meaning with the face-to-face encounter of the Self and the Other, rather than with the intentional act of the conscious ego. A brief elucidation is given below on these points of divergence between the thought of Husserl and that of Levinas concerning the event of meaning.

First of all, Levinas questions the total prerogative attributed to the intentionality of thought in giving meaning to each thing.⁵³⁸ This is because the pre-theoretical intentionality of the body in sensibility and enjoyment is prior to the intentionality of thought. The Self constitutes itself as an incarnate subject before consciousness involves itself in the representational form of intentionality. The things that satisfy the needs of the body are meaningful to the Self, even if it does not have a clear and distinct representation of these things. Levinas thinks that meaning is also a function of the body of the Self as incarnate subject and not just of the

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 129.

representational form of intentionality. Levinas, therefore, relates the event of meaning with the intentionality of the body and not just with that of thought.

The pre-theoretical intentionality of the body in Levinas appears equated with the lived experiences of the ego in Husserl. These lived experiences point to the receptivity of the ego, which is its lowest level of activity, with respect to objectivities perceived, remembered, or imagined.⁵³⁹ And these objectivities belong to the pre-predicative level of experience, i.e., to that level of experience prior to the formulation of judgments which are expressive of truth and meaning. These lived experiences are intended, intuited and ordered in the transcendental field of experience of the ego.⁵⁴⁰

Levinas already finds meaning in the pre-theoretical intentionality, i.e., in the lived experiences of the incarnate subject. But Husserl also thinks that these lived experiences must first be brought up to the level of the transcendental field of experience of the ego, before intentional analysis of meaning-intentions are related to these experiences so that they may be verified and converted

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Husserl, Experience and Judgment, p. 76.

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Ibid., pp. 168, 176, 178.

into meaning-fulfilled. In Husserl, there is meaning only for thought or transcendental subjectivity. In order to have the sense of anything clarified, it must be raised up to the level of the transcendental field of experience of the pure ego. As Husserl stresses in his Cartesian Meditations, the pure ego, i.e., transcendental subjectivity is the universe of all possible sense and whatever lies outside of it is meaningless or nonsense. 541

Levinas also diverges from Husserl when he relates the primordial event, i.e., the first occurrence of meaning, with the advent of the Other rather than with the meaning-giving activity of thought. Whereas Husserl thinks that meaning occurs in the intentional and constituting act of the pure ego, Levinas accounts for the event of meaning and signification by relating it to the face-to-face encounter of the Self and the Other. The face of the Other is the primordial meaning or signification. And this meaning precedes the meaning-giving activity of the pure ego.

For Husserl, meaning is a product of thought; i.e., the reason of the pure ego is not merely passive and reproductive but active and creative in constituting the meaning of something. Evidence, intelligibility and words are subordinated to and conditioned by the consciousness of

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 84.

reason and ultimately by the pure ego which is the first truth that is ascertained and thereby taken as the basis of all truth and meaning.

For Levinas, however, meaning and intelligibility break through in the face of the Other. The face of the Other expresses the first sign, i.e., the first intelligible or the first evidence which conditions thought and discourse. Thus, in welcoming the face, "will opens to reason."⁵⁴² In Levinas, then, the primordial event of meaning is accounted for, not by the intentional and constitutive act of the transcendental ego which is uncovered by phenomenological reduction, but by the face of the Other conveying to the Self its essential reality as responsible subjectivity.

Levinas' account of the event of meaning finally differs from that of Husserl in its emphasis on the limitation of thought as far as the constitution of the meaning of things is concerned. This is opposed to Husserl's idea that there is no limit to the noematization or constituting act of consciousness. Anything that can have a sense and meaning can be clarified in the transcendental field of the experience of the pure ego.

Levinas, however, thinks that the noetic-noematic

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 219.

structure of intentionality as conceived by Husserl cannot fully account for the event of meaning. For there are meanings and realities that break up the formal structure of thought. The noetic-noematic structure of thought described in Husserl's phenomenology is not the primordial structure of intentionality and the ultimate framework of meaning. For there are experiences that cannot be identified as noetic acts intending noematic objects.⁵⁴⁷ There is at least one reality whose meaning cannot be fully grasped by thought or constituted by the transcendental ego. This is the reality of the Other, who manifests himself by his face. The face conveys a meaning that exceeds every sense that can be attained by the intentional act of the thinking Self.

In Husserl, anything can be made an object in the transcendental field of experience of the ego. This includes the Other ego. Levinas, however, does not take the Other as a phenomenon that can be fully known. The Other disturbs the complacency of the self-presence of the Self. For the Other who faces the Self has already passed into an irretrievable past that is always beyond the projective grasp of the Self which attempts to reduce to the present the various manifestations of the Other. The Other belongs

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See Kelbley, "An Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas," Thought, 49(March, 1974), p. 85.

to the irrecuperable past and to the unrepresentable future which are beyond the present of thought.

Thus, for Levinas, Husserl's intentional analysis cannot fully account for the event or advent of meaning, which is inevitably tied up with the presence and reality of the Other. Neither can it account for the primordial event of meaning. The comparison of the views of Husserl and Levinas on the event of meaning points out to us the fact that Levinas carries the intentional analysis of Husserl to a deeper level.

2. The Source of Meaning. With respect to the question concerning the ultimate source of meaning, we again find Levinas going beyond Husserl's phenomenological investigations.

We have shown that for Husserl, the transcendental ego is characterized essentially by its intentionality, temporality and constitutive activity. The activity of these structures exposes the pure ego as the ultimate source of meaning.

Thus, the pure ego in its intentional acts intends meanings which are frustrated or fulfilled in the course of the intentional analysis. The constitution of meaning is inextricably bound up with intentional analysis. And the constituted meanings (noemata) reflect the constitutive acts of consciousness (noeses) of the transcendental subject.

The ego's temporality is its consciousness of inner-time, which is lifewise responsible for the synthetic unity of the manifold of appearances of the object as well as the multiplicity of the conscious acts which intend these objects. Without this synthesizing activity of the ego, no meaning can be constituted.

The objects of intentional analysis exist for the ego and acquire a sense, i.e., a meaning which is constituted by it. The sense is established by the ego's intuition of the eidōs which is identified with the essence of something. The process of constitution is, therefore, guided by the eidōs understood as the foundation of the a priori rules or laws of the ego. And the intuition of the eidōs is always an act of reason understood as the "all-embracing essentially necessary structural form belonging to all⁵⁴⁴ transcendental subjectivity." All these elements show that, in the thought of Husserl, the constitution of meaning is essentially the work of the pure ego.

Although Husserl's phenomenological explications also disclose transcendental intersubjectivity that makes possible the reciprocity of perspectives, a privileged position is assigned to the pure ego. This is because the standpoint or perspective of the ego is taken as the zero-

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Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, p. 57.

point of view, from which all other egos as well as other communities and cultures are understood by some kind of an "experience of someone else", i.e., by "empathy". This also shows that the ego is really the ground of all meaning in Husserl's thought.

When we consider Levinas' thought, we see that he goes beyond Husserl and acknowledges the constitutive activity or the meaning-giving function of the pure ego. However, he deviates from Husserl in two ways.

First, Levinas rejects the idea that the transcendental ego can fully account for the meaning of certain realities and events. He is convinced that there are realities which express a surplus of meaning not attainable by thought. Levinas is particularly referring here to the experiences of the Self with respect to the radical alterity and exteriority of the Other and the Other's manifestations of Infinity. As the nonphenomenal trace of Infinity, the Other exceeds any thought that the Self can have of him. He continually detaches himself from the thought that tries to reduce his reality to a mere concept or representation.

Secondly, Levinas diverges from Husserl in explicitly asserting that the ego is not the primordial and the ultimate source of meaning. Meaning does not originate in the immanence of the thought of the Self but is communicated

to it by the Other. For Levinas, the first intelligible is not a concept contemplated by thought, but the face of the Other revealing to the Self that its essential reality, lies in being-for-the-Other more than in being-for-itself. To-be for the Self is not to be responsible only for the unfolding of Being or for the ongoing revelations of worlds, but primarily to be responsible for the Other. Absolute responsibility for the Other precedes absolute responsibility for truth. In the thought of Levinas,⁵⁴⁵ "morality presides over the work of truth."

Finally, Levinas diverges from Husserl on the question concerning the source of meaning by adding a religious and a deeper dimension to meaning, when he stresses his insight that the Other who conveys the meaning of the Self to itself bears witness to the Infinite Other. This signifies the "divine intention of all truth" and reflects the Infinitely Transcendent God as the ultimate source of meaning.⁵⁴⁶

Husserl's phenomenology fundamentally aims at the intelligibility of beings and the constitution of their meanings in the transcendental field of the experience of the pure ego. Since it does not explain a being apart from

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 304.

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Ibid., p. 291.

what is intentionally constituted by the transcendental ego, Husserl's phenomenology rules out exteriority as a source of meaning. Hence, Levinas actually sees Husserl as an exponent of an "egology" or "totality" of the purest kind.⁵⁴⁷

3. Philosophy and Skepticism. In relating the views of Husserl and Levinas on the self we also take into consideration what each has to say concerning philosophy and skepticism. The purpose of this is to show the role that the self plays in the philosophical endeavor to overcome skepticism.

It is evident that for Husserl and Levinas, philosophy involves a search for truth and meaning. And this quest is personally undertaken by the self. However, they differ in their stand on the question whether philosophy can really surmount skepticism.

In the case of Husserl, we find an attempt to renew the Cartesian project of reconstructing the edifice of knowledge. His transcendental phenomenology was developed to realize this ideal of philosophy as the foundation of the rest of the sciences. Husserl, himself, says that his phenomenology may be rightly characterized as a

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See Kelbley, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

"transcendental theory of knowledge."

To achieve his goal, Husserl employed rigorously the phenomenological methods of transcendental reduction (which brackets the totality of existents) and eidetic reduction (which aims at an intuition into the eidōs, i.e., the essence of things). The former led to the transcendental ego and the latter to the eidōs that stabilizes the meanings of objects. In the course of constituting the meanings of objects, the transcendental ego also explicates its own eidōs ego. Pursuing further his phenomenological explication, Husserl discloses transcendental intersubjectivity in the transcendental field of the experience of the pure ego where everything can have a sense or meaning.

In Husserl's thought, the constitutive acts of the pure ego are guided by universal a priori rules or principles which direct these acts to a systematic and all-embracing ordering of all objects of possible consciousness. On this basis, his phenomenological philosophy may be taken as the foundation of all the sciences dealing with facts as well as of the general universal philosophy or science of absolute proof.

For Husserl, it is by a return to the Self by the path of universal self-examination that we discover the transcendental ego and attain genuine philosophical knowledge as an absolutely universal and apodictically grounded and grounding science. And this foundational knowledge represents the first philosophy from which grow and branch out the particular sciences dealing with matters of fact. And this knowledge which transcends the naiveté of the practical outlook of daily life and that of the positivistic sciences, brings into fulfillment Husserl's Cartesian project of the radicalization of philosophy and the sciences.

Levinas differs from Husserl by pointing out another direction in philosophy, which deviates from the form and purpose of thought, i.e., of the pure ego, which emphasizes representation, presence or immanence. In taking this other direction, philosophy moves away from immanence towards transcendence--i.e., from the transcendental ego towards the truly Transcendent Other.

Husserl's philosophy is fundamentally an epistemology that focuses on the transcendental ego as the ground of all sense and being. In contrast to the epistemological thrust in Husserl's phenomenology, there is a marked ethical orientation in Levinas' philosophy. For it is primarily an account of the ethical relation which conveys to the Self

the reality of an Infinitely Transcendent Other as the ultimate source of all truth and meaning.

Levinas shares Husserl's conviction that there is a need to go back to the most irreducible experience that conveys to the self the ultimate source of all truth and meaning. Like Husserl, he sees that this task calls for a reduction. In Husserl, the reduction leads to the uncovering of the pure ego, i.e., of transcendental subjectivity. But in Levinas, the reduction is carried to a deeper level where it discloses the responsible subject as a reality receiving from "above", as it were, the truth or meaning of its own subjectivity. This meaning is conveyed in the face-to-face togetherness of the Self and the Other. And this ethical relation grounds the intentional, cognitive and reductive level where thought and reason operate. In recognizing the primacy and supremacy of the meaning conveyed by the Other to the Self in the ethical relation, Levinas shows that the intentionality of thought and reason is not the ultimate framework of meaning. For Levinas, the ethical domain is the first domain of philosophy that pre-exists the plane of epistemology which is concerned with the constitution of meanings, or the plane of ontology which is concerned with the comprehension and disclosure of being.

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See Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 201.

There is, then, a striking contrast in the views of Husserl and Levinas with respect to philosophy. In Husserl, philosophical discourse is fundamentally on the level of epistemology; it yields an egological philosophy which focuses on the transcendental ego and its essential structure of intentionality, temporality and its lifetime task of constituting meanings. In this egological philosophy, things polarize into the constituting subjectivity and the constituted objectivities. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is a domain of discourse that does not explicitly account for the meaning of a true transcendent coming from the outside and appearing as a reality that is exterior and irreducible to the Self.

Levinas, on his part, is convinced that philosophical discourse accounts for the signification and meaning of the Other as the trace of the Infinite and Transcendent Other who is God. Levinas strongly suggests that philosophical discourse should be able to take in God as the Good over and beyond Being and of whom the Bible speaks.⁵⁵⁰ But this Transcendent must be recognized as a reality that cannot be fully comprehended by thought. Hence, philosophical discourse on the Transcendent Other essentially expresses an insurmountable equivocation. And this implies the

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See Levinas, "God and Philosophy," p. 128.

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"skeptical essence of philosophy,"

A discussion on the diverging views of Husserl and Levinas concerning skepticism is the concluding part in this comparative study undertaken in this chapter.

Like Descartes before him, Husserl was animated by the desire to secure a radical and solid basis for philosophy in order to overcome skepticism. And Husserl is convinced that his transcendental phenomenology which is an egological philosophy centered on the pure ego represents the final triumph of subjectivity and marks the complete overcoming of skepticism in philosophy.

Levinas, on his part, thinks that philosophy is inseparable from skepticism which follows it like a shadow. Although there had been attempts in the course of the history of philosophy to refute skepticism, it returns as "philosophy's illegitimate child."⁵⁵² The reason for this is that the truth or meaning signified by the transcendent Other, who is uncovered by philosophy in a movement of reduction from the "said" to the pre-originary "saying", is diachronic and enigmatic. It refuses to submit completely to the synchronic order of the representational form of the

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Ibid., p. 144.

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 7.

intentionality of consciousness. The an-archical or pre-originary "saying" which is thematized in the "said", is not adequately or completely contained in what is thematized by the "said". What is signified by the transcendent Other is its reality as an "ex-ception to essence" and its being "otherwise than being" which cannot really be translated into systematic theory and discourse.

Philosophy is called upon to conceive the ambivalence of the reality and truth signified by the transcendent Other; hence, it endeavors to synchronize the diachrony differentiating the One from the Other. Philosophy remains the servant of the "saying" that signifies the difference between the One and the Other as the One-for-the-Other, i.e., as the non-indifference of the One to the Other. ⁵⁵³

Levinas says that the lure to exhaustively reduce the meaning conveyed by the transcendent Other into the order of the thematized, i.e., of the "said", is a temptation for philosophy. But the essential diachrony, equivocation and enigma of this "saying" exist in moments that resist the assembling and synchronizing activity of consciousness or the theoretical self. "Unsayings" is, therefore, the proper mode of philosophizing. ⁵⁵⁴ Hence, for Levinas, skepticism

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Ibid., p. 162.

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Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, p. 107.

cannot be really refuted; it is inseparable from philosophy. And Levinas thinks that in its attempt to overcome skepticism, western philosophy actually represents the refutation of transcendence rather than the refutation of skepticism.⁵⁵⁵

Husserl carried philosophy beyond his predecessors in his project of radicalization in philosophy. The uncovering of the transcendental ego as the ultimate ground of meaning is the realization of his project and represents the overcoming of skepticism. Levinas, on his part, attempts to carry philosophy in general and phenomenology in particular beyond Husserl by means of his philosophy of responsible subjectivity, which accounts for an ethical relation to the transcendent Other as the ultimate source of meaning.

In deepening the notion of the Self as a responsible subject, Levinas likewise discloses the inadequacy and the limitations of phenomenological explicitation as intentional analysis in the sense in which it is taken in Husserl's thought. Levinas thinks that Husserl's phenomenological method is no longer appropriate in dealing with the nonphenomenal reality of the Other, who is the trace of the Infinitely Transcendent Other.

Relating the philosophical conceptions of Husserl and

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Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 169.

Levinas on the Self discloses a contrast and a divergence. In Husserl's phenomenology, the pure ego basically has a theoretical and egological orientation, whereas in Levinas' philosophy, the Self as a responsible subject primarily has a moral concern. Unifying and integrating the central insights of Husserl and Levinas concerning the reality of the Self, we can say that the Self is both an intellectual and moral subject. To be truly oneself is to be committed to the pursuit of truth and goodness. But with Levinas, we say that the moral concern of the Self is more essential to its reality. For as Levinas himself says, "morality
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presides over the work of truth."

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 304.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The discussions in the preceding chapters were all directed towards achieving the following goals: to present the philosophical perspectives of Husserl and Levinas on the self, to compare these two philosophical perspectives, and to show the development that the notions of subjectivity and phenomenology have taken in the thought of Emmanuel Levinas who was once a disciple of Edmund Husserl and is now one of his successors in the French phenomenological school. ⁵⁵⁷

This concluding chapter presents a summary of the important points established in the preceding presentations. A brief discussion pointing out the relevance to our present life-situation of the central insights of Husserl and Levinas into the self is given in the second section of this chapter.

Summary and Conclusions of the Study

In the introductory chapter of this study, a preliminary consideration is made on the various meanings associated with the notion of "self" in ordinary language, sociology, psychology and philosophy.

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See objectives above, pp. 33-34.

A survey of the different philosophies of the self that have emerged in the course of the development of eastern and western thought is also given as a historical background for the whole study.

1. First of all, the survey reflects the different philosophical conceptions of the self cited earlier.

2. Secondly, it shows that the ego or the self is actually a central theme in the many philosophies that have emerged in the course of the history of man's philosophical speculation. Since Husserl and Levinas have also assigned a central place to the ego or the self in their philosophies, they have an affinity with the other philosophers who belong to the great tradition of philosophy.

3. Thirdly, the historical survey situates the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas in the mainstream of the history of philosophy.

The second chapter presents Husserl's phenomenology as an egology. The following are the main ideas in the presentation of Husserl's phenomenological conception of the ego or the self:

1. Husserl renews the Cartesian project to make a radical beginning for philosophy by establishing it as a rigorous science, i.e., a presuppositionless science striving for the goal of apodictic certainty and absolutely universal knowledge.

2. Husserl develops transcendental phenomenology as the realization of philosophy as the rigorous science that will serve as the radical basis for the reformation of the rest of the sciences. His transcendental phenomenology is, as it were, the "telos" of reason and "the secret longing of the whole philosophy of modern times."⁵⁵⁸

3. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is an egology, i.e., a study that is centered on the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity as the universe of all possible sense, the ground of all truth and meaning, and the radical basis of philosophy and the rest of the sciences. The key to the understanding of the whole of Husserl's philosophy of transcendental phenomenology is the understanding of his conception of the ego or the subject.

4. In order to achieve the goals of his transcendental phenomenological philosophy, Husserl introduces and employs rigorously the phenomenological method. This method includes the following:

a) transcendental reduction (epoché)--this involves bracketing, and suspending belief in, the totality of existents including the empirical ego in the world

b) eidetic reduction--this aims at an intuition into the eidōs, i.e., the essence of things including that of the

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Husserl, Ideas, p. 166.

pure ego or transcendental subjectivity

5. The pure ego is the residue of phenomenological or transcendental reduction and the focus of investigations in the science of phenomenology; it is the a priori source of all knowledge and the radical basis of philosophy and the other sciences.

6. Phenomenological reflections on the pure ego reveal its transcendental field of experience as having the following essential features:

a) Intentionality--the ego's orientation to an Other as object of consciousness; this reveals the noetic-noematic structure of knowledge

b) Temporality--the ego's consciousness of internal time which is the basis of the synthesis or unity of previous, actual and possible consciousness of one and the same object

c) Constitution of meanings--the ego's conscious activity which is directed to the intuition of the eidos or essence that stabilizes the meaning of objects; it results also in the constitution of the eidos ego

7. The pure or transcendental ego is the identical pole or substrate of the multiplicities of the noetic processes of the ego, while the monadic ego is the pure ego taken in its full concreteness as containing all the constitution of objectivities existing for it; thus, it

actually mirrors the whole universe.

8. Husserl's ecological philosophy does not actually entail solipsism but leads over to a phenomenology of transcendental intersubjectivity.

a) it explicates the ego's experience of another ego by introducing the method of "reduction to the sphere of ownness" which delimits what is proper and what is foreign to the ego

b) it likewise explicates an intersubjective transcendental community as ground for the intersubjective world of nature and culture

9. The ego's experience of the other ego is accounted for on the basis of "pairing association" (i.e., the body of another which is presented in the ego's field of consciousness is considered in relation to that of the ego's own body which is also given in its own sphere of consciousness) and "analogical transfer" (i.e., just as the "I" experiences its personal ego as given and operating in its own body, so also, the ego apprehends analogically the Other's ego as something appresented in the other body that is presented in the primordial sphere of its consciousness).

10. The constitution of Objective Nature as a world common to the ego and the Other is the first step to, and the foundation of, the other intersubjective communities. Intersubjective Nature is the first and lowest level of

community between the ego and the other ego, constituted as other and existing for the ego although only appresentatively to the ego. Different egos can have different perspectives of one and the same objective Nature.

11. The constitution of higher levels of intermonadic community is described as proceeding from the constitution of an objective Nature. A particular higher level of community, e.g. a social, political, philosophical or religious group, may be constituted also in every other ego as the same community with different modes of appearances but bearing within itself the same objective world.

12. The sense of "community of men" allows for objectivating equalization whereby each one is experienced as a man among other men and makes possible the "reciprocity of perspectives".

13. There is only one physical world but there are several cultural worlds; as there can be different perspectives of the same objective Nature or physical world, there can also be different perspectives on the same cultural world. There can be "reciprocity of perspectives", but the ego and its culture are primordially given; and the alien culture is accessible only by some kind of an "experience of someone else" or a kind of "empathy" by which the ego belonging to a particular culture projects itself into the alien cultural community and its culture.

14. In his phenomenological explicitations of the constitution of the Other ego and of the transcendental intersubjective community, Husserl overcomes solipsism but retains the egological and monadological orientation of his philosophy. The explication of transcendental subjectivity and the transcendental intersubjectivity disclosed in its transcendental field of experience is essentially the whole of transcendental phenomenology.

15. For Husserl, transcendental phenomenology is actually the science grounded on an absolute and unshakable foundation, the beginning philosophy which grows and branches out into particular objective sciences, and the fulfillment of the Cartesian project of reforming philosophy and establishing it as the radical foundation of the whole edifice of knowledge.

The third chapter discusses Levinas' philosophy of the self as a responsible subject. The following are the important ideas in the presentation of Levinas' philosophy of responsible subjectivity:

1. An introduction to Levinas' critique of western philosophy provides the background for the understanding of his philosophy of the self. Levinas thinks that western philosophy is fundamentally or dominantly an ontology. Western philosophy considers ontology as the first philosophy; and ontology as first philosophy gives priority

to autonomy over heteronomy, freedom over justice, being over existents, truth over goodness, and knowledge over ethics. It is a philosophy that gives primacy to the Self and reduces all that is other to the Self. Hence, it is fundamentally a philosophy of the Self as totality in the form of an egology. And one sees the nostalgia for totalizing in the whole of the history of western philosophy from Parmenides to Hegel, to Husserl and to Heidegger.

2. Ontology as a philosophy of totality is a philosophy of power; and as a philosophy of power, it is also a philosophy of injustice. It is the "verbalization of Western power politics and will for power."⁵⁵⁹

3. Levinas strongly opposes any philosophy that posits totality as the essential structure of reality, because such a philosophy involves the negation of the Other and its reduction to the Self. He proposes, instead, a philosophy that respects the plurality of existents and recognizes a transcendent and infinite Other who is irreducible to the Self and therefore radically or absolutely other than the self, an exception to essence, outside of being and non-being, or a good over and beyond being.

4. The experience of the transcendent and infinite

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Bouckaert, op. cit., p. 407.

Other that ruptures the totality occurs in a relationship that Levinas describes as ethical, i.e., a relationship that is not a matter of thinking the Ego and the Other together, but a togetherness in the face-to-face encounter. For Levinas, ethics rather than ontology is the first philosophy. And his philosophy is fundamentally a description or a "phenomenology" of the ethical relation, that is, of the relationship between the Self and the Other in and through which the Self emerges as a responsible subject. An exposition of Levinas' philosophy of the Self as responsible subject cannot be fully given apart from this account of the ethical relation.

5. For Levinas, the Self emerges as a subject by constituting its inner life in the process of separation. But separation presupposes the relation of immersion into what Levinas calls the "elemental" or the "there is" (il ya) which is the ground from which things and subjects detach themselves or the milieu in which the Self first discovers itself as a subject of existence. The emergence of the Self as a separate existent is an escape from the "there is"; it is a deliverance from the anonymity and indifference of Being.

6. The Self as a subject of existence constitutes its inner life or subjectivity in the process of realizing an identity for the Self that would set it off from others and

define it as a separate existent. Subjectivity originates in the autonomous experience of enjoyment and the legitimate search for the economy of existence.

a) Enjoyment, which is constitutive of subjectivity, is manifest in sensibility which is concretized by the body as a corporeal or incarnate subject. As a mode of enjoyment, sensibility is initially experienced in the satisfaction of the needs of corporeal existence.

b) Arising from the Self's bodily existence or incarnate subjectivity, the needs are experienced as a lack or an insufficiency and they move the Self to reach out for things that would fill this lack. "Living from" describes the mode of interaction between the Self and the things or elements in the world that answer its needs, support its life and provide it with satisfaction or enjoyment.

c) The Self lives not only from objects like food and drink but also from such acts as feeling, knowing, working, or living itself. Everything can be enjoyed by the Self; and the Self is by what it enjoys.

d) In the course of "living from" and enjoyment, the Self establishes its identity and realizes itself as a separate existent. And the primordial mode of the separate reality of the Self is "economic existence", i.e., a life motivated by need and centered on a habitation or dwelling.

e) The dwelling or the home detaches the Self from the elemental or the elements and makes it possible for the Self to accumulate possessions through its labor; it likewise renders possible the recollection of thoughts or the representation of objects in thought.

f) The possibility for the home to be open or not to the Other reflects two possible modes of relationship between the Self and the Other--one is egoistic and the other is ethical.

7. For Levinas, enjoyment and representation belong to the intentional structure of the Self. Both reflect the movement of the Self as totality, i.e., they aim at possessing the Other and reducing its otherness or alterity to the reality of the Self. Both forms of intentionality serve as models in relating to the Other in an egoistic and totalizing way.

a) The intentionality of representation is an objectifying knowledge whereby the object known is reduced to a mere content or representation of thought. Insofar as it approaches the Other on the basis of mere representation, it does violence to the alterity or exteriority of the Other. But the Other who reveals himself as an inexhaustible center that is open to an infinite number of possibilities opposes the attempt of the Self to objectify and reduce him to a mere concept or representation of

thought.

b) The Self likewise objectifies the Other when it exercises violence on the Other to make him subservient to the Self. But the Other can offer opposition to the power of the Self not by using physical force but by appealing to the sense of goodness in the Self. The Other makes the latter realize that the egoistic relation to the Other is not the only mode of relationship between the Self and the Other.

8. For Levinas, there is another mode of relationship between the Self and the Other, and this is described as an ethical relation. In and through this relation, the Self constitutes itself as a responsible subject. This ethical relation is brought forth not by the subject's pre-occupation with its needs and its concern for the possession and enjoyment of things, but by the Other who initiates in the Self the movements of desire and transcendence.

a) The ethical relation is essentially a face-to-face encounter and a mode of relationship characterized by the modalities of signification, proximity, sensibility, de-position, dispossession, substitution, unicity, infinity and justice.

b) Responding to the exigency for justice corrects the initial asymmetry or one-sidedness of the ethical

relation. Justice implies the understanding that the Other is no longer one to whom the Self is absolutely responsible but one who must also hold himself responsible for the Self. Justice institutes an order among responsibilities and the plurality of ethical instances.

9. The ethical relation points to the essential and primary structure of the Self as a responsible subject. For the ethical relation which reveals to the Self an Other who paralyzes its egoistic and totalizing moves, likewise conveys to the Self the meaning of its reality--to be one-for-the-Other more than to be for-oneself or to be responsible for the Other rather than to persevere in being. Thus, the meaning of the Self lies not in inter-ested being but in dis-interested existence; and this meaning is conveyed to the Self by the Other who is the nonphenomenal trace of the Infinite Other.

This ethical relation is the most irreducible in experience; it is the stratum of experience which is the locus of all truth and meaning and the structure that subtends and animates the level of the "said" , essence, synchronic order of intentionality and consciousness, ontology or inter-ested existence.

10. In the case of Levinas' thought, the description of the ethical relation is at the same time an account of the event of meaning. And this account shows that the Other

is the ultimate source of all truth and meaning. But the reality of the transcendent and infinite Other as well as the meaning he conveys to the Self cannot be fully represented in thought or expressed in language.

The enigmatic reality and the meaning of the transcendent and infinite Other remains an "insurmountable equivocation." Hence, we speak of the "skeptical essence of philosophy."⁵⁶⁰ Philosophy, for Levinas, must essentially deal with the reality of the infinitely transcendent Other. But the Other is incessantly withdrawing and continually surpassing its revelations. And the truth or meaning that he conveys opposes the assembling and synchronizing activity of consciousness. Consequently, this truth or meaning is not attainable on the level of a life dedicated to the comprehension of being; it is accessible only on the basis of the ethical life devoted to obligations and responsibilities to the infinite Other who is the exception to essence, outside of being and non-being, and the good over and beyond being.

In the fourth chapter, a comparison of the philosophical perspectives of Husserl and Levinas on the Self is made on the basis of the following: 1) the identity of the Self, 2) the relation between the self and the Other,

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Levinas, "God and Philosophy," p. 144.

and the relation between the self and the question of meaning.

In general, the comparison shows that Levinas actually carries to a deeper level the phenomenological reflections of Husserl concerning the reality of the Self. The following are the main ideas arrived at in the comparative study.⁵⁶¹

1. On the Identity of the Self. Both Husserl and Levinas employ a specific method in their quest for an understanding of the self. These are considered first before comparing their views on the identity of the ego.

a) On the Method of Self-Discovery. Husserl designs and applies rigorously the phenomenological method which leads to the uncovering of the pure ego or transcendental subjectivity as the radical basis of philosophy and the other sciences.

Levinas acknowledges his indebtedness to Husserl and claims that he is moving within the spirit of Husserl's intentional analysis as he describes certain aspects of the reality of the Self. But Levinas ventures beyond phenomenology in his description of the ethical structure which conveys to the Self its identity as responsible

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The results of the comparison are outlined in Appendix C below, pp. 373-375.

subjectivity. He thinks his account of the ethical relation is no longer a phenomenology but a hagiography.

Levinas goes beyond Husserl in showing the break-up of the formal structure of thought in the face of the non-phenomenal reality of the Other. In the process, he shows that the intentional or cognitive structure is not the ultimate framework of meaning.

b) On Intentionality and Proximity. Through their methods, Husserl and Levinas arrive at conceptions of the self which have similarities and divergences.

For Husserl, intentionality is the universal structure of the pure or transcendental ego. And he identifies intentionality with the representational form or the noetic-noematic structure of thought. Consequently, for Husserl, the essential thrust of the life of the pure ego is theoretical and intellectual. The self as pure ego takes absolute responsibility for truth. This ego is really the "philosopher--the dedicated representative of purely theoretical interests."⁵⁶²

In the case of Levinas, subjectivity is characterized by the intentionalities of representation and enjoyment as well as by the ethical relation of proximity whereby the Self is constituted as a responsible subject. The Self is

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Husserl, Logical Investigations, 2:528.

not merely a conscious subject constituting objects (in the representational form of the intentionality of thought) but also an incarnate subject constituted "by the Other" (in the intentionality of sensibility and enjoyment). Furthermore, and more fundamentally, Levinas describes the Self as a reality existing "for the Other" (in the ethical relation of proximity).

Thus, Levinas' philosophy of the Self exceeds Husserl's phenomenology of the ego not only from the "bottom" (in recognizing the intentionality of enjoyment and incarnate subjectivity) but also from the "top" (in affirming proximity as essential to the ethical life of responsible subjectivity).

Although Levinas affirms Husserl's idea of representational intentionality as an essential aspect of the life of the ego, he diverges from Husserl in grounding the intentionality of representation in that of enjoyment or in the self-satisfying sensibility whereby the Self constitutes itself as an incarnate subject and comes to representation as a concrete mode of its life.

It is Levinas' thesis that before things are true or false in relation to consciousness, they are already possessed by a subject. And even before the elements are taken as source of support for life and objects for possession and enjoyment, they are already manifestations of

an Other. Thus, the relation between the Self and the things in the world is at first neither perceptual nor pragmatic but ethical.

We can say, then, that Levinas is moving away from Husserl in rejecting the idea of defining subjectivity solely and primarily in terms of intentionality, interiority and absolute presence to itself. He denies the absoluteness of the subject and refuses to take the Self as the center around which a world and another ego would be constituted. Levinas' philosophy may be actually viewed as a conscious and explicit attack on the idea of subjectivity implicit in Husserl's thought. This is the notion of the ego or the self as an absolute sovereign seeking to reduce what is Other to the very possession and identity of the self, or to transform what is other to a concept or representation in the constitutive activity of the conscious ego. In Levinas, the world and the Other precede the constitutive activity of consciousness. Both are confirmed in their existence and exteriority by the role that they play in the constitution of the subjectivity of the Self through its being subjected to them in the ethical relation of proximity.

c) On the Intellectual and Moral Self. The comparison of the views of Husserl and Levinas on the self provides the basis for a unified and integrated view of the self as a reality that is both intellectual and moral.

Putting together the central insights in the two philosophies presented gives the portrait of the ego or the self as a reality committed to the intellectual pursuit of truth and the moral concern for goodness. There is, then, an intellectual as well as a moral dimension to the life of the self. But the ethical dimension is emphasized as the more fundamental aspect of the self. For as a responsible subject, the self is brought to its final reality. To be oneself is to serve the Other; to be oneself is to be good. And goodness is the ground for expression and truth. In Levinas, the concern for moral goodness in the self is clearly emphasized. With him, we stress the idea that "will opens to reason" and "morality presides over the work of truth."⁵⁶³

2. On the Self and the Other. The comparison of the accounts of Husserl and Levinas concerning the relation between the self and the other also shows similarities and differences.

a) On the Ego's Experience of the Other. There are more differences than similarities in the views of Husserl and Levinas with respect to the ego's experience of the other. The basic similarity concerns the role of incarnate subjectivity in the ego's experience of the other. In

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Levinas, Totality and Infinity, pp. 219, 304.

Husserl, the other is incarnated in the body; in Levinas, the Other is incarnated in the face.

The significant differences are the following: First of all, Husserl and Levinas have different views concerning the manner in which the sense "another ego" or "another self" arises in the self. Husserl accounts for the existence of the other by means of a theory of "empathy" or "analogical apprehension". The experience of the other or "otherness" is grasped by contrasting it with the experience of "ownness".

Levinas, on his part, thinks that the identity of the Self is essentially tied up with the reality of the Other. The face of the Other is the "existential mirror" in which the face of the Self appears to itself. In Levinas, there is no question of an analogizing transfer of the sense of "ego" from the Self to the Other. The exposedness of the Self to the Other and the resulting awareness of the Other as Other, which is accomplished in the ethical relation or the face-to-face togetherness, serves as the ground rather than the consequent of the analogizing understanding of subjectivity.

Secondly, Husserl and Levinas also have diverging notions on the question whether the ego is immediately and directly given to the self. For Husserl, what is presented and directly given to the self is only the other's body; the

other's consciousness is only appresented or indirectly given in the body that appears in the ego's field of consciousness. However, what appears in the other's field of consciousness may be constituted in an appresented second stratum of the ego's own sphere of consciousness. So, there is the possibility of constituting the other in the thought of the ego.

In Levinas, the Other who is incarnated in the face is experienced as directly or immediately present to the Self and to its perceptual field. For the whole body can express itself as the face and the true nature of the Self gleams forth in the face. But the Other who is immediately present to the Self is not merely known or taken as a phenomenon whose meaning can be constituted by consciousness. He is anterior to any thought that the Self has of him and exterior as well as irreducible to the reality of the Self.

Thirdly, there is a contrast in the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas with respect to the question whether the Other can be fully contained in thought. For Husserl, the Other is taken as another phenomenon that can be thematized in consciousness. As a phenomenal being, he is subject to the synchronizing activity of consciousness and eventually can be fully constituted and contained in thought.

Levinas, on his part, claims that the Other who

approaches the Self is not a phenomenon that can be totally rendered present to consciousness and completely reduced to a mere concept or representation of thought. For the Other is the nonphenomenal trace of the Infinitely Transcendent Other who refuses to be totally circumscribed by thought and language.

b) On the Egological Orientation. Both Husserl and Levinas make references to the egological or egoistic and totalizing orientation of the self towards the Other.

In Husserl, the egological orientation is shown in the ego's thematizing and totalizing acts of representation or knowledge. In these acts, the ego constitutes the sense or meanings of objects which are the noematic correlates of the noetic acts of consciousness. Everything, including the other ego, is subject to the constitutive activity of the pure ego. Moreover, this ego assumes primary over the Other; for it is always starting from what is one's "own" that the other or what is "alien" is considered and understood. This clearly shows the egological orientation of Husserl's transcendental ego.

For Levinas, the Self also has an egological or egoistic inclination. This is manifest particularly in the intentionality of representation whereby what is other is converted into a concept or representation of thought. This is also evident in the intentionality of enjoyment whereby

what is other becomes a constituent part of the incarnate subject or a mere possession that can be disposed of in any manner by the Self. These totalizing relations to the things or elements in the world serve as models for the egoistic and totalizing relation to the Other whereby the Self exercises power or violence on the Other in order to make him subservient to the Self and reduce him to a mere extension of its own Self.

Unlike Husserl, however, Levinas thinks that the egoistic or totalizing relation is not the essential and ultimate relation to the Other. For the Self can overcome its egoism and relate to the Other on the ethical level.

c) On the Ethical Relation. Levinas explicitly accounts for a relation between the Self and the Other which he describes as ethical. This relation is the focus of his discussion on the nature of the Self as a responsible subject.

Husserl does not explicitly speak of an ethical relation in his writings. But he refers to an intersubjective relation that may be considered in relation to Levinas' ethical relation. This intersubjective relation is characterized by the "reciprocity of consciousness" and the "asymmetry" of the relation between the self and the Other.

Levinas also speaks of the "reciprocal relation"

between the Self and the Other in his account of the exigency for justice. But this "reciprocal relation" entails the mutual concern of the Self and the Other for obligations and responsibilities to each other; consequently, this occurs on the ethical plane. In contrast, "reciprocity" in Husserl's view involves ideas or perspectives; thus, it arises on the theoretical level.

In Husserl, the "asymmetry" in the intersubjective relation is based on the primacy and supremacy of the pure ego. In the thought of Levinas, there is also an "asymmetry" in the relation between the Self and the Other; but this is based on the fact that the Other is infinitely transcendent to the Self.

In Husserl, the self as pure ego is absolutely responsible for truth. It sees the other ego as another phenomenon that can be thematized or grasped by thought, and it finds in the other another ego that can exhibit another perspective on the world. Hence, the ego's orientation to the other is primarily theoretical and egological.

In Levinas, however, the Self assumes absolute responsibility for goodness in its relation to the Other. The Self recognizes the nonphenomenal reality of the Other as the trace of the Infinitely Transcendent Other. Hence, the orientation of the Self to the Other is not basically

theoretical or egological, but fundamentally and essentially non-reductive or non-totalizing. Husserl's egological phenomenology is, therefore, transcended by Levinas' philosophy of responsible subjectivity.

3. On the Self and the Question of Meaning. The comparison of the views of Husserl and Levinas with respect to meaning centers on the following points: a) the event of meaning, b) the source of meaning, and c) the relation between philosophy and skepticism.

a) On the Event of Meaning. In Husserl, the event or occurrence of meaning is related to the intentional analysis carried out by the pure or transcendental ego. Like Husserl, Levinas thinks that the event of meaning is associated with intentional analysis and the constituting activity of the conscious subject. But Husserl and Levinas differ on certain points.

First of all, Husserl thinks that meaning occurs in the intentional and constituting act of thought. Meaning is a product of consciousness, thought, reason or the pure ego which is not merely passive and reproductive but active and creative in constituting the meaning of any thing. But Levinas questions the total prerogative given to consciousness in giving meaning to something. He acknowledges the pre-theoretical intentionality of the body in sensibility and enjoyment. And this is prior to the

intentionality of consciousness.

Secondly, Husserl puts no limit to the noematization or constituting act of consciousness. Anything that can have a sense or meaning would be clarified in the transcendental field of the experience of the pure ego. Levinas thinks, however, that the intentional (i.e., noetic-noematic) structure of consciousness cannot fully account for certain realities or events which express a surplus of meaning that cannot be contained in thought.

Finally, Husserl relates the primordial event of meaning to the intentional and constitutive act of consciousness. Levinas, on his part, associates the first occurrence of meaning with the face-to-face encounter of the Self and the Other. And this meaning precedes the meaning-giving act of the pure ego. Thus, for Levinas, Husserl's intentional analysis cannot fully account for the event of meaning associated with the presence or reality of the Other. Levinas actually carries to a deeper level Husserl's intentional analysis concerning the event of meaning.

b) On the Source of Meaning. With respect to the question concerning the ultimate source of meaning, Levinas also goes beyond Husserl's phenomenological investigations.

Levinas acknowledges the constitutive activity or the meaning-giving function of the pure ego. But he diverges from Husserl in two ways.

First of all, Levinas rejects the idea that the pure ego can fully account for the meaning of certain realities or events. For there are realities that express a surplus of meaning not attainable by thought. Levinas is particularly referring to the ego's experience of the Other who is the nonphenomenal trace of Infinity and who continually escapes the hold of thought which tries to reduce it to a mere concept or representation.

Secondly, Levinas diverges from Husserl in asserting that meaning does not originate in the immanence of the thought of the Self. The primordial meaning is not constituted by the Self but communicated by the Other.

For Levinas, the first intelligible is not a concept contemplated by reason or thought, but the face of the Other revealing to the Self that its essential reality lies in being-for-the-Other more than in being-for-itself. Hence, the Other is the ultimate source of all truth and meaning.

c) On Philosophy and Skepticism. For Husserl as well as for Levinas, philosophy involves a search for truth or meaning. And this quest is personally undertaken by the self. But they have different views concerning what philosophy is and whether it can really surmount skepticism.

In Husserl, philosophical discourse is fundamentally on the level of epistemology; it yields an egological philosophy which focuses on the pure or transcendental ego

and its essential structure of intentionality, temporality, and its lifetime task of constituting meanings. In this egological philosophy, things polarize into the constituting subjectivity and the constituted objectivities. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is a domain of discourse that does not explicitly account for the meaning of a true transcendent coming from the outside and as a reality that is really exterior and irreducible to the Self.

Levinas, on his part, is convinced that philosophical discourse accounts for the signification of the Other as the trace of the Infinite and Transcendent Other who is God. He strongly suggests that philosophical discourse should be able to take in God. But philosophy must recognize the Infinitely Transcendent God as a reality that cannot be fully comprehended by thought. Hence, philosophical discourse on this Infinite and Transcendent Other essentially expresses an "insurmountable equivocation."

Like Descartes before him, Husserl was animated by the desire to secure a radical and solid basis for philosophy in order to finally surmount skepticism. And Husserl is convinced that his transcendental phenomenology, which is an egology centered on the pure or transcendental ego, represents the final triumph of subjectivity and marks the complete overcoming of skepticism in philosophy.

Levinas, on his part, thinks that philosophy cannot

really refute skepticism and is inseparable from it. For the reality and meaning of the Infinitely Transcendent Other cannot be reduced totally to the order of the thematized or the "said" or translated fully into systematic theory and discourse. The essential diachrony, equivocation and enigma of His "saying" opposes the synthesizing or synchronizing activity of the theoretical Self. "Unsayings" is actually the proper mode of philosophizing. And this implies the "skeptical essence of philosophy."⁵⁶⁴ Levinas thinks that the endeavor of western philosophy to overcome skepticism actually represents the refutation of transcendence rather than the refutation of skepticism. This implies an attempt on the part of western philosophy to circumscribe fully the reality of the Infinitely Transcendent Other in its effort to overcome skepticism.

Husserl carries philosophy beyond his predecessors in his project of radicalization in philosophy. In uncovering the pure ego as the ultimate ground of meaning, Husserl accomplishes his project and establishes the philosophy of transcendental phenomenology which, for him, represents the total overcoming of skepticism. Levinas, on his part, attempts to carry philosophy in general and phenomenology in

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Levinas, "God and Philosophy," p.144.

particular beyond Husserl, through his own philosophy of responsible subjectivity which accounts for an ethical relation that reveals to the Self the reality of the Infinitely Transcendent Other as the ultimate source of all truth and meaning.

As a concluding note to the whole study we can say that, in general, Edmund Husserl shares the outlook of many of the philosophers before him in portraying the self as a reality dedicating its life to the pursuit of truth. However, through his method of phenomenological or intentional analysis, he goes beyond his predecessors and arrives at the revolutionary conception that the self as pure ego is the a priori ground of all truth and meaning and the universe of all possible sense and being.

Emmanuel Levinas carries to a deeper level the phenomenological reflections of Husserl and portrays the Self as a responsible subject committed to the life of goodness. Levinas stresses the idea that to be truly oneself is to be good. And goodness lies at the very basis of all expression and truth. Responsibility for truth essentially implies an underlying responsibility for goodness. And when the Self devotes its life to goodness, it actually attaches itself to the very source of all goodness--i.e., the Infinitely Transcendent Other, the Good over and beyond being, or the God of whom the Bible speaks.

The present study is definitely not an exhaustive presentation of the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas on the ego or the self. It actually represents a personal grasp of the profound expression of the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas concerning the nature of the ego or the self. But it holds itself open to other and deeper expressions of the meaning conveyed by these two contemporary philosophers.

The ideas we have gathered from the examination of the writings of Husserl and Levinas may not reflect the depth of their thoughts on the self. But these would certainly add another dimension to our understanding of that reality with which we are most intimately related. And this understanding would no doubt carry us along the way towards a better appreciation of who we are, who we can become, and what we can do for the Other.

The significance of some of the insights of Husserl and Levinas into the self to our present situation is considered in the following section of this final chapter of the study.

Towards A Life of Responsible Subjectivity

Like many of the philosophies that have emerged in the history of man's philosophical speculation, the philosophies of Husserl and Levinas particularly on the self, possess that quality of universality and that element

of timelessness which give them an enduring value and make them relevant to anyone in any place at any time. In particular, their philosophies of the self provide us with an understanding of what it really means to be a responsible subject. And this understanding of responsible subjectivity will be a great help to us in dealing with the realities of our time.

In the following discussion, we will point out that the most meaningful way of responding to our present life-situation is to be true to what we are supposed to be--i.e., responsible subjects devoted to the pursuit of goodness and truth. In pointing out this practical importance of the central insights of Husserl and Levinas into the self as a responsible subject, we hope to clarify further and grasp more fully the thoughts of these two contemporary thinkers. For the understanding of any philosophy does not only involve its interpretation but also its application.⁵⁶⁵

Basic concerns of the responsible self in the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas will first be specified and then related to present day realities in our society.

1. The Concerns of the Responsible Self. We have shown in the presentation of Husserl's phenomenology as an

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R. Bernstein, "From Hermeneutics to Praxis," The Review of Metaphysics, 35 (June, 1982), p. 822.

equally that the responsible self is essentially committed to the pursuit of truth. The self takes absolute responsibility in giving the fullest account of its claims and beliefs or of anything that it accepts as valid and true. Thus it engages itself in phenomenological or intentional analysis in order to clarify the sense or meaning of things and attain truth and certainty concerning these matters. This fundamental theoretical or intellectual orientation implies three basic thrusts in the life of the responsible subject.

First of all, the self must transcend the naive, natural and practical outlook, and assume the philosophical or phenomenological outlook which is detached, disinterested and objective. To attain truth and certainty, it is necessary for the self to go beyond the natural standpoint which is biased, uncritical and practical. It must assume the philosophical standpoint which is an essential requirement in the search for truth concerning anything at all. This standpoint offers knowledge that is broader and deeper than that based on the natural standpoint. In particular, Husserl's phenomenological analysis aims at raising the matter at hand to the level of our consciousness in order to clarify its sense or meaning and attain truth or validity on this matter. And this clarification of the sense or meaning of anything that is given to our experience

is a necessary requisite in the process of decision making. This philosophical or phenomenological orientation is a necessary condition in grasping our life-situation as well as in organizing our life-world.

Another basic thrust in the life of the responsible self is its concern to return to its consciousness and to explore the whole field of its experience in its effort to attain truth or validity of whatever it is considering. This entails what is referred to by Husserl as phenomenological or intentional analysis which examines the noetic-noematic aspects of our experience. This implies the need to look at the thing in relation to our own self. This actually means that we consider whatever object is known or experienced in relation to ourselves as knowing and experiencing subjects. Furthermore, this means that when we pass judgments on anything, we must not be affected by the biases and misconceptions of others with respect to the same object of experience.

Moreover, directing our attention to what the thing is as it is given to our experience does not necessarily imply an egoistic and a subjective interpretation of whatever is under examination. For in the analysis of any thing in order to attain its truth or meaning, we need also to take account of the sense which this thing has for others. This points out to us another basic concern of the

responsible self, that is, to consider the standpoints or perspectives of others in and through what Husserl refers to as the "reciprocity of consciousness".

In the "reciprocity of consciousness" we take into consideration in our own field of consciousness what something means for others. And the others in turn consider in their own field of consciousness the sense that the same thing has for us. Considering the standpoints or perspectives of others clarifies further the sense or meaning of whatever is being investigated. In the end, this leads to a truer, broader, and deeper understanding of the matter under examination.

The whole purpose of the phenomenological or intentional analysis in Husserl's thought is the clarification of the truth or meaning of any thing that can have a possible sense for us. But this pursuit of truth and meaning essentially implies an underlying sense of responsibility for goodness. Our consideration of what is true or false is motivated by the sense of responsibility to uncover the truth for ourself as well as for others. This points to the significant and central idea in Levinas' philosophy of the self.

As we have already pointed out in the discussion of Levinas' thought, the Self is a responsible subject. But responsible subjectivity does not primarily and solely mean

assuming responsibility in giving the truth to the Other. For the obligation to give the truth to the Other rests on the more fundamental obligation to do good by conveying or communicating the truth to the Other. But doing good to the Other is not confined to giving him the truth. In Levinas' thought, responsible subjectivity essentially means taking responsibility both for the life and the death of the Other, i.e., responding to the fundamental ethical exigency as well as to the exigency for justice.

Responsible subjectivity asks the Self to overcome its egoistic tendencies and to curb its violence or destructive acts in relating to the Other. To be a responsible Self is to actively support the Other in his struggle for living. This demands that the Self shares its world and its possessions with Others; and if circumstances require it, the Self sacrifices its own Self for the sake of the Other.

There is obviously a one-sidedness in Levinas' conception of the ethical exigency of being responsible for-the-Other. It demands an almost superhuman altruism from the Self. But Levinas is actually expressing here an essential truth of our Christian religion. For to be truly Christians we must be concerned more for Others than for our own self. And there is no greater good we can do to the other than to give up our life so that others may live. In receiving the

gift of life from God we accept our indebtedness to God. But there is a transfer of indebtedness when we sacrifice our life for the sake of the Other. Thus, the essential meaning of being a true Christian finds expression in the contemporary thought of Levinas.

For Levinas, however, responsible subjectivity does not necessarily call for this one-sided or asymmetrical ethical relation. This ethical exigency holds true only if the Self were not also an Other to the Other or if there were not many Others aside from the Other. The one-sidedness of the ethical exigency is actually modified by the exigency for justice, i. e., by the demand for the Other to treat the Self also as an Other. It asks both the Self and the Other to be responsible for each other. And it likewise calls for the prioritization of our obligations and responsibilities considering that there are many Others with whom we must share our goodness.

The foregoing account of the basic concerns of the Self in the thoughts of Husserl and Levinas gives us a portrait of the self as a responsible subject committed to the pursuit of goodness and truth. If we live up to our essential reality as responsible subjects motivated primarily by the aforementioned concerns, we would be able to comprehend more fully our situation and participate creatively in working for conditions that serve the ends of

justice and bring about progress in our society. We will realize more acutely the need to live up to what we are supposed to be--responsible persons committed to the life of goodness and truth--when we consider our situation at present.

2. Responsible Subjectivity and Our Present

Situation. We are all aware that the February revolution in 1986 liberated us from the dictatorship and oppression of the previous regime. That historic event was unquestionably a turning point in our history as a people and it ushered in the period of transition during which we face the task of rebuilding and reforming our society by creating conditions of peace, freedom and justice which would allow us to grow and develop towards the unique direction that we are called to take as a people.

The task of achieving this goal for our people and our society is undoubtedly an extremely difficult task. This becomes particularly clear to us when we consider the many problems most of which we have inherited from the previous regime, and which we need to surmount if we are to attain the much desired progress in our society. There is no need for us to enumerate all of these problems that plague our people today; but we need to mention those that press for immediate action--our perilous economic situation and the increasing burden of our foreign debts, our

political instability and the threat of insurgency, the inequitable distribution of wealth and opportunity, massive poverty, and the deep-seated problem of graft and corruption.

Our situation at present calls for national reconstruction and recovery--economic, political as well as social. But what is more urgently needed is the "moral reconstruction of the Filipino character,"⁵⁶⁶ for "at the bottom of our economic and political instability is the weakness and corruption of the moral foundations of our society."⁵⁶⁷ We cannot really hope to build a better society unless our people have a strong moral character, for "a nation is only as good as the people who compose it."⁵⁶⁸

We were hopeful that the spirit which animated our people and brought about the people's revolution in 1986 would also carry us along the way towards national reconstruction and recovery in all spheres of our life. It has been more than three years already since that historic event in 1986; but we have not really gone very far in terms

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Manuel B. Dy, Jr., "Outline of a Project of Filipino Ethics," Karunungan: Philippine Association for Philosophical Research, 5 (1988), p. 35.

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Senator Shahani quoted by Manuel B. Dy Jr., op. cit., p. 35.

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Manuel B. Dy, Jr., op. cit., p. 35.

of national recovery and progress. A major block in our march to progress and greater well-being as a people is the erosion of moral values and "the progressive moral decay" especially in public office.⁵⁶⁹ This is evident in the corrupt practices of some of those in public office. Corruption has become "an ordinary fixture of our nation's public office."⁵⁷⁰ And in the words of President Aquino herself, "corruption has returned . . . if not in the same scale certainly with equal shamelessness."⁵⁷¹

Our present situation certainly calls for "moral renewal" in our people. And no less than the President has launched the "National Coalition for Transparency," a newly formed multi-sectoral group committed to monitor corruption and inaction in government agencies; but this group intends to look first "to the moral renewal of its individual members before calling for the reformation of society and

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Justice Marcelo Fernan, "Moral Renewal in Government Needed," Speech before Rotarians of the San Juan Rotary Club at Club Filipino, Manila, June 29, 1989.

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Joint Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), "Thou Shalt Not Steal," Tagaytay City, July 11, 1989.

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President Aquino's "A Relentless War on Corruption," Speech at the launching of the National Coalition for Transparency at the Club Filipino, Manila, June 19, 1989, in Philippines Free Press, 81 (July 1, 1989), pp. 5ff.

government."⁵⁷² And the Catholic bishops, on their part, not only expressed their condemnation of graft and corruption, but also called for a "massive program of moral formation."⁵⁷³ There is no doubt that we need to establish a new moral order so that we can build a new and better social order.

In the light of the urgent call for "moral renewal" in our people at present, we see the importance of the aforementioned fundamental insights of Husserl and Levinas into the self as a responsible subject. We can meaningfully respond to this urgent call for moral reformation by developing ourselves as responsible subjects committed to the life of goodness and truth. It is by developing ourselves as responsible subjects that we can bring about a new moral order which would pave the way for a new social order that would allow us to achieve the goal of a progressive and respectable life for our people.

To develop ourselves as responsible subjects, we must be guided by the sense of responsibility for goodness and truth in our dealings with everybody--members of our family or people we work and relate with. Whoever we are, wherever

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ibid., p. 42.

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Pastoral Letter of CBCP, "Thou Shalt Not Steal," p. 1.

we are, and whatever may be our work, we must always be guided by our commitment to be just, good and true. Undoubtedly, there would be many occasions in our life that would provide us with the opportunity to manifest our sense of justice and goodness.

To be a responsible subject, we need not actually do something extraordinary. We need only to live our ordinary lives and carry out faithfully from day to day, the tasks which are our lot in life. And we need to be guided always by a deep sense of responsibility not just in relating with our own self, but more so in dealing with others. We need to be more responsive to our duties and obligations towards others. And we must never allow personal motives or selfish interests to lure us into manipulating or exploiting other people. We must always ensure that justice prevails in our dealings with others. For when justice prevails in all our interactions with Others, there would be mutual concern for each other's well-being; there would be sharing of each other's world and possessions; and there would be no place for selfishness, greediness or corrupt practices. Justice would ensure that we put the common interest over and above our own personal and selfish interest.

In being a responsible member of our family as well as of other bigger communities, and in carrying out faithfully the tasks we are expected to accomplish in our

chosen field of work and endeavor, we are already doing our share in working for the good of our people and promoting conditions of justice in our society. Each one of us--whether an ordinary citizen or a government official--should then ask our own self if we have lived up to what is expected of us as responsible subjects imbued with a deep sense of responsibility for justice and goodness.

To be a responsible subject also means that we are motivated by a sense of responsibility for truth. To take responsibility in the pursuit of truth is in fact one of the essential demands of justice and goodness. Our decisions on what is just, good and right either for us, for other people or for all people in our society, must be based on our understanding of what is truly just, good and right. And this understanding can be better attained through an intentional analysis leading to the clarification of the sense or meaning of whatever is under examination. This clarification of the truth or meaning of any thing at hand is very important in resolving personal difficulties as well as in obtaining a clearer perspective on issues that affect the welfare of our people and the progress of our society. As responsible persons committed to the pursuit of truth, we need to examine and clarify the sense or meaning of the existing social structure, its institutions, policies and programs, and consider whether these actually and ultimately

serve the ends of justice. In this way, we gain more confidence in asserting our own stand and sharing our personal convictions with respect to existing social conditions as well as to future plans and projects intended for a just and better social order.

There is no doubt that if we can build a society of responsible people imbued with a deep sense of responsibility for truth, justice and goodness, then we would be in a better position to deal with many of our deep-seated problems and eventually do away with many forms of injustice in our society.

Becoming truly a responsible person in the sense in which he is essentially portrayed by Husserl and Levinas is, therefore, our most appropriate response to the urgent call for moral transformation in our individual lives in order to bring about the much desired national reconstruction and recovery in the economic, political and social spheres of our society. Each of us--whoever we are, wherever we are, and whatever our work may be--is called to respond to our present condition by becoming responsible persons aspiring for what is just, good and true. It is as responsible persons that we can creatively and effectively participate in the collective endeavor of directing the course of our development towards the unique direction that we are called to pursue as a people.

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A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX A

EDMUND HUSSERL
(1859-1938)

1

1. Biographical Notes:

- 1859 born on April 8 in Prosenitz, a village in Moravia (then within the Austrian Empire but now part of Czechoslovakia)
- of middle class Jewish parents
- he was later baptized as a Protestant; went to the elementary school in Moravia, then to the Realgymnasium in Vienna and later to the Staatsgymnasium in Olmütz
- 1876-1878 studied mathematics, physics and astronomy at the University of Leipzig; made it also a point to attend the lectures in philosophy given by Wilhelm Wundt
- 1878 transferred to Friedrich Wilhelm University at Berlin; continued to study mathematics under Kronecker, Kummer and the famous Weierstrass; interest in philosophy was stimulated by Wundt and kept alive through the inspiring lectures of Friedrich Paulsen
- 1881 although increasingly drawn to philosophy, he transferred to the University of Vienna to finish studies in mathematics
- 1887 studied under Königsberger, received Ph.D. for a dissertation on Beiträge Zur Theorie der Variationsrechnung (Contributions to the Theory of the Calculus of Variations)

1

See Joseph Kockelmans, ed. Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Its Interpretation (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 17-19.

- 1883 received an invitation from Weierstrass to return to Berlin and become his assistant; felt honored by the offer but received it without great enthusiasm, for he had decided to devote himself entirely to philosophy; felt he had more opportunity to pursue studies on philosophy at the University of Vienna rather than at Friedrich Wilhelm University at Berlin; Weierstrass got ill and Husserl left for Vienna to complete his philosophical studies
- 1884-1886 attended the lectures of Franz Brentano and was impressed by the way Brentano acquainted his students with the philosophies of Hume, J.S. Mill, as well as by Brentano's personal investigations into psychological, ethical and logical problems; came in contact with Bolzano's Wissenschaftslehre (Theory of Science) through Brentano; realized the genuine importance of Bolzano's theory only after he studied Lotze's Logik.
- 1886 followed Brentano's advice and went to University of Halle; became assistant under Stumpf, availed himself of an outstanding opportunity to obtain a thorough grounding in psychology
- 1887 became Privat-dozent on the philosophy faculty at the University of Halle
- 1891 published his first book while at residence at Halle -- Philosophie der Arithmetik (Philosophy of Arithmetic) which was actually the Habilitationschrift he had compiled under Stumpf's direction; the book was criticized by Frege and others; this criticism prompted Husserl to abandon the "psychologism" he defended in it
- 1900 published Logische Untersuchungen (Logical Investigations); in the Prolegomena to Pure Logic contained therein, Husserl explicitly rejected any form of "psychologism" in the realm of logic and mathematics; the book was well received by philosophers and logicians and established his reputation as philosopher

- 1900 received an invitation to join the philosophy faculty at the University of Göttingen;
later appointed as extraordinarius professor in philosophy -- held the position for 16 years and published the following works:
- Vorlesungen über Phanomenologie (Lectures on Phenomenology) 1904-1905
- Vorlesungen zur Phanomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (Lectures on Phenomenology of Inner-Time Consciousness) 1905-1910
- Die Idee der Phanomenologie (The Idea of Phenomenology) 1906-1907
- Philosophie Als strenge Wissenschaft (Philosophy as a Rigorous Science) 1911
- Ideen (Ideas) 1st volume - 1913
- 1904-1907 his new philosophy referred to as phenomenology began to take shape
- 1913 his new philosophy received a relatively final form
- 1916-1928 full professorship at Freiburg im Breisgau;
remained there till 1928,
when he applied for retirement, wrote the following:
- Ideen (Ideas) - 1912ff. 3 last volumes written
- Erste Philosophie (First Philosophy) - 1923ff.
- Phänomenologie Psychologie (Phenomenological Psychology) - 1925ff.
- Formale und transzendente Logik (Formal and Transcendental Logic) - 1928, the only one published (1929) during his lifetime
- 1929-1938 worked at a tremendous pace, produced several major works; Cartesianische Meditationen (Cartesian Meditations) -- the only work during his time published in French version

- 1934 Crisis (Crisis) - first two parts
- 1938 April 29, died of pleurisy after months of suffering

2. Four Main Stages in the Development of Husserl's
Conception of Phenomenology:²

- a) the pre-phenomenological period culminating in the ideas formulated in the first volume of the Logical Investigations (1887-1900)
- b) the period of phenomenology as limited epistemological enterprise (1901-1906)
- c) the period of pure phenomenology as the universal philosophy and science;
took shape around 1906-1907;
led not only to the formulation of a new type of transcendentalism but also to a new kind of idealism in 1913;
its increasing radicalization was the main theme of Husserl's thought in Freiburg (1906-1928)
- d) the period in which the life-world idea gradually emerged and began to occupy a more central place in his philosophy (1928-1938)

3. The Husserl's Archives:³

founded by Dr. Herman L. van Breda at Louvain (Belgium) in 1939

contains not only the philosophical library of Husserl, but also letters, diaries, numerous transcriptions in longhand of manuscripts previously written in shorthand form;

contains about 8000 works which include many publications dedicated to Husserl by renowned philosophers and scientists;

²
Ibid., pp. 19-20.

³
Ibid., pp. 20-21.

contains also the unpublished manuscripts left untouched after Husserl's death and now being transcribed; they comprise approximately 40,000 pages of shorthand manuscripts set down by Husserl in the Gabelberg system;

contains also more than 7000 pages longhand transcriptions of Husserl's original manuscripts that his assistant Edith Stein, Ludwig Landgrebe and Eugen Fink worked before 1939;

since 1939 the task of transcribing these manuscripts has been continued by Fink, Landgrebe, Strasser, Waller and Marly Biemel, and Rudolf Boehm;

more than 60 per cent of the manuscripts have already been typed in fivefold and forwarded to four cooperating centers: Paris, Freiburg im Breisgau, Cologne and Buffalo;

the texts are studied further at these centers and, in consultation with the Archives at Louvain prepared for publication

4

4. Major Works:

Philosophie der Arithmetik, Psychologische und logische Untersuchungen. Erster Band (Halle a.S.: C. Pfeiffer, 1891).

Logische Untersuchungen, 3 vols., (Halle a.S.: Max Niemeyer, 1921-22). The first edition in 2 vols. was published in 1900 and in 1901; the second edition in 3 vols. in 1913.

Logical Investigations, trans. J.N. Findlay, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, c1970).

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Phänomenologische Psychologie (1925), Herausgegeben von Walter Biemel (Husserliana, Band IX), (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962).

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Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vortrage, Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Prof. S. Strasser (Husserliana, Band I), (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950).

Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960).
Originally published in French in 1931.
trans. by J. Pfeiffer and F. Levinas.

The Paris Lectures: trans. Peter Frestenbaum (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967).

Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie, Herausgegeben von Walter Biemel (Husserliana, Band VI), (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954).

The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy, trans. David Carr, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, c1970).

The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness, trans. James S. Churchill, intro. by Calvin O. Schrag, ed. Martin Heidegger (London: Indiana University Press, c1969).

Erfahrung und Urteil: Untersuchungen zur Genealogie der Logik, Redigiert und herausgegeben von Ludwig Landgrebe (Hamburg: Claassen, 1939).

Experience and Judgment: Investigations in Genealogy of Logic, trans. J.S. Churchill and K. Ameriks, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, c1973).

APPENDIX B

EMMANUEL LEVINAS
(1906-)

5

1. Biographical Notes:

born in January 1906 in Kaunas, Lithuania
of Jewish parents;

secondary studies in Strasbourg and Russia;

early education brought him into contact with the Hebrew
Bible as well as with the great Russian novelists --
Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Doestevsky and
Tolstoi;

philosophical studies in Strasbourg from 1923-1930;

stayed in Freiburg in 1928-1929 where he followed closely
the teachings of Husserl and Heidegger while writing his
dissertation on The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's
Phenomenology;

naturalized French in 1930;

director of the Oriental Israelite School;

professor of philosophy at --
University of Poitiers (1964)
University of Paris-Nanterre (1967)
University of Sorbonne (1973)

5

See A. Tallon, "Emmanuel Levinas and the Problem of
Ethical Metaphysics," Philosophy Today, 20 (Spring, 1976),
pp. 63 (note no. 14); Peperzak, Adrian, "Emmanuel Levinas:
Jewish Experience and Philosophy," Philosophy Today, 27
(March, 1983), pp. 297-298; Levinas, Ethics and Infinity,
trans. R. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press,
1985), interviewers preface, pp. vi-11.

gave a series of radio talks in February and March of 1981; these ten interviews follow the development of Levinas' thought since his student days up to the most recent articles dedicated to the question of God -- these articles were put together into a collection in --

Die Dieu qui vient à l'idée (1982)

2. Levinas himself gave the following "inventory" as an autobiography:⁶

the Hebrew Bible since my earliest childhood in Lithuania;

Pouchkin and Tolstoi;

the Russian revolution of 1917 experienced at the age of eleven in the Ukraine;

then in 1923, the University of Strasbourg where Charles Blondel, Halbwachs, Pradines, Carteron, and a little later, Guerolt, were teaching;

friendship with Maurice Blanchot and, through teachers who had been teenagers during the Dreyfus affair, a vision strange and bewildering for a newcomer, of a people equal to humanity and of a nation to which one can feel attached in mind and heart as strongly as through roots;

sojourn in 1928-1929 at Freiburg and apprenticeship in phenomenology, begun a year earlier with Jean Hering, Leon Brunschwig, and the philosophical Saturday nights of an avant-garde at Gabriel Marcel's;

the intellectual and anti-intellectualist refinement of Jean Wahl and his generous friendship found again after a long captivity;

since 1947, regular lectures at the Philosophical College;

6

Emmanuel Levinas, "Signature," Philosophy Today, 10 (Spring, 1966), pp. 30-31.

pedagogical service at the head of the Israelite Oriental Normal School which, for almost a hundred years, has been forming French teachers for the elementary schools of the Universal Israelite Alliance of the Mediterranean Basin;

finally, close association with a phenomenal and ruthless teacher of exegesis and Talmudic themes, in the daily communion with Henri Nerson.

7

3. Major Works:

Théorie de l'intuition la phénoménologie de Husserl (Paris: Vrin, 1930, 1963, 1970).

The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology, trans. Andre Orianne (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern, 1973).

Le Temps et l'autre, in J. Wahl, Le Choix, Le Monde, L'Existence (Grenoble - Paris: Arthaud, 1947), pp. 125-176.

Le Temps et l'Autre (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1979).

De l'existent à l'existence (Paris: Vrin, 1947).

Existence and Existents, trans. Alphonso Lingis, (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1978).

En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger (Paris: Vrin, 1949); 2nd ed. 1967, 1974).

Totalité et Infini (La Haye, Nijhoff, 1961, 1965, 1968, 1971, 1974).

Totality and Infinity, trans. Alphonso Lingis, (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1969); (Pittsburgh: Duquesne, 1969, 1979).

Difficile liberté (Paris: Albin Michael, 1963).

Quatre lectures talmudiques (Paris: Minuit, 1968).

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7

See Levinas, Ethics and Infinity, pp. 123-124.

Autrement qu'être ou au-delà l'essence (La Haye: Nijhoff, 1974).

Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence, trans. Alphonso Lingis, (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981).

Sur Maurice Blanchot (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1975).

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Du Sacré au Saint (Paris: Minuit, 1977).

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De Dieu qui vent à l'idée (Paris: Vrin, 1982).

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APPENDIX C

THE SELF IN HUSSERL AND LEVINAS
(A COMPARISON)

The significant similarities and differences in the thoughts
of Husserl and Levinas on the self are outlined below :

BASIS OF COMPARISON	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	
		HUSSERL	LEVINAS
A. Identity of the Self			
1. Method of Self- Discovery	a certain method is necessary to discover the reality of the ego or self	the phenomenological method uncovers the reality of the ego and defines its identity	the phenomenological method is inadequate; it cannot describe the pre- personal life of the self and the nonphenomenal reality of the Other; the account of the face-to- face encounter whereby the self discovers its identity is no longer a phenomenology but a hagiography
2. Essential charac- ter of the ego/self	intentionality belongs to the life of the ego or self	intentionality is the universal structure of the ego; representation is the basic form of intentionality	the self is characterized by the intentionalities of representation, enjoy- ment and sensibility, and fundamentally by respon- sible subjectivity
3. Basic Orientation of the ego/self		theoretical, i.e., the life of thought	ethical, i.e., the life of goodness, obligation and responsibility to the Other

BASIS OF COMPARISON	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	
		HUSSERL	LEVINAS
B. Self and Other Relationship			
1. Ego's Experience of the Other	the Other's body or a part of it (the face) is immediately involved in the encounter with the Other	the ego experiences the Other incarnated in his body; the Other's body is directly presented and immediately given to the ego; the Other's con- sciousness is appresented; in the body presented to the ego's consciousness the ego takes the other as a phenomenon that can be fully constituted in thought	the self experiences the Other as manifest in the face-to-face encounter; the Other as incarnated in the face is exper- ienced as immediately present to the self; the self sees the Other as the nonphenomenal trace of the Infinite Other; the Other cannot be fully contained in thought and expressed in language
2. Egological Orientation	there is an egologi- cal or egoistic orientation in the ego or self	the egological orienta- tion is manifest in the intentionality of representation	the egological orienta- tion is manifest in the intentionalities of representation, enjoyments and sensibility as well as in the egoistic rela- tion between the self and the Other the egological or egoist- ic orientation is not fundamental; it can be overcome by assuming the ethical relation;
3. Ethical Relation	there is reciprocity and asymmetry in the relation between the self and the Other	reciprocity involves ideas or perspectives; asymmetry points to the primacy and supremacy of the ego over the Other	reciprocity is involved in justice as mutual con- cern for obligations and responsibilities; asym- metry points to the primacy and transcendence of the Other

BASIS OF COMPARISON	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	
		HUSSERL	LEVINAS
C. The Self and the Question of Meaning:			
1. Event/Advent of Meaning	the event of meaning; is associated with intentional analysis and the constitutive intentionality of thought	giving meaning is the prerogative of conscious- ness or thought and the constitutive intentionality of thought	giving meaning is not the prerogative of conscious- ness or thought; there is meaning in the pre-theo- ritical intentionality of the body in sensibility and enjoyment; the advent of meaning is associated primordially with the face-to-face encounter;
2. Source of Meaning:		ego is the ultimate ground of meaning	the Other is the ultimate source of meaning
3. Philosophy and Skepticism	philosophy is a quest for truth and meaning; it is per- sonally undertaken by the ego or the self	philosophical discourse is fundamentally on the level of epistemology; it leads to the uncovering of the pure ego as the universe of all sense and being;	philosophical discourse is fundamentally on the level of the ethical--an account of the encounter between the self and the Other which conveys to the self the reality of the Other as the source of all right and meaning; philosophy must take in God--the Infinite and Transcendent Other whose enigmatic reality cannot be fully contained in thought or expressed in language;
		philosophy completely overcomes skepticism by grounding truth in the apodictic certainty of the pure ego	philosophy is inseparable from skepticism and must recognize the insurmount- able equivocation of the Infinite and Transcendent Other who cannot be fully translated to systematic theory and discourse

APPENDIX D

A LIST OF DISSERTATIONS

I. ON EDMUND HUSSERL

- Abbink, John Brittain. "Kant, Husserl and the Structure of Philosophical Theories." Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1981.
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