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Husserl's personalist ethics

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The point of departure of any ethical theory is the anthropological fact that normally developed humans must lead their own lives themselves. This means that their conduct is neither programmed nor determined by instincts. Human beings must on every occasion engage the circumstances of a practical situation by their own choice and decision. Even when they find themselves delivered over to the stimuli and powers of particular circumstances in a completely passive manner, this does not occur in the way that it does for a robot, but rather, on the basis of a background of an essential possibility that they can conduct themselves otherwise than they are now behaving. Where there is the possibility of a choice, then the question inevitably arises regarding the principle of the choice. On what do we base our decision to choose one possibility rather than another? We can let fate decide, we can consult astrological charts, we can appeal to an authority, or we can try to find out what we truly want, what are our deepest desires and what choice agrees best with these desires. Finally, we can also inquire into what decision is the objectively correct and rational one, i.e. which decision is good independent of our subjective preferences. This latter case, of course, presupposes a standard of the objectively good and rational, in regard to which we can be responsible for and evaluate our decisions as well as our ensuing actions.

The consideration that we, as normally developed humans, must ourselves lead our lives, that our lives do not make sense and take shape without us, does not merely mean that our behavior is not determined in regard to particular details in the manifold changes of the practical situations within which we find ourselves, but rather, in principle ours is a self-determined behavior. Furthermore, it means that our life as a unified whole is in principle self-determined. When I live for the moment, i.e., in a wanton and random

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way, untroubled about taking into account what has preceded or what is to follow, this occurs nevertheless against the background of the essential possibility of arranging the emergent practical situation within the total context of my life and of examining my behavior in all these particular situations in regard to its unity and total character. I then ask how I have shaped my life. And my life, as a whole, is therefore placed in question: What do I want to make out of my life? What life goals do I want to pursue? Here also I can inquire into the rational and the good in an objective and absolute sense.

The possibility in principle of a self-determined choice in particular cases and in relation to one's own life as a whole, is confronted with a twofold conflict: On the one hand, there is the conflict between our own needs, desires, and posited goals; on the other hand, there is the conflict between our needs, desires, and posited goals, and those of the others, the fellow-humans, or indeed, the fellow creatures. Human life is overwhelmingly determined with the preoccupations and struggles for a clarification engendered by this twofold conflict that as a rule is experienced as painful and negative. Consequently the possibility of overcoming the double conflict through bringing about an encompassing inner and social harmony, perhaps even a social-ecological harmony that includes the non-human, is a deep human longing.

Husserl's more thorough discussions and numerous initial forays into the area of a phenomenologically grounded axiology and ethics, none of which ever reached a systematic conclusion, have their thematic center in the three circles of questions just reviewed: What ought I to do in the concrete situation? How ought I to shape my life as a whole, toward what ought I aim it? How can I live in agreement with myself and with others?[1]

The following discussion cannot offer a comprehensive systematic presentation of Husserl's axiology and ethics and its development. Rather, it limits itself to some of the chief contours of Husserl's axiology and ethics. It does this in taking its departure from, and in view of, the ontology of the ethical subject. The ethical subject is the person as personal I or as a personality of a higher order, by which Husserl understands a particular form of community. We will first of all present the basic contours of Husserl's ontology of personal being. Then we will review his rationalist ethics of the categorical imperative and of the theory of the highest good, as developed in the Göttingen lectures. In this phase of the development of his thought one finds initially in the foreground the inquiry into the practical obligations in a determinate practical situation. But already in the framework of the ethics of the categorical

[1] I thank my friend Prof. Dr. James Hart who has translated this text from German. Husserl's efforts at a phenomenologically grounded ethics are documented in his Göttingen lectures on axiology and ethics, 1902, 1908/09, 1911, and 1914, edited in Vol. XXVIII of *Gesammelte Werke* of Husserliana (hereafter abbreviated as Hua in what follows and in the other later references, followed by the volume number of Hua), and in the extensive Freiburg lecture-course on the ''Introduction to Ethics'' of 1920/1924 (Hua XXVII). Further, there are discussions of ethics in his lecture-courses ''Introduction to Philosophy'' of 1919/20 (Ms. F I 40) and of 1922/23 (Hua XXXV), and in the 1922-1924 ''Essays on Renewal,'' with related research manuscripts published in Hua XXVII. Finally, there is a series of other research manuscripts that were mostly written in the context of these lectures and publications.

imperative there surfaces the thought that is central for the further development of Husserl's ethical teaching, namely, the notion of a self-regulation of the whole of life. Moreover, Husserl already in the Göttingen years began to have doubts about the axiological-ethical universalism and objectivism that the Göttingen lectures presented (see Hua XXVIII, 419–421). In his later manuscripts from the first half of the twenties, love in addition to reason comes to be seen as the fundamental ethical motive. Love, which wells up from the depth of the person and the absolute obligation that it generates, individualises the person and her ethical law. As such it is in tension, if not in contradiction with, the universalising tendency of reason and its law. Husserl's later ethics is marked by this tension, which for him can ultimately only be solved by a rational faith in God. The last part of our presentation is devoted to this new approach in Husserl's Freiburg ethics and the questions it raises.

1 Ontology of the person

The personal subject, the community of personal subjects, and their common milieu are radically distinct in their being from nature, in the sense understood by modern natural science. Husserl's total phenomenology and philosophy, as is well known, positions itself as a leader in the charge against naturalism, i.e., against the reduction of the ideal and of spiritual-personal being to nature, in the sense understood by modern natural science. Naturalism consists in the unjustified absolutization of an artificial attitude, which is thoroughly legitimate within its limits, within which we observe and investigate all being exclusively as an object of nature, or as a process of nature within the natural causal framework that regulates the spatial–temporal materiality, or the being-outside-of-one-another of nature. Self-forgetfulness of the personal I (Hua IV, 184) that underlies the natural sciences is ''a consistent, but unconsciously applied blinder'' (Hua XXV, 25).

Whereas nature for natural science is a senseless context of necessity ruled by causal laws, spiritual-personal being is a sense-determined context of motivation; whereas nature, in the sense of modern natural science, is a realm of uninterrupted necessity, spirit (in the sense of the personal subject and its surroundings) is a realm of freedom and self-determination.

The living substance, so to speak, of the personal subject is its stream of consciousness. This stream of consciousness is comprised of lived experiences, the larger part of which are intentional experiences in which the subject is directed to an objectivity. In the proper sense, consciousness is comprised of intentional experiences that have the form of an I-act, a *cogito*: the I directs itself in such an act or attitude, with a wakeful glance at an object. It does this in order to grasp it in its categorial, axiological, and practical determinations; it does this in order to enjoy it, in order to work on it, and in order to change it. In short, it directs itself to it in a cognitive, valuing, and voluntary, deed-oriented manner.

The intentional acts can be divided into three fundamental classes of acts. The class of intellectual acts in which we experience and know the objects in their categorial determinations, the class of feeling acts, in which we experience in an original way the value-determinations of objects, and the class of will acts in which we decide in favour of determinate goals and actions, as well as what follows from this, i.e., the carrying out of these actions. For Husserl there exists between the acts of these classes of acts an irreversible order of founding: willing acts are founded in feeling acts, and these again are founded in intellectual acts. The irreversibility of the order of foundation, and the one-sided separability that is connected to this—intellectual acts are thinkable without feeling-valuing and willing acts, feeling-valuing acts are thinkable without willing acts—is nevertheless relativized to the extent that all acts as I-achievements are at least a spiritual doing and thereby will-acts, and, over and above this, consciousness as life has the character of striving and effecting.

I-acts are responses of the I to determinate stimuli that affect it. The most elemental form of the I-act is turning one's attention towards.... Affection itself is an event of consciousness. The I is affected through stimuli and responds to the stimuli from out of the background or underground of consciousness. Consciousness has, as it were, a double life: one lived in passivity and one lived in activity.

In regard to passivity we must distinguish primary and secondary passivity. All I-acts sink after their actual achievement into a passive background of consciousness and they form the secondary passivity. In contrast, the primary passivity is not the sediment of the earlier activity, but it is the primal passivity that goes in advance of each and every activity, and which is presupposed by all activity. There is a primal passivity in the service of each of the three classes of acts: sensation serving intellectual acts, feelings of pleasure and displeasure serving valuing acts, and drive, instinct, and blind inclination, serving acts of will.

The primal passive life is dominated by two fundamental regulating structures: the rigid law structure of inner time-consciousness and association. Both of these regulating structures lead to the initial formations of a unity in the stream that then becomes the basis for the achievements of apprehensions by the I. Thereby the I gives to itself categorial and axiological objectivities that are determined for practice, and the I forms for itself a world of experience and cognition, a world of value and praxis.

Alongside the three fundamental classes of acts there is for Husserl, to be precise, still a fourth kind of act, the social act, in which the I-achievements are communalized. Even here there are, along side the active communalization by way of the egoic performance of social acts, passive forms of communalization through instincts, suggestion, and blind imitation. On the basis of socialization, the I lives with other I's in a common world, a familiar natural and social–cultural milieu.

The constitution of a world of abiding and therefore reliable categorical, axiological and practical determinations presupposes that the positings of intentional acts have at least a measure of enduring persistance, i.e., that their

validity is sustained. A positing, the validity of which remains after the actual achievement of the act, so that I, in new acts, can perform this positing as still continuing to be valid, is what Husserl calls a *conviction*. The constitution of a world of relatively stable and abiding objects, real as well as ideal, is the correlate of the self-constitution of the personal I as the I of abiding capabilities and convictions. The I is more than an empty pole of the identity of the acts performed by it. The I has a character through habitualization, through primal institution, and re-constitution. In a primal instituting act of judgment, a determinate predicative state of affairs is constituted: I posit in a doxic mode of certainty, ''S is p.'' After the actual achievement of this act I then may turn to something else; the prior act then sinks into the past, but what I have done through it, namely, the establishment of ''S is p,'' remains valid for me. I am convinced from now on that S is p. My personal I has attained a new determination. However, I can lose this conviction, or it can become questionable on the basis of new insights that contradict it. The conviction can also become completely powerless. In this case it no longer plays a role in my life. Or its strength is maintained and is increased through reactivating reaffirmations. I realize the judgment underlying the conviction once again in the awareness of the bases of the judgment; I renew the insight.

I am who I am as a person through my habitual convictions, evaluations, positing of goals, ideals, and projects. Also my capabilities rest for the greater part on the habitualized and sedimented I-achievements; they rest on learning and practicing. The world in which we live in the total richness of its categorial, axiological, and practical determinations and the communalized personal subjects in the total richness of their personal hexis are correlates. They are solidified coagulations of primal-instituting I-achievements. These ultimately are achievements of apprehensions of pre-given unities of experiences originated in primal passivity.

The hyletic facticity is the dark underground of consciousness. This is the indeterminate and non-objective primal stuff for the constitutive structure. The constitution of the world and the self-constitution of consciousness is not a *creatio ex nihilo*. The substrate for the rigid primal passive synthesis of inner time-consciousness and the first associative formations of unity can be loosely delineated as pre-conscious sensation in which there is still undifferentiated what eventually gets differentiated as impressional-coming-to-awareness, as affection of pleasure and displeasure, and as blind drive. In still another sense, the self-creation of the personal I through the habitualization of its I-achievements is bound to contingent factual presuppositions: The personal I has innate dispositions and talents.

In consciousness only the law-likeness of internal time-consciousness has something of the rigidity and mechanistic character of a law of nature. Each and every consciousness is stamped with this law-likeness and thereby is pervaded by this temporal form that is localized in the particular consciousness. Over and above this, consciousness, already in the primal passivity of the associative formations of unity, is a historical event and a context of motivation, not a matter of external causality; it is rather a matter of a context of

understanding and not explanation. One can speak meaningfully of motivation only in relation to an event of will, even if it exists only in the form of a still pre-conscious striving and longing. Intentional consciousness follows upon an affection but not mechanically; it does not respond automatically like a robot programmed to an electronic impulse. Even there where it seems to give in to a stimulus in a completely blind and unconscious way, its history, its habits, are in play. Here there are intelligible reasons not only in the person's past experiences but also in her purposeful intentions, the positing of goals, and directions of striving, even when these lie under the threshold of the I-achievement.

Even in respect to motivation one must distinguish between passivity and activity. Whereas the passive motivations in the form of association founds the pre-egoic contexts of consciousness—in this regard Husserl speaks of the ''machinery of passivity''—in the case of active motivation it is a matter of the connections of reasons between the positings and position-takings of the I.

I-acts in the proper sense are free acts that have the basic feature of positing and position-taking. The personal subject takes a position in regard to an affecting and grasped object when it posits this object as being, and being such in certainty or in a modality of being; or if it posits the object in a valuing or taking delight in something as being of value; or in deciding and willing something as what ought to be. Such position-takings are motivated in the active sense through other acts of the I. The active motivation is the motivation of rational justification of a position-taking through another position-taking. I give a reason, e.g., for my willing this object *a* through the preference of the object *a* to the object *b*. I found in turn the preference through the greater value *a* has over *b*, etc.

If I speak of giving a reason, the question arises regarding the right and validity of giving a reason and the insight into the reason. Husserl therefore names the active motivation also *motivation of reason*. All active taking a position by the I stands under the question of reason: In regard to each individual position-taking, in regard to each being and being-such in a determinate modality of a positing judgment, in regard to each feeling-valuing and each willing and doing, I can raise the question whether this position-taking is reasonable, whether it is reasonably grounded, and that means, whether it is insightfully motivated.

In regard to the reasonability and the grounding of position-takings, one must distinguish between a relative and an absolute reasonableness. The first has to do with logical implication and consistency of motivations, and the sequence of logical correctness in the chain of giving reasons. But even if position-taking *a* is grounded consistently in position-taking *b* and, to this extent, rational, it can, in an absolute sense, be unreasonable and false if the basic position-taking *b* is not insightful but rather, e.g., a matter of blind custom. The primal form of the motivation of reason is the motivation of a positing and position-taking through intuitive self-givenness.

Freedom and autonomy in the proper sense are to be found only there where the subject, in its I-achievements, follows its own insight. This means

that it determines itself on the basis of its own insight in the form of intuitive givenness or rational grounding. Where the subject does not act from its own insight, it permits itself to be driven, it follows passively the paths of custom; it uncritically appropriates the view of another; it subordinates itself blindly to another's authority, etc. In all of these forms the subject is unfree.

Freedom is freedom of reason; autonomy is autonomy of reason. *De facto*, of course, we cannot enjoy evidence in each I-act prior to our achieving it. We cannot lead our entire lives on the basis of actual intuitive insight. There are times when I in my I-act must trust the experienced and acquired insight that belongs to someone else. Decisive for the autonomy of reason is that we are aware of this state of affairs and that we in principle at any time are ready to question the matter or to check it out. And this can be done through a renewal of evidence or through a new insight that contradicts the old evidence.

For Husserl it belongs to the essence of the personal subject to strive for the autonomy of reason. In every personal subject there lives, however obfuscated, suppressed, and undeveloped, a drive of reason, a striving for a life lived from out of the light of insight on the basis of one's own insight, i.e., a striving for a life that is self-determined and self-responsible, for which the categorial determinations, values and goals are a result of a self-giving intuition. The drive of reason extends beyond the individual personal subject. This personal subject has a rational nisus to be a rational subject within a community of reason, a rational humanity. The personal subject finds true happiness only in the unfolding and satisfaction of the rational striving as a striving for intuitive filling of its intellectual, emotional, and volitional intentions. ''A blessed total life as such,'' as Husserl put it in the ''Introduction to Philosophy (1922/23)'', ''would be a unified life in which all its intentions and all its striving would play itself out in the form of pure filled intentions.'' (Hua XXXV, 44)

The drive of reason living in each personal subject gets hindered, on the one hand, through the dead weight of tradition, custom, and authority and, on the other hand, through inertia and weakness of will. Instead of opposing the powers of passivity, the personal subject lets herself be driven and therefore follows blindly these forces.

The correlate of rational insight, the experience of evidence, is truth. The personal subject striving after truth wants to live in truth. She wants to know the truth about the being, or being-such, of objectivities, about the values and their order of preference, and about the goals and practical goods. But life in truth and untruth is not merely theoretic life. Knowledge merely serves praxis and the realization of goods. Theoretical knowledge in the form of propositions and theories is itself an object, even if only an ideal one, produced in a theoretic practice, i.e., one produced in a theoretic doing and acting.

In the center of Husserl's ethics and axiology there is to be found, in agreement with the ontology of personal being that we have sketched here, the realization of rational autonomy in the struggle with the powers of unreason and passivity, and correlatively, with the realization of the good and the best among the objectively highest values.

2 The ethics of the highest good and the categorical imperative

For Husserl, the entire I-life in all three classes of intentional acts stands under the norm of reason. Moreover, in each case there is a proper norm of reason not reducible to theoretic reason for the axiological and practical spheres of acts, for the heart and will. The feeling-valuing and the willing-acting I-acts stand under their own principles of reason. The parallel and analogy of kinds of reason stand at the center of Husserl's Göttingen lectures on axiology and ethics. A formal axiology and formal praxis as the sciences of the formal laws of the heart and will correspond in a parallel way to formal logic as the science of formal laws of theoretic reason. This presupposes that just as in the case of intellectual acts, and, first of all, judgments, so analogously in the case of valuing and willing acts, respectively the correlates of their positings, one can distinguish between form and matter. Just as there are pure forms of judgment, forms of theoretical propositions, so there must be pure forms of axiological and practical propositions. In these forms there are then grounded the formal conditions of rationality for each class of acts and their correlates, i.e. of theoretical, axiological and practical rationality. ''To the form of the content of the will, i.e. to the basic formations that are to be found in the essence of such a content as such, there would belong theoretical laws which would run parallel to the formal-logical, i.e. to the analytical laws.'' (Hua XXVIII, 49f.)

As a first example of such a formal law of the will Husserl introduces the hypothetical imperative: Who wills the end ought also to will the means that are indispensable. Husserl points out that it is not logically contradictory to will the end but not the means; but it is unreasonable in the purely practical sense.

As it is already clear from this first example of a formal-practical law, it is a matter of the laws of rational motivation in valuing and willing when we are concerned with formal practical laws. The theory of inference would be in formal logic what corresponds to this. One must, of course, see that on the basis of the founding of valuing and willing acts—the former are founded in the intellectual acts and the latter in the valuing acts and mediated by them also in the intellectual acts—the contexts of motivation are to be found between the acts of different classes of acts. Thus consider, for example, in this regard the following law of motivation: Whoever is convinced that A exists cannot will the bringing about of A. Or, to put it differently: The presentation of A that founds the wanting to bring about A cannot posit A in the ontic modality of certain and actual being. As Husserl says, the theoretical, valuing and practical forms of reason are ''interwoven everywhere with one another.'' (*Ibid*., 72)

The formal laws of rational motivation are laws of logical implication and consistency in our position-takings and therefore they are laws of relative reasonableness. Therefore, with the recognition of formal axiology and praxis, axiological and ethical skepticism are by no means overcome. In addition, it must be shown that the valuing and willing position-takings of a personal

subject are not only consistent but also that they can be justified in an insightful way in regard to what is meant and posited in them. If I take delight in the torture of an animal, it is logically consistent in an axiological-practical sense and therefore reasonable in a relative sense for me to want to torture my dog and actually do so. The question is whether the taking pleasure in the torture of animals, therefore the valuing position-taking that animal torture is good and of value, can be shown to be correct or false in an absolute sense. Husserl's affirmative answer to this question, i.e., that this valuing position-taking can be shown to be correct or incorrect in an absolute sense, is likewise based on the analogous thought according to which there is an analogous evidential filling of intentions, i.e., of the passage of an empty intention into a filled intuition in acts of the heart and will.

The concrete descriptive disclosure of the acts of the heart and will that are analogous to the empty and filled-intuitive intellectual acts open up the door to great difficulties and Husserl did not arrive at any definitive conclusion. What are the analogues of perceiving, determining, and judging, of the empty and filled intentions in the heart? (see Melle, 1990) Even more difficult than the determination and description of axiological reason is that of practical reason. Does this not get reduced ultimately to theoretical and axiological reason, to correct knowing and valuing, insofar as willing is reasonable if it follows upon correct knowledge and correct valuing?

In his Göttingen lectures on axiology, Husserl determines the rationality of the will with the help of the categorical imperative already formulated by Brentano: ''Do the best among the achievable!'' The laws related to the hierarchy of values and the part-whole relation of values are at the basis of this categorical imperative as a pure formal law of choice. These laws give expression to the fact that the values to be chosen may never be considered in an isolated way. The laws of comparison of value culminate in the law of absorption: ''In every choice the better absorbs the good and the best absorbs everything else that can be appreciated as practically good in and for itself'' (Hua XXVIII, 136). The determination of the best among what is achievable by me in a situation of a practical choice and decision seems to be the task of the intellect and the heart: I must delineate the present practical realm, I must know my practical possibilities and estimate them correctly, and I must grasp the possibilities that are to be found in this practical region in terms of their relative value and disvalue. But to what extent can one here speak of a proper value of will, i.e., one that is founded in intellect and heart, but one that is not reducible to these? The rational willing and doing seems in this case to consist in following the order of preference of practical realizable values that is established by valuing acts that themselves instituted this order of preference. This willing and doing, in this case, would not realize any insight on its own; its reasonableness would be purely subsequent to what preceded.

Husserl has, in the framework of the formal determination of the rational will by the Brentanoian categorical imperative, retrieved the Kantian thought of the self giving to itself its law in order to determine what is distinctively proper to the rational will. The rational will, the reason of will, one could say,

consists in the will of reason, in the essential and, in principle, will to reason, i.e., in the readiness and in the decision to establish one's act-life as a whole and once and for all, under the law of reason of the categorical imperative. On the basis of the knowledge of one's inertia and the constant inclination to follow blindly the powers of passivity, the personal I decides to make the categorical imperative the law its life, and therefore to shape its act-life itself in accord with the categorical imperative.

3 The ethics of renewal and self-preservation

The thought of an encompassing self-legislation and self-regulation of the entire life of a personal I determines Husserl's later ethics. This thought too is based in an ontological determination of the personal I. Namely, the personal I can arrive at a higher form of self-consciousness. It can survey its entire life as a whole and evaluate it in relation to a normative point of view. The personal I can be satisfied or dissatisfied with its entire life, and it can decide for a radical change of life, a radical break with the manner of its life up until now, and it can decide for a radical reform of itself. In his ''Essays on Renewal'' from 1922–1924 Husserl defines ethics and ethical life through this concept of renewal: ''Renewal of humans, of the individual human as well as the communalized humanity, is the chief theme of all ethics. The ethical life in its essence is one that stands consciously under the idea of renewal, a life guided and shaped willingly by the idea of renewal.'' (Hua XXVII, 20)

In a late manuscript from the beginning of the 1930's Husserl distinguishes the human from the animal through the capacity to critique one's earlier life. The animal, Husserl writes, ''does not have in its wake the unity of a life as something personal, that lends itself in its unity to a critique.'' (A V 5, 14a)[2] The human as person in the most proper sense does not simply live straightforwardly in the world, but rather, he oversees his life and aims it at universal values. But Husserl further distinguishes within this universal regulation of life two levels: the pre-ethical and the absolute-ethical. On the first level of universal regulation of life I take distance from living in a merely straightforward fashion in that I posit for myself adequately satisfactory goals, or I entertain projects that encompass all of life. In the ''Essays on Renewal,'' the choice of career is regarded by Husserl as just such a pre-ethical form of self-regulation. On the second and higher level of self-regulation these pre-ethical forms of self-regulation are subjected to a critique of absolute norms. Life on the lowest level of living straightforwardly is unhistorical, claims Husserl (in the just-mentioned manuscript written at the beginning of the 1930's). Life at the second level is a history of the lower

[2] In the ''Essays on Renewal'' one finds: ''The 'mere' animal perhaps may, under certain circumstances, do something always again in the same way, but it does not have the will in the form of universality. It does not know what the human expresses with the words: I want to act in such a way wherever I come upon these kinds of circumstances because these kinds of goods as such are of value to me.'' (Hua XXVII, 24)

level. At the third level history attains its absolute sense. The I has formed the universal resolution directed to itself to shape itself to an absolute I. What holds for the individual personal subject holds also for the personal community: A community too can critique the communal life that it has pursued up until now and resolve to undertake a radical ethical renewal.

In agreement with his ontology of the person and the ethics of the categorical imperative, the absolute point of view from which the personal life is critiqued and renewed would seem to have to be the point of view of reason. In his later ethics it is especially in the ''Essays on Renewal'' that Husserl advocates an unrestricted ethical rationalism, as becomes clear from the following determination of ethics. Ethics is ''the science of the total life of action of a rational subjectivity, lived from the point of view of reason that regulates this whole life in a unified way.'' (Hua XXVII, 21)

The ethical ideal of a life of reason is a life in which all my positings and position-takings are absolutely grounded and thereby not able to be nullified. Now the categorical imperative reads: ''Be a true human, lead a life that you can justify thoroughly in an insightful way, a life lived from out of practical reason.'' (*Ibid*. 36)

For Husserl absolute justification is the task of science, and in particular of science in its highest and universal form, i.e. in the form of philosophy. Therefore the ideal of a life of reason is the ideal of the philosophical life.

The ideal of reason is, according to Husserl, also the ideal of true self-preservation, of true agreement with myself, and the ideal of being true to oneself. True self-preservation means nothing other than that my positings and position-takings, my decisions, etc., have an abiding validity, that there are no reasons, nor can there be any that would necessitate that I cancel them out. ''True self-preservation,'' Husserl says in a late manuscript on ethics, ''means that for the I there is an abiding insurmountable identity of decision, and not merely a factual one, but one that is evidently apodictic.'' (A V 22, 22a)

4 The ethics of love

It was completely clear to Husserl that with the formal determination of the rational will ''only a small, if also the most fundamental, part of the task of a scientific, and first of all, a priori ethics'' was completed. Already at the time of his Göttingen lectures on axiology and ethics, Husserl became doubtful about the ideal of practical reason in the sense of the categorical imperative. These doubts led, in the 1920's, to a new orientation in his axiology and ethics which amounted to an extensive restriction, even a putting into question, of ethical rationalism. The ideal of a humanity of reason in the sense of the categorical imperative consists therein, that each personal subject makes this imperative to be the law of his will and accordingly subordinates his acts to the normative standard of the corresponding rational laws, as he strives for evident self-givenness. All this is done in order, in each situation, to realize the highest

possibility of value by way of comparison from among the value-possibilities of the actual practical domain. According to Husserl's own critique, this ideal of reason is ultimately too formal, too universalist, too objectivistic, and too calculating; in short, it is too cold and heartless. It fails to see the dimension of the depth of personal being and personal subjectivity.

The critique of the rationalism of the categorical imperative stands in connection with a change in the ontology of the personal subject. As a result of this new ontology of personal being (that one finds almost exclusively only in research manuscripts in the form of sketches) the deepest being of the person and deepest root of its identity and individuality is not to be found in reason and rational striving but in love. Husserl discussed love as an ethical motive and principle primarily in conjunction with two examples: the love of the mother for her children and the call to a determinate task of life. In the first case, love has, as Husserl recognized, a biological-instinctive basis. But in the motherly love the motherly instinct becomes a conscious decision and deliberate caring for the welfare of the child. In the second case it is a matter of the individual calling or career, putting one's life in the service of a definite region of values, e.g., science, art, politics, etc. What before in the ''Essays on Renewal'' were still pre-ethical regulations of life now receive universal ethical significance.

The I has, Husserl states in a manuscript from the middle of the 1920's, its egoic depths. It is an individual I with a deep center, a center of personal love with which and in which it follows its vocation, its calling. It is touched in its depth by this vocation which beckons it to new decisions and responsibilities. This deepest I is awakened; it ought to establish itself beyond mere general reasonableness and place itself in a particular manner in the service of certain values, in order ''to live up to them unto infinity in an absolute habituality.'' (B I 21, 55a) ''The I, which has such an innermost I and which is beckoned by his ownmost calling, this I, has individuality.'' (*Ibid*., 55) My personal individuality comes to the deepest and most authentic expression in the manner, the intensity and the direction of my love. ''I am who I am and the individual particularity shows itself therein that I, as who I am, love exactly as I love, that precisely this calls me and not that.'' (*Ibid*., 60a.)

The question about my individual calling is the question about my true self and my ownmost life-task. The true self is to be found beyond any possible inborn talents and character traits. It can have its origin only in our being offspring of God. At this juncture Husserl's ethics passes over into a philosophical theology. In the conclusion we will return to this.

For Husserl love has the active feature of a decision of the heart—feeling itself has here, therefore, an aspect of will—for determinate values. In regard to the values of love, it is a case for the personal subject of what is absolutely obligatory. Such absolutely obligatory values are not comparable with objective values, but rather are individual subjective values from which there emerges the imperative. Husserl speaks, in regard to the obligations originating out of these subjective values of love and conscience, of an absolute ought. The objective values, on the one hand, that are comparable and

estimable in relation to one another, and that can be brought together in a hierarchy of preference and, on the other hand, the personal values are ''opposite values by reason of the polar directions of their origins'' (*Ibid*., 53a). For the personal values do not exist in a pre-given way as affecting the subject, in response to which the subject turns to them in a feeling-experience of value, but rather because these values only originate in a loving value-appreciation. The values of love and conscience as correlates of the deepest form of valuing, preferring, and willing of the person have an absolute priority over the objective values. ''An objective value itself counts for nothing when weighed against a value that is rooted in the I and originated by way of its love (as absolute love), unless it be a case that this objective value is embraced by the absolutely valuing I as belonging to its own goals.'' (*Ibid*., 53b)

In a conflict between absolute values—Husserl's usual example is the conflict between the love for one's child and the love for the fatherland—there is no rational comparison, no absorption of the good into the better and the best, but there is only the tragic sacrifice of one absolute value for another, a sacrifice that remains a burden for the soul. This can happen with the presupposition that such a choice itself falls under an absolute ought, in accord with which, e.g., I must choose the fatherland before my child. In such a sacrifice, Husserl claims, I sacrifice always my self. ''If I decide for one such obligation over against another one that is also demanded, then I sacrifice not only something absolutely loved and thereby something of value over against another, but I sacrifice therewith me myself: I sacrifice myself as who I am, I, who cannot separate myself from such a loved one, from such an unconditioned obligation, from such a striven-for and loved value that originates from my innermost I.'' (A V 21, 13b)

From the recognition of the love and calling as an absolute ought for the person that is rooted in the depth of the person, Husserl concludes (in an undated single page of manuscript, probably from the first half of the 1920's): ''This entire ethics of the highest practical good as it was orchestrated by Brentano and taken over by me in essential features, cannot be the last word. It needs essential qualifications. In such an ethics calling and inner vocation do not receive their true due.'' (B I 21, 65a)

In this citation Husserl is not saying that the ethics of reason is to be totally given up. Rather, it is not to be the only point of view. It must be limited, in order that love and calling can be given their due. In the continuation of the text just cited Husserl calls the inner vocation that results in the unconditioned ''You ought and must'' an ''absolute affection'' for the particular person that ''is not subordinated to a rational justification and in its binding the person with an obligation it is not dependent on the rational justification.'' (*Ibid*.)

In a lengthy appended remark in the manuscript of his lecture ''Introduction to Philosophy,'' 1919/1920 Husserl expressed himself similarly to the just given citation: ''I will have to give up the entire teaching of the categorical imperative, or at least place new limitations on it. (1) The *bonum* and the *summum bonum* considered from the aspects of values of good (goods). The sphere of goods has for me a practical realizable part, my practical best 'good.'

(2) Is that already for me that which I ought to do? Could one not doubt that the best practical good is for me the absolutely obligatory? What is the meaning of the subjectivity of willing? Does it come into consideration only as something objectified insofar as I evaluate it according to some trans-subjective good that it creates? The problem of love. Can I not have love for a value region, and in such a way that this love is not of the same kind as valuing and as taking delight in the value that one has? A personal love, as something specifically personal, that determines as a pure love the value of the person.'' (F I 40 131b)

In a manuscript from the first-half of the 1920's Husserl distinguished what he calls values of enjoyment, then later in the reworking, values of beauty, from absolute values. The concept of the value of beauty has a wider meaning than the aesthetic values in the usual senses of the beauty of art or nature. Values of beauty are pure values of content, of the idea of something, in particular of the individual idea in view of some existing individual. Such an idea is given in a joy that is disinterested in the actual existence of the something of which the idea is the idea. All desire is disengaged; the I functions as the pure I of valuing. Husserl notes that wherever it is a question of these values of beauty ''there the law of the best among the achievable values of beauty—and that is here the 'highest' value of beauty—has its place. Where, on the other hand, it is a matter of absolute values, there is no talk of the greatest good, of a better and best.'' (A VI 30, 137 b) ''The voice of conscience, of the absolute ought,'' which we find in another manuscript, ''can demand of me something that I in no way would know as the best through a comparison of values. What is foolishness for the understanding that compares values is sanctioned and can become an object of the greatest veneration.'' (A V 21, 122b)

5 Conclusion: the reconciliation of love, fate, and reason in belief in god

We said at the beginning that humans as personal subjects must themselves lead their own lives. They have in principle the choice to live for the day, i.e., wantonly and randomly, to follow blindly the powers of passivity, the momentary occurring drives and inclinations, the prevailing traditions and authorities, or they can determine themselves actively and by their own insight. Within the personal subject the law of inertia conflicts with the drive of reason, with the striving for the autonomy of reason. The subject reaches the highest form of personal self-consciousness when it makes its life as a whole a theme for will, and when it not only opposes in a single case of a concrete practical situation the powers of passivity, but fundamentally and once and for all deprives them of their power to mislead. The subject wills to live in the truth, in the light of reason. It wills to bring to reason all his achievements, its theoretic knowing, its feeling-valuing, as well as its willing and acting, in the form of an insightful grounding and self-giving filled intention. As Husserl himself puts it, the ideal is a life lived with an absolutely good conscience, because it is a life lived with an absolute, i.e., philosophical, grounding. Human personal subjects

can only appropriate the ideal in the form of an infinite development. On the way to the perfecting of themselves and their world, they are hindered by surd-like powers of fate like sickness and an early death.

Husserl, however, reaches the insight that the ideal of reason alone does not do justice to personal identity and individuality. Ethical renewal cannot merely consist in the subject's decision to bring as much as it can the full extent of the I-life under the form of reason, which for action would mean to decide for the best among what is achieveable in each practical situation. Rather, every personal subject has its own personal ethical task. It is called to this task from the depth of its personal being. In this subjective absolute ought, its true being comes to expression; to discover and to preserve this true I is its highest duty. This means that for social ethics, along side of the ideal of rational humanity there is now to be found the idea of a community of love, in which the personal subjects reciprocally aid one another in the realization of their true I's and the correlative absolute values.

For Husserl the seeming irrationality of love and fate can be reconciled to rationality only through a rational faith in a godly arrangement of the world. ''I can be blessed, and I can only be such in all suffering, misfortune, and irrationality of my surroundings, when I believe that God exists and that this world is God's world; and if I will with all the strength of my soul to hold fast to the absolute ought, and that itself is an absolute willing, then I must believe absolutely that God is; faith is the absolute and highest requirement.'' (A V 21, 15b) The belief in my true I presupposes belief in God: ''In order to be able to believe in myself and my true I and the developing in its direction, I must believe in God and in so far as I do this I see the divine dispensation, the counsel of God, and God's intention in my life.'' (*Ibid*., 24b/25a)

I have no knowledge of the existence of God on the basis of a self-presenting sensible or categorial intuition, but I posit God with the doxastic quality of certainty on the basis of a motivation of the heart and practice: I must believe in God and God's providential arrangement of the world if the striving of the personal subject for the perfection of itself and the world is not to be senseless. ''The world has to be a lovely and good one, one that has a universal teleology. Human action must be divinely guided and nevertheless free and responsible; free agency and its sinful errors, and all teleological irrationalities have to have a milieu of universal teleology, and everything therein must also have a teleological function in order that a human life in the world with definitive goals be possible.'' (*Ibid*., 20a) For the sake of its self-preservation as a person, the personal I must believe in God. Reason has the last word in Husserl's personalist ethics only as the form of a faith demanded by the heart and will, i.e., a faith ultimately demanded by love.

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