GENETIC PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE HUSSERLIAN ACCOUNT OF ETHICS

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In this essay I will argue that Husserl's methodological transition to genetic phenomenology is an important development with ramifications for his ethical theory. We shall see how the transition to genetic phenomenology paves the way for thinking about plurality in community without the elimination of ethical foundations, or the elimination of the importance of inherited convictions. In order to achieve this understanding we shall first examine Husserl's ethics paying close attention to the differences between his early ethical theories and his later ethical theories. I will show how the early ethical theories are clearly informed by the static phenomenological method and how the later ethical theories are made possible by the supplementation of static phenomenology with the genetic phenomenological method. This allows for the claim that the genetic method makes possible a much more rich and nuanced way of understanding the ethical individual and his or her relationship to a historical as well as concurrent community.

Ethics

Husserl's early ethics, primarily explicated in lectures from 1908 through 1914, are characterized by his concern with a scientific grounding for ethics, and include an exploration into the question of a categorical imperative. Like his preoccupations in the broader spectrum of his thought, his ethical investigations too are concerned with overcoming relativism and skepticism.

He first attempts to establish a phenomenological axiology founded upon an analogy with the early structure of reason he provided in other works. The structure that he describes as formal logic is applied then to a formal axiology.[1] Like formal logic, a formal axiology would provide a universal structure for ethical judgments. It would establish principles that are abstracted from the content of ethical judgments and legislate for consistency in ethical practice and ethical judgments. Just as thought requires a distinction between reason and acts, which the laws of logic can provide, valuing requires a distinction between reason and acts, which only laws of axiology and formal laws of practical action can provide.

The analogy with formal logic functions on different levels. Like logic, there are the formal laws to which value judgments must conform in order for us to claim consistency in our beliefs or actions. These formal laws make clear that if something ought to be done, then if one desires the good, but fails to do that thing, one is irrational. In logic one does not evaluate an argument on form alone. We must also consider whether the premises, in other words, the content, are true claims. Likewise, in ethics, the goodness of an action cannot be determined on form alone. The formal axiology must take into account the truth or falsity of those consistent claims. This requires reference to the material content of an ethical claim.

Determination of the material content of an ethical claim is recognized as being circumstantial. Husserl's effort to maintain the formality of his approach while still accounting for circumstance leads him to the thought of Franz Brentano.

Following Brentano, Husserl formulates a categorical imperative as "Do the best that is attainable" ("Tue das Beste unter dem Erreichbaren").[2] This formulation of the imperative allows for multiple possibilities in any given situation which must be consid-

ered on the basis of what can actually be achieved in practical terms. For, if the best in any situation is not achievable, then how good can it practically be? The idea is to choose the best that is practically achievable, thereby improving the possibility for success in performing the willed action. A lesser achievement is better than a best failure. On this premise, the best that is attainable in any situation is the appropriate object of willing. Its implementation would be an ethical action. In this approach the good action depends upon a process of weighing alternatives to determine which has the highest value while being most feasible within the practical domain created by each situation. Husserl explains that "if we think for ourselves of the totality of the existing realizable options for the willing subject objectively determined, then according to the law of value there emerges absorption of the lesser value by the higher value that there is a good that has objectively absolute primacy, indeed that has a singular absolute practical value."³ This notion of absorption allows us to determine which action has the highest value, for that which absorbs all other actions and is not itself absorbed is the action of the highest practical value. One good emerges from the spectrum of achievable goods as that which has the highest value. It takes on, then, the absolute practical value because of its higher value within what is achievable. In other words, of the options that are achievable, some have a higher rank than others in terms of their value. Of those, the one with the highest rank is the one with absolute practical value. Husserl's ordering of material values is thus based upon the principle that he calls the "law of absorption." By this he means that we determine a material good which we identify as the highest and all other goods are hierarchically ordered according to their contribution to the "umbrella" good. This ordering of material values is based upon the formal axiological principle of doing the best that is attainable.

Husserl is careful in these early writings to lay out this hierarchy of values. He places spiritual values on a higher plane than sensual values, because spiritual values are in a position of being able to absorb sensual values. Spiritual values include things within the realms of art, science, and rational love. If two spiritual values are the same in value, we turn to the sensible values which are absorbed by the spiritual values. Husserl suggests that "the values which we designate as 'sensible' are null beside values of the 'spiritual' level, the 'higher' values, insofar as they are not prerequisite values for these [the higher values]. . . . If we have two 'alike' spiritual values, then the connectedness with the sensible values still gives an estimate of importance. Only in regard to this choice would the sensible be absorbed by the higher."⁴ Obviously, there can be various goods that might be in conflict and we would have no way of determining which good ought to outweigh any other good without applying Husserl's formal principle of the categorical imperative. Formal axiology provides a structure through which one could determine the a priori goods, which may be somehow internal to each material good.⁵

An experience of something can be merely a cognitive experience. One can perceive something, remember it, make a simple judgment about it, but often an experience is not only a cognitive experience of what something is, but is also an experience of that thing as affecting us emotionally. In the latter case, the value of the thing is given through emotions or feelings towards the thing. Emotions or feelings function in a truth of disclosure, disclosing the value of the thing. Such emotions or feelings are founded upon the more purely cognitive experiences. In order to have a feeling about a thing, we must first recognize the thing as object of experience without it being either good or bad, either desirable or not. This helps us to understand that the value of the thing is objective in the sense that it is

founded upon the objective and inter-subjective activity of experiencing the thing as thing apart from its practical value.

Let us take, for example, the moment of preparing to venture outside on a cold day. As I look through the closet to determine what coat to wear, I am confronted with multiple possibilities. I desire the coat to be a warm coat. Several of the coats fit that description to greater or lesser degrees. The windbreaker is not as warm as the denim jacket, and the denim jacket is not as warm as the long winter dress coat, but the long winter dress coat is not as warm as the down parka. My valuation of these coats as being warm or not depends both upon my experience of them as coats, but then also upon my desire for certain characteristics of the coat to keep me warm. Clearly, the value judgment of the coat as a good coat is not separated from the experience of it as a coat, but it is a logically distinct moment of the experience. We can also understand that even if the feelings are involved here, that does not reduce the moment to a subjective or purely immanent moment since there are objective reasons for thinking that one coat is better than another. My identification of the down parka as the best coat to wear today indicates the goodness of the parka. It is good both in the sense that it is desired, but also in the sense that it is understood that it will meet the requirements of the desire.[10]

This example still is dependent upon my desire for a warm coat which is not perhaps as clearly objective as one would want when dealing with ethical issues. Husserl recognizes the need for still further objectivity or universality in that he wants to identify goods that will be understood by all to be goods regardless of desires. He attempts, then, to identify a priori goods. These a priori goods would provide the content for the formal axiology that has already been explained. By material a priori Husserl means the necessary conditions for an object to be of the type that it is. In other words, the material a priori determines the essence of the type of the thing in question. We identify the material a priori through a process of eidetic variation. The role of the material a priori is to eliminate certain possibilities of variation. In so doing, we are able to establish objective value. Without the material a priori such objective value would be impossible, for we would be unable to identify any possibility as being outside of the realm of acceptability for any thing. In other words, the material a priori allows us to determine limits of variation of possibilities when we are considering the best that is attainable. The best attainable becomes something that is viewed circumstantially, but not something that is open to absolutely any possible circumstance or any possible action since only some of those possibilities are compatible with the material a priori and some of those that are compatible are better than others.

This working out of the implications of the categorical imperative was later considered to be insufficient by Husserl because it suggests that the imperative assumes a position of neutrality from outside the realm of value. On this interpretation, any ethical individual in a given situation would be expected to do exactly the same thing, given the limits of what is practically achievable. Such an account leaves no room for what Husserl will later come to identify as an individual's particular responsibility in a particular realm of love. The later Husserl is able to see that the universal categorical imperative would lead to a self-alienation since every individual is subject to the categorical imperative regardless of what his or her personal project might be. Husserl's concern is that we would be required to choose to achieve the best that is objectively attainable based on external valuations without any will involved. Although Husserl, following Brentano, claims that feelings have a role in determining the good in a particular situation, his reworking of the imperative restricts the role of individual feelings by placing the

subject in an unrealistically neutral position. These are themes that Husserl attempts to accommodate in his later ethical writings.[7]

For our purposes it should now be clear that Husserl's analysis of the categorical imperative and his development of an ethics based on that notion, was coherently achieved within the static phenomenological method. However, an approach that takes account only of the best attainable does not accommodate any individual's development as an ethical subject. It deals with ethical decision making in a purely formal, structural way. Although Husserl does not give up this formalism, he does alter it in such a way as to take on an individualistic formal structure which accommodates the development of the subject, its inheritance of values from other generations, and its absolute self-responsibility in renewal and critique of those values within community. This much more nuanced approach to ethics cannot be explained or explored using the static phenomenological method. It requires genetic phenomenology.

With the introduction of the genetic phenomenological method, Husserl's focus shifts. His effort is to make subjectivity more clear, but also he wants to be able to take account of the world as historical. His focus in the early ethics, as we have seen, is on establishing the objective value of an action, even though that objective value is established circumstantially. When we approach ethics through the genetic method, we instead focus on the development of the ego and the thrust of the ethics shifts to the character of the ego, the ego's personal projects which guide it in the determination of an ought, or a truth of the will, and the process of renewal and critique where the ethical role of philosophy makes itself most deeply felt. Self-responsibility can only seriously be addressed within the context of the inheritance of convictions and the sedimentation of experiences. The genetic method allows Husserl to consider how the ego establishes an ethical character because it allows him to investi-gate the development of habitualities, the sedimentation of sense, and passive association. In this way, then, he is also able to take account of the establishment for the ego of certain cultural traditions. The analysis of passive association attempts to explain how those traditions come to be taken up by the ego and offers a position from which Husserl can argue for the radical importance of the process of renewal and critique and for the ethical role of philosophy.

Husserl's later ethical theory arises in response to the ethical crisis of the post-war world, and exhibits his increasing distance from Brentano and increasing influence of Fichte.[8] Convinced that the role of ethics is not to define the Good as applicable to each individual case, he concerns himself with the development and characteristics of the ethical individual, the ethical attitude. In an effort to outline a more general ethical attitude as opposed to an imperative that applies objectively to each particular situation, Husserl begins to engage such notions as the "absolute ought" and "ethical love." These themes are developed in conjunction with the ideas of renewal and critique he presents in the Kaizo articles of 1923/24.[9] This preoccupation with the development of the ethical individual and with the process of renewal and critique incorporates a new involvement with the questions of the human subject as an inheritor of tradition as well as one whose convictions and desires can be subject to change. His consideration does not stop with the individual human subject, however. He includes the community of subjects in his description of the ethical life that culminates in the personality of a higher order. The community of self-responsible individuals is vital for the process of renewal and critique, which can bring new life to a world in chaos.

The absolute ought is a value that Husserl describes in one of his unpublished manuscripts as "rooted in the ego itself and which has arisen from love (as absolute love)."[10] The personal ought is absolute to the extent that it is only in adhering to this ought that I

am who I am." It commands me to choose the best possible life, "from now on in all its acts and with its total content of mental processes, that it is my best possible life, my best possible, that means, the best possible that I can live. . . . That ought is a correlate of the will, and indeed of a rational will. The ought is the truth of the will."[12] The best possible life for Husserl is one that admits of no regrets. The personal identity one acquires through this is the result of establishing lasting convictions. Each position that an ego freely takes in any practical situation contributes to the habitual sedimentation of convictions. Without the sedimentation of such position-takings, there is no habituation, and without habituation, there is no development of convictions. Obviously, without sedimented habitual convictions, there is no concrete identity of an ego. The ego would be fragmented, dissipated.

Husserl has not given up the formalism of his earlier ethics in that he never dismantles his adherence to a categorical imperative of doing the best that is attainable. However, this categorical imperative takes for its material content that which is determined through an absolute ought which is, of course, different for each individual. Each individual must do the best attainable in accordance with his or her absolute ought. Otherwise, the identity of the individual would be threatened. This is how the categorical imperative becomes placed within the realm of the life-world. The categorical imperative loses its influence as a universal that applies identically to all. Rather, it takes on the character of applying to each individual in preservation of that individual in his or her individuality. This becomes vitally important when we recognize the role the absolute ought plays in determining values. The absolute ought places a burden upon the individual that requires that he or she make certain decisions not universally upheld as being the best attainable in a situation.

We might wonder how we are to determine what our own absolute ought is and how our ethical decisions develop into habits and convictions in conjunction with an absolute ought. Husserl speaks of this in terms of being called to a vocation. We feel a personal love for a particular realm of value. For instance, the vocation of academic philosophy may be a love for the realm of value of teaching or philosophical inquiry. Other vocations have other realms of value such as the doctor whose realm of value is health or easing the pain and suffering of others. It is only when we choose our vocation in compliance with that love for a realm of value that we are following our professional duty and claiming an authentic life. It is that love for a realm of value that gives life an encompassing, rational goal. In developing our habits and convictions in line with this goal, we are realizing a true self. This is our personal telos.[13] Husserl does connect this notion of the telos with his earlier notion of the categorical imperative, but he complicates the issue by suggesting that the imperative is determined because of the personal telos, because of the personal realm of value and not strictly based upon what is practically the best attainable. He also complicates the matter by addressing the relationship between the individual ought and the ought of a community. The categorical imperative cannot stand on its own as a universal without consideration of the cultural and communal influences.

We do not gain an understanding of our true self in isolation. Our personal telos can be and is influenced by others. What we identify as a realm of value is not arbitrary, but involves inherited traditions which connect us with other generations and other individuals. Ethical norms, then, are not absolutely universal and timeless, nor are they absolutely subjective or historical. They are rather, binding values that arise from the human community at different levels, but which bind community as what it is. They are "related to individuals, to groups, and to

the universe of humanity: thus should each person in general behave, especially each soldier, each priest, etc."[14] In other words behavior is in some part dictated by the realm of value that one adopts, either for example, being soldierly or being priestly. To be a soldier entails certain values and behaviors and the same holds true for any realm of value that one takes up.

Each individual needs to be true to herself or himself and yet, as members of the same community, we are called to the preservation of the communal self, the personality of a higher-order. The personality of a higher-order is the 'subject' of the community loosely analogous to the individual subject. It is difficult, however, to determine to what extent it is analogous. For Husserl at times seems to suggest that there is a very strict analogy between the individual and the higher-order personality, but at other times is careful to avoid such a strict analogy. He describes the personality of the higher-order as being comprised of a many-headed connected subject. It is "a personal, so to speak many-headed and still united subjectivity." The various parts of this many-headed subjectivity are "interwoven with one another through complex 'social acts' (I-you-acts, commands, appointments, activities associated with love, etc.) that spiritually unite persons with each other."[15]

The true self of the community is taken up into the true self of the individual. This happens due to the passing along of tradition. The ego, through passive association, is socialized and thereby takes up the identity of the community into its own identity. The identity of the ego involves all kinds of communal identities, e.g., being Jewish, being a university professor, being American. These carry with them certain identities that become part of the ego's own identity because the personal ethical will cannot be accomplished in isolation from the community. The community has a telos that is more than just the summation of the ends for the individuals who comprise the community.[16] The

ideal self of the community is based on striving for the "common good" of each member of the community as well as for the whole of the community. This does not mean that the individuality of each is absorbed into the community. Rather, the absolute ought is preserved for each individual in terms of his or her responsibility to the other and the responsibility of the other for him or her. It is only through this mutuality that a common life and common good can be established at all.

Of course, communities can be of all sorts, family, colleagues, fellow-citizens, but in many cases Husserl seems to see this higher-order we as that community with which we share the lifeworld. This means, however, that the community contains within it that which is alien. We obviously cannot think that the lifeworld is one community with one set of convictions and one set of traditions, but the lifeworld contains each individual's convictions and traditions, as well as those of the higher-order, those which are defined by the universal ethical love that is the telos of any community. Husserl recognizes that each experience of another culture, a community which is entirely alien to one's own, is still one that could be defined by its own absolute ought.

We are not, however, locked into the belief systems, or value systems that we have inherited from previous generations or within a particular realm of value. Husserl attributes to the human the capacity for renewal and critique. Renewal is the ethical attitude that we must have not only as individuals, but as communities. This process of renewal is a process that involves critique of the traditions and convictions we have inherited, as well as of those which are personally developed. It is only through this critical process that we are able to appropriately take those inherited convictions up as our own. We renew them as convictions for our own selves and our own community. In renewing, we examine what has been passively handed down to us and we make it a part of our ac-

tive, free position-taking. We are capable of this precisely because we have autonomous reason and are self-determining. The project involves the intersubjective community because it connects us to those from whom we receive tradition, as well as those with whom we share tradition and those to whom we will pass along tradition. In our everyday attitude we do not always take up traditions or even our own previous convictions in a critical way. The process of critique is one that Husserl deems necessary for the process of renewal and is one that belongs to us as humans. The ethical life is the life of critique and renewal and not the everyday naive acceptance of traditions that we inherit or convictions that we ourselves have formulated. The capacity for critique includes self-critique. The renewal that results from critique allows us to have new beginnings that are critically supported on both the individual and communal level. The solid foundations of renewed and new convictions allow us to hope for a life with no regrets. This process of renewal and critique manifests itself most clearly for Husserl as the aim of the philosophical life, the life of "freely determining humanity in its autonomous reason."[7] Just as in the realm of epistemology, the ethical life is characterized as an infinite task.

With the differences between Husserl's early and later ethics here underlined, we move now to an investigation of the differences in method that make these variations in the ethical positions possible. In general, we shall see that the static method is very formal and is limited due to that formality. It does not take into consideration the development of the ego, the ego's relationship to other generations, or the historical development of the ego or the world. In other words, the static method is limited in a manner of speaking to a slice out of time whereas the genetic method is able to see the subject as embedded in a historical world as well as being itself historical. But these overviews must be elaborated upon more thoroughly, thus we turn to a discussion of methodology.

Static and Genetic Phenomenology

The static phenomenological method is a descriptive analysis of how something is given or experienced. It includes an analysis of the structures of experience including formal and material essences. Through its engagement with the themes of noesis and noema, intentionality, modes of fulfillment, and evidence, it deals with objects as correlates of consciousness and with the consciousness to which those objects are primordially given. Genetic phenomenology, while never a rejection of static phenomenological method, builds upon that method by taking up pre-predicative dimensions of experience and uncovering layers of experience implicit in the constituted object of static analysis. Genetic phenomenology picks up where static phenomenology ends and deepens the description of an experience. Where static phenomenology deals with an object as completed and provides a formal analysis of consciousness as a synthesis of acts and a formal synthesis of time that describes a purely formal ego, genetic phenomenology takes up the temporality of consciousness and the constitutional process in a much more complex manner thereby engaging notions of affect, pre-predicative levels of constitution, and an ego with content.

In its approach to an experience such as looking at a house, the static phenomenological method addresses the experience as directed to an object meant. It may focus on the features of the object meant such as shape, color, or even texture. The aspects of the thing are linked to a spatial structure of extension. Having analyzed the experience in terms of its way of givenness, the static method also can point to the types of consciousness through which the meant object attains its unity. Any object of experience is given through various profiles. The house,

for instance, is always given from a particular perspective, whether it is imagined, or perceived, but through a process of reduction, we get to that which is not given through a perspective. This is the realm of absolute subjectivity. It is the only thing given to us without profiles. It is given apodictically. It is also that to which the world is relative in the sense that the world can only have meaning for a consciousness. Consciousness is a condition for the possibility of the appearing of the objectivity of the world.

The sphere of immanence with which Husserl is concerned is the sphere of the *cogitatio-cogitatum*, the "primal cognition." It is a sphere where cognition and its object are not artificially separated into an inside and outside. Rather, the relatedness to an objective correlate is given essentially in the cogitation. To examine the essence of consciousness itself, Husserl institutes eidetic inquiry. The purpose of this purely eidetic inquiry is to give us an objectivity of essences as absolutely given. This is the "field of assertions about essences, viz., of what is generally the case as given in pure 'seeing.' That is to say at first undifferentiated from the individually given universal objects."[18] The individually given universal objects of which Husserl here speaks are those that are a priori. We have moved then from the level of pure reflection to the level of a priori cognition. The a priori for Husserl is the eidos. The eidetic inquiry likewise, is concerned with the ideal possibilities rather than actualities. At this level the self-givenness with which we are confronted is the horizon of possibilities of the ego's actual experience. The horizon is "the correlate of the components of undeterminateness" essentially attached to experiences of physical things themselves "which is open to possibilities of fulfillment" and is "predelineated with respect to their essential type."[19] Each mental process involves being directed toward something which is a particular of the formal universal "anything whatever." Such formal a priori universals make the experience of any actuality possible.

At this level where nothing is taken for granted, Husserl begins the process of investigating what is constituted by consciousness and how distinctions can be made between the things that are constituted. This explanation becomes highly formal, taking on a matter-form schema.[20] The schema divides experience into two different kinds, those of sensations (hyle), and those of intentional processes (noeses). These are seen as the matter and form, which are both involved in the process of intentionality. The hyle is the "sensuous stuff" that is given to us in perception. This "sensuousness in a narrower sense designates the phenomenological residuum of what is conveyed by the 'senses' in normal perception of the external" (Id.I, 173/204). The activity which "forms the stuff into intentive mental processes" is what Husserl describes as noesis. One is intentively directed to something in a certain manner. The "object" of one's intentive direction is the noema which directly corresponds to that intentive process (the noesis). Husserl has set up this matter-form schema in order to explain how our consciousness can be consciousness of anything transcendent to itself.

The analysis of noesis investigates the various types of acts, which give meaning to the hyle, be they recollections, valuings, judgings, perceivings, likings, etc. The noema is the correlative object of a noetic act of intention belonging to the phenomenological realm. As such, the noema is the object known but considered precisely in its mode of givenness. In other words, it "is to be taken precisely as it inheres 'immanentally' in the mental process of perceiving, of judging, of liking; and so forth; that is, just as it is offered to us when we *inquire purely into this mental process itself*" (Id.I, 182/214). The noema is understood to be objective in that the noematic sense is possessed by the object itself. Moreover, the noema is the same for different activities of

intentionality, e.g., whether the object is perceived or imagined. The noema is the object of different ways of appearing. It is the perceived object in one case, and the imagined object in another case. The noema itself includes both of these ways of appearing. But there is a core of the noema around which these different ways of appearing are gathered. That core is the object simpliciter which is at one time perceived, at another imagined.

Static phenomenology is recognizable by two particular characteristics: its focus is on immanent experience, and unchanging objects are the locus for investigation into those immanent experiences.[21] The unchanging objects involved need not be concrete, empirical objects—ideal objects can be static objects as well. The objects of such static phenomenology are directly correlated to particular modes of consciousness. They are stable, constituted unities. Static phenomenology investigates the succession of immanent, intentional experiences that relate to the givenness of such objects. Through reductions to the sphere of pure immanence, Husserl has achieved a position of absolute givenness as the source of all meaning. This formal structure is not concerned with the contents of acts of consciousness as much as it is concerned with the apparatus by which sense appears.

The limitations of static phenomenology can be seen precisely in its formal approach to experience. In explaining meanings of experience through the structure of sense data animated by intentionality, Husserl limits himself to those already completed objects without giving us a way to think about how meaning comes to be within that structure. He treats the meaning as already somehow there within the structure. The meaning lacks an origin, or at least the method limits our ability to ask about the origin of the meaning. This method lacks the understanding of process that arises with Husserl's later thinking. Instead its focus is on the formal structure of the matter-form schema, which cannot entirely explain the origins of objects and meanings or how their sense arises out of earlier senses.

The sensory data that is given to us in experience is not what allows us to distinguish between the things we experience. There must be a more fundamental way in which we are able to gather the sensory data together to constitute objects of different intentional acts. We have to be able to explain more than simply the form of the object. We must be able to explain how the sense of the object has arisen from earlier experiences as well. Without an explanation of the origins of meaning and the origins of habits and convictions of the ego we are unable to provide an adequate explanation of the sense of the object itself. The sense we give to an object can invoke a different history purely due to the content of the constitutive act. The act as seen statically cannot account for the different histories of the contents of acts. Husserl's formal structure does not allow for the historical development of the noematic content. Robert Sokolowski provides an excellent example of this. "His analyses would find no difference in the predicates constituting the noema 'father' as realized in the consciousness of a person who is only ten years old, and the noema as constituted by the same person when he is sixty years old."[22] Through the sedimentation of meanings the noema "father" must have an entirely different sense for the person who is sixty years old than it had for the person when he was ten. But static phenomenology is unable to accommodate such differences. Husserl himself alludes to this in one of his manuscripts. "Psychologically and *phenomenologically-genetically* one may speak of producing; phenomenologically-*statically* one can only analyze the components of the appearance and the appearance itself according to its essence. Phenomenologically-*statically* we find, however, the essential difference between apprehension and logically connect-

ing functions, logically manifold, forming functions."²¹ Those logically connecting functions are part of the formal structure of Husserl's static analysis, but do not allow us to talk of the production of objects, or production of meanings of objects.

In addition to adhering too closely to a purely formal structure, Husserl's static analysis neglects the importance of the temporal realm. Genetic constitution provides Husserl with the framework within which to offer an account of experience that will be able to adequately take temporality into consideration. Within his static method there is room for a kind of dynamism because the static approach investigates the temporal collection of evidence which involves the investigation into the history of consciousness. However, this dynamic view is not the same as the later genetic thought. It is tied to the formal nature of the static method because it is still an investigation into the history of a completed perception rather than a true genetic investigation into the dynamic development of pure ego or into a temporal noema. The move to a dynamic investigation is preparatory for a true genetic analysis. We understand that the dynamic analysis that takes account of the collection of evidence in any experience of a thing is not a true genetic analysis, but that it is a motivating factor for Husserl's movement towards genetic phenomenology.

Certainly Husserl is aware of the temporal dimension even in static phenomenology as is evidenced by his lectures on internal time-consciousness from this early period. And yet, this formal conception of temporality does not deal properly with the stable object as genetic as much as it deals with the consciousness through which that object is given and is concerned with the temporality of that consciousness as a formal structure. Even this concern with the temporality of consciousness, however, does not adequately treat the historicity of the subject. Genetic investigation moves beyond a static investigation of the consciousness of given objects to the origins of objects and the origins of approaches to objects.

These difficulties with static phenomenology come glaringly into view when one begins to consider questions of ethics. A formal schema offers very little by way of explanation of the dynamism of nor the vacillations of ethical decision-making. Equally, the ethics that Husserl develops along with static phenomenology are understandably of a very formal, limited nature. The move to genetic phenomenology offers us one solution to the difficulties raised above. It opens a way to address the issues of ethics that is more nuanced and complete. It is important to note that Husserl does not abandon the static method of phenomenology, rather he supplements it with the deeper genetic method. With that in mind, we turn to an examination of genetic phenomenology.

The proper understanding of genetic phenomenology is achieved only when Husserl moves beyond the schematic approach of static phenomenology towards an approach which involves the genealogy of the pure ego as well as the genealogy of those objects of the ego's experience. The pure ego involves more than an empty form that is filled by successive experiences. It is an ego that has capabilities and convictions that have arisen over time from earlier experiences that have developed into habitualities. These habitualities allow for the world to be pregiven as a horizon of possible experiences which makes it possible for the ego to bring objects to givenness. The habitualities acquired by the I indicate the multiple layers of sense that constitute not only the pure ego but also the world the ego experiences. The process of genetic phenomenological inquiry is a peeling away of layers of meaning that belong to each experience.

Each time we experience an object, we predicate something of it, which remains a part of the experience each consecutive time we encounter that object. In experiencing an object, I do not approach it each time as if for the first time; I come to it with the prior expe-

riences still available to me. My initial experience constitutes a sense of the object that remains when I experience the object again and, in fact, makes the subsequent sense which I constitute possible. This becomes clear if we think about the example provided by Sokolowski. Each subsequent experience of "father" adds a new dimension to the sense of "father," so that at age sixty, "father" means something more than it does to the child of age ten. There is, moreover, a reciprocal relationship between the motivation of the sense and the experience. The sense of the subsequent experience is motivated by the initial sense while at the same time being the result of the experience. Repetition of these encounters with the object result in a certain habitual relationship between the subject and its consistent experience of the object. This type of explanation would clearly not be possible under the rubric of static phenomenology because the subject is there conceived as a fully developed subject. In his later works Husserl is able to make room for the development of the subject, or what he calls ontogenetic development.[24] Such an explanation entails the use of the concept of passive genesis as the level of pre-predicative constitution. In addition, it examines the sedimentations of the experiences of a subject into its habitualities and convictions.

In addition to investigating the historicality of subjects of experience, genetic analysis is concerned with the historicality of the objects of experience. Husserl maintains that the layering of senses has a telos, which is the infinitely sedimented meaning of the object. In order to specify the genealogy of these layers of sense, the phenomenologist must engage in a genetic phenomenological analysis. This process is a way of uncovering those sedimentations of meaning and their influence upon the present experience. In some cases this goal may be difficult to achieve. But in cases such as the above mentioned example of "father," one can easily

comprehend how the understanding of that noema that is maintained by the sixty-year old involves his own role as a father, which was dependent upon his understanding of being a new father at age thirty, which was dependent upon his having had a father at age twenty, and may have been dependent upon his interaction with his friends' fathers at age ten. In peeling away these various senses of "father" one can see how they contribute to the present experience. Husserl describes the process as a "constitutive" phenomenology of genesis that follows "the necessary history of this objectivation and thus the history of the object itself as an object of possible knowledge." We trace the history of the object back to "the hyletic object" that is "the immanent as such," which means that we have traced the object to its genesis "in originary time-consciousness." The monad includes its own "histories of the constitution of the objects which are there for the monad." This results in the recognition of "a sequence of levels of the monad, which correspond to the objective levels."[25]

By reason of the shift to genetic phenomenology we are no longer confronted with completed systems of constitution, but are drawn into a consideration of a history of the reciprocal relationships between noesis and the emergent noema. Genetic analysis is intended to uncover the temporal becoming and the temporal relationship of one experience to the next thereby revealing a temporal depth of any experience. This sort of temporal depth cannot be achieved through static analysis. Every noema contains within itself the history of its own past occurrences. It is the task of genetic phenomenology to provide a more complex explanation of each noema based upon a revealing of that history. The structural schematic approach of static phenomenology is obviously not sufficient for such an explanation. We can see how genetic phenomenology allows us to be concerned with the content of an experience in a

way that we could not be with the matter-form schema of static phenomenology.

Finally, *Formal and Transcendental Logic* reveals with great clarity what Husserl intends to achieve through genetic phenomenology. The role of genetic analysis is to get at a more genuine understanding of the process of constitution. This involves for Husserl a criticism of his own earlier approach of static phenomenology, which he sees as having been too psychologistic since it encourages the view that objects are constructed within consciousness out of passively given data and without open horizons:[26] "The Data-sensualism that is generally prevalent in psychology and epistemology and, for the most part, biases even those who verbally polemicize against it, or against what they mean by the term, consists in constructing the life of consciousness out of Data as, so to speak, finished objects."[27] The static phenomenological approach restricts the ability to account for the "evidences as functionings that constitute what exists, [which] bring about the performance whose result in the sphere of immanence is called an *existing object*" (FTL 253/286). The phenomena are not investigated in terms of the genetic conditions for their possibility. They are not investigated in terms of the deeper level of subjectivity, that of the flow of temporality. That process, which we described as the method of *Ideas I*, is finally seen by Husserl as the starting point for understanding the phenomenological method as a whole. The later method does not treat any object as the result of a process of impressing a form upon some given matter through noesis. Such a simple duality of matter and form is eliminated by the more sophisticated genetic method. Rather, the process of genetic analysis uncovers a prepredicative experience, which lends content to the matter-form schema and allows us to constitute an historical object. In uncovering the "deeper-lying genesis that already belongs to the ultimate 'cores' and points back to their origination from experiences,"

we can make evident the logical principles of sense (FTL, 185/208). With this conception of genetic phenomenology Husserl is able to incorporate temporality into the explanation of the subject as well as the world that subject experiences.

This understanding of genesis suggests a radically new conception of the ego. The ego is formed in part by a passive acceptance of a cultural tradition communicated by preceding generations that becomes part of its sedimented relationships to the world. The process of discovering the origins of those sedimentations involves delving into a history broader than simply the subject itself. Since the sedimentation of meanings does not stop with the origin of a particular person, in the process of regressive inquiry, one has to inquire into constitutional achievements of prior generations whose sedimented meanings are passed on to subsequent generations. Thus the process involves an investigation into human history. Husserl was well aware of the immense difficulties of such a project. His *Origin of Geometry* is an effort to carry out such an investigation in one particular case, i.e., with respect to Galilean geometry. That effort entails investigations that "are historical in an unusual sense, namely, in virtue of a thematic direction that opens up depth-problems quite unknown to ordinary history, problems which, [however] in their own way, are undoubtedly historical problems."[28] The method of inquiry, however, is not one of straightforward inquiry into history. Husserl recognizes that it would be virtually impossible to identify the factual historical origin of geometry. Instead, he suggests that we can determine how geometry "had to appear, even though we know nothing of the first creators and are not even asking after them" (OG, 366/354). Through the regressive inquiry, we can reveal a tradition of human activity that contributes to the gradual and cumulative process of sense formation. This leads to "the deepest problems of meaning, problems of science and of the history of

science in general, and indeed in the end to problems of a universal history in general" (OG, 365/353). Such an inquiry allows us to understand meaning as historically developed. Part of this process of uncovering that history is to attempt to reveal to ourselves the hidden meanings in our own experiences. The inquiry back into the genesis of meaning, in making us aware of those hidden meanings, helps to rid us of our prejudices and to offer a way to revitalize aspects of our own history that have been banalized by sedimentation or suppressed by certain dominant interpretations. This makes possible the agenda of renewal and critique that is so important to Husserl's later ethics.

Conclusion

By looking first at Husserl's early ethical theories, we can see more clearly the major contributions that his later ethics can make. Not only was Husserl able to provide an ethical theory that takes account of the feelings and emotions of individuals, but he was able to provide a theory that allows for the tolerance and appreciation of multiplicity within a community founded on a teleological notion of universal ethical love. Additionally, Husserl shows us that the process of laying bare the origins of social tradition and habits places us in the position to critique those traditions and habits and allows us to consider the renewal that might be necessary in our own society. Husserl has provided us a way to think about ethical convictions and an apparatus for critique, not of some rigid ethical structure, but of the living traditions and convictions we witness in our own and other communities. Unless one is able to talk of the origin of the ego, and its inherited traditions, one is not in a position to be able to critique those positions. The genetic approach to ethics gives us a way to think about the relationship of each individual to his or her community that preserves the plurality without doing away with an understanding of the community as an ethical whole. Each indi-

vidual who participates in the higher-order we is itself a whole with a responsibility to the larger whole, but not a responsibility that requires of him or her any relinquishing of freedom. The encounter between one community and the other is, as we saw, one that is fundamental to the development of the higher-order ethical we. By allowing for the preservation of each individual absolute ought, Husserl has offered us a way to see the community as a unity of multiplicity.

The philosopher of the genetic phenomenological method has a unique relationship to his or her surrounding world. Equipped with the apparatus for investigating the many sedimented layers of meaning as they come down through generations we are offered an insight to meaning that the static formal method could not have provided. Because of its concentration on peeling away layers of meaning, the genetic method allows us to inquire back after the genesis of such notions as temporality, intersubjectivity, values, and community.[29] Because of that insight, we are in the position of having something appropriate and meaningful to say about the Other, time, comounity, and ethics.

Throughout this study, we have repeatedly seen how the development of genetic phenomenology makes possible a way of thinking that static phenomenology lacks. It makes possible an understanding of the development of an ethical character through habitualities and sedimentation. It makes possible the discussion of renewal and critique as an ethical approach to a history that can be laid open through genetic investigation. It makes possible a way of thinking about ethical convictions and an apparatus for critique of the living tradition we witness in our communities.

Without the possibility of investigating such issues as instinct, habituality, the higher-order we, and the theme of vocation, Husserl would not have been able to develop his later thinking on ethics. In juxtaposing

his early ethics with his later ethics, we see the importance of the genetic phenomenological method in providing the more nuanced and human approach to ethics that we find in his later work. Genetic phenomenology allows Husserl to provide an account of the inheritance of tradition while maintaining the necessary independence of an ethical subject capable of renewal and critique. The vocation of the individual sets up for him or her an absolute ought. The absolute ought is not something that can be determined in isolation from the community, but is of necessity something that ties the individual to the community. For the sense of vocation can only be determined within the community. Thus, the absolute ought is one that cannot exclude the absolute ought of the Other. The true self of the community is intimately connected to the true self of the individual. This results in what we describe as universal ethical love. This is a love that the ego freely gives. Again, this theme could not have been established without genetic phenomenology, which allows us to understand a truth of the will as fundamental to the ego's freely chosen projects. Additionally, we understand that the conception of the telos of the individual and the telos of the community requires the genetic phenomenological characteristic of inquiring back. We must inquire about the sedimentation of the teleological beginning in order to lay bare the origins of social tradition and habits and in order to renew that telos in our own community. But we must not do this in an uncritical way. Renewal and critique are the requirements of every self-responsible individual. Such a reaction to the role of the individual can only be supported by genetic phenomenology.

ENDNOTES

1. Ullrich Melle, "The Development of Husserl's Ethics," *Études Phénoménologiques* 13–14 (1991): 115–35. Hereafter referred to as "Ethics."

2. Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen Über Ethik und Wertlehre 1908–1914* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), p. 221, Hereafter referred to as Hua XXVIII.

3. "Denken wir uns objektiv bestimmt die Gesamtheit der überhaupt für das Willenssubjekt bestehenden Realisierbarkeiten, dann ergibt sich nach dem Gesetz der Wertabsorption der Minderwerte durch die Höherwerte und nach den zugehörigen anderen Gesetzen, daß ein Gutes da ist, das objektiv den absoluten Vorzug hat, ja das einzigen absoluten praktischen Wert hat. Es ist dasjenige, das den praktischen Wert aller übrigen absorbiert und selbst nicht absorbiert ist." Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen Über Ethik und Wertlehre 1908-1914* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), p. 220. Hereafter referred to as Hua XXVIII.

4. "Ein Beispiel wäre etwa: Die Werte, die wir als "sinnliche" bezeichnen, sind neben Werten der "geistigen" Stufe, den "höheren" Werten, Nullen, sofern sie nicht Vorbedingungswerte für diese sind. Aber nein, das geht doch nicht. Haben wir zwei "gleich" geistige Werte, so gibt die Verbundenheit mit sinnlichen Werten doch einen Überschlag des Gewichts. Nur in der diesbezüglichen Wahl werden sinnliche von den höheren absorbiert" (ibid., p. 421).

5. John Drummond explains it thus, "regardless of the differences which might exist between different material conceptions of the good, our moral activity aims at the ends mandated by the categorical imperative: rational (consistent), free (actively achieved rather than passively received), insightful (true) thinking and willing. This good presents itself as one which is instantiated in all other goods but which is nevertheless consistent with the insightful identification of different, true material goods." "The 'spiritual' World: The Per-

sonal, the Social, and the Communal," in *Issues in Husserl's Ideas II*, eds. Tom Nenon and Lester Embree (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), p. 250.

6. For a more detailed discussion of Husserl's axiological ethics and this process of valuing, see John Drummond, "Moral Objectivity: Husserl's Sentiments of the Understanding," *Husserl Studies* 12 (1995): 165–83. See also "Ethics," p. 118.

7. See manuscripts F I 24, 75a, and B I 21, 61a from the early 1920s. For further references to Nachlass texts, see Melle's editor's introduction to Hua XXVIII, pp. xlvi–xlviii.

8. See Melle's helpful anaysis of Fichte's influence in "Ethics."

9. Edmund Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge 1922–1937* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), pp. 3–124. Hereafter referred to as Hua XXVII.

10. BI 21, 53b, as quoted by Melle, "Ethics," p. 131.'

11. For a more detailed explanation of the absolute ought than is possible here, see chapter IV of James G. Hart, *The Person and the Common Life* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992).

12. FI 28, p. 199b. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. I would like to thank Professor Dr. R. Bernet, director of the Husserl Archives, Leuven, Belgium, for permission to cite from unpublished manuscripts. Manuscripts are designated by the official cataloging system of the Husserl Archives. Although in this quotation Husserl stresses the rational will, he does not believe that convictions are always purely rational. In other words, the absolute ought sets up a duty that would not necessarily rationally be determined by all to be the highest good. Instead, it is determined according to one's realm of love, one's own absolute ought.

13. Hua XXVII, p. 118.

14. "Auf einzelne, auf Gruppen und auf die Allheit der Menschen bezogen sein: So soll überhaupt jeder sich verhaltedn, speziell jeder Soldat, jeder Priester, etc." (Hua XXVII, p. 59).

15. "Die Gemeinschaft ist eine personale, sozusagen vielköpfige und doch verbundene Subjektivität.

Ihre Einzelpersonen sind ihre "glieder," funktionell miteinander verfloghten durch vielgestaltige, Person mit Person geistig einigended "soziale Akte" (Ich-Du-Akte; Befehle, Verabredungen, Liebestätigkeiten usw)" (Hua XXVII, p. 22).

16. Ibid., p. 119.

17. Ibid.

18. Edmund Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie. Fünf Vorlesungen*, ed. Walter Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950, p. 8; *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. W. P. Alston and G. Naknhikian (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p. 6

19. Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie I*, ed. Walter Biemel (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), p. 90; *Ideas of a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, Volume I, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p. 107. Hereafter referred to as Id.I within the text with German page numbers preceding English translation page numbers.

20. I adopt this term from Robert Sokolowski as it seems particularly apt for the difference we are trying to emphasize between static and genetic phenomenology. See *The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), especially pp. 54–58.

21. See Rudolf Bernet, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach, *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), p. 196.

22. Sokolowski, *The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution*, p. 162.

23. Edmund Husserl, Ms A VI 8 I, p. 42a, cited after Kern's transcription in Iso Kern, *Husserl und Kant, Phaenomenologica*, vol. XVI (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), pp. 258–59.

24. See for instance Ms. C 17, 83b (1932): "In seiner 'ontogenetischen' Entwicklung erwächst er zum Selbstbewußtsein, er wird Mensch als sich selbst als Menschen ständig erfahrender. Als Mensch

wird er Vater, Bürger etc., als Mensch erwacht er von neuem im Bewußtsein seiner 'wahren Bestimmung', der individuellen Normidee seiner selbst."

25. "Eine andere 'konstitutive' Phänomenologie, die der Genesis, verfolgt die Geschichte, die notwendige Geschichte dieser Objektivierung und damit die Geschichte des Objektes selbst als Objektes eider möglichen Erkenntnis. Die Urgeschichte der Objekte führt zurück auf die hyletischen Objekte und die immanented überhaupt, also auf die Genesis derselben im ursprünglichen Zeitbewußtsein. In der universellen Genesis einer Monade liegen beschlossen dies Geschichten der Konstitution der Objekte, die für diese Monade da sind, und in der universellen eidetischen Phänomenologie der Genesis wird dieses selbe geleistet für alle erdenklichen Objekte, bezogen auf erdenkliche Monaden; und umgekehrt gewinnt man eine Stufenfolge von Monaden, die den objektiven Stufen entspricht." Edmund Husserl, *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis. Aus Vorlesungs und Forschungmanuskripten 1918–1926* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 340.

26. See Sokolowski, *The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution*, pp. 207–10.

27. Edmund Husserl, *Formale und transzendentale Logik. Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft*, ed. P. Janssen (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p. 252; *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), p. 286. Hereafter referred to as FTL within the text with German page numbers preceding English translation page numbers.

28. Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. Walter Biemel (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954), "Beilage III," p. 365; "The Origin of Geometry," in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 354. Hereafter referred to as OG within the text with German page numbers preceding English translation page numbers.

29. For a further discussion of Husserl's later thinking on temporality see Janet Donohoe, "The Non-Presence of the Living Present: Husserl's Time Mansucripts," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 38 (Spring 2000): 221–30.

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