

The Concept of Personhood in the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl

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THE CONCEPT OF PERSONHOOD IN
THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF
EDMUND HUSSERL

by

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ABSTRACT
THE CONCEPT OF PERSONHOOD IN
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This dissertation attempts to articulate the concept of personhood in Husserl. In his research manuscripts, Husserl recognized the need for a concrete description of subjectivity that still remained within the transcendental register. The concept of personhood, although never fully worked out, is intended to provide this description by demonstrating how the embodied, enworlded, intersubjective, and axiological dimensions of experience are integrated.

After briefly outlining the characteristics of a transcendental phenomenological account of personhood, this dissertation outlines the essential structures of personhood. The person, for Husserl, includes the passive dimension with the instinctive and affective dimensions of subjectivity, which become sedimented into habits, and the worldliness of subjectivity that provides a background horizon for the subject's actions. However, the full concept of personhood does not yet emerge in the passive sphere. The active dimension of position-taking acts, especially with respect to the loved values that make up one's vocation, is what constitutes the person as a unity of intentional activity, history, and striving, and makes it possible to speak about the transcendental person, as opposed to merely the transcendental subject or ego. Because the person lives in a community with others, the choice of a vocation can be subjected to critical scrutiny on the part of the community, and the community itself ought to critically reflect upon its own *telos*.

After outlining the structures of personhood, this dissertation argues that there is a teleology running from the lowest dimensions of passive experience all the way up to the highest ideal of a person and his or her community. This teleology is ultimately a teleology of reason, and it reveals the philosophical task of living a life that can be absolutely justified. This dissertation concludes by describing the person as an entelechy of reason, which captures the teleological striving of reason inherent in Husserl's concept of personhood.

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Colin J. Hahn, B.A., M.A.

It is clear that intersubjectivity is one of the most important aspects of human experience, according to Husserl, and that is no less true of my experience in writing this dissertation.

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A NOTE ON CITATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Where possible, I have cited materials from Husserl by the *Husserliana* volume and pagination, followed by the published English translation noted in the bibliography. Unpublished manuscripts have been cited according to the archival signature.

In order to aid the reader, all of the texts quoted in the body of the dissertation are in English. In cases where there is a published English translation available or an author has given me permission to use a draft translation, I have simply used the translated version. Any modifications to the translation are noted in the footnotes.

However, many of Husserl's texts (as well as German secondary sources) have not yet been translated. In these cases, I have translated the texts on my own. Because many of Husserl's manuscripts have not even been published in German, I have also included the original text of the unpublished manuscripts in the footnotes.

Chapter 1. Introduction to the Problem of Personhood

Γνώθι σεαυτόν

Know thyself

—Attributed to the Oracle at Delphi

The problem of personhood, and by extension the entire problematic of subjectivity, has appeared in many guises throughout the history of philosophy. This problem extends from metaphysical issues, such as the ontology of the person and the identity conditions of a single individual, to ethical issues like the moral worth or dignity of persons. Although philosophers have advanced theories like Cartesian dualism, eliminative materialist explanations of consciousness, and Heideggerian avowals that the ontical nature of subjectivity is to be ontological, the profusion of ink on these topics has yet to establish a consensus on how to understand the lived reality of consciousness. Likewise, when compared to the enormous progress made by scientists and philosophers of mind in mapping the neuro-physical composition of the human brain, the status of research into human subjectivity appears primitive. If anything, the stubborn refusal of consciousness to yield its secrets to a scientific account has encouraged philosophers to dismiss consciousness as an occult property, a convenient fiction, or a folk phenomenon. It seems that, like the fabled Gordian knot, any attempt to unravel the tangled reality of subjectivity will only result in more gnarled problems.

This dissertation began from the conviction that phenomenology—and in particular *Husserlian* phenomenology—offers the best chance at repeating Alexander’s mythical feat. No other philosophical approach provides such a rigorous method, or such a sustained investigation, into the constitution of subjectivity. The

contributions that Husserl has made to the topic of subjectivity, from the correlational *a priori* and the rigorous method of the reduction to the constitutional analysis of transcendental subjectivity and the insight into the inherently intersubjective dimension of transcendental consciousness, are too numerous to list and too significant to overlook. It is no accident that much of 20th century philosophy developed in dialogue with Husserl, and it seems to me that the crowning achievement of Husserlian philosophy is his relentless efforts to untangle the threads of subjectivity.

In the last several years, phenomenology has experienced a resurgence as its method has been used to research many aspects of subjectivity, identity, sociopolitical thought, and even cognitive neuroscience. However, these approaches have generally shied away from the transcendental dimension of phenomenology. There seems to be an assumption that transcendental investigation is in tension with a nuanced cultural, political, and embodied treatment of subjectivity. As a result, Husserl's contributions to these domains—as well as his insights into the practice of phenomenological investigation—have been ignored in favor of realist phenomenology, existentialism, and phenomenological naturalism. In some cases, the notion of phenomenology has been watered down to the point that it simply means a description of conscious experience or a psychological analysis.

The problem with this weaker sense of phenomenology is that it loses what makes the phenomenological method, in Husserl's words, "rigorous science." Husserlian phenomenology is an intentional analysis of subjectivity and its constitutive activity. Rigorous phenomenology goes beyond mere description by

investigating the constitution of objects, meaning, and subjectivity itself in the conscious streaming of intentional life. The constitutive element of Husserlian phenomenology makes it a transcendental philosophy.

By investigating the concept of personhood, this dissertation offers a corrective to the rejection of transcendental philosophy. In this dissertation, I will attempt to articulate a concept from Husserl's phenomenology that Husserl himself never fully worked out. In his research manuscripts, Husserl begins to elucidate a theory of "transcendental personhood," which is intended to be a corrective to as well as extension of his earlier accounts of transcendental subjectivity. Although the earlier descriptions of transcendental consciousness opened the domain of constitution to rigorous investigation, the depth dimension of subjectivity was initially overlooked. As Husserl began to remedy this oversight, especially from his genetic phase forward, he realized that there were serious limitations to describing subjectivity in terms of an ego-pole, and he introduced language such as the "person" and the "monad" in order to describe the sedimented history of the transcendental subject, the worldliness of subjectivity, the community in which the subject lived, and even the ethical dimension of the subject's life.

Through his discussion of transcendental personhood, Husserl's analysis demonstrates that transcendental investigation in fact opens the domains of culture, society, and embodiment to investigation in a rigorous manner. Unlike realistic, naturalistic, or existential accounts, transcendental phenomenology reveals that human beings are essentially rational at a deep level; the very framework of personal experience is structured according to norms of reason and those norms

constitute an internal obligation upon the person to strive for a rational fulfillment of his or her life. This sense of reason is intimately connected with the concrete domains of personal experience and provides a casing within which specific life experiences can be experienced, understood, and affirmed. This dissertation argues that the concept of transcendental personhood represents the culmination of these attempts to articulate the richness of subjectivity, and that Husserl's efforts to vocalize these dimensions can be synthesized into a unified account of personhood.

To that end, this chapter will survey the landscape of personhood within the Western philosophical tradition in order to sketch the contours of a Husserlian approach to the topic. The first section of this chapter will survey the concept of personhood in the philosophical tradition in order to identify some common themes. The second section will briefly summarize some contemporary analytic approaches to personhood in order to contrast the analytic style of investigation with a phenomenological account. In the third section, I will focus on the unique characteristics of Husserlian phenomenology in order to describe the method for developing a Husserlian account of personhood. The fourth section of this chapter will review the existing literature on Husserlian approaches to personhood in order to demonstrate how the dissertation contributes to this discussion. Finally, I will briefly outline the structure of the dissertation in order to show how the various aspects of personhood will be discussed.

§1. The Problem of the Person in the Philosophical Tradition

The question of selfhood is one of the most fundamental problems in philosophy. The Delphic oracle's claim that Socrates was the wisest person

motivated Socrates to understand his own ignorance and ultimately to be able to give an account of his life.¹ Since then, the philosophical tradition has wrestled with the nature of the self. Indeed, as James Mensch suggests, “if Western philosophy has a persistent goal or telos, one which gives it its identity as a historical process, this may very well be provided by the Oracle’s injunction.”²

The problem of personhood stems from the issue of selfhood. Since ancient times, philosophers as well as ordinary individuals have suggested that there is something unique about the human self. For Aristotle, there is a function particular to the human being that is not shared with other animals.³ In the Biblical tradition, human beings are created in the image of God.⁴ Shakespeare calls attention to the uniqueness of the human situation throughout his plays, most notably in Hamlet’s declaration,

What a piece
of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite
in faculty, in form and moving how express and
admirable, in action how like an angel, in
apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the
world, the paragon of animals—⁵

Although the term “person” has never been used strictly as an expression of what is exceptional about the self—indeed, even the philosophical literature uses the terms interchangeably more often than not—“person” also carries a connotation of a higher sense of selfhood.

¹ Plato, “Apology,” esp. 21c and 39c.

² Mensch, “What is a Self?”, 61. See Taylor for a detailed treatment of the development of the contemporary concept of selfhood.

³ Aristotle, NE I.7, 1097b25.

⁴ Gen. I: 26–27.

⁵ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, II.ii.315–320, 65–66. Bloom argues that Shakespeare created the modern concept of personality; see Bloom, esp. 4–7.

The word “person” can be traced back to the Latin *persona*, which referred to the mask worn by actors playing a role in a theater (*dramatis persona*).⁶ The Romans expanded this notion to the legal system: *personae* were represented in the courts, and slaves did not have personality—*Servus non habet personam*—precisely because they lacked the social role that entitled them to standing under the law.⁷ The word “person” therefore began to be used in distinction to (mere) human beings.

Early Christian thinkers adopted the language of personhood and gave it a metaphysical foundation by using the term to explain the nature of God. Tertullian famously invoked the concept of person to describe the relationship of the Trinity: the three Persons of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are nonetheless one God.⁸ According to the Trinitarian doctrine that was ratified at the Council of Nicea, the Persons of the Trinity were one in substance—meaning that they had identical natures—yet distinct in a mysterious way.⁹ What this usage creates is the idea of a person as an ontological entity that is singular and distinguishable from other entities even if those entities share the same nature. Boethius famously links this

⁶ Onions, 671. The Latin *persona* likely derives from Greek and Etruscan words for mask, but the Latin is certainly the beginning of the philosophical development of “person.” However, Trendelenberg notes that this etymology is not totally settled; see esp. 5–8.

⁷ Spaemann, 30; Mauss, 17.

⁸ Tertullian, esp. 598 as well as 621.

⁹ For the Christian tradition, the nature of the Trinity is a mystery of faith; it is a revealed truth that exceeds the capacities of human reason alone. See Joyce for a brief summary of the Catholic position on the Trinity.

sense of personhood with the ancient Greek claim that man is a rational animal, writing, “Person [is] the individual substance of a rational nature.”¹⁰

The modern era of philosophy, inaugurated by Descartes’ famous turn to the subject, shifted the model of selfhood from the divine to the human. While Descartes does not use the philosophical concept of personhood in the pregnant sense, he famously proclaims that the starting point of philosophical inquiry must be the certainty of the existence of the ego: “I must finally conclude that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me.”¹¹ For Descartes, the legitimacy of all knowledge is grounded on the necessary truth of an individual subject’s existence. The thoughts and representations of the individual subject, in turn, are built upon the foundation of self-certainty. Thus, although Descartes’ concept of the ego remains much thinner than the concept of personhood, this shift towards selfhood as a focus of philosophical inquiry makes possible the thematic development of personhood.

In political philosophy, Hobbes draws upon the Latin tradition to develop the notion of a person as the entity to which words and actions are attributed.¹² While Descartes focuses on the ontological nature of the human being as a thinking thing, Hobbes considers the subject in a political context. For Hobbes, the crucial issue is who is to be included, or represented, within the state, and he uses the term “person” to identify this group. Hobbes recognizes both natural persons—individual human beings—as well as artificial persons, such as a church and a commonwealth

¹⁰ Boethius, 93.

¹¹ Descartes, 17.

¹² Hobbes, esp. ch. 16.

(which may be personated, or represented, by a rector and the sovereign, respectively). Hobbes argues that the ability to personate others is contingent upon the existence of civil society and thus civil society makes possible personhood: “before [a civil state], there is no dominion of persons.”¹³ Using the notion of personation, Hobbes also develops the idea of a person as a representative for a unified group of individuals.

The political significance of personhood is also developed in Locke, who argues that person “is a Forensick Term appropriating Actions and their Merit; and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and Happiness and Misery.”¹⁴ Thus, personhood identifies a particular juridical and moral status, and is used to encapsulate the history of actions taken by the subject in question. This sense of person synthesizes Descartes’ claim that the person picks out an ontological entity like a thinking being with Hobbes’ political understanding of personhood. Locke deepens both of these claims by explicitly including the interior life of the person as a feeling and morally culpable individual. For Locke, the person is not merely a thinking thing or a political representation; rather, the person is a creature driven by both reason and passion that is responsible for his or her actions before both the community and the self.

The moral dimension of the person is brought to fruition in Kant, who defends the unique moral status of persons over and against things. For Kant, “person” is a term that picks out beings of a rational nature, and therefore persons

¹³ Hobbes, 103.

¹⁴ Locke, 346.

are ends in themselves.¹⁵ As Kant explains, the rational nature of persons bestows upon them an inner worth, or dignity, rather than the hypothetical worth (or price) of other entities.¹⁶ By virtue of this unique nature, only persons can be members of the Kingdom of Ends. Since autonomy is the state of being directed solely by reason, only persons can be autonomous. Therefore, only persons can be subject to the moral law, and only persons are deserving of absolute, unconditional respect.

This emphasis on personhood within the modern tradition, especially with respect to political and moral philosophy, continues today. A clear example is Rawls' Kantian reinterpretation of the social contract in *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls begins with the claim that it is *persons* that are to be protected politically: "Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice."¹⁷ While Rawls does not give a strict definition of persons, the characteristics of persons that he refers to throughout the work—notably rationality and autonomy—are clearly drawn from the modern tradition, as is the idea of harmonizing the self's desires according to reason.¹⁸

In short, there are several themes that emerge from the use of personhood in the Western historical tradition. Persons are understood as subjects or agents, and the concept of personhood is linked with reason, individuality, and autonomy. While the appropriate role of passions is contentious, the tradition recognizes that persons have passions in addition to the faculty of reason. Personhood is sometimes used to indicate a special capacity of the human being and is used at other times in contrast

¹⁵ Kant, *Groundwork*, 37.

¹⁶ Kant, *Groundwork*, 42–3.

¹⁷ Rawls, 3. See also esp. §§63–64 for his use of persons in his description of deliberative rationality.

¹⁸ Rawls, §§40 and 85.

to a natural human being; in either case, there is something special about personhood, which is usually linked to a heightened moral or political significance. One form of the political significance is the ability of a “person” to represent a collective of individuals. As we shall see, all of these themes are present in Husserl’s concept of personhood: Husserl’s person is rational yet in possession of passions that must be integrated into his or her life, has a deep commitment to an individual moral vocation, and is united with others in a personality of a higher order.

§2. Analytic Approaches to Personhood

The previous section laid out the historical background for the term “personhood” within the Western philosophical tradition. In contemporary philosophy, and in particular mainstream analytic philosophy, the notion of the person has also become a prominent theme. Because the analytic approach is dominant within Anglophone discussions of the term “personhood,” it is necessary to briefly outline what is involved in the general analytic discussion of personhood. As will become clear, Husserl’s project differs in several important ways from the general analytic approach, and it will be helpful to make these contrasts explicit in order to better understand what questions Husserl’s notion of the person is intended to address—as well as what questions are foreign to Husserl’s conception.

Although this section will give a general outline of some major themes within the analytic approach to personhood, a full examination of all the ways in which analytic philosophers have investigated personhood is beyond the scope of this dissertation. This section has the far more modest purpose of clearing the air and distinguishing some unique elements of Husserl’s approach by setting them in

contrast with the more prevalent, and thus familiar, uses of the term. As a result, it will be necessary to offer some generalizations about analytic approaches rather than getting bogged down in the nuances of their approach. This section will therefore sketch three prominent analytic interpretations of personhood in order to articulate some of the common assumptions behind the general analytic approach to personhood and will then set up a contrast with Husserl's phenomenological method. The key point of contrast, as it turns out, will be whether the concept of personhood is fundamentally a concept that ought to be described from a third-person perspective, as the analytic tradition generally does, or whether it requires a science of the first-person perspective, which is what phenomenology offers.

In the analytic tradition, one of the central approaches to personhood centers on the topic of personal identity. The key question for this approach is: what criterion allows us to reidentify a person as the same person? This problem is often traced back to Locke's famous statement that a person is "a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places."¹⁹

Contemporary philosophers have expanded Locke's memory criterion into broader criteria of some form of psychological continuity. Sydney Shoemaker, for instance, modifies Locke's criterion into a "quasi-remembering" criterion in order to allow that the person may have changed between a past event and now.²⁰ In a similar manner, Thomas Nagel argues that the person is reidentifiable via a

¹⁹ Locke, 335.

²⁰ Shoemaker, "Persons and their Pasts," 271.

“persisting locus of mental states and activities,” but does not claim that any particular state is necessary.²¹

While the Lockean tradition of psychological continuity is the dominant approach to personal identity, it is not the only response to the problem of re-identifying a person. Some philosophers, such as Bernard Williams, have appealed to a criterion of physical continuity rather than psychological continuity.²² In addition, various thought experiments such as Derek Parfit’s teletransporter example have suggested that the question of personal identity does not matter because identifying who is numerically identical with whom else is practically irrelevant.²³

A second analytic approach to personhood revolves around finding the features that distinguish persons from other entities. An example of this approach is Harry Frankfurt’s contention that “one essential difference between persons and other creatures is to be found in the structure of a person’s will.”²⁴ For Frankfurt, persons are unique in having second-order desires: they may want to have different desires from their current desires, and this capacity for reflective self-evaluation distinguishes human persons from other animals.

P. F. Strawson is a second example of the distinguishing features approach to personhood. He defines a person as “a type of entity such that *both* predicates ascribing states of consciousness *and* predicates ascribing corporeal

²¹ Nagel, 40.

²² Williams, 11.

²³ Parfit, esp. ch. 12.

²⁴ Frankfurt, 6.

characteristics...are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type.”²⁵

Thus, Strawson’s distinguishing feature of personhood is having both properties of both physical and conscious kinds.

Some analytic philosophers have insisted that the everyday concept of personhood is a conflation of different concepts, and therefore the underlying concepts need to be separated before the distinguishing features of personhood can be identified. For instance, Daniel Dennett distinguishes between a metaphysical notion of personhood (“roughly, the notion of an intelligent, conscious, feeling agent”) and a moral notion, which picks out an entity to which rights and responsibilities attach.²⁶ The moral notion, according to Dennett, is normative rather than descriptive; since being a full person in the moral sense is aspirational, there are no sufficient conditions for moral personhood although there are necessary conditions, some of which are captured in the metaphysical notion of personhood.²⁷ Dennett’s list of features that are linked to the metaphysical concept of personhood include rationality and having states of consciousness, while the moral notion can include traits like being capable of verbal communication and having self-consciousness.²⁸

A third approach to personhood comes from the field of applied ethics. This approach focuses on determining whether the term “person” can be appropriately applied in a specific context. These discussions begin from the premise that personhood indicates a privileged moral status and attempt to establish whether

²⁵ Strawson, 102.

²⁶ Dennett, 176.

²⁷ Dennett, 193–4.

²⁸ Dennett, 177–9.

that status ought to be recognized for the entities in question, for instance, a human fetus. In that vein, Michael Tooley claims that “X is a person” is synonymous with “X has a (serious) moral right to life.”²⁹ Likewise, Mary Anne Warren writes, “it is personhood, and not genetic humanity...which is the basis for membership in this [moral] community.”³⁰

A similar argument occurs in the domain of animal rights. Paola Cavalieri and Peter Singer note evidence that great apes possess many of characteristics traditionally believed to be the sole possession of human beings—such as linguistic capacity, self-consciousness, and a sense of humor—and therefore conclude that “it is surely indisputable that the notion of person can meaningfully be applied to the other great apes.”³¹ Consequently, they aver that great apes are entitled to heightened moral consideration, including the right to life, the protection of individual liberty, and the prohibition of torture.³²

This approach is similar to the distinguishing features approach in that the argument proceeds by appealing to certain criteria as essential to personhood: e.g., self-consciousness in Tooley and consciousness, reasoning, and self-motivated activity in Warren, and linguistic capacity and a sense of self in Cavalieri and Singer.³³ However, it differs from the distinguishing features approach in that the goal is to identify enough features of personhood to defend a judgment about the

²⁹ Tooley, 40.

³⁰ Warren, 47.

³¹ Cavalieri and Singer, 139.

³² Cavalieri and Singer, 128.

³³ Tooley, 44; Warren, 55; Cavalieri and Singer, 138–9.

personhood of, e.g., the fetus, rather than to develop a comprehensive list of necessary and sufficient conditions for personhood for its own sake.

All of these approaches are analytic not merely in the sense of emerging from analytic philosophy but also in the root sense of analytically separating a concept into its constituent parts. They all take the concept of personhood and attempt to distill the core meanings from the panoply of connotations—for instance, by distinguishing the metaphysical and moral notions. Once they have isolated the sense in which they will examine the term, they refine the term by removing extraneous concepts and identifying the necessary components, until they have a concept that is clarified enough for their purposes. The ideal account of personhood, as seen by these approaches, would be a complete list of the necessary and sufficient conditions under which the concept of personhood could be applied.

While this process of analysis is an important task, it is inadequate on its own to capture the true nature of personhood. In particular, the analytic approach to the problem of personhood tends to treat the person as an object to be investigated from the third-person perspective. The theme of personhood focuses on the *concept* of personhood, and not the experience that constitutes the concept. This method of investigation brings to mind Natorp's objection that science, "kills subjectivity in order to dissect it, and believes that the life of the soul is on display in the result of the dissection!"³⁴ By contrast, Husserl insists that the first-personal experience of subjectivity must be the starting point of investigation, and indeed that all phenomenological problems must begin from the experience of the ego. He writes,

³⁴ Natorp, 103, translated in Zahavi, "How to Investigate Subjectivity," 103. See also Luft, "Reconstruction and Reduction," esp. 64–6.

Since the monadically concrete ego includes also the whole of actual and potential conscious life, it is clear that the problem of *explicating this monadic ego phenomenologically*...must include *all constitutional problems without exception*. Consequently the phenomenology of this *self-constitution* coincides with *phenomenology as a whole*.³⁵

A phenomenological account of personhood differs from an analytic approach in several ways. First, phenomenology is a descriptive science from the first-person perspective; it begins with how entities are given to consciousness. Thus, the motivating question for a phenomenological analysis of personhood will not be, “What are the necessary conditions of personhood?” Instead, the focal questions will be, “How is personhood *experienced*?” and “What are the conditions for the possibility of the experience of personhood?” These are questions that fundamentally presuppose the first-person perspective. As Husserl argues, phenomenology is “a systematic egological science,” and *a fortiori* a phenomenological account of personhood will demand a rigorous investigation of the first-person experiences that constitute the concept of personhood.³⁶

This focus on the experiential dimension of personhood leads to a second difference between analytic and phenomenological approaches. As the following chapters will argue, personhood is not a fixed state. The personality of the individual develops and transforms his or her experiences. The analytic approach to personhood struggles to account for the dynamic nature of personhood precisely because the unfolding of personhood runs orthogonally to the categories of necessary and sufficient conditions. By contrast, phenomenology—especially

³⁵ *Hua. I*, 106; *Cartesian Meditations*, 68. Gadamer claims that Husserl’s notion of *conscious life* was influenced by Natorp, as well as Dilthey; see Gadamer, 238.

³⁶ *Hua. I*, 118; *Cartesian Meditations* 86.

genetic phenomenology, as we will see in the next section—is well-equipped to describe the ever-unfolding experience and constitution of personhood. As a result, a phenomenological account of personhood can describe the pull of personhood as a guiding ideal for oneself, as well as the way that the progressive realization of personhood shapes one’s experience of the moral and social dimensions.

Finally, analytic approaches to personhood tend to abstract from issues of history, worldliness, and culture. The process of analysis is reductive; it eliminates as many factors as possible in order to arrive at universally necessary and sufficient conditions for personhood. For instance, Frankfurt’s criterion of second-order desires abstracts from any particular objects of the will, and Strawson’s account of the person as composed of both physical and psychic properties says nothing about the content of the person’s psyche. This method is problematic for the concept of personhood because the person is an essentially rich concept: the person is enworlded, historical, and embedded in an intersubjective community.

In short, what a phenomenological approach to personhood offers is a dynamic, concrete account of subjectivity that begins from the experience of subjectivity itself. Rather than an abstract investigation that starts from a concept of personhood and develops through a third-person viewpoint, phenomenology offers the ability to engage in a rich description of the lived reality of personhood from the first-person perspective. Husserl himself criticized his contemporaries for ignoring the lived reality of experience and focusing on impersonal abstractions; as he remarked in his inaugural lecture at Freiburg, “Philosophers, as things now stand, are all too fond of offering criticism from on high instead of studying and

understanding things from within.”³⁷ As the next section will detail, Husserlian phenomenology offers precisely the kind of method necessary to rectify this shortcoming.

§3. Husserlian Phenomenology

For Husserl, the problem of personhood is intimately connected with his overall phenomenological project. Throughout his career, Husserl’s primary task is, through phenomenology, to ground the accomplishments of philosophy with scientific rigor. As Husserl’s conception of phenomenology matures into a *transcendental* idealism, he realizes that he needs to develop an account of the constituting (i.e., transcendental) consciousness in order to explain how phenomenological claims can attain the rigorous level of justification expected from a science. It is only with the development of Husserl’s genetic method, however, that the problem of personhood can emerge in its own right from the problem of transcendental subjectivity. Husserl recognized that his static analysis of consciousness and constituted objects needed to be supplemented by the depth dimension of constitution. Transcendental subjectivity therefore needed to be reconceived as a constituting consciousness within an intersubjective and worldly horizon. It is the thesis of this dissertation that Husserl’s concept of personhood was an attempt to integrate the concrete dimensions of experience (such as intersubjectivity and worldliness) into an account of transcendental subjectivity.

On Husserl’s trajectory from conceiving of epistemology as a form of idealism to the development of the transcendental concept of personhood, there are three

³⁷ *Hua*. XXV, 81; “Husserl’s Inaugural Lecture at Freiburg im Breisgau (1917)”, 17.

key methodological points. The first is the recognition that consciousness is intentional, or is consciousness *of* something, and the discovery of the *a priori* correlation between the intending subject and the object intended that stems from this recognition of the intentionality of consciousness. The second is Husserl's method of the reduction, which allows him to purify his investigations of intentional structures from naturalistic assumptions and uncover the transcendental dimension of subjectivity. Third, the method of genetic phenomenology explains the depth dimension of constituting subjectivity in its relations to intentional objects. Husserl's investigations into constitution push him to investigate how constituting subjectivity itself can be constituted, both from its own activity as well as by being passively affected by its horizons. I will briefly examine how each of these three points illuminates what the problem of personhood is within Husserl's phenomenology, as well as how these three points clarify the way in which personhood can be investigated.

A. Intentionality

The starting point for Husserl's investigations into subjectivity is the insight, borrowed from Brentano, that consciousness is intentional. Husserl argues that consciousness is consciousness *of* something; consciousness directs itself towards objects and takes up those objects as its theme. In the *Logical Investigations*, the intentionality of consciousness allows Husserl to refute the objection of psychologism (which asserts that conscious acts are directed towards merely psychological entities with no reality outside of the human mind) by noting that the psychological act of consciousness has an ideal content; the ideal object intended in

the act is one and the same object that can be intended in different psychological acts.

The insight of the intentionality of consciousness, however, is not a psychological claim about the nature of consciousness. Many other philosophers, including Husserl's mentor Brentano, had observed that consciousness can be directed towards an object.³⁸ Husserl's discovery is that the intentionality of consciousness provides an epistemological criterion. There is a correlation between the intentional object and the intentional act, and by examining the manner in which objects fulfill or disappoint particular expectations, Husserl can explain how objective judgments are possible without lapsing into psychologism. To be sure, this correlation is not yet worked out in detail in the *Logical Investigations*; Husserl himself remarks that "my whole subsequent life-work has been dominated by the task of systematically elaborating on this a priori of correlation."³⁹ In particular, he will need the method of the phenomenological reduction in order to focus on the objects solely as given to, and constituted by, consciousness.

In the context of personhood, the discovery of intentionality is significant because intentionality is the vehicle through which transcendental personhood can be explored. All of our claims about personhood must be claims that can be expressed in intentional terms. The notion of intentionality that Husserl establishes will evolve as his phenomenological method matures, and in particular he will develop a non-thetic form of intentionality to account for the passive and pre-

³⁸ Brentano, 88–9.

³⁹ *Hua*. VI, 169n; *Crisis*, 166n.

reflective dimensions of experience.⁴⁰ However, even when Husserl begins to consider non-objectifying forms of consciousness, they will still be understood within a general rubric of intentional analysis. Bernet describes the importance of intentionality for Husserlian investigations in general when he writes,

Husserl never went so far as to say...that the essence of subjectivity is an affectivity without any inherent connection with some form or other of intentionality. If it is true that the life of the transcendental subject is neither reducible to objectifying intentionality, nor even to the pre-intentional attachment to the world, it is no less true that for Husserl the subject which experiences itself never completely escapes the framework of intentionality.⁴¹

In brief, it is the discovery of intentionality that makes possible the phenomenological investigation of subjectivity, and Husserl's refinements in his theory of intentionality all occur against the background insight that intentionality is the defining feature of consciousness.

B. Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction

The discovery of intentionality leads to the second crucial feature of Husserlian phenomenology, viz., the phenomenological reduction. Having established that the fulfillment or disappointment of intentional expectations can be used as an epistemological criterion, Husserl realizes that he needs a method that secures the results of these investigations from lapsing into psychologism. The method that Husserl develops is the phenomenological reduction.⁴²

⁴⁰ Zahavi, "Inner Time-Consciousness and Pre-reflective Self-awareness," esp. 157–8.

⁴¹ Bernet, "An intentionality without subject or object?," 232–3; translation modified.

⁴² Husserl's method of the reduction developed throughout his career. This presentation will focus on the reduction as it is described in Husserl's genetic phase,

The discovery that consciousness is intentional shows that there is an *a priori* correlation between objects as given to consciousness and the subject intending those objects: one recognizes “the absolute correlation between beings of every sort and every meaning, on the one hand, and absolute subjectivity, as constituting meaning and ontic validity in the broadest sense, on the other hand.”⁴³ In order to focus solely on the object as given to consciousness, the phenomenologist performs the reduction, which suspends all questions and assumptions that treat the intentional object as a real entity in the world. As Husserl explains, the phenomenologist

forbids himself to ask questions which rest upon the ground of the world at hand, questions of being, questions of value, practical questions, questions about being or non-being, about being valuable, being useful, being beautiful, being good, etc. All natural interests are put out of play.⁴⁴

However, the reduction is not a loss or restriction. On the contrary, everything within the natural attitude is preserved. What is different is that the sense of the object has changed. The reduction shifts the sense from an object existing “in the world” to an object as correlated to, and constituted by, consciousness. In other words, the world and its objects are now considered in the reduced sense of “as phenomena given to consciousness.” This shift from natural objects to phenomena given to consciousness allows Husserl to investigate how the sense of these objects is constituted without being derailed by psychologistic or skeptical concerns. By putting out of play the naturalistic assumption that objects are “out there” in the

especially *Cartesian Meditations* and *Crisis*, rather than his earlier works like *The Idea of Phenomenology* and *Ideas I*.

⁴³ *Hua*. VI, 154; *Crisis*, 151–2.

⁴⁴ *Hua*. VI, 155; *Crisis*, 152.

world, the phenomenological reduction allows the philosopher to describe phenomena with scientific rigor by focusing on their manners of givenness and the eidetic laws that govern those manners of givenness.⁴⁵

Husserl also refers to the phenomenological reduction as the transcendental reduction, and it therefore makes sense to consider the transcendental character of Husserlian phenomenology alongside the method of the reduction.⁴⁶ Husserl appropriates the term transcendental from the Kantian tradition, although he expands its meaning. For Kant, transcendental philosophy investigates the conditions of the possibility of objectivity and discovers that judgments of reason, as synthetic *a priori* judgments, are justified only insofar as they are made about objects of possible experience. Husserl takes the idea of transcendental philosophy as focused on “the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge.”⁴⁷ Where Husserl departs from Kant is in claiming that the ultimate source of our knowledge is not judgments about objects of possible experience but rather experience itself. In other words, Husserl supplements Kant’s formal account of transcendental philosophy as the conditions of the possibility of legitimate judgments with a material account of transcendental phenomenology that includes transcendental *experience*.⁴⁸ Transcendental phenomenology examines objects as they are given to consciousness and as consciousness intends; the focus is on validity, rather than

⁴⁵ *Hua*. I, I. Meditation, esp. §§5–8.

⁴⁶ The nature of Husserl’s transcendental idealism is a complicated and sometimes controversial topic. For a brief overview, see Luft, “The Transcendental Dimension of Phenomenology” as well as “From Being to Givenness and Back,” Moran, *Edmund Husserl*, ch. 6, and Smith, 168–81.

⁴⁷ *Hua*. VI, 100; *Crisis*, 97.

⁴⁸ *Hua*. I, §12.

natural existence. Husserl also refers to the totality of manners of givenness of the object in terms of constitution: the object is constituted as valid when the relevant intentional relations are fulfilled.

The transcendental-phenomenological reduction's restriction of considering phenomena solely as given to consciousness, and consciousness solely as it constitutes other phenomena, is particularly important given three claims that Husserl makes. The first is his acknowledgment, especially with the ontological way to the reduction, that the natural world can inform transcendental investigation. Husserl focuses on the naturally given objects of experience within the lifeworld as guiding clues for intentional analysis. The goal of transcendental phenomenology is to inquire back from those natural experiences into the conditions of the possibility for those experiences, and thus to focus on the *a priori* correlation between the object qua given and the subject that intends that object. The reduction is crucial in order to avoid performing a *metabasis*, or making naturalistic assumptions about the givenness of objects. Although the natural attitude is a leading clue for intentional analysis, it is not itself the subject of that analysis, and it is essential to avoid making metaphysical assumptions about the existence of those objects outside of the context of the reduction.⁴⁹ Without the reduction, it is easy to slip from the phenomenological register into metaphysical claims. In fact, it is the failure

⁴⁹ This commitment to a metaphysical neutrality within the reduction does not imply that phenomenology has nothing to contribute to debates about metaphysics, but only that the prejudices of metaphysical realism must be suspended within the reduction. In fact, Zahavi argues that phenomenology can demonstrate the inadequacies of certain metaphysical theories; see *Husserl's Phenomenology*, 39–42 as well as 61–3.

to distinguish the phenomenological and metaphysical domains that led many of Husserl's contemporaries to an absolute idealist reading of Husserl's Cartesianism.

In the context of subjectivity, this mistake results in the belief that the transcendental ego is "absolute" in a metaphysical sense (like Berkeley). Because such an ego would be metaphysically prior to the world that it constitutes, it would be extraordinarily difficult to explain how such an ego could be affected by its world, and therefore such a conflation would be disastrous for an investigation into personhood.

Second, the phenomenological attitude includes all of the natural attitude.⁵⁰ However, it does so in a changed sense. If we ignore that changed sense, then we exceed the limits of phenomenology and instead engage in speculative metaphysics. Husserl specifies the legitimate limits of givenness in the phenomenological Principle of all Principles:

that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originary...offered *to us* in "intuition" is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, *but also* only within the limits in which it is presented there.⁵¹

If we apply the Principle of all Principles to the study of personhood, it becomes clear that we are only justified in making claims about personhood insofar as those claims are grounded in the way that personhood is given to consciousness. While the transcendental concept of personhood is intimately related to the world precisely because personhood is a concrete form of subjectivity, that relationship must be understood within the scope of the reduction on both the noetic and

⁵⁰ *Hua.* VI, 139; *Crisis*, 136. See also *Hua.* XXXIV, Texts Nr. 6 and Nr. 22.

⁵¹ *Hua.* III/1, 51; *Ideas I*, 44. I have reversed the italics and roman face from the original.

noematic sides. Sokolowski says that the person is an agent of truth; we might modify that saying to emphasize the transcendental nature of personhood by noting that the person is an agent of validity. The concept of personhood does not exclude the natural attitude, but acknowledges that objects within the natural attitude are grounded upon phenomenological modes of givenness that are intentionally correlated to a transcendental subject. Thus, the reduction is necessary for a study of transcendental personhood in order to focus on how the dimensions of the person manifest themselves in the life of consciousness. This study can include evidence from the constitutive activity of the person as well as his or her passive affectivity, but it cannot make claims about the nature of the person that are divorced from the experience of personhood.

The third reason why the reduction is important for the study of personhood involves the paradox of subjectivity. In the *Crisis*, Husserl notes that subjectivity has a seemingly paradoxical dual nature:

Universal intersubjectivity...can obviously be nothing other than mankind; and the latter is undeniably a component part of the world. How can a component part of the world, its human subjectivity, constitute the whole world...as its intentional formation?⁵²

In other words, one and the same person is both an entity in the mundane world and a transcendental subject. If we forget the confines of the reduction, it is easy to accidentally mundanize the transcendental aspects of subjectivity. This threat is especially acute for the concept of personhood, since the concrete aspects of subjectivity that are studied take their leading clues from natural phenomena such

⁵² *Hua*. VI, 183; *Crisis*, 179.

as instincts, felt values, and other persons. Thus, a focus on the sense that is given in reduced phenomena is essential to avoid naturalizing transcendental personhood.

C. Genetic Phenomenology

As Husserl's research into constitution deepens, he realizes that constitutional analysis requires a genetic dimension. Objects are not merely constituted as static entities; they also bear sedimented histories of meaning. Husserl writes that the a priori of correlation "can be displayed only in relativity, in an unfolding of horizons in which one soon realizes that unnoticed limitations, horizons which have not been felt, push us on to inquire into new correlations inseparably bound up with those already displayed."⁵³ For example, when I perceive a cultural artifact, I perceive not only the physical characteristics of the object but also its sedimented cultural meaning: thus, the intentional object of the Mona Lisa includes the significance of the portrait's smile within art history.

Husserl's initial description of constitution cannot account for the depth dimension of objects because it is limited to the static register. In *Ideas I*, Husserl explains constitution in terms of a matter-form schema: "Sensuous Data present themselves as stuffs for intensive formings, or sense-bestowings."⁵⁴ The intentional matter is organized, by transcendental subjectivity, into objects having a particular noematic sense (such as a spatial object), which in turn generates additional expectations for the object's manners of givenness (such as that the object will have a back side that I will see if I walk around it).

⁵³ *Hua.* VI, 162; *Crisis*, 159.

⁵⁴ *Hua.* III/1, 193; *Ideas I*, 204.

The above description of constitution is, however, limited because it does not explain *how* particular contents have come to be built up. The purpose of the matter-form schema of constitution is to explain that objects are constituted through the intentional activity of a subject, out of the “matter” of sensation and experience. However, the matter-form schema says nothing about how the sedimented meanings have accrued to the object. Consequently, the schema cannot clarify why, for instance, the smile of the Mona Lisa is significant while the smile in a family portrait is unremarkable. Sokolowski summarizes this problem by saying that “the basic difficulty, how it is possible for sense data to function in the constitution of meanings, will persist until Husserl looks at it under a new light in the context of genetic constitution.”⁵⁵

In order to overcome these limitations of the static matter-form schema, Husserl introduces a genetic phenomenological method. He writes,

it is a necessary task to establish the universal and primitive laws under which stands the formation of an apperception arising from a primordial apperception, and to derive systematically the possible formations, that is, to clarify every given structure according to its origin.⁵⁶

In other words, the matter-form schema—each object has an essential form to which the matter belongs and is thus constituted—is replaced by a genetic process, in which consciousness seeks to clarify the possible formations of a given apperception so as to determine the manifold of possible objects that it could intentionally fulfill or disappoint. Welton summarizes how genetic phenomenology grows out of the limitations of static phenomenology: “If static analysis gives us the

⁵⁵ Sokolowski, *Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution*, 65.

⁵⁶ *Hua*. XI, 339; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 627.

‘form’ of the structure of intentionality, genetic analysis is an effort to articulate this structure without presupposing that its form can be finally severed from its content.”⁵⁷

Because genetic phenomenology inquires into the past sedimented formations of meaning, Husserl realizes that he needs to expand the scope of phenomenology beyond the Principle of all Principles that regulated his static investigations. While refusing to compromise the descriptive character of phenomenology, he acknowledges that the genetic dimension cannot be made immediately evident in the same way as direct experience. Husserl describes genetic analysis in terms of “interpretation,” while maintaining that this interpretation is grounded on evidence in accordance with the dictum of phenomenology:

This is “*interpretation*,” but obviously not arbitrary [interpretation], but an *unfolding of an intentionality that can be evidently demonstrated*. Or rather, such unwinding is from the outset interpretation, and all intentional analysis, all self-understanding of consciousness that finds its expression in “*description*”, is *interpretation*.⁵⁸

In other words, genetic investigation provides an interpretation of sedimented phenomena by peeling back the layers of sedimentation in order to uncover and thus make evident the intentional activity responsible for the constitution of those layers. As Husserl argues, this interpretive dimension is present in all description, so

⁵⁷ Welton, 231.

⁵⁸ *Hua*. XXXIX, 2. “Das ist ‚*Interpretation*‘, aber offenbar nicht willkürliche, sondern *Auseinanderwicklung einer evident aufweisbaren Intentionalität*. Oder vielmehr, solche Aufwicklung ist von vornherein Interpretation; und alle Intentionalanalyse, allen Selbstverständigung des Bewusstseins, die in ‚*Deskription*‘ ihren Ausdruck findet, ist *Interpetation*.” Husserl’s acknowledgment of the necessary interpretive element in description is a tacit admission that the goal of phenomenology is not pure presuppositionlessness but rather interpreting correctly. Landgrebe discusses this realization on Husserl’s part in the context of the *Erste Philosophie* lectures; see Landgrebe, “Husserl’s Departure from Cartesianism.”

it would be an impossible burden to insist that phenomenology exercise all interpretation. Instead, the proper way to deal with the interpretive element of phenomenological description is to insist that such interpretation be founded upon intentional activity that can be made evident.

Genetic phenomenology is generally discussed in terms of the genesis of objects and the sedimentation of meaning, both of which occur on the noematic side of the correlation. However, one can also engage in genetic investigation on the noetic side. The genesis of the noetic side deals with how particular intentions are structured, on the basis of the constitutive history of the subject. Roughly speaking, the genetic investigation of noetic acts outlines the concept of personhood. Genetic phenomenology permits Husserl to discuss the passive motivational structure behind particular classes of intentional acts. Each transcendental subject, which Husserl refers to as a “monad,” is individuated by its own horizontal history:

But under the rubric “monad” we have had in mind the unity of its living becoming, of its history. But it also has its living present and it has become in this present, and directly continues in this becoming. It belongs to the nature of this present that, on the one hand, it is a primordially impressional present as the newly surging, actual moment of life having the shape, “impression”; on the other hand, as the heir to the past, so to speak, together with the impression, this present has its obscure backgrounds that can be illuminated; in every Now, the present carries its history as the horizon into which it can peer, which it can run through once more and, as it were, can live through once more in the shape of isolated or interrelated rememberings. It belongs to the nature of monadic being that every phase of its becoming has this structure with all the accompanying marvels.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ *Hua. XIV, 36; Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis, 637.* Because each monad is a unique unity, Husserl moves away from the eidetic language of his earlier phenomenology when describing transcendental subjectivity. Although he still mentions the method of eidetic variation in his research manuscripts, most of those discussions culminate in a dissatisfaction with the inability of the eidetic method to capture the individual nature of the *Ich*; see, for instance, A V 2, 12a, A V

The individuation of the monad through its constitutive history is the starting point for a phenomenological analysis of the transcendental person. The content of the person begins to emerge through the sedimentation of previous intentional acts; without this genetic dimension, the person would simply be a flat, non-horizonal subject uninfluenced by the past or future.

Husserl often speaks about genetic investigation in terms of a depth dimension of subjectivity, and the concept of personhood certainly begins at the depths of passive affection and worldly historicity. However, the depth dimension of personhood also reaches upwards, to include the levels of morality and culture. I will argue in chapters four and five that a genetic investigation makes possible an analysis of values and a rational critique of certain forms of culture. Thus, genetic investigation contributes to all the levels of personhood, from the lowest depths to the highest formations.

§4. Literature Review of Other Husserlian Accounts

Subjectivity has long been a favorite topic among phenomenologists, and the problem of personhood in particular has attracted attention over the last few years. This dissertation aims to contribute to this discussion by focusing on the concept of transcendental personhood as it emerges in Husserl's later work. This focus is justified for a number of reasons. First, the concept of personhood emphasizes several aspects of Husserl's thought that are commonly neglected in the non-specialist literature, such as the importance of intersubjectivity and the lifeworld,

10, 40b–42a, and E III 9, 8b. My reading of these passages is that Husserl uncovers many of the structures of selfhood (such as worldliness and embodiment) but cannot describe the genetic depth of that ego within the eidetic method. For more on the challenges of describing the *Ich* using the eidetic method, see Fonfara, 38.

the rejection of Cartesian assumptions about the subject, and the possibility of a phenomenological account of ethics. By bringing attention to these aspects of Husserl's thought, this dissertation can contribute to a more faithful picture of Husserl's philosophy.

Second, there is value in focusing on phenomenological problems from the perspective of a single author before attempting to synthesize the work of many philosophers on a given topic. This is particularly true for Husserl, whose philosophical insights have been taken in many different directions by subsequent phenomenologists. While other phenomenologists have succeeded in developing their own approaches that stem from Husserl's insights, focusing on how Husserl himself understood these problems provides a context in which to understand what the problem is, as well as how the problem relates to other philosophical issues.

There are several philosophers who have discussed the problem of personhood with a clear Husserlian influence. Husserl's contemporaries Max Scheler and Edith Stein both examine the concept of personhood in a phenomenological sense. Scheler's *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values* is obviously influenced by Husserl's work in ethics, especially his concept of vocation.⁶⁰ Stein's book *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person* draws heavily from Husserl's work on embodiment, intersubjectivity, and the intentional structure of consciousness.⁶¹ However, both of these accounts explicitly reject the *transcendental* character of personhood and therefore fail to faithfully maintain the limits imposed by the reduction.

⁶⁰ Scheler, ch. 6.

⁶¹ Stein; see in particular parts VI–VIII.

In contemporary scholarship, Robert Sokolowski and James G. Hart both have recently published significant works on personhood that draw from Husserl, and my approach is indebted to their work. Like Sokolowski argues in *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, I maintain that the concept of personhood has an essential moral dimension. I also agree with Sokolowski that the person is an “agent of truth” insofar as the person is driven by a teleology of reason, although I will modify this formulation in order to emphasize the dynamic character of the person.

This study also shares many similarities with the account of personhood developed by James G. Hart. Hart also claims that the person is best understood as a concrete form of subjectivity, and he emphasizes many elements of personhood that we will also focus on, including the role of vocation, intersubjectivity, and love. Hart’s discussion of the teleology of personhood is particularly noteworthy; although Hart’s discussion draws from a slightly different set of manuscripts than I will use in chapter six, his metaphor of the person as a teleological unity is one to which I am ultimately sympathetic.

Although Sokolowski and Hart have the two most comprehensive Husserlian studies of personhood, many other Husserl scholars refer to the idea of personhood. Roberta de Monticelli highlights the depth dimension of the person and the fact that the person must be constituted through his or her lived experiences.⁶² Hiroshi Goto emphasizes the function of habituality in the constitution of the person.⁶³ Hans Rainer Sepp uses the idea of an abiding personal style or character to explain how

⁶² de Monticelli, 70.

⁶³ Goto, esp. Kap. 2.

the various aspects of the person are unified over time.⁶⁴ Henning Peucker notes an evolution in Husserl's ethics manuscripts towards an ethics of the person, by which he means the ego with its affective tendencies, strivings, and other concrete dimensions.⁶⁵ Hanne Jacobs focuses specifically on Husserl's concept of a calling (what I call "vocation") as the organizing principle for the person.⁶⁶ In short, most of the aspects of personhood that will be treated in this dissertation have been identified by Husserl scholars in some form.

In order to advance the state of the literature, this dissertation will go beyond the current accounts of Husserlian personhood in several ways. First, no existing account provides a satisfactory explanation of the *unity* of the person. The dimensions of personhood are considered in isolation or are linked in a perfunctory manner. By organizing the dimensions of personhood according to the distinctions of passive and active constitution as well as the noetic and noematic sides of the correlation, this dissertation provides a structure for systematically identifying the dimensions of personhood. In addition, the notion of the person as an entelechy of manifestation will advance the literature by both synthesizing the dimensions of personhood and establishing *how* the dimensions of personhood are unified, viz., by a teleology of reason.

Second, this dissertation will emphasize the *transcendental* character of Husserl's concept of personhood. Most of the existing accounts of personhood only mention the transcendental dimension in passing, and as a result the concept of

⁶⁴ Sepp, esp. 42–6.

⁶⁵ Peucker, "From Logic to the Person," 319.

⁶⁶ Jacobs, 354.

personhood is occasionally used in a mundane sense.⁶⁷ When this *metabasis* occurs, the first person perspective that is constitutive of personhood is lost and the limits imposed by the reduction are transgressed because naturalistic descriptions are taken uncritically, without the qualification “as given to consciousness.”

The tendency of the existing literature on personhood to slip from the transcendental register to the mundane register is exacerbated by Husserl’s own use of the term person. Because Husserl never finished articulating the concept of personhood, his writings often include uncritical uses of the term in its everyday significance, and he does not always distinguish this usage from the pregnant sense of personhood that is the focus of this dissertation. This equivocation by Husserl is often reflected in the work of Husserl scholars, who recognize that Husserl identifies the person as an important philosophical issue but do not attempt to distinguish the technical meaning of the term from its everyday use.

The difficulty of avoiding this equivocation becomes clear when one realizes that even Husserl scholars who take seriously the transcendental character of Husserl’s phenomenology conflate the transcendental sense of personhood with the natural category of the person. Two examples from leading Husserl researchers will demonstrate this difficulty. The first is David Carr, who raises the topic of the person

⁶⁷ A notable exception can be found in Luft, “Husserl’s Concept of the Transcendental Person.” Luft argues that the transcendental person evolved, in part, as a response to Heidegger’s criticism that the transcendental ego was too abstract to account for the concrete aspects of subjectivity. Husserl’s goal was to retain the transcendental character of subjectivity—he felt that *Dasein* failed to do so and thus was an anthropological concept rather than philosophical—while responding to this critique. This reading of Husserl is central to the thesis of this dissertation, although I will be focused on the concept of personhood systematically rather than historically.

in the context of the paradox of subjectivity. For Carr, one of the crucial questions of transcendental philosophy is the relation between transcendental subjectivity—the unity of apperception in Kant or the transcendental ego in Husserl—and the mundane subject that is part of the world, rather than a condition of possibility of the world. Carr’s use of the term “person” tends to place the person on the mundane side of the paradox. He says of the transcendental I that “The ‘I’ in this relation is not the ‘I’ of personal identity that distinguishes me from other persons, but the ‘I’ of subjectivity which distinguishes me from everything else, the world as a whole.”⁶⁸

A second example comes from Dan Zahavi, who has one of the most developed articulations of a Husserlian account of consciousness in the literature and emphasizes the necessity for a transcendental dimension of consciousness. He explains, “If we wish to truly understand what physical objects are, we will eventually have to turn to the subjectivity that experiences those objects, for it is only there that they show themselves as what they are.”⁶⁹ Zahavi also emphasizes the role of the world and the intersubjective community in transcendental analysis, noting that “the constitutive process occurs in a threefold structure, *subjectivity-intersubjectivity-world*.”⁷⁰ Yet despite this awareness of Husserl’s concrete transcendental analysis, Zahavi does not recognize that this threefold structure is part of the teleology of personhood. Instead, Zahavi places the concept of person on the mundane side of the transcendental/empirical distinction. He writes that mundane self-awareness can be experienced in two ways: “in a *personalistic* attitude

⁶⁸ Carr, “Transcendental and Empirical Subjectivity,” 183; see also Carr, *The Paradox of Subjectivity*, esp. ch. 3.

⁶⁹ Zahavi, *Husserl’s Phenomenology*, 52.

⁷⁰ Zahavi, *Husserl’s Phenomenology*, 76.

where I appear to myself as one subject among many, that is, as a person or human being” or in a *naturalistic* attitude in which I am a causally determined thing.⁷¹

The mundane discussion of personhood in both Carr and Zahavi clearly echoes Husserl’s own discussion of the personalistic attitude in *Ideas II*. Because the Husserl of *Ideas II* had not yet worked out his genetic method, he had no way to discuss the depth dimension of subjectivity without abandoning the first-person perspective that is characteristic of phenomenology. By developing an explicitly transcendental account of personhood, therefore, this dissertation will restore the “view from within” to the concept of personhood.

Because the mundane interpretation of personhood is very common even among Husserl scholars, a third advance offered by this dissertation is a corrective to this misreading. By concentrating on Husserl’s later works, in which he had worked out the genetic method to adequately investigate the depth dimensions of consciousness, we can rectify the erroneous or misleading representations of personhood that are limited by Husserl’s pre-genetic method.

§5. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation will contain six chapters. This first chapter has laid out the problem of personhood within Husserlian phenomenology and has shown how the project of the dissertation fits within the existing literature.

The next two chapters will establish the pre-personal structures of subjectivity that make possible the full concept of personhood. The second chapter will focus on the genetic structure of subjectivity itself, through the concepts of

⁷¹ Zahavi, *Self-Awareness and Alterity*, 157.

instincts and habits; I will show how subjectivity begins to individuate (or personalize) itself through its passive affections and the sedimentation of those affections into habits. The third chapter will examine the noematic counterpart to the depth dimension of subjectivity; I will explicate several of the senses of world in Husserl in order to establish the horizontal character of transcendental subjectivity and to indicate how subjectivity is itself shaped by its horizon.

Chapters four and five will begin examining the terrain of personhood itself. In chapter four, I will use the concept of vocation as a leading clue for personhood, since it is with the emergence of a vocation that subjectivity reflectively endorses its unique orientation to the world in which it lives. Since a vocation represents one's personal calling, the phenomenological structure of vocation gives several clues to understanding personhood in general. The fifth chapter will again examine the world in which a person lives, but this time from the context of the intersubjective community. Husserl is clear that transcendental subjectivity cannot be solipsistic, and he refers to an ethical community as a "personality of a higher order." He introduces the concept of a *Liebesgemeinschaft* in order to capture the harmony between individuals within a genuine community, and this concept is useful in examining how vocations are united and rationally critiqued without abandoning the personalism of Husserl's ethics for an impersonal ethics of the highest good.

Lastly, the sixth chapter will demonstrate that these four facets of personhood—passive affection, worldliness, vocation, and community—are in fact united by means of a teleology of reason. I will defend the description of the person as an entelechy of manifestation and will explain how personhood contains an inner

teleology that links the lowest levels of passive striving to the highest regulative ideal of an ultimate synthesis of reason.

Before jumping into Husserl's discussion of personhood, it is necessary to say a few words about the choice of texts for this dissertation. Husserl's philosophy was in a constant state of development, and his research manuscripts reveal that he never came up with a final answer on several of the central questions in his phenomenology, including the problems of intersubjectivity, the lifeworld, and ethics. Unsurprisingly, his theory of personhood is likewise incomplete, and parts of the theory are scattered throughout his texts, lecture courses, and manuscripts. As a result, it is necessary to draw from Husserl's *Nachlaß* as well as his published works in order to reconstruct his concept of personhood. To make this dissertation manageable, I will concentrate on a couple of main texts for each topic, rather than attempting to survey the entirety of his research. My focus will be on texts from 1917 and later. This date is significant for two reasons. First, in 1917 Husserl first delivered his lectures on Fichte's ideal of humanity (now published in *Hua*. XXVII), which were extremely influential on his later personalistic ethics and inaugurate a more personalistic bent in his conception of phenomenology writ large.⁷² Second, it was around this time that Husserl's genetic method came to fruition, and the clarification of the genetic method in turn made possible a number of phenomenological studies that were too superficial or incomplete in earlier attempts.⁷³ As I have argued in the earlier part of this chapter, the concept of

⁷² Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, 218.

⁷³ While Husserl's manuscripts indicate that he began working on genetic problems extremely early in his career, his 1917/18 Bernau manuscripts on time (now

personhood in particular requires a genetic phenomenological investigation, and hence it makes sense to focus on his discussions after this time period.⁷⁴

published in *Hua*. XXXIII) are the first sustained genetic investigation; see Bernet, "Husserl's New Phenomenology of Time Consciousness," 16. Husserl's 1920/21 winter semester lectures on passive synthesis (now published in *Hua*. XI) are also a significant milestone, since these lectures develop the genetic *method* at length.

⁷⁴ Because this dissertation will focus on Husserl's genetic writings, the discussion of personhood in *Ideas II* will be set aside. In *Ideas II*, it is obvious that Husserl struggled to articulate the constitutive function of the person in terms of its concrete dimensions (e.g., body and sociality) precisely because he had no genetic method to explain how past intentional acts could be sedimented and exert a passive constitutive function. In addition, *Ideas II* is a problematic text for Husserl scholars in general; it is often unclear when Husserl is describing natural phenomena and when he has performed the reduction. For a more detailed look at the place of *Ideas II* in Husserl's corpus, see Nenon and Embree, *Issues in Husserl's Ideas II*, as well as the discussion of the personalistic attitude in de Boer, 391–6.

Chapter 2. Instincts and Habits in the Person

I say that habit's but long practice, friend,
And this becomes men's nature in the end.
—*Evenus*

The overall thesis of this dissertation is that Husserl's transcendental concept of personhood unifies several different concrete aspects of subjectivity. The concretion of subjectivity into personhood in fact begins at the pre-personal level of passive intentionality and affective capacities. Thus, this chapter will use Husserl's concepts of instincts [*Instinkte*] and drives [*Triebe*] as guiding clues for how subjectivity begins to "thicken" itself in the passive dimension.

The first section of this chapter (§6) will briefly motivate Husserl's interest in the concrete aspects of subjectivity by explaining how Husserl himself saw a lacuna in his earlier accounts of the transcendental ego and how he developed the ontological way to the reduction in order to address this concern. The second section (§7) will use the ontological way in order to clarify the transcendental sense of instincts in Husserl's philosophy. I will defend the interpretation that instincts in the transcendental sense are a motivated form of intentionality within the passive dimension. The third section (§8) will explore the structure of transcendental consciousness that makes such passive constitution possible and will demonstrate how transcendental subjectivity can be affected by its past constitutive activity. The fourth section (§9) will indicate how the instincts can become sedimented into habits of subjectivity. Finally, the last section (§10) will situate the instincts in the overall account of personhood by explaining the teleological function of instincts.

§6. Revealing Instincts through the Ontological Way

This chapter will demonstrate that Husserl's concept of personhood is grounded in the passive sphere of instincts and habits, and that the passive dimension thus provides a foundation for the development of the person. In order to investigate the role of instincts in Husserl's concept of personhood, it is first necessary to clarify how instincts can be given—i.e., experienced—phenomenologically. As we saw in the first chapter, Husserlian phenomenology performs the reduction in order to analyze how objects are given to consciousness. This section will explain how it is possible for instincts to be given to consciousness within the context of the reduction by describing Husserl's so-called "ontological way" to the reduction.

Husserl's ontological way to the reduction is usually contrasted with his "Cartesian" way, which is the dominant presentation through his earlier works. Introduced in *The Idea of Phenomenology* and culminating in the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl explains that one performs the reduction in order to isolate the objects intended in consciousness and to consider them solely as intended. This initial presentation of the reduction is explicitly modeled after Descartes' procedure of radical doubt. While Husserl does not doubt the existence of the external world, like Descartes does, he does argue that the ego has an apodictic status because it is intentionally correlated to any possible object in the external world and thus cannot be thought away. As a result, Husserl argues that the reduction brings the ego to the fore: "The epoché can also be said to be the radical and universal method by which I

apprehend myself purely: as Ego, and with my own pure conscious life, in and by which the entire Objective world exists for me and is precisely as it is for me.”¹

While Husserl never renounces the essential role of subjectivity in constitution, he realizes that the Cartesian metaphors are liable to misinterpretation. The biggest misinterpretation stems from the priority that phenomenology places on subjectivity. Husserl writes, ambiguously,

Thus the being of the pure ego and his *cogitationes*, as a being that is prior in itself, is antecedent to the natural being of the world....Natural being is a realm whose existential status is secondary; it continually presupposes the realm of transcendental being.²

In light of Husserl’s *oeuvre*, it is clear that he means that the transcendental ego enjoys a *constitutional* priority over natural being insofar as any natural being can only be given in correlation to transcendental subjectivity. However, many people misinterpret Husserl to be saying that the transcendental ego has an *ontological* priority over natural being.³ This is the root of the misunderstanding that Husserl is an absolute idealist.

This misreading is particularly problematic for the concept of personhood. If the transcendental ego were ontologically prior to the world that it constitutes, then it is hard to see how the *person*—as a concrete, worldly description of transcendental subjectivity—could be possible, because the person’s constitutive activity would be ontologically independent from the surrounding world and the

¹ *Hua. I*, 60; *Cartesian Meditations*, 21.

² *Hua. I*, 61; *Cartesian Meditations*, 21.

³ For examples of this misinterpretation, see Crowell, “Heidegger and Husserl,” 61, as well as de Boer, esp. the description of absolute consciousness in Part 3, ch. 1.

intersubjective community. If transcendental subjectivity is ontologically prior to the world, then there could be no worldly “depth” to that subjectivity.

Husserl himself recognized this shortcoming of the Cartesian metaphor. As he writes in the *Crisis*,

The much shorter way to the transcendental epochē in my [*Ideas I*], which I call the “Cartesian way” ...has a great shortcoming: while it leads to the transcendental ego in one leap, as it were, it brings this ego into view as apparently empty of content.⁴

The solution to the apparent vacuousness of the transcendental ego is to explicitly describe the content of subjectivity within the reduction. Therefore, Husserl argues that phenomenology demands “a thoroughly intuitively disclosing method” in order to investigate the transcendental dimension, including its subjective (noetic) side.⁵

In brief, Husserl’s final path to the reduction—what he calls the *ontological* way—emphasizes the correlation between constituting subjectivity and the constituted world. Under the Cartesian way, the epoché suspended the existence of the world in order to reveal the constitutional priority of (transcendental) subjectivity. Like the Cartesian way, the ontological way to the reduction performs an epoché that suspends the belief in the natural existence of objects in the world. However, rather than focusing on what is not worldly (i.e., transcendental subjectivity), as the Cartesian way does, the ontological way uses this suspension to shift interest from the objects themselves to how those objects are given to

⁴ *Hua*. VI, 157–8; *Crisis*, 155.

⁵ *Hua*. VI, 118; *Crisis*, 115.

subjectivity. As Husserl writes, “let us establish a consistent universal interest in the ‘how’ of the manners of givenness.”⁶

By focusing on how objects are given to consciousness, the ontological way to the reduction makes thematic “the absolute correlation between beings of every sort and every meaning, on the one hand, and absolute subjectivity, as constituting meaning and ontic validity in this broadest manner, on the other hand.”⁷ In other words, the ontological way focuses on the *correlation* between subjectivity and world, which rectifies the misinterpretation of the Cartesian way as a one-sided focus on subjectivity. As Kern explains, the ontological way “overcomes the one-sidedness (abstractness) of positive ontological knowledge and views the ontological a priori in its correlation to subjectivity.”⁸ Kern emphasizes that this approach avoids the suggestion that the world is lost in the reduction, writing, “This change of attitude is *not a loss* of any kind of positivity; on the contrary, it is a *gain*, a ‘widening,’ since now positivity is seen in its correlation to subjectivity.”⁹ Rather than suspending the world, the epoché now functions to prevent a *metabasis*—a shift—between empirical and transcendental concepts.¹⁰

Because the ontological way emphasizes the correlation between subjectivity and world, it becomes impossible to think of a worldless, independent subjectivity within the transcendental register. In fact, the ontological way reveals that there is a

⁶ *Hua.* VI, 147; *Crisis*, 144.

⁷ *Hua.* VI, 154; *Crisis* 151–2.

⁸ Kern, “The Three Ways,” 137. In part this emphasis on the correlation was a response to Heidegger’s focus on the “being of beings”; see *Hua.* XXXIV, Beilage XV as well as Text Nr. 17.

⁹ Kern, “The Three Ways,” 137.

¹⁰ Kern, “The Three Ways,” 143.

dialectical relationship between subject and world such that neither one is unaffected by the other. Both the Cartesian way and the ontological way agree that subjectivity constitutes the world, but the ontological way goes beyond the Cartesian way in making clear how the world constitutively affects subjectivity. The specific mechanisms of these affections (such as the worldly horizon and the homeworld) will be discussed in chapter three. What is relevant for this chapter is that subjectivity can be affected by the world. It is this affection that begins to reveal the concrete dimensions of the subject. A transcendental description of the concretion of the subject will rectify Husserl's worry about the emptiness of transcendental subjectivity, and at the same time will form the foundation for the development of the transcendental *person*.

The articulation of the new, ontological way to the reduction opens the door to a new set of phenomenological problems, viz., problems dealing with the relationship between transcendental subjectivity and its intentional objects and horizons. This locus is at the heart of the problem of personhood. The first step towards a phenomenology of personhood, therefore, is the recognition that transcendental subjectivity must be intuitively disclosed through its intentional correlations to the world. In investigating these intentional correlations, Husserl recognizes that a genetic approach can be applied to the subjective side of the correlation as well as the objective side: "It is through genesis that we will be able to

understand their [i.e., the monads'] process of becoming from out of the constitutive founding levels."¹¹

What the concept of instincts will show is that the constitutive founding levels of the person begin in the passive sphere. By investigating the genesis of transcendental subjectivity and its concretion through passive sedimentation and habituation, Husserl shows that there is a "depth" to the transcendental subject.¹² This depth dimension is essential to a phenomenology of personhood for two reasons. First, the concretion of subjectivity into a full person begins at the passive level, with the instinctive, affective, and habitual "activity" of the person. As instincts become sedimented into habits, new constitutive possibilities emerge for the subject while others recede in prominence. Thus, the depth dimension of subjectivity is where the subject begins to become individuated and concrete—or personalized. Not only does this dimension begin the individuation of the transcendental person, but it also establishes the foundation from which the higher-order aspects of the person, such as vocation and community, will emerge.

Second, the depth dimension serves as a foundation for the unity of the person. As the final chapter will show, there is a teleological unity running through all the levels of personhood, stretching from instincts and affectivity on the lowest level up towards the concept of God as a highest, regulative ideal. I will argue that

¹¹ *Hua*. XIV, 38; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 640. In a homage to Leibniz, Husserl uses the term "monad" to describe the life of the subject in more detail than permitted by the term "ego." As I will show in the later chapters, there is a close affinity between Husserl's concept of the monad and his concept of the person.

¹² Husserl introduces the language of the depth dimension most notably in *Hua*. VI, §32.

the intentional motivation behind the teleology of the person is founded in the depth dimension. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the depth dimension of transcendental subjectivity in order to account for the teleology of the person.

§7. The Transcendental Function of Instincts

With the ontological way to the reduction, phenomenologists can investigate phenomena by using natural experience as a leading clue for investigation. This seems to be how Husserl approaches the topic of instincts. As his manuscripts show, Husserl himself had at least a cursory awareness of the psychological understanding of instincts as a subconscious response to a particular stimulus.¹³ Husserl gives examples of instincts towards self-preservation or towards preservation of the species.¹⁴ Examples of these instincts include the hunger instinct, which motivates one to seek food, and the sexual drive, which encourages one to procreate and thus preserve the species. While most examples of instincts are solitary, Husserl mentions some instincts of sociality as well. The most obvious example is the drive of the mother,¹⁵ but he also mentions “social-sympathetic drives.”¹⁶ In some passages, Husserl even suggests that instincts come out of a person’s life with

¹³ In addition to the texts that will be cited further in this chapter, Bernet notes that Husserl was aware of many topics in then-current psychology; indeed, both Husserl and Freud learned psychology from Brentano; see Bernet, “Unconscious Consciousness in Husserl and Freud,” 201. Contemporary psychology has obviously developed beyond the psychology of Husserl’s day, but the advances are not important for Husserl’s concept of instincts since he uses the natural phenomena simply as a leading clue. For more on the relationship between phenomenology and contemporary psychology, see Gallagher and Zahavi.

¹⁴ E III 10, 8, quoted in Lee, 80: “Die animalischen, die allgemein-‘vitalen’ Triebe, die spezifischen Instinkte, Triebe der ontogenetischen Selbsterhaltung und der physiologischen, der Gattungserhaltung.”

¹⁵ “Universal Teleology,” 336.

¹⁶ B I 21, 4a: “sozial-sympathetische Triebe.”

others.¹⁷ Given the diversity of instincts discussed by Husserl, the key question is: what does it mean to consider instincts in the context of phenomenology?

Articulating Husserl's answer to this question is complicated by the fact that Husserl's manuscripts dealing with instincts are exploratory rather than finished.¹⁸ What is clear from Husserl's writings is that there is a significant difference between the natural psychological concept of instincts and the transcendental concept.

Husserl writes,

Transcendental instincts. Of course, this psychological concept of the instinct (the primordial drives and the newly emerged drives of a higher level), which is supposed to be innate in the individual soul and in the psychic connection—[this psychological concept] is a constituted formation and belongs to the constituted world. In contrast, transcendental research leads to the problem of a transcendental genesis, to which the transcendental instincts belong, as fundamental concepts of transcendental teleology.¹⁹

¹⁷ A V 24, 30, quoted in Lee, 153: "Die Instinkte des voll reifen Menschen sind schon aus seinem eigenen Leben und mittelbar aus den für ihn einfühlungsmäßig mitdaseienden Menschen her und ihrem Leben enthüllte Instinkte."

¹⁸ Although the concept of "drives" in the sense of instincts appears as early as Husserl's *Ideas* phase (e.g., *Hua.* III/1, 192; *Ideas I*, 203, *Hua.* IV, 334; *Ideas II*, 346, see also Eng, 67–9), and Husserl's early lectures on *Aufmerksamkeit* (published in *Hua.* XXXVIII) are clear antecedents to the concept of instincts, the topic of instincts and drives remains inchoate until Husserl's genetic phase.

¹⁹ E III 9, 6b, quoted in Lee, 75: "Transzendente Instinkte. Natürlich ist dieser psychologische Begriff des Instinktes (die Urtriebe und die neu durchbrochenen Triebe höherer Stufe), der eingeboren sein soll der einzelnen Seele und der unter seelischen Verbundenheit – ein konstituiertes Gebilde und gehört zur konstituierten Welt. Demgegenüber führt die transzendente Forshung auf die Problem einer transzendentalen Genesis, zu der die transzendentalen Instinke gehören, als Grundbegriffe der transzendentalen Teleologie." Husserl's understanding of instincts, including in the transcendental dimension, bears obvious similarities to the contemporary psychological accounts of his day (such as the Freudian model). What this quote highlights is that the psychological account of instincts as a drive towards something is constituted; the specific manifestation of the instincts is a product of the correlation between subject and object, and the way that the subject is intentionally directed towards the object. This phenomenological understanding of instincts thus sidesteps many of naturalistic questions about instincts, such as whether they are hardwired into us via organisms or whether they are socially

Husserl's main emphasis in this passage is that the psychological concept of instincts belongs to the constituted world. The contrast that Husserl apparently intends to suggest is that instincts in the transcendental sense have a role to play in the constitution *of* the world and of the subject's instincts (in the sense of the natural attitude). This makes sense in light of our argument from the first chapter that Husserl uses the term "transcendental" to capture the constituting dimension of subjective experience. As we shall see, the way that transcendental instincts contribute to the problem of constitution is through the genesis of objects and transcendental subjectivity itself.

Given this claim, we can attempt to phenomenologically reconstruct Husserl's concept of the transcendental instinct. If we start from the natural concept of an instinct, we observe that the subject responds to a particular kind of object in a certain way. Specifically, the subject experiences a stimulus because of some feature of the object in question, and that stimulus draws the attention of the subject towards the object. Let us take this simple description of instincts (in the psychological sense) and apply the phenomenological method. By performing the reduction, we bracket questions about the existence or non-existence of the stimulus object; what we notice instead is the correlation between an intentional object (or noema) having certain characteristics and the (transcendental) subject that experiences the instinctive response in question. This correlation can be described from either side: in Husserl's words, "What from the side of the hyletic

constructed. For Husserl, the key question is how objects can give themselves at a passive level, and the way that this givenness can be shaped by the constitutive background of the subject gives rise to the idea of habituation that we will develop below.

data is called the affection of the ego is from the side of the ego called tending, striving towards.”²⁰ Because instincts are a way in which the ego can be affected, instincts appear as a mode of the correlation between transcendental subject and intentional object.

Further, we observe that the subject’s intentional activity is directed towards the noema by virtue of some feature of that object. One of Husserl’s examples of instinctively being directed is the case of hunger. In phenomenological terms, hunger is given as a desire for food. The hunger instinct, as Husserl describes it, is thus a way by which the subject’s attention is directed towards food objects. More specifically, there is something about the hyletic data that signals to the subject that this noema is appetizing, nourishing, etc. In other words, the “how” of how the stimulus-noema is given to the subject is through the instinct: the instinct is the form of intentionality through which the subject’s attention is called to the noema. Each instinct is specific to a particular kind of stimulus-noema; the hunger instinct causes the subject to respond to a food-noema but not, for instance, to the noema of another person’s body. As Husserl explains, there are “determined ways of striving that are originally, ‘instinctively’ one with [their] hyletic complement.”²¹ To use the language of phenomenology, the instinct is correlated with the appropriate hyletic

²⁰ B III 3, 3a, translated in Mensch, “Instincts,” 223.

²¹ E III 9, 23b, translated in Mensch, “Instincts,” 223. The claim that specific ways of striving are linked, at a passive level, with their hyletic complements must be put alongside Husserl’s arguments that the instincts and habits can develop and sediment in different ways, which means that there can be differing responses to the same object based on factors like a person’s culture. For instance, the hunger drive might not identify pork as a potential food object for a practicing Muslim because he or she has been habituated to not regard pork as a substance to be consumed.

data and thus *constitutes* the stimulus-noema as the kind of object for which the instinct in question is appropriate.

In addition, we notice that the instinct can focus the attention of the subject even if the subject was not consciously directing himself or herself towards the noematic object in question. In other words, instinctive intentionality can occur below the level of conscious deliberation. A subject does not need to be actively intending a food-object in order for the food-hyle to be salient; the food-object can become the focal point for the subject's intentions even in the absence of his or her voluntary intentional activity (as in the case of a person who suddenly notices the smell of freshly baked bread).

In short, the interpretation I wish to defend is that transcendental instincts, or instincts in the constitutive sense, are motivated intentional experiences in the passive sphere. The remainder of this section will develop this interpretation by elucidating the relevant aspects of Husserl's theory of passive constitution and using the instincts as an example of how such constitution functions.

For Husserl, passive constitution stands in opposition to active constitution. Husserl describes activity as "the active position-takings of the ego, the active decisions, convictions, letting oneself be convinced, and taking sides, etc., and finally the activity of conviction in the broadest sense."²² By contrast, passivity occurs when the ego is not actively directing its position-takings or interests. Activity and passivity form a spectrum; while most actions in the life of consciousness have degrees of egoic involvement, they can nonetheless still be referred to as "passive" if

²² *Hua. XI, 52; Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis, 92.*

the motivation for attending to the object comes primarily from the object rather than from an explicit decision by the subject. Likewise, Husserl will sometimes refer to passive “acts” in order to avoid circuitous locutions. In these cases, it is important to remember that passive acts are not directed by the ego in the same way as acts *simpliciter*; the “act” can be attributed to the ego only insofar as the ego is brought to experience the intentional correlation that the act represents because the ego is affected by the intentional object.

Because the ego is not directing the experience in passive constitution, the impetus for the intentional experience must come primarily from the side of the object. Husserl describes how an object can attract the attention of a subject with the concept of an “affective allure” [*affektiven Reiz*]. He writes,

What is constituted for consciousness exists for the ego only insofar as it affects me, the ego. Any kind of constituted sense is pregiven insofar as it exercises an affective allure, it is given insofar as the ego complies with the allure and has turned toward it attentively, laying hold of it. These are fundamental forms of the way in which something becomes an object.²³

As objects exert an affective allure upon the ego, the object emerges from the unthematic background of consciousness and becomes thematic for the ego. The object can subsequently be intended by the ego in an active intentional relation. This notion of an affective allure explains how instincts can be responsive to objects even if the subject is not actively intending the object in question. As Husserl explains, “we thus ascribe to every constituted, prominent datum that is for itself an affective allure [acting] on the ego.”²⁴

²³ *Hua. XI*, 162; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 210.

²⁴ *Hua. XI*, 163; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 211.

Husserl emphasizes that the object of instinctive intentionality need not be immediately present to consciousness. He contrasts instincts with explicit desires, writing,

One could say: the desire (the wish) is explicitly directed; the instinctive drive is implicitly directed. The unclear, drive-like wish is explicitly directed, but through an unclear presentation; the drive [is directed] through an implicit presentation.²⁵

The contrast with a deliberate intentional act, such as a desire or a wish, highlights that the object of a passive intentional “act” can *become* present in the intentional relationship. In active constitution, the object that is intended by the subject is already thematic to consciousness prior to the intentional activity of the subject. When analyzing the intentional structure of instincts, however, the object that is intended is implicit; it is not necessarily presented to the subject until after the instinct is experienced. In other words, the object is not present to consciousness ahead of time but rather becomes presented by virtue of the instinct.

The fact that instincts can present objects to consciousness supports our earlier claim that instincts have a role to play in constitution. For Husserl, this aspect of instincts comes to the fore in describing the objectifying function of instincts. In his manuscripts, Husserl suggests that there is an “objectifying instinct” that is responsible for constituting the matter of sensation into an object.²⁶ In other words, the very formation of sensuous *hyle* into a unified experience of an object is attributed to the objectifying instinct.

²⁵ B I 21, 5a: “Man könnte sagen: Die Begierde (der Wunsch) ist explizit gerichtet, der instinktiv Trieb ist implizit gerichtet. Der dunkle, triebähliche Wunsch ist explizit gerichtet, aber durch eine dunkle Vorstellung, der Trieb durch eine implizite Vorstellung.”

²⁶ *Hua. Mat.* VIII, 258.

The idea behind objectifying instincts is that there needs to be a mechanism by which unthematic sensations can become thematized as an object of experience. The affective allure explains how particular sensations can attract the attention of consciousness, but it does not explain how consciousness can subsequently coalesce the sensations into an object of experience. This lacuna is filled by the objectifying instinct. As Mensch explains, "To attain a thematic object, something more than simply being affected must occur....The [objectifying] drive seeks to make object 'sense' of the data."²⁷ In other words, the instinct constitutes the hyle into an object with a noematic sense.

The concept of objectivating instincts explains Husserl's claim that the instincts intend through an unclear or implicit presentation. Normally, constitution is directed towards an intentional object. However, the objectivating instinct is precisely what forms the intentional object *as* an object. Hence, the intentional object cannot be presented to consciousness immediately; it is a product or a *terminus ad quem* of the objectivating instinct. Since the instinct does not have an object before it initially, Husserl sometimes speaks of the instincts as "blind" [*blinde*].²⁸

Of course, instinctive striving can continue after the object has become thematized. The affective allure of the object continues to pull on the ego by motivating the ego to seek further fulfillments of the object. Husserl explains,

By affection we understand the allure given to consciousness, the peculiar pull that an object given to consciousness exercises on the ego; it is a pull that is relaxed when the ego turns toward it attentively, and progresses from

²⁷ Mensch, "Instincts," 223.

²⁸ See, e.g., B I 21, 5a.

here, striving toward self-giving intuition, disclosing more and more of the self of the object, thus, striving toward an acquisition of knowledge, toward a more precise view of the object.²⁹

In other words, the affective allure of an object pulls the ego to constitute the object more fully, by motivating the fuller disclosure of the object's adumbrations and apperceptions. What is important is that it is the affective allure of the object—and not necessarily the deliberate activity of the subject—that motivates the subject's attention towards the object. The motivation for the intentional activity comes from the side of the object, which is why instinctive intentionality belongs to the domain of passive constitution.

The interpretation of the instinct as motivated intentional activity in the passive sphere, especially in the case of the objectifying instinct, explains Husserl's implication that there is a transcendental function to instincts. As we stated in the first chapter, transcendental philosophy according to Husserl deals with the *a priori* correlation between constituting subjectivity and the objects to which it is correlated. Within the reduction, an instinct (in the transcendental sense) is a way in which that correlation can be exhibited.

§8. The Passive Concretion of Subjectivity

By examining the transcendental function of instincts, the previous section demonstrated that there is a passive dimension to constitution. Because of the correlation, we can investigate how transcendental subjectivity must be structured in order to make such constitution possible. This section will show that, because passive constitution is driven by association, consciousness must have its own

²⁹ *Hua*. XI, 148–9; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 196.

background in which objects become thematic. It will turn out that this background is a temporal horizon in which past constitutive activity and future constitutive possibilities can influence subjectivity. The temporal extension of consciousness not only makes possible the passive synthesis demonstrated in transcendental instincts but also allows us to explain how the instincts, in their passive constitution of experience, can individuate and concretize the transcendental subject through the formation of abiding habits.

We have seen that objects can passively attract the attention of subjectivity through their affective allure, and that the subject can instinctively constitute the hyletic data into an object for future intentional activity. Husserl describes this passive intentional constitution in terms of synthesis: “At the outset we also want to name the synthesis in which this [passive] intention arises: associative synthesis.”³⁰ In other words, passive constitution involves synthesizing different pieces of hyletic data into the sense of a single object, which is the noema of the passive intention.

The most important kind of synthesis within the passive dimension, according to Husserl, is the synthesis of association. He remarks, “Association is primarily a passivity and ‘laws’ of association are primarily *the essential laws of passive intentionality* and of their interconnection, by virtue of which they constitute themselves as passive intentional unities.”³¹ Consciousness passively synthesizes objects by associating individual sensations with each other; for instance, the

³⁰ *Hua. XI, 76; Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis, 119.*

³¹ A VI 34, 7; quoted in Lee, 34: “Assoziation ist zunächst eine Passivität und ‚Gesetze‘ der Assoziation sind zunächst *die Wesensgesetze der passiven Intentionalität* und ihrer Verflechtung, vermöge deren passive intentionale Einheiten sich konstituieren.” For further details on Husserl’s account of association, see Holenstein as well as Kühn.

individual smell sensations of food hyle are unified into a meaningful experience of a pleasant smelling food-noema.

As Bloechl notes, “it is clear that the genesis of the *object*, as a distinct unity present in consciousness, is indissociable from the genesis of the *subject*, as that which is conscious of the object here and now.”³² For Husserl, the ability of consciousness to synthesize individual sensations into an object stems from the fact that consciousness itself is temporally extended. Rather than existing through a discrete series of Now-instants, consciousness retains what it has just experienced and reaches towards the future in expectation of what will be experienced.³³ Indeed, this temporality is an essential condition of consciousness: Husserl writes, “consciousness is inconceivable without retentional and protentional horizons, without a co-consciousness...of the past of consciousness and an anticipation of an approaching consciousness.”³⁴ If I did not have retentions of the immediate past, I would be unable to constitute the many hyletic components of an object as individual adumbrations of *an* object; they would be mere flat appearances, without any connection amongst them. Similarly, if I did not have expectations towards the future, intentionality would be impossible because there would be no transcendent experience; I would not be able to anticipate apperceptions of the object that were not immediately given. Thus, the fact that consciousness is intentional—the fact that consciousness is consciousness *of* objects—demands that consciousness be

³² Bloechl, 94.

³³ *Hua*. X, §11.

³⁴ *Hua*. XI, 337–8; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 626.

temporally extended so that objects, and not mere appearances, can appear to consciousness.

Because consciousness goes beyond the mere Now-point to include retentions of the past and protentions of the future, the Now of consciousness bears a horizon or a background. Objects become presented to consciousness when they emerge into the foreground, but the background nonetheless persists. As Husserl explains, “When I actually perceive an object, that is, look at it, take note of it, grasp it, regard it, it will never be without an unnoticed, ungrasped background of objects.”³⁵ In fact, as we have seen, the ability of the unthematized background sensations to attract the interest of consciousness and become thematic is precisely what passive constitution entails.

We can apply this insight into the temporal extension of consciousness to our analysis of instinctive constitution. There is a trivial sense in which consciousness must be temporally extended in order for the instincts to function: if consciousness were merely a series of discrete Now-instances, then it would be impossible for the instincts to objectify contents into presented objects. This is nothing more than a particular case of Husserl’s original claim that intentionality requires the temporal extension of consciousness. The presentation of an object to consciousness as the result of passive constitution entails that the affective allure of the contents be able to direct the subject towards an ideal fulfillment of those expectations, which is precisely what it is to present an object rather than mere appearances. A similar

³⁵ *Hua. XVII*, 363; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 18.

analysis could be presented for how other modalities of passive synthesis, such as bodily kinaestheses, allow objects to become presented.³⁶

However, there is a deeper sense in which the temporal extension of consciousness is relevant to the instincts. The instincts are relevant to Husserl's concept of personhood because they not only affect the subject but also constitute the subject in specific ways. This constitution of the subject by its instinctive responses to certain kinds of contents can only be explained if consciousness can develop a history, which requires that the Now of consciousness includes, in some sense, its past. Husserl expresses the connection between the past of consciousness and its present by noting,

Put more precisely, in the unity of a consciousness that is streaming in the present, we find concrete perceptions with their retentional components, as well as concrete retentions—all of that in the flow of retention fading away into the distant horizon of retention. But in addition to this, emergent rememberings as well. Between the noematic components of something present and something remembered we find a phenomenologically peculiar connective trait that can be expressed in the following way: Something present recalls something past.³⁷

In other words, consciousness associates the objects in its present with objects that were experienced in the past. An immediately retained experience is associated, at a passive level, with something from further in the past that is remembered, and the present retention thus triggers the recall of the similar past experience. These

³⁶ The topic of kinaesthesia is a rich area in Husserl scholarship. For a foundation in Husserl's thinking, see Landgrebe, "The Phenomenology of Corporeality," in *The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl*, and Zahavi, "Husserl's Phenomenology of the Body." For a more developed interpretation of Husserl, see both Dodd, *Idealism and Corporeity*, and Lotz, *From Affectivity to Subjectivity* as well as *Von Leib zum Selbst*. Finally, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body, especially in *Phenomenology of Perception*, is deeply indebted to Husserl's then-unpublished research manuscripts on corporeality.

³⁷ *Hua*. XI, 117–8; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 162–3.

associations between present experiences and the past history of the subject make it possible to discuss the concretion of the subject. As Husserl explains, the constitutive history of a particular subject does not merely disappear when the act is completed; instead, the acts fade into the background horizon of that particular subject. He explains, "Cognitive acts, acts of pleasure, volitional acts do not simply disappear when we no longer carry them out from the standpoint of the ego; they become background lived-experiences."³⁸

Because the ego carries its past actions in its background of lived-experiences, it is possible for its past constitutive activity to constitutively shape the ego itself. Husserl notes,

We thus can now speak of the *concrete I*, which is what it is, as determined in his actions and passions. This concrete I is the real I of inner experience, since what is experienced is fully taken as concrete, and the pure I is that which is abstractly identical.³⁹

The context of the passage makes clear that both the concrete ego and the pure ego are describing the ego within the transcendental register; however, the pure, worldless ego is a mere abstraction from the concrete life of transcendental subjectivity. The actions and passions of the ego, therefore, distinguish one ego from another and determine it as *this* ego, with these past experiences and activities. This claim makes sense if we recall Husserl's motivation for developing the ontological way to the reduction. For Husserl, transcendental consciousness is not a contentless pole or a formal principle; it is a living stream of consciousness whose unity

³⁸ *Hua. XVII*, 365; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 20.

³⁹ *Hua. XIV*, 43: "Wir werden nun also sprechen dürfen vom *konkreten Ich*, das ist, was es ist, als in seinen Aktionen und Passionen sich bestimmendes. Dieses konkrete Ich ist das wirkliche Ich der inneren Erfahrung, da Erfahrenes ja voll genommen Konkretes ist und das reine Ich ein abstrakt Identisches ist."

encompasses the past activities in the past of that specific transcendental ego. As stated by Bloechl, the “unity of my present...may be traced to the particularity of my past.”⁴⁰

In short, the background history of transcendental subjectivity can become the material for further constitutive activity. Because past constitutive activity can be recalled via association, the history of consciousness can exert an influence on the current constitutive activity of the subject.

Husserl explicitly claims that the instincts can affect the constitutive possibilities of the subject. He writes, “The system of intentionality is a system of associatively interconnected drives, a system of drive-associations, of abilities modifying themselves through associations.”⁴¹ In this quote, Husserl goes beyond his claim that association and drives have a constitutive function within the passive dimension. He is making the further claim that this passive constitution affects the transcendental subject’s future constitutive capacities. The capabilities mentioned in this quote are the capacities of the subject to react to certain kinds of stimuli. We have seen how the instincts can present—in a passive manner—certain types of contents to the subject. Now, Husserl is extending that claim by saying that the instinctive drives themselves can also be shaped by the subject’s past constitutive activity.

We can attempt to flesh out this account in two ways. First, we can consider how the instincts influence the surrounding world of the subject. Pugliese notes that

⁴⁰ Bloechl, 98.

⁴¹ A VII 13, 24, quoted in Lee, 59: “Das System der Intentionalität ist ein System von assoziativ verflochtenen Trieben, ein System von Triebassoziationen, durch Assoziationen sich modifizierend ausgebildeten Vermögen.”

the subject is imprinted by a constitutive instinct towards the world. When the subject says, “I have a surrounding world,” the “I have” can be explained in terms of the objectifying instinct; the subject is motivated to direct his or her attention towards the world precisely because the subject instinctively attempts to objectify the background horizon into objects of possible intentional activity. Husserl describes this objectification in light of the intentional activity of what he calls the “primordial child,” [*Urkind*], which is subjectivity prior to developing its own constitutive history. Husserl writes, “the primordial child—instinctively directed towards the world as from the ‘primal foundation’ of his being towards ‘living in the world.’”⁴² In other words, subjectivity is instinctively driven towards the world and its objects from the very beginning.

Because the instincts motivate the subject to direct its attention towards various kinds of contents, we can also say that the instincts in fact provide the motivation for future intentional activity. Pugliese attributes this claim to Husserl insofar as the instincts in their transcendental, rather than empirical, function form the motivational nexus for consciousness:

The primordial child represents the subject of the drives and instincts, which however are seen not as empirical facts but as the *motivational situations* existing in consciousness, which comes to the fore through the reduction.⁴³

⁴² E III 3, 4b–5a, quoted in Pugliese, 144: “das Urkind – als von der ‚Urstiftung‘ seines Daseins her ‚in der Welt lebend‘, instinktiv auf Welt gerichtet.” Pugliese’s article focuses on the transcendental concept of the *Urkind*. Specifically, the *Urkind* represents the subject in its naivety, genetically prior to its enworlding. It is through its instincts that the *Urkind* finds itself in a world and can begin to develop genetically. For more on the genetically revealed starting point of constitution, see Pugliese as well as Taguchi.

⁴³ Pugliese, 144: “Das Urkind stellt das Subjekt der Triebe und Instinkte dar, welche aber nicht als empirische Tatsachen angesehen werden, sondern als im Bewusstsein

Therefore, the instincts form a foundation for further constitutive goals. Eventually, the subject can explicitly set goals on the basis of the world as presented instinctively, and can therefore begin to determine itself in relation to its world.⁴⁴ Thus, the first way in which the instincts can shape the capacities of the subject is by influencing the motivations for future intentional activity.

A second way in which the instincts can shape the capacities of the subject is by influencing how the instincts themselves will respond to future situations. Suppose that one has previously constituted cooked hamburger meat as an object that satisfies one's hunger pains. Now suppose that one encounters an undercooked hamburger patty. There are obvious visual and olfactory similarities between the undercooked hamburger patty and the cooked hamburger meat that one has previously experienced, and so the hunger instinct may associatively link the new object—the undercooked patty—with the previous experience of cooked hamburger meat, and therefore present the undercooked patty as a food-object. However, the undercooked patty will also disappoint some of the expectations of the previous, cooked meat: it will taste different and may even trigger a reaction of disgust if the patty is sufficiently raw. As a result, the hunger instinct may narrow its associative connections so as to discriminate between cooked and uncooked meat in the future, and therefore will not present uncooked meat as a food-object. In this example, the hunger instinct itself is modified by its own activity; its past experience of how uncooked meat disappointed its food-expectations results the instinct no

bestehende *Motivationszusammenhänge*, die durch die Reduktion von Vorschein kommen."

⁴⁴ Pugliese, 143.

longer presenting uncooked meat as a food-object. While Husserl does not offer an example of this kind, it seems a reasonable extrapolation based on his account of how the instincts constitute objects via passive laws of association.

In both of these cases, the subject is constituted in various ways by its instinctive activity. As Pugliese explains,

As a result, the drive proves itself to be a deep-lying organizing principle that shapes the world through the passive achievements of consciousness. Husserl ascribes to it a constitutive function in the relation of the transcendental child to the world and a *founding* function in the self-formation of subjectivity.⁴⁵

In short, drives play a foundational role in the formation of subjectivity. Not only do instinctive drives individuate transcendental subjects by influencing their constitutive history, but the drives also constitute the capacities of the transcendental subject in different ways.

Thus, the instincts begin the process of concretizing the subject; the concrete, instinctive tendencies of the subject in turn form the foundation for subjective habits. The following section will explore how these instinctive tendencies can become sedimented into habits and how the habits further concretize and individuate the subject.

§9. The Sedimentation of Instincts into Habits

We have seen how the instincts can individuate different subjects by causing them to affectively respond in different manners, depending on what contents are associatively brought forth from the subject's own history. Husserl also indicates

⁴⁵ Pugliese, 149: "Dadurch erweist sich der Trieb als tief liegendes Ordnungsprinzip, das die Welt durch die passive Leistungen des Bewusstseins prägt. Ihm schreibt Husserl eine *konstitutive* Funktion im Verhältnis des transzendentalen Kindes zur Welt und eine *fundierende* Funktion bei der Selbstbildung der Subjektivität zu."

that the instincts can become sedimented into habits of the subject, which further individuate one transcendental subject from another. This section will develop Husserl's account of the passive development of habits through the sedimentation of instincts.

For Husserl, the instincts and habits perform the same constitutive functions. Pugliese explains, "In order to continually exercise its own constitutive function, the drive habitualizes itself and thus takes a persisting form.⁴⁶ In other words, habits are nothing more than instincts in a stable form. Habits, like instincts, perform the constitutive functions of bringing certain types of contents to consciousness and objectifying those contents so that they can become objects for higher levels of intentional activity. Husserl emphasizes the constitutive function of habits, writing, "'Constitution'—by this we can understand the genetic process in which apperceptions come about step by step and, seen more precisely, by which an endless apperceptive system comes about as a *habitus*."⁴⁷

The difference between instincts and habits, therefore, is one of degree rather than kind. While I can instinctively respond to the affective allure of an object in individual cases, I can also let my instinctive response become sedimented into an abiding tendency. As I continue to respond in the same way to the affective allure of a particular kind of object, I strengthen my disposition to respond in that way to future instances of that kind of object. Husserl explains,

⁴⁶ Pugliese, 150: "Um die eigene konstitutive Funktion kontinuierlich auszuüben, habitualisiert sich der Trieb und nimmt damit eine beharrende Form an."

⁴⁷ D 13 IV, 40, quoted in Lee, 18: "Die ‚Konstitution‘ – darunter können wir verstehen den genetischen Prozeß, in dem stufenweise die Apperzeptionen und genauer besehen, ein unendliches apperzeptives System als Habitus wird."

If one configuration has formed a prominent, specially bound unity through the affective forces governing in it, then the force will radiate out from it to accentuate objects that will fulfill the conditions for forming the uniform configuration....Even the force of this apperceptive expectation increases with the number of “instances”—or with habit, which amounts to the same thing.⁴⁸

With each instance that I respond to the affective allure of the object, I increase the force that this allure exerts upon me and so dispose myself to respond likewise in the future. A habit is therefore nothing else than this abiding tendency to respond, which has become sedimented via a history of instinctive responses to similar contents. In more specific terms, the past instinctive actions of responding to the affective allure in a particular way become associated with the present response, and as the individual continues to respond in the same way, the associative link is strengthened as the instinct becomes sedimented into a habit.⁴⁹

Husserl explains the formation of habits in more depth with respect to periodic drives, such as the hunger instinct:

Furthermore, with respect to the periodicity of the life of drives, it must be shown for each how a sensible drive awakens an open horizon of willing with a periodicity of attainment as a personal horizon, an open endless personal life-future as a habitual unity of a will, which passes through a chain of future

⁴⁸ *Hua. XI*, 189–90; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 240. A possible objection to this account of habits is that one can habituate oneself to respond in a manner contrary to a typical instinctive response (as a soccer goalie does in training herself to throw her head in front of the ball). Although Husserl does not explicitly address this kind of case, it seems that he could respond to the objection by noting that the new habituation is still an abiding tendency and that it in fact occurs at the passive level: the soccer goalie learns to throw her body in front of the ball at a level below that of conscious deliberation.

⁴⁹ Lee goes so far as to assert that the passive laws of association are conditions of the possibility of sedimentation (165). To support this claim, he quotes from C 16 V, 62a: “Wo diese Assoziation nicht ihr Werk tut, da kann sich nicht sedimentieren.”

desires and already seeks to desire its fulfillment, here drive-fulfillments, in every Now.⁵⁰

This quotation is significant for two reasons. First, the repeated desire and satisfaction of the instinct begins to form an abiding horizon for the subject. For Husserl, we do not merely respond to instincts by having our attention turned towards, e.g., food objects when we are hungry. Rather, we recognize that we regularly desire food, and begin to seek contents in our background horizon that would satisfy that desire so that we will be able to fulfill the desire when it next arises. Second, we begin to integrate the desire for food into our other desires, so that we can begin to form a personal life horizon in which the various instinct-horizons are unified (or at least made compatible with) our other desires.

The full explanation of this process will need to be deferred until we introduce the concept of vocation in chapter four, but a brief example may illustrate the point for now. A person might develop a positive habitual response to beans as a food staple by being exposed to many different bean recipes as a child. If the person begins to develop a love for animals as well, the habitual response towards beans as food might be integrated into the person's value of loving animals by using beans as a substitute for meat and eventually becoming a vegetarian. The person's instinctive response to beans—food source—becomes unified with the person's value of loving

⁵⁰ *Hua.* XV, 599: "Ferner, mit Rücksicht auf die Periodizität des Trieblebens, <muss gezeigt werden>, wie für je einen sinnlichen Trieb ein offener Willenshorizont mit einer Periodizität von Erzielungen als personaler Horizont erwächst, eine offen endlose personale Lebenszukunft als habituelle Einheit eines Wollens, das durch eine Kette künftiger Wollungen hindurchgeht und schon im jeweiligen Jetzt ihre Erfüllungen, hier Trieberfüllungen, wollend erstrebt."

animals by becoming an expression of that value through the choice of becoming vegetarian.

The concept of habits therefore shows that there is a development within subjectivity itself, beginning in the passive dimension. Lee emphasizes this development by focusing on the genetic relation between instincts and habits. He explains,

It is no accident that, in a manuscript passage from the thirties, Husserl refers to the original instincts in terms of their genesis as a *habituality*. Genetically considered, there exists therefore no essential difference between the innate Ur-instinct and the acquired habituality.⁵¹

Because the difference between instincts and habits is a genetic difference rather than an essential one, we can say that Husserl's doctrine of the instincts and habits presents a way in which subjectivity itself is constituted; the role of the instincts and habits is not limited to the constitution of objects. As the instincts become reified or sedimented into habitual tendencies of that particular subject, the subject itself develops in unique ways. The final section will link this development to the overall concept of personhood by introducing the teleological drive that begins at the level of the instincts and goes all the way upwards through the concept of the person.

§10. Teleology of Instincts

The previous sections have explained how the instincts contribute to the individualization of the subject through affective responses, and how these responses can become sedimented into habits. This section will link the instincts to

⁵¹ Lee, 167: "Es ist kein Zufall, daß Husserl an einer Manuskriptstelle aus den dreißiger Jahren die ursprünglichen Instinkte im Hinblick auf ihre Genesis als eine *Habitualität* bezeichnet. Genetisch betrachtet besteht also zwischen dem angeborenen Urinstink und der erworbenen Habitualität kein wesentlicher Unterscheid."

Husserl's concept of personhood. I will claim that Husserl identifies a role for instincts within the person for two reasons, both related to the teleological function of the concept of personhood. First, the instincts establish the pre-personal foundation from which personality in the strong sense can emerge. In other words, the instincts provide a base upon which the teleology of personhood can operate. Second, the instincts motivate the teleology of the person. One finds that the motivation for the upward striving characteristic of personhood, and in particular the motivation for rational activity, begins in the instincts. As I will argue in chapter six, this sense of reason provides the ideal limit towards which the various facets of personhood develop.

For Husserl, instincts and drives belong to the pre-personal domain. Because these drives operate on a passive level, the instincts themselves cannot be personal acts. He writes,

The drive in simple effect is no action, the drive-like being-directed no personal act, no act of will. Naturally it must be shown how acts of will (acts in the pregnant sense), as founded in the sensible drives, arise.⁵²

When Husserl distinguishes between acts of will and drives in this passage, he is not merely reiterating his distinction between active and passive intentional constitution. The context of the passage makes clear that Husserl has in mind a stronger conception of the will, which distinguishes a higher form of life from the

⁵² Hua XV, 599: "Der Trieb in schlichter Auswirkung ist keine Handlung, das triebmäßige Gerichtetsein kein personaler Akt, kein Willensakt. Es muß natürlich gezeigt werden, wie fundiert in der Trieb Sinnlichkeit Willensakte (Akte im prägnanten Sinn) erwachsen." The previous sentence makes clear that the drives Husserl refers to are instinctive drives.

life of mere drives.⁵³ Thus, the crucial question for Husserl is: how do instinctive acts awaken acts of will, which are distinctive of a higher order of life?

Husserl's answer is twofold. First, instincts direct one towards the future, which is a necessary condition for deliberate willing. Second, the instincts present values to the subject, which makes possible a higher order of existence in which one lives according to one's chosen values. Let us explore each of these claims in turn.

We have already seen how the instincts direct one towards the future. The object constituted by instincts is desired because it offers satisfaction, which is not yet present, for a need that is currently present. In other words, instinctive striving involves protention, or "a 'fore-[*intentio*],' namely, as an *intentio* directed into the future."⁵⁴ Because the instincts are directed towards the future, Husserl claims that the instincts create the possibility of planning or preparing for the future (albeit in a very limited way). When discussing the life of instinctive drives, he explains,

Taking care [*Vorsorge*] for the future, taking care [*Vorsorge*] for "goods" in the future, serving to fulfill future needs, which are not now present in themselves and which will be available in the future. This presupposes the experience of the unsatisfied, lasting hunger, the experience of famine, etc.⁵⁵

Because the instincts make possible the experience of needs such as the need for food, they present to the subject the possibility of fulfilling those needs; the

⁵³ In fact, this quote is a transition into the next section of the manuscript, which is titled "Vom niederen Triebleben hinauf zum Willensleben und schliesslich zum Leben in der ‚Humanität'" (*Hua.* XV, 599).

⁵⁴ *Hua.* XI, 86; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 129 (translation modified).

⁵⁵ *Hua.* XV, 599: "Vorsorge für die Zukunft, Vorsorge für künftige ‚Güter‘, dienlich zur Erfüllung künftiger Bedürfnisse, nicht jetzt von selbst daseinend und bereit sein werdend in Zukunft. Das setzt voraus die Erfahrung des unbefriedigt bleibenden Hungers, die Erfahrung der Hungersnot etc."

possibility of fulfilling those needs in turn motivates the subject to take care for those needs in the future.

It is clear that the kind of “taking care” that could be accomplished by a purely instinctive subject is rudimentary at best, and Husserl does not give any examples of merely instinctive care-taking. What Husserl wants to highlight, however, is that the directedness towards the future that comes from the instincts lays the ground for a fuller conception of subjectivity, viz., personhood. In the same passage, Husserl explicitly makes the connection: “The person is only a person as taking care [*als vorsorgende*].”⁵⁶

Husserl’s explanation of the person as taking care brings in the second function of instincts in grounding the teleology of the person. For Husserl, the person is situated in many horizons, each with its own values. The values of those horizons are presented via the instincts. For instance, food is presented as satisfying my hunger instinct; as a result, food acquires a value within my surrounding world:

The food has...a “value,” I recognize it according to its nature as a pie, as a nice roast, etc. Entering into the apperception that (assuming that I am hungry) I would like to enjoy a certain flavor by bringing it closer—I and all of my peers, my normal environment. For me and for everyone it realizes a (relative) value in the primordial sphere of self-giving.⁵⁷

In other words, the second function of instincts in grounding the concept of personhood consists in presenting values to the subject within a particular horizon.

⁵⁶ *Hua.* XV, 599: “Die Person ist nur Person als vorsorgende.”

⁵⁷ *Hua.* XV, 601: “Die Speise hat...einen ‚Wert‘, ich erkenne sie ihrer Art nach etwa als Torte, als einen schönen Braten etc. In die Apperzeption geht ein, dass (gesetzt, dass ich Hunger habe) ich bei Näherbringen einen gewissen Geschmacksgenuss haben würde – ich und jedermann meinsgleichen, meiner normalen Umwelt. Für mich und für jedermann realisiert sich solch ein (relativer) Wert in der primordialen Sphäre von Selbstgebungen.”

As Husserl notes in this passage, the value of food is relative to the situation I find myself in; for instance, if I am not hungry, the food will have less value to me.

Husserl contrasts the relativity of these values with what he calls “authentic” values. He refers to needs and goods of a higher order, remarking,

Formation of a higher human life-will, awareness of a life-task, a life of an absolute norm, in which lies an open infinity with respect to the human community and whereby “eternal values” arise.⁵⁸

Husserl’s point is that people have the capacity to live their lives under an absolute norm, which would not be relative to particular situations but would rather orient the individual’s life within all the diverse horizons in which the person finds himself or herself. This is the outgrowth of the personal horizon of willing (Husserl uses both “*personale Horizont*” and “*Willenshorizont*”) that Husserl refers to in his discussion of habituation. As we shall see in chapter four, this process of having values presented to the subject and choosing to embrace a “life task” from those values culminates in Husserl’s concept of a vocation; what is significant is that Husserl identifies a fundamental role for the instincts in presenting these values to the subject.

To reiterate, the instincts contribute to the foundation of the person in two ways. First, the instincts direct the subject towards the future, which creates the possibility for exercising one’s will in deliberate decisions. Second, the instincts present values to the subject, from which the subject can acquire the idea of a life of absolute value that would not be relative to particular situations or horizons.

⁵⁸ *Hua*. XV, 600: “Ausbildung eines höhermenschlichen Lebenswillens, Bewusstsein einer Lebensaufgabe, eines Lebens einer absoluten Norm, in der die offene Unendlichkeit liegt mit Beziehung auf die menschheitliche Gemeinschaft und wobei die ‚ewigen Werten‘ erwachsen.”

In addition to establishing the foundation of the person, the instincts also contribute to the teleology of the person by motivating the teleological striving that is characteristic of personhood. In his manuscripts, Husserl identifies a central feature of intentional life: striving. He writes, “All life is continuous striving, all satisfaction is transitory.”⁵⁹ Life strives towards objects in that it constantly seeks objects to satiate the desires of the striver. These desires begin at a very rudimentary and simple level—hunger, thirst, and the like—but can expand to include higher-order desires, such as desires for intellectual or spiritual goals.

In terms of constitution, the function of striving is to present objects to the subject as possible fulfillments of a desire. Husserl speaks about periodic desires, such as the desire for food, and explains:

This directedness is tendentious [*tendenziös*], and as a tendency, as a striving, it is from the very beginning “driving at” a satisfaction. This satisfaction is only possible in a special kind of synthesis that brings to intuition, in a synthesis that brings the presented object to self-givenness.⁶⁰

The food-object, in other words, comes to self-givenness precisely because the hunger drive seeks an object that would satisfy the need for nourishment and presents the food to the subject as an object that could satisfy the intention in question.

If striving were restricted to the instinctive realm, then it would be too limited to inform the concept of personhood. However, Husserl argues that striving can be found in all intentional relationships. In fact, in transcendental terms, striving is the ultimate motivation for intentionality.

⁵⁹ A VI 26, 42a, translated in Mensch, “Instincts,” 220.

⁶⁰ *Hua*. XI, 83; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 126.

Husserl's favorite example of a simple intentional relationship is perception. In static terms, the schema for a perceptual intentional relationship is a correlation between an intentional noetic act and the noematic object that is intended. However, Husserl argues that this intentional schema is motivated by a "drive towards perception" [*Trieb zur Wahrnehmung*].⁶¹ The perceptual drive seeks to constitute an objective sense out of the experiential contents provided by perception. In this respect, the perceptual drive is an extension of the objectifying instinct.

If we recall how the instincts and habits influence the constitutive possibilities of the subject, we can note that the instincts provide the motivational nexus in which constitution happens, and instinctive striving creates the possibilities for all other constitutional activity by presenting objects to the subject and motivating the subject to act with respect to those objects. In short, the subject's being-directed towards the world is made possible, at first, by instincts. Husserl thus writes, "Striving is instinctive and instinctively (thus, at first, secretly) 'directed' towards what in the 'future' will be first disclosed as worldly unities constituting themselves."⁶²

This claim brings us back to the quotation in which we introduced the transcendental instincts as one of the fundamental concepts of transcendental genesis and teleology. We can now see that the instincts begin the process of concretizing the world, which in turn begins a teleological development. Husserl writes,

⁶¹ A VI 13, 15, quoted in Lee, 88.

⁶² A VI 34, 34b, translated in Mensch, "Instincts," 221.

In development lies a teleology: every soul acquires itself for the valid world; in there it lies: it acquires for itself the formation of manners of appearing, whereby the various regions of the world and the particular types in which this world is made concrete come to consciousness for it.⁶³

Husserl explicitly connects the lower levels of experience to the higher levels when he discusses the role of the passive dimension in founding rational activity. Insofar as the instincts make possible higher objectivities that can become the matter of rational acts, the instincts make possible rational intentional activity. Husserl highlights this function when he writes, “Thus the inborn ground of subjectivity is the irrational, which makes possible rationality, or it has its rationality therein, to be the ‘teleological ground’ for all that is rational.”⁶⁴

Because rationality is *grounded* in the irrational (instead of being opposed to the irrational), Husserl can speak of a drive of reason [*Vernunfttrieb*] as an instinctive motivation towards rationality in the broad sense of intentional fulfillment.⁶⁵ Husserl notes that there are different levels of human development, and what motivates the upward progression through those levels is the drive of reason. He writes, “The human is a ‘rational creature’—it ‘develops’ in the history of its humanity.”⁶⁶ In short, the drive towards reason motivates the further

⁶³ E III 9, 6a: “In der Entwicklung liegt eine Teleologie: Jede Seele erarbeitet sich für die geltende Welt; darin liegt: sie erarbeitet sich die Bildung der Erscheinungsweisen, wodurch die verschiedenen Weltregionen und die besondere Typik, in der diese Welt konkrete Welt ist, für sie zu Bewusstsein kommt.”

⁶⁴ E III 9, 4b: “So ist die angeborene Anlage der Subjektivität das Irrationale, das Rationalität möglich macht, oder es hat seine Rationalität darin, der ,teleologische Grund‘ für alles Rationale zu sein.” It is important to note that Husserl’s concept of the irrational is *not* anti-rational; it simply has not yet been formed by the norms of reason. I will further discuss Husserl’s concept of reason in chapter six.

⁶⁵ A V 20, 2a.

⁶⁶ A V 20, 2a: “Der Mensch ist ,Vernunftwesen‘ – sich ,entwickelnd‘ in der Geschichte seiner Menschheit.” The quoted sentence ends with a question: “– und bloss das?”

development of the person; the following chapters will explore the key facets of this development.

The context makes clear that the question is whether humanity may be understood in *merely* rational terms, as opposed to being concretized in its particular community, nation, etc., and the answer to the rhetorical question is clearly no. In other words, Husserl acknowledges the concrete aspects of subjectivity while nonetheless maintaining that these aspects should not be understood in opposition to the rationality of the person.

Chapter 3. The Worldly Environment of the Person

*Does human beginning presuppose a transcendental existence
that already is, that enworlds itself as man
and must constitute its own worldly beginning...?
—Eugen Fink*

In the previous chapter, we explored how, through passive constitution, the person begins to be formed as an individual insofar as the person responds instinctively and habitually to specific kinds of experiences, which become constituted as objects. However, Husserl is clear that constitution, whether active or passive, does not happen in a vacuum: as a result, we need an account of the world in which constitution occurs in order to fully explain how the person is constituted. It turns out that the world is more than merely a space in which constitution happens; for Husserl, there is an essential correlation between the world and constituting subjectivity. In particular, many of the concrete aspects of subjectivity—including historicity, normativity, and cultural traditions—are worldly aspects precisely because, for Husserl, the subject is not diametrically opposed to the world. Thus, this chapter will explore Husserl’s notion of worldliness in order to develop these characteristics of personhood.

This chapter will proceed in five sections. The first section (§11) will briefly outline the many terms Husserl uses for world in order to identify the core functions of the concept of worldliness. In the second section (§12), we will focus on the horizontal character of the world. Since it is an open horizon, the world is inherently intersubjective; this makes it possible to speak about particular cultural worlds to which a person can belong. The third section (§13) will explicate the concept of a

cultural world and the traditions that individuate cultures; the fourth section (§14) will show how Husserl synthesizes these ideas into the concept of a homeworld. Finally, the last section (§15) will discuss the significance of these features of worldliness to the concept of personhood.

§11. Husserl's Concepts of World

The concept of the lifeworld dominates Husserl's later works, most notably the *Crisis*. However, Husserl initially described the notion of a "world of life" much earlier. In the editor's introduction to the *Husserliana* volume on the *Lebenswelt*, Rochus Sowa notes that the actual term "*Lebenswelt*" appears for the first time in two texts from 1917, although Husserl had been working through the idea in different terms at least as early as the *Dingvorlesung* in 1907.¹ In both of these texts, Husserl describes the world in which human beings live. The first text emphasizes that everything objective that is found in the world—and Husserl uses several variations here, including lifeworld, personal world, and spiritual world—is subjectively given to consciousness.² In the second text, Husserl describes the pre-given world formed in communal values and praxis.³ Thus, from the very beginning, Husserl understood the concept of the lifeworld in relation to subjectivity, whether of the individual ego or the community.

¹ Sowa, xlv. While the root of the term "lifeworld" is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is clear that Husserl's initial idea of a world of life is developed from Avenarius' *natürlicher Weltbegriff*; see *Hua*. XIII, 131–138, as well as Føllesdal, 38. On the history of the term "Lebenswelt" in Husserl, see also Biemal, esp. 204–5, and van Kerckhoven, "Zur Geneses des Begriffs 'Lebenswelt'."

² *Hua*. IV, 374–5; *Ideas II*, 384–5.

³ Ms. F IV 1, 2a–3b; see also Sowa, xlvi.

While the lifeworld is one of the most influential concepts to emerge from Husserl's writing, it is far from the only term that he uses to describe the worldly nature of subjectivity. Throughout his manuscripts and even in his later publications, Husserl uses terms as varied as "surrounding world" [*Umwelt*], "life environment" [*Lebensumwelt*], "cultural world" [*Kulturwelt*], and "homeworld" and "alienworld" [*Heimwelt, Fremdwelt*], as well as the familiar "lifeworld" [*Lebenswelt*]. Although Husserl himself never establishes a clear taxonomy of world-types, it is evident that he has in mind at least five different concepts of worldliness in his thinking.⁴

The first type of world is the notion of a world as a totality of things. If one were to add together all the individual objective realities in the world, the collection of such entities is the world. This concept of world appears in some of Husserl's pre-genetic writings and was a focus of Heidegger's critique of Husserl.⁵ This concept of world is a static concept; the world is given as a fully realized entity just as any other objective reality. However, Husserl abandons this sense of world in his mature work; as he develops his genetic method, he realizes that the world is a horizon

⁴ Several Husserl scholars have developed their own taxonomies of Husserl's use of "world." See, for instance, Boehm, "Husserls drei Thesen über die Lebenswelt," and Claesges.

⁵ As an example of this usage, see *Hua*. III/1, esp. §§47–49. For Heidegger's critique of this concept of world, see Heidegger, *Being and Time*, esp. div. 1, ch. III. See Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning*, 177, for a discussion of this critique in the context of Husserl and Heidegger's collaboration on the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article.

from which objects are emerge as they are genetically constituted and hence the world must be different in kind from objects.⁶

The second type of worldliness invokes the notion of a pre-given world. Husserl often, but not always, uses the term “surrounding world” [*Umwelt*] or its variations (e.g., *Lebensumwelt*) for this notion of worldliness. The idea behind the surrounding world is that, as subjects experience objects, they do so against a background of what is pre-given. The function of the world is to encompass this pre-given background from which objects become thematic. Although Husserl occasionally uses the expression “*Lebenswelt*” for this characterization of the world, it is clear that it does not yet reflect the full meaning that the term will acquire.

As Husserl develops this concept of the world, he realizes that one of the essential features of the world is its horizontal character. The world is pre-given in the sense of being a horizon of possible future manners of givenness for objects. This horizon of possible manners of givenness establishes the sense of the object; the validity of an object is dependent on the world. As Husserl explains, “Things, objects...are ‘given’ as being valid for us in each case...but in principle only in such a way that we are conscious of them as things or objects *within the world-horizon*.”⁷

With the development of the horizontal character of the world, Husserl firmly leaves behind the idea of the world as a totality of things in favor of what will

⁶ See Overgaard, 111–5, as well as Landgrebe, *Der Weg der Phänomenologie*, 185 and Luft, “Husserl’s Theory of the Phenomenological Reduction,” 204.

⁷ *Hua*. VI, 146; *Crisis*, 143. Husserl develops the claim that the sense of objects depends on the lifeworld in several places in the *Crisis*; cf. the example of Galileo and geometry in §9, as well as the relation between the objective sciences and the lifeworld in §34.

become a transcendental characterization of the world, as the condition of the possibility of objects becoming thematic.

Husserl speaks about worldliness in a third sense when he specifies particular aspects of the horizon that he wishes to call attention to. For example, he will speak about the cultural world in order to emphasize that cultural norms are public in the sense that they can be shared with others who also live within that horizon of shared meanings. He writes, “Everyone, as a matter of apriori necessity, lives in the same Nature [that]...he has fashioned into a *cultural world* in his individual and communalized living and doing.”⁸ At other points, Husserl will speak about the world in terms of practical possibilities: for example, he explains how humankind uses scientific *episteme* to gain control over its “practical surrounding world.”⁹ Irrespective of which aspect Husserl highlights, what is notable is that he recognizes the *particularity* of the world; the world is not merely an abstract unity but includes concrete particulars such as cultural artifacts, scientific discoveries, practical possibilities, etc. To capture this focus, Carr suggests a possible distinction between the “full” or “concrete” sense of the lifeworld, which includes cultural elements such as language and artifacts, and a narrower sense that strictly refers to the pre-given world in a generic sense as a horizon, without identifying the specific content contained within the horizon, although he admits that Husserl himself is not consistent in employing this distinction.¹⁰

⁸ *Hua. I*, 160; *Cartesian Meditations*, 133.

⁹ *Hua. VI*, 67; *Crisis*, 66.

¹⁰ Carr, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, 196. The attempt to distinguish a concrete sense of the lifeworld from a narrower sense that does not include cultural elements raises a difficult question of the relationship between Nature and Spirit,

Husserl problematizes this third sense of the world—as a particular world—in the *Crisis*. His concern is that, if this world is merely one particular world among many (possible) others, then what gives legitimacy to the sense meaning that is grounded on the evidence of this world? Husserl explains the problem in terms of the legitimacy of the sciences:

The knowledge of the objective-scientific world is “grounded” in the self-evidence of the life-world....[A]nd thus all of science is pulled, along with us, into the—merely “subjective-relative”—life-world. And what becomes of the objective world itself?¹¹

In other words, it seems as though the objectivity of the sciences becomes lost in the relativism of the lifeworld. As Soffer notes,

pluralism and relativism are not simply equated by Husserl but asserted to accompany each other. The pluralism of the lifeworld consists in the different *contents* and horizons of the worlds themselves; the relativism in the reference to a specific ‘we’ (or ‘they’) that comes to belong to the intentional constitution of this world and its contents.¹²

Husserl’s example of being thrown into an alien social world is instructive: when thrown into the world of, e.g., the Chinese peasant, there is no guarantee that our truths will be true for them as well.¹³ In fact, if the lifeworld is what grounds our intentional accomplishments, then should we not expect that the Chinese peasant will *eo ipso* have different truths? It is clear that this sort of relativism would be devastating to Husserl’s quest for scientific rigor.

Husserl responds to this threat of relativism by developing a fourth sense of world, viz., a non-relative lifeworld. In this fourth sense, Husserl argues that “the

and whether there is such a thing as pure nature, that Husserl attempted to articulate in *Ideas II*.

¹¹ *Hua*. VI, 133; *Crisis*, 130–1.

¹² Soffer, 152; cf. also Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 92–5.

¹³ *Hua*. VI, 141–2; *Crisis*, 139.

life-world does have, in all its relative features, a *general structure*. This general structure, to which everything that exists relatively is bound, is not itself relative.”¹⁴ The lifeworld, for Husserl, is the condition of the possibility of experience insofar as all objects are meaningful only to the extent that they exist within the referential nexus established by the lifeworld. This notion of lifeworld does not specify what those referential nexuses are: that would make the lifeworld relative in the same way that a cultural world is relative. Instead, Husserl speaks about the *a priori* of the lifeworld, or of what must be true of any world whatsoever in order to be meaningful. Husserl scholars have debated what features Husserl meant to include in this *a priori* of the lifeworld; plausible candidates include temporality, historicity, and horizontality.¹⁵ What is clear is that Husserl uses this notion of the lifeworld as a ground, from which structures of meaningfulness can emerge.

The notion of the lifeworld as a ground leads to a fifth sense of world, viz., the homeworld. For the concept of personhood, the historicity of the lifeworld becomes relevant insofar as the person lives in a specific homeworld, and not merely a generic worldly structure. Husserl introduces the language of homeworld in a manuscript from 1920.¹⁶ He uses the term in opposition to the “other world” or “alien world”; the homeworld is a particular world, individuated by cultural

¹⁴ *Hua*. VI, 142; *Crisis*, 139.

¹⁵ Bernet, *et al.*, 228 notes that Husserl never systematically developed his ontology of the lifeworld, but suggests that it should have to include the structures of temporality, spatiality, and causality, as well as the homeworld/alienworld structure (although they translate the terms as familiar world and foreign world). Landgrebe, *The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl*, 194, argues that the horizontality of the lifeworld demonstrates the necessity of history as an *a priori* structure of worldliness.

¹⁶ A V 10, 127–9, cited in Toulemont, 184n6.

traditions and history, to which one belongs and which thus serves as a point of reference, or zero-point, for one's horizon of intentional activity. Husserl describes the homeworld as being formed from the levels of culture and functioning to create surrounding worlds with specific geo-historical horizons.¹⁷ These geo-historical horizons are not merely relative, as they were for the particularized lifeworld discussed above. Instead, Husserl talks about a homeworld [*heimatliche Welt*] in which individuals are connected to each other and to past members; this unified community can in turn encounter a foreign world [*fremde Welt*], whose members are human but nonetheless Other.¹⁸ As we will see, this notion of otherness is essential to the constitution of a homeworld and gives the homeworld a normative significance: what is *heimatlich* is normatively privileged precisely because it is not other.¹⁹ What establishes the normality of the homeworld is, it turns out, the tradition and culture of that world. In short, the claim that history is an *a priori*

¹⁷ *Hua. XV*, 411: "Stufen der Kultur, Stufen in der Ausbildung von Umwelten, von geo-historischen Horizonten." The passage goes on to explicitly use the language of homeworld in reference to a number of levels variously sized groups, from the family through villages.

¹⁸ Cf. *Hua. XV*, 205.

¹⁹ Surprisingly, Husserl does not spend much time explaining how it is possible for norms to arise. His casual treatment of this issue suggests that he believed the notion of normativity arises out of pre-philosophical, lifeworldly contexts and thus can be taken as a given within phenomenological analysis. One popular interpretation is that Husserl's transcendentalism anticipates McDowell's distinction between the space of nature and the space of reasons; see, e.g., Crowell, "Husserl's Subjectivism," esp. 366–77, as well as McDowell. While it is beyond the scope of the dissertation to develop this argument, one possible line of justification for the emergence of norms is an argument from reflective endorsement: reason requires us to have a sense of our own identity, and reflection on that identity (*qua* rational) establishes a sense of normativity insofar as our rational identity requires us to be able to endorse what we do. Korsgaard develops this argument in the context of Kant's ethics, and her introduction of the notion of a "practical identity" bears intriguing parallels to Husserl's account of a vocation; cf. esp. Lecture 3.

structure of the lifeworld allows Husserl to acknowledge the particularity of the lifeworld—via structures such as the homeworld and tradition—while simultaneously preserving the role of the lifeworld as what underlies and makes possible objective accomplishments.

Because Husserl's terms for the worldly dimension of subjectivity are sometimes used equivocally, it will be helpful to focus on the function that these concepts of the world are intended to serve, rather than the terms themselves. The most significant function of the world is that it establishes a horizon in which intentional activity occurs. Therefore, the next section of the chapter will develop the horizontal nature of the world in order to demonstrate how the world can—and indeed must—influence the constitution both by, and of, subjects. The following section will investigate the ways that culture, tradition, and history can particularize a world; this will allow us to unpack the transcendental concepts of the homeworld and alienworld in the subsequent section. Finally, we will be able to synthesize these different functions of the world into a coherent account of how the world establishes a foundation for the constitution of the person.

§12. Horizons and the Lifeworld

Husserl's investigations into the concept of world begin with his realization that objects are given against a background. In addition to the object that is intended in an intentional act, there are also co-meant or co-given profiles. As we saw in the previous chapter, one of the ways that subjects are passively affected is by seeing the object *as an object*, as being a unity despite having various profiles that could appear to consciousness in different ways and at different times. These possible

manners of givenness lie within the horizon of the object's immediate manner of givenness. As Husserl explains, "Every experience has its horizon of experience."²⁰

Husserl distinguishes between two forms of horizons of experience. There are internal profiles of the object, such as the back side of the house. As Husserl describes, there are possible future manners of givenness of the house, which are apperceived along with the front side of the house. Because I see the house as a house, and not merely a façade, I apperceive a back side of the house, which I would see if I were to walk around the house. These additional, possible manners of givenness are synthesized into my experience of the house. Husserl argues that these apperceptions lie in the background; although they are not yet thematic, they could be made thematic by, for instance, walking around to view the house from the other side. Husserl explains the concept of a horizon of experience, writing,

Every experience refers to the possibility...of gaining experience of not only the thing, but also further and further new determinations of the same [thing]. Every experience is spread in a continuity and explicative chain of individual experiences, synthetically unified as an individual experience, an open endless continuity and chain of the same.²¹

This notion of a background horizon against which an object becomes thematic makes possible Husserl's development of the concept of a world. Husserl argues that, in addition to the horizons of the object itself, there are also external horizons. When I intend an object, my intentionality encompasses more than just the object itself in its adumbrations; my intending of that object *as that object* is also

²⁰ *Hua.* XXXIX, 126: "Jede Erfahrung hat ihren Erfahrungshorizont."

²¹ *Hua.* XXXIX, 126–7: "Jede Erfahrung verweist auf die Möglichkeit...nicht nur das Ding...sondern auch weitere und weiter neue Bestimmungen von demselben erfahrend zu gewinnen. Jede Erfahrung ist auszubreiten in eine Kontinuität und explikative Verkettung von Einzelerfahrungen, synthetisch einig als seine einzige Erfahrung, eine offen endlose von demselben."

influenced by the other “objects” within my perceptual awareness. As Husserl explains,

However, this aiming-beyond is not only the anticipation of determinations which...are now expected; in another respect it is also an aiming-beyond the thing itself with all its anticipated possibilities of subsequent determinations, i.e., an aiming-beyond to other objects of which we are aware at the same time, although at first they are merely in the background. This means that everything given in experience has not only an internal horizon but also an infinite, open, *external horizon of objects cogiven*.²²

In other words, what is given in experience is not merely this object, e.g., this coffee mug, but also the meaning attached to the mug as a gift from a loved one; the memory of that gift is included in the horizon that is co-given with the mug.

What Husserl realizes is that the external horizon is not itself another object. Rather, it is a field of meaningfulness in which possible experiences can be given. The world establishes a referential horizon within which objects acquire significance. This insight eventually becomes solidified in Husserl’s concept of a world. He expresses this concept using the language of horizon, writing, “the thing has yet another horizon: besides this ‘internal horizon’ it has an ‘external horizon’ precisely as a thing within a *field of things*; and this points finally to the whole ‘world as perceptual world.’”²³ In other words, the world is a nexus of relations of meaning among objects, rather than another object.

The description of the world as a perceptual world is categorically different from a description of a physical object as a perceptual object. As Steinbock explains,

²² *Experience and Judgment*, 33.

²³ *Hua*. VI, 165; *Crisis*, 162. Steinbock notes that, although the connection between the horizontal givenness of object profiles and the horizontal character of the world is not explicitly mentioned in the passive synthesis lectures, there is a clear thematic continuity between the analysis in those lectures and Husserl’s later writings on the lifeworld; see Steinbock, “Translator’s Introduction,” xxiii.

“the horizon is a *way of revealing*, a feature of the process of how something comes into being as present.”²⁴ The proper interpretation of the claim that the world is a perceptual world, therefore, is that the world is perceptual insofar as the world is the condition of the possibility of perceiving objects. The givenness of an object to consciousness is a feature of the object only insofar as it exists within a world, i.e., a horizon of possible appearances. As Husserl explains, everything is “something of the world.”²⁵

Husserl understands “everything” as coming from the world in a broad way. In addition to physical objects such as houses, the world allows the emergence of practical elements such as values, goals, and the like. In *Ideas I*, Husserl remarks,

Moreover, this world is there for me not only as a world of mere things, but also with the same immediacy as a *world of objects with values, a world of goods, a practical world*. I simply find the physical things in front of me furnished not only with merely material determinations but also with value-characteristics, as beautiful and ugly, pleasant and unpleasant, agreeable and disagreeable, and the like.²⁶

Without going into the issue of whether axiological predicates are objective (which is a notoriously confusing issue for Husserl), it is clear that Husserl understands the world to encompass non-material “objects” such as values and ideas, as well as

²⁴ Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 107.

²⁵ *Hua*. VI, 146; *Crisis*, 143.

²⁶ *Hua*. III/1, 58; *Ideas I*, 53. A marginal note in one of Husserl’s own copies of *Ideas I* links this discussion with the idea of worldliness; Husserl’s claim seems to be that there is a connection between the human being’s ability to perceive axiological characteristics and his or her being in a world. For more on the claim that values, goals, and other practical elements emerge in connection with a world, see *Hua*. XV, 214–8. See also Soffer, 150–1, who compiles a list of texts in which Husserl describes the kinds of entities that are linked to the lifeworld.

material objects like houses and tables.²⁷ Carr observes that Husserl's broader sense of what the world contains is what allows Husserl to speak about culture as being part of one's world; he writes, "It is not only scientific theories that 'exist' and are accessible in this linguistic milieu, but also laws, institutions, customs."²⁸ In short, the horizontal function of the lifeworld needs to be understood as making possible not only the emergence of physical objects but also axiological, practical, and intersubjective entities.

The horizontal character of the world implies that the world is not an ontological entity like other objective beings. As Steinbock writes, "To ask *what* the lifeworld is, is to inquire into its *Quidditas*, it is to have already misconstrued the horizontal character."²⁹ The world is a transcendental, rather than ontological, entity: it is that which makes possible the appearance of objects. The recognition of the horizontal character of the world is what allows Husserl to move from the natural description of the world as the totality of objects to the transcendental characterization of the world. Husserl describes how, in the performance of the reduction, objectivities such as things, the world, and positive sciences are taken as valid only insofar as they are phenomena related to a transcendental ego.³⁰ In the investigation of these phenomena, transcendental analysis reveals that these

²⁷ See Melle, "Objektivierende und nicht-objektivierende Akte" for the definitive summary of the problem of whether values are constituted in objectivating acts. Husserl wrestles with this question most closely in his 1908/09 lecture course; cf. *Hua*. XXVIII, 332–45. Brand suggests a way of understanding the givenness of values in terms of what satisfies a lack that is present in the material situation; cf. *Die Lebenswelt*, 381.

²⁸ Carr, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, 194.

²⁹ Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 107.

³⁰ *Hua*. VI, 261–2; *Crisis*, 258.

“objects” are given by becoming thematic against a background horizon, which is the lifeworld as a transcendental concept. As Overgaard explains, “the idea of horizon is in fact...an *alternative* to the conception of world as totality.”³¹

The horizontal character of the lifeworld is intrinsically oriented outwards. The horizon is never reached; it always represents a further limit no matter how much one tries to approach it. As Husserl writes,

[The universal *a priori* of correlation] can be displayed only in relativity, in an unfolding of horizons in which one soon realizes that unnoticed limitations, horizons which have not been felt, push us on to inquire into new correlations inseparably bound up with those already displayed.³²

Because each new givenness emerges from the field established by the horizon of the lifeworld, the field of possible givennesses also changes with each new givenness. As I walk around the house, the horizon of “the sides of the house that I would see were I on the other side” also changes to incorporate my new experiences. I can never catch the horizon itself. As Landgrebe notes, world for Husserl entails the notion of “and so forth” with respect to our possible experiences.³³

Because the horizon always extends beyond my present experience, and because each horizon is synthetically unified with other possible experiences in a harmony of continuity, the regulative ideal of the horizon is the notion of a single lifeworld that encompasses all possible manners of givenness *simpliciter*. As Luft

³¹ Overgaard, 111.

³² *Hua*. VI, 162; *Crisis*, 159.

³³ Landgrebe, *Der Weg der Phänomenologie*, 53.

states, “Husserl envisions the merging of all worlds as the ‘horizon of all horizons’ or as Husserl’s ‘One world.’”³⁴

In constitutional terms, then, the horizon means that the world is never fully exhausted; there are always future possible manners of givenness beyond what we have thus far experienced, and all of our judgments about objects are presumptive on the basis that there will be a continuity between the way that expectations have been fulfilled in the past and future givennesses. In other words, the horizon of experience always holds open the possibility that “it could be otherwise.” As we shall see, this openness to the future is one manner in which the lifeworld can influence the constitution of objects, as well as subjects. The following section will explore how the openness of the lifeworld’s horizons implies that the lifeworld is a *public* world; this in turn will allow us to investigate the role of culture, tradition, and history in the structure of worldliness.

§13. Cultural Horizons and Traditional Norms

In the previous section, we noted that the world functions as a horizon within which objects give themselves. Husserl grasps that this horizon is intrinsically intersubjective; as he writes, “Thus in general the world exists not only for isolated men but for the community of men; and this is due to the fact that even what is straightforwardly perceptual is communalized.”³⁵ The fact that objects exist against a backdrop of further possible perceptions implies that others could be perceiving the adumbrations that are not directly given to me and vice versa. The same holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for values, norms, and other meaningful intentional

³⁴ Luft, “Husserl’s Notion of the Natural Attitude,” 118.

³⁵ *Hua*. VI, 166; *Crisis*, 163.

relations. As a result, individuals not only live next to each other, but with each other. Husserl explains,

Thus in whatever way we may be conscious of the world as universal horizon, as coherent universe of existing objects, we, each “I-the-man” and all of us together, belong to the world as living with one another in the world; and the world is our world, valid for our consciousness as existing precisely through this “living together.”³⁶

The intersubjective character of worldly experience indicates that the lifeworld is shaped by the social groups that live in that world. As Waldenfels notes, “This world is subject-relative not only to individual subjects, but also to *social life circles*.”³⁷

The claim that the world is related to a social circle is not merely a claim that objects are publicly available; it is also a claim that expectations for objects are established via the possible interaction of members of a community. The constitution of these expectations results in the generation of cultures and their traditions. This section will explore the historical, cultural dimension of the world in order to set up Husserl’s discussion of the homeworld/alienworld dynamic in the following section.

Because individuals live in a shared world, their expectations merge into a sense of what is typical, or “normal,” for any given kind of experience.³⁸ As Husserl explains,

³⁶ *Hua*. VI, 110; *Crisis*, 108.

³⁷ Waldenfels, 132: “Diese Welt ist subjektiv-relativ nicht nur bezüglich individueller Subjekte, sondern auch bezüglich *sozialer Lebenskreise*.”

³⁸ Husserl uses the term “normal” in opposition to several concepts throughout his works. In brief, what is atypical is unusual, but there is not necessarily a normative connotation associated with the atypical. There is a normative connotation associated with the anomalous; what is anomalous is not normal insofar as it goes against the norm (e.g., viewing an object differently from others). What is anomalous may be able to be brought into harmony with others (such as by wearing

In reciprocal understanding, my experiences and experiential acquisitions enter into contact with those of others, similar to the contact between individual series of experiences within my (one's own) experiential life; and here again, for the most part, intersubjective harmony of validity occurs, [establishing what is] "normal" in respect to particular details, and thus an intersubjective unity also comes about in the multiplicity of validities and of what is valid through them.³⁹

While there are necessarily differences between the viewpoints of different subjects (e.g., you see the house differently than I do because you are standing slightly to my right), we can harmonize those differences into a unified sense of what the house is and thereby establish a norm for how we expect the house to give itself in future experiences.⁴⁰

Conversely, if I have a radically different experience of the house than my fellow observers, we can question whether my view is impaired in some way (e.g., I am not wearing my glasses), and we can refuse to allow my view to be harmonized into the sense of the house that is being intersubjectively constituted. As Steinbock writes,

Since the notion of normality is developed in the context of analyses concerning passive synthesis, *Einstimmigkeit* is the process of synthetic unity

corrective lenses), or it may permanently deviate from the norm (as in the case of a colorblind person's perception), in which case it would be abnormal. Finally, there is the alien, which is abnormal from the perspective of the homeworld but has its own concordancy within its own horizon. In what follows, I will attempt to show how the more normatively charged senses of normality emerge for Husserl.

³⁹ *Hua.* VI, 166; *Crisis*, 163.

⁴⁰ This norm can be constituted from cultural premises as well as perceptual content. Husserl gives the example of parks, houses, and churches, which would be merely spatial objects to a Bantu: "Aber da ist ein Unterscheid. Hinsichtlich der raumzeitlichen Bestimmungen, der bloßen Natur muss Gemeinsamkeit bestehen, aber worauf der Baumeister mit diesem Gebäude da hinauswollte, und was korrelativ dieses Gebäude als solches für einen ‚Sinn‘ hat, einen ästhetischen und praktischen, das kann der Bantu nicht verstehen" (*Hua.* IX, 498).

constitution in and through differences; accordingly, *Un-stimmigkeit* is that which does not initially pass into the synthetic constitution of unity.⁴¹

Significantly, this shared sense of what is typical begins to constitute a norm; if my experience is discordant with that of everyone else, there is a presumption that my experience is atypical and *ought* to be harmonized with the experiences of my intersubjective community. We will come back to this idea of a norm as an ought momentarily; for now, it is important to note that this process of harmonization establishes an expectation for future experiences.

Husserl extends this sense of normality into an expectation of a normal style for a world. He writes, “in the *world of experience that has become normal* everything real that belongs to the surrounding world has a sense of unity from the universal style of spatiality of the experience of reality, thus of presumptive harmony, which belongs to this normality.”⁴² One of the ways that such a normal style of a world can be established is through the formation of a cultural world. Husserl parenthetically mentions the connection between the cultural world and the normal world by writing,

Expansion of a normal surrounding world in terms of a personality through association with other personalities (peoples, cultures) with other

⁴¹ Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 130. Although Cairns recommends a translation of “harmony” or “accordance” for “Einstimmigkeit” (*Guide for Translating Husserl*, 38), Steinbock glosses the term as “concordance.” Based on Husserl’s use, concordance seems preferable as a default translation because it implies a stronger sense of being in agreement than harmony.

⁴² *Hua*. XXXIX, 71: “Innerhalb der *normal gewordenen Erfahrungswelt* hat jedes umweltliche Reale Einheitssinn aus dem räumlichen Allgemeinstil von Realitätserfahrung, also von präsumptiver Einstimmigkeit, die zu dieser Normalität gehört.”

surrounding worlds, like, e.g., the becoming of a united earthly world (thus normally expectant [world]) for the entire earthly humanity.⁴³

The interaction of individuals not only forms a common basis of experience for a culture but also establishes that basis as normal, i.e., as what is typical for experiences of that kind. One the examples Husserl gives is the modern scientific world; this particular cultural world is governed by norms for what counts as evidence and truth which have been sedimented by the scientists following in Galileo's tradition.⁴⁴

In his manuscripts, Husserl draws an even more explicit connection between intersubjective norms and culture. He writes, "In all that lies a coexistence and intermingling of all subjective horizons, in addition to the generative communalization, its communalization of horizons in all forms of community."⁴⁵ In the following paragraph, Husserl asks himself how to proceed with the insights that the intersubjectively shared sense of the world emerges from tradition and that the world exists for those whose horizons have become enmeshed in terms normality and anomaly.

⁴³ *Hua.* XXXIX, 71: "Erweiterung einer normalen Umwelt bezogen auf eine Personalität durch Verkehr mit anderen Personalitäten (Völkern, Kulturen) mit anderen Umwelten, wie z.B. das Werden einer einheitlichen irdischen Welt (also normal werdender) für die gesamte irdische Menschheit." Husserl's concept of culture is ill-defined and seems to be synonymous, in a low-key sense, with a social world and its history. Although culture is probably not a pregnant term for Husserl, he was undoubtedly familiar with the stronger sense of culture employed by the Neo-Kantians, especially Cassirer.

⁴⁴ *Hua.* VI, 177; *Crisis*, 173–4.

⁴⁵ *Hua.* XXXIX, 129: "In all dem liegt ein Miteinander und Ineinander aller subjektiven Horizonte, dazugerechnet die generative Vergemeinschaftung, ihre Vergemeinschaftung der Horizonte in allen Gemeinschaftsformen."

In order to develop the connection between tradition and normality, a brief digression into Husserl's concept of history is necessary. Because normality emerges from the shared validities of a particular community, it will turn out that normality has an essentially historical character. Since normality is essentially historical, as well as intersubjective, it requires an expansion of phenomenology beyond the genetic method to what Husserl will term "generative" phenomenology.

In "The Origin of Geometry," Husserl describes history as "the vital movement of the coexistence and the interweaving of original formations and sedimentations of meaning."⁴⁶ In other words, history entails a production, or generation, or meaning that reflects both the sedimented formations from which it develops as well as the potential for new developments as those sedimented formations are reaffirmed, reinterpreted, or rejected. Given the previous discussion of horizontality, it should be no surprise that this sense of history can only be treated properly under the rubric of worldliness. As Landgrebe notes, "*the horizon of the lifeworld is nothing other than the horizon of the history of the world.*"⁴⁷ By allowing new historical formations to emerge and then become sedimented as the background for future intentional activity, the world is the source of history in the sense of being the site within which history happens.

If we remember that tradition includes a normative dimension in the sense of what ought to be, i.e., how sense should be made given these sedimented meanings and practices, then it makes sense to think of tradition as one of the primary means

⁴⁶ *Hua.* VI, 380; *Crisis*, 371.

⁴⁷ Landgrebe, *Phänomenologie und Geschichte*, 158: "*der Horizont der Lebenswelt ist nicht anders als der Horizont der Weltgeschichte.*"

by which history is constituted and transmitted. As Steinbock writes, “A historical tradition becomes characterized as a living, productive formation of sense that integrates the sedimented layers of earlier productive formations.”⁴⁸

Husserl uses the language of “generation” to describe the formation of a historical tradition. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl mentions “generative problems” concerning birth, death, and “the generational nexus of psycho-physical being”⁴⁹ and notes that these problems exist in a higher dimension of analysis that presupposes the lower, genetic problems such as the phenomenology of internal time-consciousness. Steinbock argues that the best way to understand these claims is in terms of a parallel relationship: just as the genetic method took the results of static phenomenology as a starting point for new investigations, likewise generative phenomenology opens a new dimension beyond genetic phenomenology in investigating problems concerning generation (in both the sense of “generations of human beings” as well as the sense of “that which is generated historically”). Steinbock summarizes the scope of generative phenomenology by contrasting it with genetic phenomenology. He writes,

In distinction to a genetic analysis that is restricted to the becoming of individual subjectivity, a synchronic field of contemporary individuals, and intersubjectivity as founded in an egology, generative phenomenology treats phenomena that are *historical, geological, cultural, intersubjective, and normative* from the very start.⁵⁰

The concept of generativity [*Generativität*] is occasionally referenced in Husserl’s manuscripts, although his work in the 1930s is generative in the sense of

⁴⁸ Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 191.

⁴⁹ *Hua. I*, 169; *Cartesian Meditations*, 142.

⁵⁰ Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 178.

raising generative problems rather than reflecting a fully worked-out generative method. One of the essential problems that pushed Husserl beyond a merely genetic phenomenology was the problem of the normality of culture. Held describes the normality of culture as “generative” because it is grounded on the accomplishments of a series of past generations that reaches back into infinity.⁵¹ Steinbock also emphasizes that the historical dimension of normality is forward-looking: it establishes a tradition in which future generations participate and contribute.⁵² While a full discussion of generative phenomenology lies beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is necessary to be familiar with the topic of generative phenomenology in order to examine how culture and tradition influence the constitution of the person through the notion of the homeworld. As Steinbock writes, “The starting point of many of [Husserl’s] generative reflections is the constitution of normatively significant lifeworlds, that is, the co-constitutive relation of homeworld and alienworld.”⁵³ Thus, the next section will explore these interrelated concepts of worldliness.

§14. Homeworld and Alienworld

Because the lifeworld includes a cultural dimension that is sedimented through tradition, Husserl argues that one of the manifestations of worldliness is the concept of the homeworld. This term, which appears in scattered manuscripts as well as the published intersubjectivity manuscripts (especially *Hua. XV*), is used to indicate a world that has a normative priority for a specific ego because *that ego*

⁵¹ Held, “Heimwelt, Fremdwelt, die eine Welt,” 313.

⁵² Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 172.

⁵³ Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 179.

belongs to *that* world. As Husserl writes, “Each [homeworld] has his ‘acquired history’ on the basis of the respective ego which is made at home in it.”⁵⁴

Husserl introduces the concept of the homeworld in terms of the generative dimension of normality. He writes, “[t]he *normal* life as *generative* has now its historicity and initially its own life-temporality and world-temporality peculiar to every generation, which itself has its horizons of familiarity and unfamiliarity.”⁵⁵ In other words, the norms established by a particular historical community constitute a unique world with its own (historical) horizons. This world is an application of the concept of the lifeworld, i.e., a horizon of meaningfulness; the homeworld applies that notion of a horizon to a historical context that establishes norms, expectations, and limits to what is meaningful to the community in question. Held summarizes Husserl’s position, writing, “Here it is a matter of exceeding the initial already constituted common world, namely the cultural world, in which a community of humans is home [*heimisch*], through the encounter with a foreign culture.”⁵⁶ Held highlights two key aspects of Husserl’s position. First, the generation of a common cultural world establishes a home in which individuals live together. Second, this

⁵⁴ “Grundlegende Untersuchungen,” 319; “Foundational Investigations,” 126. Kersten’s translation leaves the referent of “jede” undermined. From the context, the only grammatical choice is the “points” that are distant bodies but can also be considered as homelands [*Heimstätten*]. The context makes clear that Husserl is speaking about homeworlds in the same way that he uses the term elsewhere.

⁵⁵ *Hua*. XV, 431; translated in Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 181 (emphasis added by Steinbock). “Die normale Leben als generative hat nun seine Geschichtlichkeit und zunächst die jeder Generation eigene Lebenszeitlichkeit und Weltzeitlichkeit, die selbst ihre Horizonte der Bekanntheit und Unbekanntheit hat.”

⁵⁶ Held, “Heimwelt, Fremdwelt, die eine Welt,” 307: “Hier geht es um die Überschreitung der ersten bereits konstituierten gemeinsamen Welt, nämlich der Kulturwelt, in der eine Menschengemeinschaft heimisch ist, durch die Begegnung mit einer fremden Kultur.”

homeworld is generated through an encounter with a foreign culture. We will discuss both of these aspects in turn.

The acquired history of the homeworld is an extension of the subject-relativity of the lifeworld to the intersubjective community. Kern links the concept of homeworld to Husserl's earlier analysis of the *a priori* of the lifeworld, writing,

Husserl saw in such a general structure or type a "lifeworldly *a priori*," which is to be grasped in an *a priori* science, in an "ontology of the lifeworld." Such an ontology would also have general structures of subjective relativity and intersubjective praxis (such as the structure "homeworld—farworld").⁵⁷

In other words, one of the *a priori* structures of the lifeworld is that it is intersubjective and influenced by the practical activities (i.e., history) of those who live in it. The language of homeworld captures the idea that this world belongs to a community of subjects in a stronger sense than merely finding themselves "thrown" into a world. Specifically, the subjects *belong* to a homeworld; their homeworld is the zero-point of their universe around which all other horizons are oriented.

Husserl explains, "We see that in this fashion the cultural world too is given 'orientedly', in relation to a zero member of a <zero> personality. Here I and my culture are primordial, over against every alien culture."⁵⁸

Let us pause a moment to take stock of the ideas introduced in the preceding paragraphs. Husserl's claim is that the intersubjective, cultural character of the

⁵⁷ Kern, "Die Lebenswelt als Grundlagenproblem", 77–8: "Husserl sah in einer solchen allgemeinen Struktur oder Typik / ein ,lebensweltliches Apriori', das in einer apriorischen Wissenschaft, in einer ,Ontologie der Lebenswelt' zu erfassen ist. Eine solche Ontologie hätte auch allgemeine Strukturen der subjektiven Relativität und intersubjektiven Praxis (etwa die Struktur ,Heimwelt-Fernwelt')." Kern's opposition of the homeworld and farworld captures the idea that the homeworld is the zero-point for the community, but it neglects the normative character of the opposition homeworld/alienworld.

⁵⁸ *Hua. I*, 162; *Cartesian Meditations*, 134.

lifeworld makes possible the constitution of norms. Within a cultural world, there are sedimented expectations for how things will appear and be valuable (e.g., cultural artifacts) as well as how individuals will act, what individuals will strive for, etc. Steinbock argues that these expectations establish a sense of normality that goes beyond a descriptive claim of what is typical to an evaluative claim of what ought to be. Steinbock uses the language of optimality to distinguish this sense of norm from what is normal in the sense of being typical. He writes,

the optimal emerges *in and through the very kind of givenness of pre-givenness* it is, while what is non-optimal is excluded by its self-subordination to what is optimal, without having recourse to a reflective choice of possibilities that are determined in advance.⁵⁹

The key idea is that norms in the sense of what is optimal involve a kind of exclusion; these possibilities are pre-given as optimal while other possibilities are pre-given as abnormal.

In short, the idea of a norm as optimal establishes my world as a null-point that individuals can either belong to or stand outside. As Husserl explains, normality is a “limiting-off of ‘the’ world.”⁶⁰ He goes on to give the example of tradition as a specific manner in which ‘the’ world can be delimited into my homeworld and the alien outside world. Because my tradition establishes my homeworld as normatively optimal, my homeworld becomes the zero-point of my reflection insofar as I limit off my “homeworld” from the unfamiliar “outside world.”⁶¹ In other words, the oriented nature of the homeworld, coupled with the limiting off of the outside world as being

⁵⁹ Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 150.

⁶⁰ *Hua*, XV, 431, translated in Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 181.

⁶¹ *Hua*. XV, 430–1; cf. Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 180.

not part of my culture, is what allows norms in the sense of what is optimal to emerge.

Steinbock argues that the constitution of the homeworld is inescapably and indeed dialectically bound up with the constitution of the alienworld. He writes, “the home can neither constitutively precede the alien, nor the alien precede the home; they are co-constituted as a co-relative structure.”⁶² He quotes from Husserl to demonstrate this co-relativity; as Husserl explains,

There is constituted an alien humankind, an alien humanity, and alien people, for instance. *Precisely thereby* there is constituted for me and of us ‘*our own*’ community of homecomrades, community of a people in relation to our cultural environing-world as the world of our human validities, our particular ones.⁶³

Husserl’s argument is that the normality of “our community,” “our values,” etc., is constituted by means of an opposition with the alien. Prior to the encounter of another culture, the values of our culture simply *are* values, *simpliciter*. It is only when we realize that those values are not shared universally that it becomes possible to think of them as values belonging to our community. Husserl summarizes, “[the] homeworld *only comes into relief* when other homeworlds, other peoples are already there along with the homeworld in the horizon.”⁶⁴

⁶² Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 182.

⁶³ *Hua*. XV, 214, translated in Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 182 (italics added by Steinbock).

⁶⁴ *Hua*. XV, 176n1, translated in Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 182 (italics added by Steinbock). It is important not to misinterpret Husserl as arguing for a radical discontinuity between the homeworld and the alienworld. For Husserl, both the homeworld and alienworld are still lifeworlds, albeit lifeworlds with different histories and thus constituted norms. Because they are both lifeworlds, however, they still share the general structures of worldliness, which makes it possible (at least in theory) for the alienworld to be made intelligible from the perspective of the homeworld, and vice versa.

The homeworld is an interesting concept because it compliments the notion of the lifeworld as an unending series of horizons with a notion of the lifeworld as a ground. As Husserl writes in the *Crisis*, “the life-world...is always already there, existing in advance for us, the ‘ground’ of all praxis whether theoretical or extratheoretical.”⁶⁵ Although the metaphor of the lifeworld as a ground is related to the metaphor of the lifeworld as a horizon, the ground metaphor carries some unique implications that are important to understand the function of worldliness in the concept of the person.

In a manuscript, Husserl uses the ground metaphor to argue against the modern, Copernican account of the universe. According to the Copernican view, the earth is simply one body among many in the universe; thus, to modern scientists, there is no scientific reason to privilege the earth as the zero-point of our coordinate systems.⁶⁶ From the third-person perspective of the scientists, it makes sense to say that the earth is merely another body rotating around the sun.

Husserl argues that this worldview, in which the earth is merely another body, neglects the grounding function of the lifeworld. He writes, “In the primordial shape of its representation, the earth itself does not move and does not rest; only in relation to it are movement and rest given as having their sense of movement and rest.”⁶⁷ In other words, Husserl wants to argue that there is a primordial notion of

⁶⁵ *Hua*. VI, 145; *Crisis*, 142.

⁶⁶ “Grundlegende Untersuchungen,” 308–9; “Foundational Investigations,” 118–9.

⁶⁷ “Grundlegende Untersuchungen,” 308–9; “Foundational Investigations,” 118. The obvious comparison here is Heidegger’s claim that there is something primordial that is the condition of the possibility of certain dichotomies, such as the dichotomy between subject and object; cf. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 297. Although a detailed comparison is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it seems

the earth as being prior to the concepts of motion and rest; it is from the perspective of the earth that concepts like motion and rest acquire their sense.

This example makes more sense when considered in light of Husserl's critique of the sciences in the *Crisis*. His argument is that the geometers following after Galileo have abstracted themselves from the lifeworld and then erased that relationship by reifying the abstract, formalized mode as the true domain of geometry. In fact, geometrical operations such as translations, rotations, and the like are only meaningful insofar as they derive from experiences in the lifeworld.

Thus, Copernicus' argument against geocentrism is but another example of the modern tendency to mistake the method of mathematization for true being.⁶⁸ The true concepts of motion and rest are derived from a lifeworld that is experienced phenomenologically prior to the formalized representations of the universe. Husserl contrasts the modern scientific view with the experiential reality of the lifeworld, writing, "for us it [the earth] is the experiential ground for all bodies in the experiential genesis of our representation of the world."⁶⁹ Husserl does not want to deny the truth of the scientists' perspective, but he does want to assert that it is a truth of a mathematized, third-person worldview rather than the first-personal experience of the lifeworld as a ground for our experience.

It is this sense of the lifeworld that the metaphor of the lifeworld as ground attempts to highlight. Steinbock explains the function of the earth-ground metaphor

reasonable to assert that both Husserl and Heidegger have latched onto the insight that there is a ground that makes these concepts possible by establishing horizons (or, in Heidegger's language in *Basic Questions*, the unconcealedness of being).

⁶⁸ See the history of Galileo in *Hua*. VI, esp. §9h as well as §34e.

⁶⁹ "Grundlegende Untersuchungen," 308; "Foundational Investigations," 118.

in terms of meaningfulness: “The earth-ground is that *from* which being ‘above’ has any sense at all; it is that *from* which an ego or a community of egos are sense-giving.”⁷⁰ In other words, the lifeworld as ground has the transcendental function of making sense possible. Husserl’s explanation of the concepts of motion and rest and the crisis in the mathematized sciences are but two examples of how the lifeworld is necessary as a meaning-foundation for beings.

The concept of the homeworld in particular relies on the metaphor of the lifeworld as ground. Just as the world of experience grounds the objective sciences for Husserl, the homeworld grounds the concepts of culture, tradition, and community. Husserl’s claim that the values, peoples, etc. of the homeworld come into relief via the encounter with the alienworld is an assertion that the homeworld transcendently grounds the experience of one’s community, as well as the values and norms of that community. Insofar as the community, values, and norms are all essentially related to the concept of personhood, then, the homeworld/alienworld dynamic is a vitally important structure of the worldly dimension of the person. When combined with the metaphor of the world as a horizon, it becomes possible to articulate how the person itself is an essentially worldly entity; this will be the focus of the final section.

§15. The Worldliness of the Person

Now that we have outlined the function of the lifeworld as a horizon, the homeworld/alienworld dynamic and its grounding function, and the historicity of culture and tradition, we are in a position to explicitly connect the concept of

⁷⁰ Steinbock, *Home and Beyond*, 112.

worldliness to the structure of personhood. The first connection lies in the lifeworld's constitutive function insofar as it is the horizon of meaningfulness. In the previous chapter, we noted that Husserl uses his genetic method to investigate how objects are given to consciousness in passive ways, as well as how passive constitution presents objects to consciousness. Once Husserl performs the reduction and moves into the transcendental register, the question becomes how certain kinds of objects can be presented to consciousness, or: what are the conditions of the possibility of this object being an object for consciousness? Because objects become objective, or thematic, against a background of co-givennesses, the transcendental question requires an investigation into the (co-) givenness of horizons, which culminates in a phenomenology of worldliness. As Husserl argues, studies of constitution require that "the transcendental sense of the world must also become disclosed to us ultimately in the *full concreteness* with which it is incessantly the *life-world* for us all."⁷¹

From the perspective of the problem of personhood, world is therefore an essential aspect of personhood insofar as all constitutive activity, from the passive dimension of instincts and affection up through the active position-taking acts (*Stellungnahmen*) of choosing a vocation, which constitute the person as such, are only possible insofar as intentional objects and their correlated acts can meaningfully objectify and make thematic their objects with respect to a horizon of meaningfulness. Since constitutive activity constitutes the subject through its intentional history, and since the world is a condition of the possibility of genetic

⁷¹ *Hua. I*, 163; *Cartesian Meditations*, 136.

constitutive activity, the constitution of the depth dimension of the subject—which is precisely what constitutes the person as such—depends essentially upon the world in which such constitution occurs and can be made intelligible. As Zahavi notes, “it is an abstraction to speak of a pure, worldless I-pole, for full subjectivity is a world-experiencing life.”⁷² The same holds, *a fortiori*, for the transcendental person precisely because the transcendental person is intended to capture the concrete aspects of transcendental subjectivity.

In fact, Husserl argues that transcendental subjectivity *necessarily* enworlds itself. As Husserl writes, “It belongs essentially to this world-constituting accomplishment that subjectivity objectifies itself as human subjectivity, as an element of the world.”⁷³ In other words, it is an essential feature of transcendental subjectivity that it enters into a world, and the worldliness of transcendental subjectivity is what makes possible its constitutional activity.

The claim that transcendental subjectivity necessarily enworlds itself is not merely a claim that subjectivity necessarily exists in a world. Husserl rather understands this as a claim that subjectivity *belongs* to a world. For example, Husserl claims that the person inherently has a cultural world: “The human being as a person is *the subject of a cultural world*.”⁷⁴ In this same text, Husserl emphasizes the idea that the person belongs to that cultural world in a footnote. He uses the language of home and alien [*Heimat* and *Fremde*], as well as the contrast between our humankind and foreign humankind [*unserer Menschheit* and *fremden*

⁷² Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology*, 74; the internal quotation comes from *Hua. XV*, 287.

⁷³ *Hua. VI*, 115–6; *Crisis*, 113. Cf. also *Hua. XXIX*, 260.

⁷⁴ *Hua. XV*, 180: “Der Mensch als Person ist *Subjekt einer Kulturwelt*.”

Menschheiten] to argue that the world of the person has the normative character of the homeworld.⁷⁵ This sense of belonging to a world is significant because it explains how the concrete aspects of subjectivity—such as belonging to a community—are not accidental features of transcendental subjectivity; rather, they belong to the essence of what it is to be a transcendental subject in the full sense.

A second connection between the concepts of worldliness and personhood involves the historical nature of subjectivity. Carr argues that, in the *Crisis*, Husserl's understanding of history has evolved from his earlier position (especially in the *Erste Philosophie* lectures). In his later work, the distinction between historical, worldly reflection and pure ego-reflection is undermined. Husserl no longer sees the purpose of historical reflection as merely a propaedeutic into the systematic procedure of pure reflection; rather, the reflections carried out by "the human being as a person" are the focus of phenomenology.⁷⁶

Because Husserl emphasizes the historical character of personhood, it is necessary to examine the concept of personhood in its historical context. However, this should not be misunderstood as a demand that the study of personhood engage in biographical studies or psychological research. Rather, it means that we can only outline the contours of personhood in the generic sense of identifying the structures that constitute the person; every specific person will be constitutively influenced by

⁷⁵ *Hua.* XV, 181n.

⁷⁶ Carr, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, 60; the phrase that Carr takes from Husserl ("Menschen als Person") is used by Husserl himself in *Hua.* VI, 232 (*Crisis*, 228), although the emphasis of that section is on the concreteness of human beings in a world rather than the historicity of the world *per se*. See also *Hua.* XXIX, Text Nr. 34, in which Husserl criticizes his ahistorical approach to phenomenology in *Ideas I* and asserts that the historical way to the reduction is the most principled way.

the content of his or her horizons, homeworld, and cultural traditions. As we will see in the chapters on community and teleology, Husserl believes that there is still a way to critique the legitimacy of one's cultural traditions through reason. As a result, it will be possible to determine if specific cultural traditions and homeworld are conducive to personal flourishing. For now, what is important is that the historical tradition belongs to the concept of personhood as a constitutive part, even if we cannot discuss what that tradition posits in the abstract.

An additional consequence of the historical character of the person is that the person cannot stand outside of his or her own history. In other words, history is a transcendental condition of the person. We have already suggested this claim when we noted in chapter two that the individual is affected by his or her constitutive activity. However, we can make the claim even stronger once we realize that constitution stands within a worldly context. Landgrebe connects the historicity of the world with transcendental subjectivity in no uncertain terms. He argues, "The constituting accomplishments of transcendental subjectivity must contain in themselves the *conditions of the possibility of experiencing the lifeworld as a historical world in its historicity.*"⁷⁷ Because the world provides a horizon within which objects can be given to consciousness (or can become objects, in the case of passive synthesis), it would be impossible for transcendental subjectivity to perform its constitutive activity without the historical dimension of the life. To reiterate the

⁷⁷ Landgrebe, *Phänomenologie und Geschichte*, 158: "Die konstituierenden Leistungen der transzendentalen Subjektivität müssen die *Bedingungen der Möglichkeit* in sich schließen, *die Lebenswelt als geschichtliche Welt in ihrer Geschichtlichkeit zu erfahren.*" See also Luft, *Subjectivity and Lifeworld in Transcendental Phenomenology*, esp. the introduction and chs. 4, 6, and 12.

claim made earlier: an *a priori* feature of the lifeworld is its historicity. Landgrebe in fact goes on to argue that this *a priori* of history is not a Kantian ideal or an innate idea; rather, it is the “*region of the deepest-lying self-experience of reflecting transcendental subjectivity.*”⁷⁸ In short, the historicity of the lifeworld is connected, at the deepest level, with the structure of transcendental subjectivity precisely because it is the depth dimension of subjectivity that both makes possible and is manifested in the historicity that belongs to any worldly structure in virtue of its horizontal nature.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that Husserl understood all of the above mentioned aspects of the world—from the horizontal character to cultural traditions and the homeworld—to have a transcendental interpretation. In a manuscript entitled “The Historical Manner of Being of Transcendental Intersubjectivity,” Husserl describes the historicity of transcendental subjectivity in terms of its worldliness.⁷⁹ He writes,

We reveal of the transcendental *ego* from the constitution of the world: the self-constitution of transcendental “personality” as directed in infinity to “self-preservation” in the necessity of self-objectivation as human personality, as humanity, which wants to form itself and its ever newly humanizing surrounding world to a genuine or true humanity and to a humanly beautiful and good surrounding world.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Landgrebe, *Phänomenologie und Geschichte*, 162: “*Bereich der tiefstliegenden Selbsterfahrung der reflektierenden transzendentalen Subjektivität.*”

⁷⁹ *Hua*. XV, Text Nr. 23: “Die geschichtliche Seinsweise der transzendentalen Intersubjektivität. Ihre verhüllte Bekundung in der Menschengeschichte und Naturgeschichte.”

⁸⁰ *Hua*. XV, 388: “Wir enthüllen vom transzendentalen *ego* aus die Weltkonstitution: die Selbstkonstitution der transzendentalen ‚Personalität‘ als ins Unendliche auf ‚Selbsterhaltung‘ gerichtet in der Notwendigkeit der Selbstobjektivierung als menschliche Personalität, als Menschheit, die sich und ihre sich immer neu

Husserl goes on to explicitly mention the concepts of culture, (homeworld) territories, and the generative history of communities ranging from families to peoples in the broadest sense, as being part of transcendental subjectivity.⁸¹

Given the emphasis that Husserl places on the transcendental interpretation of the world, as well as the close interrelation between worldliness and subjectivity, it thus is no surprise that the world is a vital component of the structure of personhood. As this chapter has argued, the worldliness of subjectivity directly implicates the constitution of the person by means of his or her horizons, homeworld, and historicity. However, this chapter has also argued that it is the worldly nature of subjectivity that makes possible the appearance of values, norms, and intersubjective communities. These consequences of the worldliness of subjectivity have their own function to play in the concept of personhood. In the following chapters, we will explore how the values chosen by a person—as exemplified by the concept of a person’s vocation—and the intersubjective community of the person both influence the development of personhood in its full concretion. As we turn to these topics, it is important to remember their ground in the worldliness of subjectivity.

humanisierende Umwelt zu einer echten oder wahren Menschheit und einer menschlich schönen und guten Umwelt gestalten will.”

⁸¹ Cf. *Hua.* XV, 391.

Chapter 4. The Vocation of the Person

Here I stand; I can do no other.
—Martin Luther

The previous chapters have focused on the background structures that make possible the concept of personhood. As I have argued, Husserl's concept of personhood is intended to provide an account of the concrete features of subjectivity. Because the person is not an abstract, contentless form of subjectivity, it is necessary to discuss the depth dimension of subjectivity, which includes the passive, affective, and habitual dimensions, as well as the worldly context in which subjectivity operates. However, while these dimensions are essential components of personhood, being in a world or being passively affected are not sufficient to make one into a person. Personhood is an achievement of subjectivity; therefore, in order to develop the full concept of personhood, it is necessary to examine the active life of subjectivity.

This chapter will begin that examination by focusing on the concept of vocation. A vocational decision is a particular kind of position-taking act in which the subject takes on specific values as absolute for him or her. The decision to regard those values as absolutely important, while motivated in part by the passive, affective, and worldly history of the individual, is an active decision that orients the entire person's life around those values and hence provides a unity to the life of the person. Indeed, I will argue that it is with the emergence of a person's vocation that it becomes appropriate to speak of the person, rather than the individual subject.

This chapter will be divided into six sections. The first section (§16) will introduce the concept of *Stellungnahmen*, or position-taking acts. The second section (§17) will explain Husserl's motivation to develop the concept of vocation from what he calls the "problem of love." The next four sections will collectively reconstruct the characteristics of vocation in Husserl's philosophy: I will argue that a vocation is a kind of position-taking act that is characterized by its embrace of specific values as being absolute for the individual (§18), that encompasses the whole life of the individual (§19), that constitutes the individual as a unified person (§20), and that establishes a teleological development within the person (§21). These characteristics of vocation collectively allow us to speak for the first time about the *person*, as distinct from a merely individuated transcendental ego.

§16. Position-Taking Acts

While the previous chapters have focused on the passive background elements that make possible the concept of personhood, they have not yet addressed the actual constitution of personhood. To be a person is an achievement of subjectivity, and it is necessary to expand this account to include the active life of the subject. Husserl links the notion of personhood with the metaphorical idea of being awake, instead of asleep in the domain of passivity, when he writes,

The subject develops itself, we say, from sleeping to waking I, and the awake I develops itself with its intentionality. It is no empty identity-point of consecutive acts. In one, since in the acts of the I it constructs a surrounding world for the I, it develops the I into personality, or more clearly, from the I-point of acts constitutes a person as a personal subject, which in turn manifests personal properties.¹

¹ A V 21, 62a: "Das Subjekt entwickelt sich, sagen wir, vom schlafenden zum wachen Ich, und das wache Ich entwickelt sich mit seiner Intentionalität. Es ist nicht leerer

This quotation makes several points about the concept of personhood. First, the person is conceptually different from a formal principle of unity. The person has a *personal* unity, which is related to the acts performed by the person and which manifests the *personal* properties of the subject. Second, the development of the person from sleeping to waking occurs through (personal) intentional acts, i.e., acts that are related to the person as a unique subject. In short, the person in its proper sense emerges in the *active* life of subjectivity, when that subjectivity intentionally relates itself to its surrounding world in a manner that manifests the uniqueness of that subjectivity.

For Husserl, the central concept necessary to understanding how the active life of subjectivity can manifest its uniqueness is the concept of position-taking acts, or *Stellungnahmen*. As Hart explains, “The key to [Husserl’s] concept of personhood is indicated by the German word *Stellungnahmen*, which is perhaps best rendered by ‘taking a position.’ A position-taking act effects a *Stellungnahme* (or *Einstellung*)...i.e., a disposition toward the repetition of the position-taking act under similar circumstances.”² In a position-taking act, the subject commits himself or herself to a particular intentional performance. Husserl’s initial examples of position-taking acts are theoretical judgments: for instance, when I judge that $2 + 2 = 4$, I take a position on the content of my judgment, viz., the sum of the addends in

Identitätspunkt von aufeinanderfolgenden Akten. In eins damit, dass sich in den Akten des Ich für das Ich eine Umwelt baut, entwickelt sich das Ich zur Persönlichkeit oder, deutlicher, konstituiert sich aus dem Ich-Punkt der Akte eine Person als personales Subjekt der Akte, die ihrerseits personale Eigenschaften bekunden.”

² Hart, *The Person and the Common Life*, 53. The connection between *Stellungnahmen* and personhood is already noted by Landgrebe, *Der Weg der Phänomenologie*, 155.

question. Yet position-taking acts are not limited to theoretical judgments; Husserl includes “theoretical, valuing, and practical position-taking” acts as classes of *Stellungnahmen*.³ In *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*, Husserl suggests that all intentional activity that relates to validity or invalidity qualifies as a position-taking act: “All life is taking a position, and all position-taking stands under an ought, a justification of validity or invalidity according to alleged norms of absolute validity.”⁴ In short, position-taking acts are acts that commit the intending subject to endorsing a particular position (which may be the content of the act or the attitude of the subject towards the content) as valid or invalid.

Husserl describes how position-taking acts create the disposition towards repetition, writing,

The explicit intensitive mental process is an “I think” which is “effected.” But the same “I think” can be converted into a “non-effected” one by way of intentional changes. The mental process pertaining to an effected perceiving, to an effected judging, feeling, willing, does not disappear when attention adverts “exclusively” to something new; this implies that the Ego “lives” exclusively in a new cogito. The earlier cogito “fades away,” sinks into “darkness”, but nonetheless always has an existence pertaining to the mental process, even if modified.⁵

Husserl’s claim is that the effected acts—which he goes on to explicitly label as “position-takings”—never disappear; they remain in the background of the agent’s intentional life and “are lived with all their intentionalities.”⁶ Like all intentional acts, position-taking acts are presumptive; they are subject to revision if the subject encounters new evidence. However, until the position-taking act is annulled or

³ *Hua.* IV, 105; *Ideas II*, 112.

⁴ *Hua.* XXV, 56; “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” 193 (translation modified).

⁵ *Hua.* III/1, 262–3; *Ideas I*, 273.

⁶ *Hua.* III/1, 263; *Ideas I*, 274.

revised, it remains part of the life of the ego. In other words, position-taking acts constitute a certain commitment: to the existence of such-and-such objects, to the belief that the house has a back side, to the judgment that the paper is white, even though I am viewing it under yellow-tinted lighting. This commitment can manifest itself in future activities, such as my action of walking around the house in order to view the back side. Hart summarizes the influence of *Stellungnahmen* by explaining, “Position-taking, as a present achievement, produces an ‘attitude’ or disposition. It is a present...cognitive, volitional, or affective achieving which has a tendency to reproduce itself within the flux of one’s life.”⁷

Since position-taking acts commit the person to certain judgments or intentional performances, Husserl believes that position-taking acts have the ability to individuate different subjects. When I commit myself to a position, I distinguish myself from others who either have not made such a commitment or who have committed themselves in a different manner. Husserl argues that position-taking acts individuate and constitute the intending subject by describing what happens when the subject alters his or her position: “[A previous decision] can be annulled by the ego making a different decision according to new motives. The memory of it remains, but *I* have become different in the judgment.”⁸ To be sure, the way that I am individuated by a theoretical act such as judging “ $2 + 2 = 4$ ” is extremely limited

⁷ Hart, *The Person and the Common Life*, 54. In the elided section of this quote, Hart suggests that position-taking acts can be passive. I think this is an error, and indeed Hart explicitly describes position-taking acts as solely active elsewhere in the chapter. I think that, in this sentence, Hart accidentally conflates position-taking *acts*, which must be active, with the *effects* of position-taking acts, which can exert either a passive or active influence.

⁸ Hua. XI, 360; *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 444.

since the content of the judgment is so widely shared. However, less widely shared propositional judgments (“The apparent barn is in fact a façade”), and especially valuing acts and acts of will, have the potential to differentiate subjects to a far greater extent.

As Husserl explains, the identity of the person is constituted by the actual or possible position-taking acts *for that subject*. He writes,

The personal I as an individuality is an identity of the total manifold of actual or possible position-takings, actual or possible position-takings for it, and this totality is for this I a definite [totality], which is firmly determined and attesting itself “from the inside” in the individual manners of behavior.⁹

Because the position-taking acts that are possible for me are influenced by my past position-taking acts, the commitments articulated in my position-taking acts individuate me as a person and distinguish me from other subjects.

There is a close link between position-taking acts and habituation. Husserl’s claim that position-taking acts always have an existence that pertains to the mental process, even when they fade into the background, indicates that position-taking acts can individuate the subject on the basis of his or her life experiences in the same way as habits do. However, there is a key difference, in that habits are not necessarily chosen, while position-taking acts actively and explicitly commit oneself to a certain position. It is possible to form habits in a passive manner—as many of

⁹ E III 2, 6a: “Das personale Ich als eine Individualität ist ein identisches des gesamten Mannigfaltigkeit wirklicher oder möglicher, für es wirklicher, für es möglicher Stellungnahmen, und diese Gesamtheit ist für dieses Ich eine fest bestimmte und sich in den einzelnen Verhaltensweisen ‚innerlich‘ bekundende.”

us do when we fall into daily routines, for example.¹⁰ However, one cannot be passive with respect to position-taking acts. As Husserl writes,

In this pregnant sense, the ego does not always take a position; if it simply perceives, observing, merely apprehending, what is present and what appears of itself in experience, there is then...no motive for taking a position.¹¹

Husserl's argument that position-taking acts are motivated is confusing because he also speaks about the motivation for habits and other passive affectivity, as we saw in chapter two. In this passage, however, he invokes the notion of motivation because the activity of taking a position is not arbitrary; it is motivated by something in experience, *and then that motivation is acknowledged and acted upon*. Because position-taking acts require acknowledging and affirming the motivation for the act in question, they are different than habits, which may operate entirely at the passive level.

The concept of position-taking acts provides a transition between the passive life of the subject and its active intentional life. By taking a position on a particular decision, the subject can endorse (or repudiate) an aspect of its affective life. Husserl describes "specific personal acts" by saying,

Instead of being surrendered to passive, unfree drives...and so in a broadest sense *to be moved affectively*, the human person has as well the essential property rather *to "act" freely* from the "I"-center out, in genuine "personal" or "free" activity.¹²

¹⁰ While an existentialist like Sartre would insist that even falling into a routine is a choice, for Husserl such a "decision" would be so different in degree from a position-taking act as to constitute a difference in kind. See Sartre, esp. part four.

¹¹ *Experience and Judgment*, 274.

¹² *Hua*. XXVII, 24, translated by Buckley.

Husserl continues that such free acts are position-taking acts, and by endorsing, critically considering, or rejecting such acts (and their affective “tug” on one’s motivation), these position-taking acts can in turn become sedimented into the depth dimension of the subject for future decisions. For the development of the person, I will argue that taking a position with respect to one’s vocation is the key step in differentiating the person from other subjects and at the same time constituting the person as a unity of intentional activity.

§17. The Problem of Love

For the concept of personhood, the most important kind of position-taking acts are acts in which the person chooses or affirms a particular vocation.

Surprisingly, Husserl does not directly link the choice of vocation with the notion of position-taking acts (perhaps because he found the connection so obvious as to be unnecessary to highlight). Despite the lack of an explicit link between the two concepts, however, the total context of Husserl’s later ethical writings—especially the *Kaizo* articles and the Fichte lectures—makes clear that Husserl recognized an essential connection among the concepts of personhood, *Stellungnahmen*, and vocation.

In order to understand the concept of vocation, it is necessary to discuss the problem that motivated Husserl to develop the concept. Because Husserl developed the concept of vocation in response to a shortcoming in his early ethics (exemplified by his Göttingen lectures from 1908–1914), this discussion requires a detour into the structure of Husserl’s ethics. This will not be a comprehensive discussion of Husserl’s ethics; rather, the goal is simply to describe enough about Husserl’s ethical

thought to give the context for his concept of vocation. This section will therefore provide a short overview of his ethics, but many details in interpreting Husserl's ethics will, of necessity, remain unexamined.¹³

Husserl's early ethics is best characterized as an "ethics of the highest good." For Husserl, the right thing to do is objectively determinable on the basis of how a "non-participating observer" would rationally judge. Because the non-participating observer is not invested in the situation, he or she can determine if the "good-valuings" [*Gutwertungen*] are correct, and then can identify the best action by evaluating the goods to be attained in the material situation according to *a priori* laws of axiology.¹⁴

However, in an appendix to these lectures, Husserl acknowledges a shortcoming to his reliance on the non-participating observer. He notices that it would be strange to require a mother to evaluate moral decisions involving her child without acknowledging that the child is *her* child:

Must one not say according to reason: as a mother she has a special responsibility for her child?...She cannot be asked to reflect as a stranger who would be justified in preferring the person of significance over the child in the case of a rescue.¹⁵

Although in this appendix Husserl concludes that the mother's love for her child must be sacrificed to the higher objective value of rescuing the person of

¹³ Husserl's ethics have become a lively topic in recent years. For a brief introduction to Husserl's ethics, see Melle, "Edmund Husserl," as well as Peucker, "Husserl's Ethik." See also Vongehr for an overview of how Husserl's ethics, especially the early ethics, fits into his other philosophical projects at the time.

¹⁴ *Hua*. XXVIII, 138. See also Donohoe, "Genetic Phenomenology," esp. 162.

¹⁵ *Hua*. XXVIII, 421–2. Dodd describes how, in contrast to Kant, Husserl's concept of personality is not a self that is set above the natural self; see "Husserl and Kant on *Persönlichkeit*," esp. 33 and 35.

significance, he is clearly unsatisfied with that answer. He notes that he needs a way to account for the individuality of the mother and her child: “The children are children of this mother, not as objective facts, but <they are> values in their individuality for her and related back to the individual of the mother.”¹⁶

As Husserl continues to return to the problem of the mother throughout his manuscripts, he eventually realizes that he cannot account for the unique personal relationship between the mother and the child in terms of how a non-participating observer would evaluate the situation. The mother’s love for her child is not commensurable with other values weighed by the non-participating observer, and the non-participating observer cannot view the child in the same way as the mother. Husserl begins to refer to this shortcoming as the “problem of love,” and he ultimately attempts to solve this shortcoming of this early ethics by introducing the concept of vocation:

This entire ethics of the highest practical good [...] cannot be the last word. Essential limitations are necessary! Profession [*Beruf*] and inner vocation [*innerer Ruf*] are not fully accounted for here.¹⁷

Thus, the concept of vocation emerges in order to move beyond the notion of values that can be judged by a neutral, non-participating observer towards a sense of value that is essentially linked to the persons who experience those values.

¹⁶ E III 9, 32b: “Die Kinder sind Kinder dieser Mutter, nicht als objektive Tatsachen, sondern <sie sind> für sie in ihrer Individualität Werte und zurückbezogen auf die Individualität der Mutter.”

¹⁷ B I 21, 65a: “Diese ganze Ethik des höchsten praktischen Gutes [...] kann nicht das letzte Wort sein. Es bedarf wesentlicher Begrenzungen! Beruf und innerer Ruf kommen dabei nicht zu ihrem wirklichen Rechte.”

§18. Absolute Values as the Foundation of Vocation

It is clear from the evolution of Husserl's ethics that concept of vocation is intended to account for the uniqueness of values that are loved above all other values by a specific person, since these loved values cannot be reduced to objective values for everyone. However, what exactly the concept of vocation entails is far less clear. The two most polished sources for the concept of vocation are Husserl's lectures on Fichte's *Ideal of Humanity* and his *Kaizo* articles. However, both of these sources are works written for a general audience, and hence do not focus on the nuances of the concept of vocation. Husserl's manuscripts go into far more detail, but, as Husserl scholars know, his manuscript work is often exploratory rather than conclusive. Since Husserl does not offer a finished account of vocation, the next sections will reconstruct the key features of a vocation according to Husserl. I will argue that vocation is (1) a form of life determined by a loved value that (2) encompasses the whole life of the person and (3) constitutes a unity throughout the person's life by (4) establishing a teleological development of the person that is led by a regulative ideal of life.

The first characteristic of vocation stems from the problem of love. As we have seen, Husserl recognized that there are some values that cannot be weighed against other values merely according to *a priori* axiological laws. Husserl describes loved values by emphasizing the incommensurability of those values. He writes,

Wherever we love something in pure love for the sake of itself, wherever something pleases us purely for the sake of itself...and pleases us in a

measure completely going beyond all other pleasings, then we are certain we are dealing with...an absolute value.¹⁸

However, it is not enough to say that absolute values (which Husserl speaks of interchangeably with loved values) go beyond other values, because absolute values are not merely a matter of impersonal rational evaluation. Husserl here is using the notion of an absolute value in a very different manner from the traditional notion of an absolute value, which would be a value under all circumstances and for all moral agents. Instead, Husserl maintains that there is a deep connection between the values, on the one hand, and the person who experiences the values as absolutely valuable, on the other. As Husserl explains,

In overweighing and evaluating one's future possible life, someone may become certain that values of a particular type...have the character of unconditionally desired values, without whose continual realization one's life can have no satisfaction.¹⁹

The mother's love for her child is not an absolute value merely because she values her child more than other goods in the material world, and it is certainly not absolute in the sense that any other person would necessarily feel the same affective pull that makes that child the center of the mother's universe. What makes the child an absolute value for the mother is that the mother cannot imagine her life being fulfilling without her child. While other desires can have a greater or lesser impact on the satisfaction of the mother's life, her child has an overriding influence on the whole of her life-satisfaction. As a result, the mother will orient her life around the value of her child.

¹⁸ *Hua.* XXV, 288; "Fichte's ideal of humanity," 127.

¹⁹ *Hua.* XXVII, 27, translated by Buckley.

While the vocation of a mother is Husserl's first and most common example of a vocational form of life, he does give examples of other forms: a life dedicated to painting for an artist, being involved with judicial activity for a lawyer, and so forth. Husserl emphasizes that a person's vocation is unique to that person: "Each of us has...*his own* Idea which, in a practical respect, constitutes his higher life-task, his higher determination and vocation."²⁰ The idea of how we should live our lives, and the values we embrace in order to do so, individuate our selves precisely because my vocation is something that belongs to me and cannot be taken up by an arbitrary individual. In other words, the fact that individuals experience different values as absolute is a descriptive claim about how absolute values are given, instead of a normative claim about how one ought to experience these values.

In fact, a person's absolute values are so intimately connected to who that person is that Husserl argues that the intentional act of loving values absolutely is constitutive of the person's identity. Husserl declares, "to go against this [loved] value is to be untrue, to lose oneself, to betray one's true ego—absolute practical contradiction."²¹ Because who I am as a person is so closely bound up with what my loved values are, it would be unthinkable to abandon those values. Husserl goes so far as to claim that forcing the person to give up a loved value is a form of sacrifice, not only for the value but also for the person. For instance, the mother who has to give up her child to the war effort would not only be sacrificing her child, but would also be losing *herself*, since her love for the child is bound up with her own identity.

As Husserl explains,

²⁰ *Hua*. XXV, 289; "Fichte's ideal of humanity," 128.

²¹ Ms. B I 21, 53a, translated in Melle, "The Development of Husserl's Ethics," 131.

The good that one renounces, that one sacrifices, is and remains a loved value, a value for me, and as a personal individuality I am in conflict with myself in such a choice. In [that choice] if I sacrifice the good, I sacrifice myself; and the pain of the sacrifice is insurmountable.²²

While Husserl himself does not explain at length where one's loved values come from, it seems clear that the appeal of those values is rooted in the affective dimension of the person. Husserl suggests that the source of loved values is the person itself:

In values, which receive their personal sense from the depth of personality and its personal love, there is no choice and no "quantitative" differences, namely, no differences in weight, of what overrides and of what is overriding. A value that gushes out of myself, for which I myself, as who I am, decide from an originally loving devotion, is practically an unconditioned, an absolutely obligated [value], which binds me as who I am.²³

The claim that loved values emerge from the depth dimension of the person is affirmed by Melle, who describes absolute values by noting their origin in the depths of the person: "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."²⁴ As we have seen, the origin of one's valuing, preferring, and willing is the affective allure of objects upon us within the horizons of our lifeworld.

²² A V 21, 81b: "Das Gute, dem man entsagt, das man opfert, ist und bleibt ein Liebeswert, ein Wert für mich; und als personale Individualität bin ich in solcher Wahl mit mir selbst in Widerstreit. Indem ich das eine Gute opfere, opfere ich mich selbst; und der Schmerz des Opfers ist unüberwindlich."

²³ B I 21, 53a: "Bei Werten, die aus den Tiefen der Persönlichkeit und ihrer persönlichen Liebe ihren persönlichen Sinn empfangen, gibt es keine Wahl und keine ‚quantitativen‘ Unterschiede, nämlich keine Unterschiede des Gewichtes, des Überwiegenden und Überwogenen. Ein Wert, der aus mir selbst entquillt, für den ich mich, als der ich bin, entscheide aus ursprünglich liebender Hingabe, ist praktisch ein unbedingter, ein absolut gesollter, mich bindend als der ich bin." This passage raises several questions about what an analysis of decisions looks like within the context of the reduction; for a further discussion, see *Hua*. XXXIV, Text Nr. 23, esp. §7, as well as Spahn.

²⁴ Melle, "Husserl's Personalist Ethics," 13.

It seems reasonable to claim that the allure of a value that gives itself as being essential to the meaningfulness of one's life would likewise begin by exerting an affective pull upon the subject in question—as long as it is understood that this is a phenomenological explanation of how values motivate the subject, and not a natural explanation of how values causally result in the subject's adoption of a vocation.

Because loved values do not causally necessitate the embrace of a vocation, a loved value does not result in the adoption of a vocation if it merely remains at the passive level. Husserl distinguishes loved values from other kinds of desire, writing, “But goods from personal love are not goods to be desired for enjoyment. The love is a personal decision of the active ‘heart’ [*Gemüts*], and fulfilling love is blessedness in the I.”²⁵ Unlike other kinds of pleasure, which can be passively received, loved values are goods whose value must be actively embraced via a decision (a *Stellungnahme*, which is usually an act of the heart or *Gemütsakt*). Absolute values exert a particular call on a person, but that call must be affirmatively embraced in order for it to organize the person's life.

§19. Encompassing the Whole Life

The second characteristic of vocation is that a vocation is a form of life that encompasses the whole of the person's life. When Husserl describes the emergence of loved values, he notes that humans are able to devote themselves to particular values because they have the ability to survey their entire life and can establish “a

²⁵ A V 21, 82a: “Aber Güter aus personaler Liebe sind nicht Güter um des Genusses willen. Die Liebe ist personale Entscheidung des aktiven ‚Gemüts‘, und sich erfüllende Liebe ist Seligkeit im Ich.” Husserl adopts the term “Seligkeit” from Fichte and interprets it in terms of a life lived entirely in accord with norms of reason, or a life of fully fulfilled intentions; see *Hua. XXXV*, 43–6, as well as Peucker, “From Logic to the Person,” 320–3.

general goal of life.”²⁶ While animals are limited to desiring values that are immediately present, humans have the ability to reflect upon what they find valuable. As Husserl explains, the human being can say, “I will act in this way—*generally*, and wherever I encounter such and such circumstances, because for me such and such goods are *generally* valuable.”²⁷

In addition to identifying goods that are generally valuable, humans also have the ability to identify goods without which their life would have no satisfaction: in other words, loved or absolute values. Husserl argues that absolute values signify more than just that a value is generally valuable or even habitually valued. He considers the example of eating food; even though humans desire food regularly, it would be odd to say that a person is called (in the vocational sense) to a life of eating. He notes in a manuscript, “Enjoyment of food. I am regularly hungry, but I am not ‘called’ to eat in my ‘personal being.’”²⁸

The reason that eating does not qualify as a vocation is because it does not touch the “core” of the person. In order to be a vocation, the value to which one is oriented must be broad enough to encompass the whole life of the person. The mother’s love for her child is different in kind from the desire an individual feels to enjoy a good meal. The latter is a desire that only covers one part of the individual’s

²⁶ *Hua.* XXVII, 26, translated by Buckley.

²⁷ *Hua.* XXVII, 25, translated by Buckley.

²⁸ E III 9, 28a: “Genuß von Speisen. Ich habe regelmäßig Hunger, aber ich in meinem ‚persönlichen Sein‘ bin nicht ‚berufen‘ zu essen.” The topic is more complicated because, while Husserl clearly does not want to allow a glutton to describe his passion as a legitimate vocation, one can imagine being called to be, e.g., a cook or sommelier. Ultimately, I think the best way to distinguish these cases is to see how those choices fit into the context of the intersubjective community, as will be described in chapter five.

life. By contrast, the mother's love for her child motivates and directs all her other activities; her obligations to her child inform all of her actions and stem from the very essence of her being. As Husserl explains,

Are we not brought back to the following: I have duties in the pregnant sense as the identical I of my whole life? It is "now the time," that says: that what is now postulated is co-postulated out of the entirety of my being and my life, which has predelineated to myself my current I in its current determination.²⁹

In this passage, Husserl uses the term "duties" to refer to the obligations that arise from an individual's vocation. Therefore, his claim is that the duties stemming from a person's vocation must be sufficiently broad to encompass the person's whole life; it does not concern merely a facet of the person's life or one aspect of the person's personality.

The claim that a person's vocation must encompass the whole of the person's life makes sense given Husserl's understanding of absolute values. As we have seen, Husserl argues that a person cannot sacrifice his or her absolute value without likewise sacrificing himself or herself. The intimate connection between a person's absolute values and his or her self only makes sense if the person's identity is constituted by his or her absolute values. As far as the person is concerned, he or she *is* only insofar as his or her absolute values are maintained. Thus, the reason

²⁹ A V 21, 83b: "Kommen wir nicht darauf zurück: Pflichten im prägnanten Sinn habe ich als identisches Ich meines ganzen Lebens? Es ist ‚jetzt an der Zeit‘, das sagt: Das jetzt Geforderte ist aus der Ganzheit meines Seins und meines Lebens, das mir mein jetziges Ich in seiner jetzigen Bestimmung vorgezeichnet hat, mitgefördert." One of the obvious challenges for Husserl's moral philosophy is how to deal with seemingly illegitimate vocations: what if a glutton did organize his or her life around the pleasure of food to the same extent as the mother organizing her life around her love of her child? While a full answer to this question is beyond the scope of the dissertation, the discussion of critiquing a vocation within chapter five could provide a partial response to this challenge.

that a vocation must encompass the whole of a person's life is that what matters in the person's life is determined by his or her absolute values to an "absolute" degree; satisfaction of the person's absolute values is literally a *sine qua non* for other aspects of the person's life to be meaningful. Any aspect of the person's life that does not (or cannot) relate to the person's absolute values is at best ancillary to what is significant in the person's life.

Because a vocation encompasses the whole of the person's life, the decision to follow a vocation constitutes the person as having what Husserl calls a "deepest center" of the person. He writes,

It is something special, however, that the I is not only a polar, centering interiority, thereby an interiority that is achieving sense and value and acts from out of itself, but that it also is an individual I, that in all its presentations, emotive valuing and self-deciding still has a deepest center, the center of every love in the eminent personal sense, the I, that in this love follows a "call," a "vocation," an inner call, which concerns the deepest interiority, the innermost center of the I itself and determines new decisions, new "self-responsibilities," self-justifications.³⁰

By choosing to follow a vocation, the person's inner life is organized around the loved values of that vocation. As a result, it becomes possible to speak of a self-responsibility or self-justification of the person: the person's loved values constitute a standard to which the person is responsible and by which the person may judge his or her life. Not only does a vocation encompass the whole of the person's life, but

³⁰ B I 21, 55a: "Ein Besonderes ist es aber, dass das Ich nicht nur polare, zentrierende Innerlichkeit ist, dabei aus sich Sinn und Wert und Tat leistende Innerlichkeit, sondern dass es auch individuelles Ich ist, das in all seinem Vorstellen, fühlend Wertend, Sich-Entscheiden noch ein tiefstes Zentrum hat, das Zentrum jener Liebe im ausgezeichneten personalen Sinne, das Ich, das in dieser Liebe einem ‚Ruf‘, einer ‚Berufung‘ folgt, einem innersten Ruf, der die tiefste Innerlichkeit, das innerste Zentrum des Ich selbst trifft und zu neuartigen Entscheidungen, zu neuartigen ‚Selbstverantwortungen‘, Selbstrechtfertigungen bestimmt wird." See also Luft, "Das Subject als moralische Person," esp. 227.

it also provides a standard by which the whole of the person's life can be held to account.

Finally, Husserl argues that the absolute values are directed towards the person in his or her fullness; in other words, the absolute values of a person encompass the whole of the person's life because those values direct the person to the fullness of his or her being. Husserl speaks of the "perfection" [*Vollkommenheit*] of the person insofar as the person is directed by his or her loved values:

All action, all initial goals are directed towards values and finally, insofar as there is an absolute act, towards absolute values, which are values of persons and for persons. Finally, everything only has value with respect to persons and absolute value in relation to their absolute oughts. All truth of value [*Wertwahrheit*] is directed to persons, who complete themselves in love for them <the values>, rise to "perfection."³¹

Husserl's language of "perfection" echoes his phrasing in the *Kaizo* articles and the Fichte lectures, in which he argues that the affirmation of a vocation raises the human person to a higher level of living, beyond the drives of affectivity and material desires. What is significant is that, for Husserl, the higher levels of human existence require the individual to reflect from the vantage point of his or her life as a whole.

It is therefore clear that one of the distinguishing characteristics of a vocation is that it is a form of life that encompasses the whole of the person's life. The absolute values that underlie the person's vocation organize the entirety of the

³¹ A V 21, 14b: "Alles Handeln, alles Abzwecken ist auf Werte bezogen und zuletzt, sofern es absolutes Handeln ist, auf absolute Werte, das sind Werte von Personen und für Personen. Schließlich hat alles überhaupt nur Wert in bezug auf Personen und absoluten Wert mit Beziehung auf ihr absolutes Sollen. Alle Wertwahrheit ist auf Personen bezogen, die sich in der Liebe zu ihnen, <den Werten>, vollenden, zur ‚Vollkommenheit‘ emporsteigen."

person's life, and one can only embrace those values if one first surveys one's life as an entirety in order to determine what values are generally—indeed, absolutely—valuable for the person. Finally, the vocation of the person establishes an ideal goal to which the person is responsible for his or her life, and which calls the person to develop his or her life as a whole.

§20. Constituting the Unity of the Person

The third characteristic of a vocation is that a vocation constitutes a unity throughout the person's life. While this aspect of vocation was alluded to in the previous section, it is significant enough to warrant its own discussion. It is through a vocation that it becomes possible to speak of a *person*, and not merely a subject. In other words, the vocation of the person is what constitutes that person *as a person*. It is through embracing a vocation that the concrete aspects of the person's life—the depth dimension, the worldliness, and the unique values, which all individuate the person—are unified.

After the publication of the first edition of the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl recognized the need for a transcendental ego to function as a formal pole of unity for different intentional acts. In *Ideas I*, for instance, Husserl describes the pure (i.e., transcendental) ego as “something absolutely identical throughout every actual or possible change in mental processes” and explicitly alludes to the Kantian “I think” that can accompany all my representations.³² This concept of the pure ego is the transcendental ego as a formal pole of unity for its *cogitationes*. However, as we have seen in chapter two, this understanding of the transcendental ego was

³² *Hua*. III/1, 109; *Ideas I*, 132–3. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, §16 (B edition).

inadequate because it could not account for the depth dimension of the person or the individuality of each transcendental ego's intentional life.

Likewise, there is a uniqueness to the person that results when the person accepts a vocation. While individual transcendental egos may be differentiated by their intentional histories, there is not yet anything that gives unity in a strong sense to the transcendental ego. The "unity" belonging to an individual is merely a descriptive unity—that this ego has this intentional history.

In order to constitute the person *as a person*, however, a stronger sense of unity is needed than the descriptive unity found in an individual ego. This sense of unity is provided by the vocation of the person. As we have argued in the previous sections, the person's vocation is a form of life that encompasses the whole of the person's life and directs that life according to the person's absolute values.

When Husserl introduces the ability of human beings to survey their entire lives and determine a general goal of life, he links this ability with the capacity for self-transformation. He writes, "Furthermore, there is then also the possibility that the human being is able to evaluate and practically transform herself or himself according to norms of reason."³³ The language of transformation is deliberate; Husserl believes that the individual's change is more than merely adding a set of values to his or her life. The embrace of a vocation organizes and reorients the person's desires in terms of the absolute values of his or her vocation.

³³ *Hua*. XXVII, 26, translated by Buckley (translation modified).

In a manuscript, Husserl explains that the personal unity of the person emerges through position-taking acts that constitute a unity among the manifold intentional strivings of the person. He writes,

The human person has its personal unity in the unity of its diverse strivings. It <the I> is unified as a feeling-I in all its individual feelings, [...] likewise as a person it has in itself a universal unity of life, of actual and possible life, which is, in regards to the experiential validities, to the experiencing habituality, a universal unity in advance, [having] the flexible style of an I that preserves itself constantly in streaming life in its experiencing position-takings through self-correction.³⁴

While Husserl does not use the term “vocation” in this passage, the previous section demonstrated that Husserl has the concept in mind when he speaks of position-taking acts that encompass the whole of the person's life. He goes on to speak about the “personal, absolute decision”³⁵ that establishes the unity of the person. What becomes clear is that this decision is both a reaction and a position-taking; it is only possible to choose a vocation if one feels the pull of the relevant values upon the self, but choosing the vocation is also a choice to affirmatively embrace those values and to organize one’s life around them. In other words, the embrace of a vocation is a deliberate decision, but it is a decision that is only made possible on the ground of the passive dimension of the person’s affectivity, habituality, and so forth.

The decision to embrace one's absolute values constitutes a unity to the various intentional acts of the person; by uniting the person's strivings within the

³⁴ E III 9, 39a: “Die menschliche Person hat ihre personale Einheit in der Einheit ihres mannigfaltigen Strebens. In all seinen einzelnen Gefühlen ist es, <das Ich>, als Gefühls-Ich einheitlich. [...] so hat es als Person in sich eine universale Einheit des Lebens, des wirklichen und möglichen, das in Hinsicht auf die Erfahrungsgeltungen, auf die erfahrende Habitualität *universal und im voraus Einheit ist*, den beweglichen Stil einer sich im strömenden Leben in seinen erfahrenden Stellungnahmen durch Selbstkorrektur ständig erhaltenden Ich.” See also Ferrarello, 173.

³⁵ E III 9, 39b: “persönliche absolute Entscheidung.”

purposive framework of the person's absolute values, the person herself is transformed. The person is now constituted as a unity in a much stronger sense than merely saying that the numerically identical transcendental ego is the ego-pole of a list of acts. With the embrace of a vocation, the person's whole life is transformed according to the standards of self-responsibility established by the absolute values. The absolute values of the vocation provide an ought, under which all the person's strivings are unified and directed towards a teleological goal.

By transforming the person according to the standards of the vocation, the acceptance of a vocation constitutes a new field of practical possibilities for the person. Since all actions are evaluated in light of the person's absolute values, the actions that appear as practically possible are changed. Because one cannot abandon one's absolute values without sacrificing the self, actions that are inconsistent with one's vocation cease to be genuine possibilities. Husserl writes,

The vocational form of life arises in the individual person where a kind of beauty, of self-valuing for this person becomes a self-enclosed horizon for itself of practical possibilities wherein under a continually progressing enactment, or an enactment that always starts and continues anew after interruption, such a beauty can be realized continually and in always greater perfection.³⁶

The idea that the field of practical possibilities is modified by one's vocation is perhaps most famously expressed by Martin Luther's declaration, "Here I stand; I can do no other." The actions that contribute to the realization of the person's values

³⁶ B I 21, 39a: "Die Berufsform des Lebens erwächst in der Einzelpersönlichkeit da, wo eine Art von Schönheiten, von Selbstwerten für diese Persönlichkeit zu einem für sich geschlossenen Horizont praktischer Möglichkeiten wird, in dem unter kontinuierlich fortgehender bzw. nach Unterbrechung immer wieder neu anzusetzender und fortzuführender Betätigung derart Schönes fortschreitend und immer vollkommener realisiert werden kann [...]."

are undertaken, while actions that are in conflict with those values are shunned (or not even considered as a live option) because they lie outside the domain of practical possibilities.

It is noteworthy that Husserl returns to the language of awakening in this passage. The person's vocational decision results in the person awakening in the life that he or she is called to. This awakening constitutes for the person not only new practical possibilities, but also new habits. As Husserl states, "Every decision of the will is an abiding 'habit.'"³⁷ The decision of a vocation is no different; the habits constituted by the choice of a vocation are habits of valuing, acting, and striving according to the standards established by the person's absolute values. In this case, what is sedimented by the habit is not merely a tendency to act in a certain way, but the very being of the person herself. Melle explains,

For Husserl, personal identity presupposes lasting convictions. Such lasting convictions are habitual sediments of the free, theoretical, axiological, and practical position-takings of the "ego." My person would fragment and disintegrate if my position-takings would not crystallize into habitual convictions. I am I only so long as I have harmonious opinions.³⁸

It is clear that a vocational position-taking act is sufficient to constitute the person as a unity. From the totality of Husserl's writings, it seems fair to also claim that the adoption of a vocation is a necessary condition for becoming a person in the full sense. As we have seen, a vocation is the only type of position-taking act that seems broad enough to constitute the person as a whole. While individual habits and dispositions can be formed by other kinds of position-taking acts, and while those acts suffice to individuate one transcendental ego from another, they do not

³⁷ A V 21, 62b: "Jeder Willensentschluss ist ein bleibender ‚Habitus‘."

³⁸ Melle, "The Development of Husserl's Ethics," 126.

provide the kind of unity that develops with the awakening of the person to his or her vocation. Only a vocation is broad enough to span the entirety of the person's life and provide a personal unity to his or her actions. As Husserl emphasizes, the unity of the person is a unity of position-taking commitments rather than a substantial unity:

What is the identity of the I as a person, the identity of the human I? Identity of its "behavior," of the behavior in the active position-takings....The identity of the I, in the changing of the position-takings...is not yet a substantial identity.³⁹

Because a vocation stems from the deepest center of the person and transforms the person in light of his or her loved values, it is the only kind of position-taking act that seems comprehensive enough to constitute the person *in toto*. The type of commitment demonstrated by a vocation is different in kind from the commitment incurred by other position-taking acts. The commitments stemming from other kinds of position-taking acts are subject to revision if new evidence comes to light. However, Husserl does not mention the possibility of revising one's vocation. In fact, his claim that the values of a vocation stem from the depths of the person's soul suggests that it would only be possible to adopt a new vocation if one in fact became a different person (for instance, as Saul of Tarsus

³⁹ *Hua.* XIV, 296: "Was ist Identität des Ich als Person, Identität des Menschen-Ich? Identität des sich ,Verhaltens', des Verhaltens in den aktiven Stellungnahmen....Die Identität des Ich im Wechsel der Stellungnahmen...ist not nicht substantielle Identität." Husserl's statement that the identity is not *yet* a substantial identity suggests that the substantial form of identity might be a stronger one. Obviously, all the usual caveats about the exploratory nature of Husserl's manuscript writings should be kept in mind; I think that this line is better understood as a shortcoming in Husserl's ability to move beyond the Cartesian/substance-based understanding of monadic subjectivity.

became St. Paul).⁴⁰ This does not mean that a person's vocation cannot develop—what being a soldier means to a veteran will hopefully be more maturely understood than what it means to a fresh recruit—but the development of the person's vocation is a development and maturation of *who the person is*. Aside from a radical change of personality, one's vocational commitment is absolute, since it is tied to one's identity in a way that cannot be sacrificed without losing the self. Quite simply, it seems that the only values that are linked to the core of self in a strong enough way to constitute a person are the absolute values that ground one's vocation.

§21. The Regulative Ideal of a Vocation

The final characteristic of a vocation is that a vocation establishes a teleological development of the person that is led by a regulative ideal of life. We have seen how a vocation constitutes a person as a unified entity, directed towards a general goal of life that is established by the person's absolute values. Husserl's

⁴⁰ The question of changing one's vocation is a difficult one that Husserl himself does not address. Because loved values are not merely rationally chosen but have an affective pull on the person, it seems like the decision to embrace a new vocation would need to be motivated by a change in the person's affective responses and not simply an intellectual shift, as in the case of St. Paul suddenly finding his old life abhorrent. At the same time, however, it seems that merely having a shift of affections without the affirmative embrace of a new vocation oriented around the new loved values would not be sufficient to transform one into a new "person." There is a mutual relationship between the affective and intellectual levels, or the loved values and the *Stellungnahmen*, such that both are necessary in order to take up a (new) vocation. The issue becomes even more complicated when we remember that the "new" person cannot just forget his or her own past but must relate his or her new vocation to the old past in some way (e.g., as a mistaken life, as a time before a spiritual awakening). Although Husserl's manuscripts are too exploratory to pursue this question in the context of this dissertation, it would be interesting to work out a theory of vocational change from a Husserlian perspective.

claim is that the framework established by a person's absolute values results in a teleological development of the person.

First, Husserl notes that there is a teleological structure embedded in every action: I act in this way in order to realize that goal. Like Aristotle, Husserl argues that individuals can establish chains of goals, and eventually these chains of goals must become linked:

It belongs to the essence of acting that it be directed to a goal. If the I acts and if each new purporting does not generate out of itself new goals and each task new tasks in infinite succession, the I would be dead and not alive. The infinite chain of goals, purposes, and tasks cannot, however, be disconnected, otherwise the I would not be an I...Every goal is a *telos*, but all goals must connect in the unity of the *telos*, therefore in a teleological unity. And that can only be the highest moral end.⁴¹

Where Husserl diverges from Aristotle is in his identification of the ultimate end.

For Aristotle, the ultimate end towards which all of our actions are directed is happiness. Husserl instead labels the ultimate end of our striving as the highest moral end.

Following Fichte, Husserl identifies the highest moral end as God, a concept that we will unpack in chapter six. What is crucial for our present purposes is that the person occupies a central place within the progression towards the highest moral end. Husserl argues that the development towards the highest moral end, like all intentional activity, is motivated by the desire for the fulfillment of intentional acts and the corresponding avoidance of disappointed intentions.

Initially, all individuals find themselves oriented towards material things. We instinctively react towards other objects within our lifeworld, and we may progress

⁴¹ *Hua*. XXV, 275; "Fichte's ideal of humanity," 117.

to the point where we consciously direct those responses in specific ways. The problem is that the life of the individual who is oriented towards material things is constantly threatened by disappointment. Husserl describes how goods can change their value in different situations, and what was satisfying to an individual at one time can reveal itself as useless at a different time. It is easy to understand Husserl's point: the technophile who purchases every new device that comes to market finds satisfaction in a new technology, but as soon as the next device arrives, he once again desires the latest product. Husserl describes such a process as a "depreciation of value through the loss of its material or axiological validity"—the now-surpassed device is no longer valid as valuable, and the individual must identify a new goal in order to find satisfaction in life.⁴²

For Husserl, ultimately any life that seeks satisfaction in material goods is doomed to disappointment. He explains that true contentment must transcend the world of individual, finite things:

*It is no coincidence that the human being, constantly occupied with the details of experience, of valuing, of desiring and acting aims (goals), never comes to satisfaction or rather, that no satisfaction is truly and fully satisfying in isolation and in finitude.*⁴³

Since material things are liable to disappointment, the person can either adopt an attitude of stoicism towards the (inevitable) disappointment of life, or he or she can

⁴² *Hua.* XXVII, 30, translated by Buckley.

⁴³ E III 9, 38b: "Es ist *kein Zufall*, dass der Mensch, immerfort mit Einzelheiten der Erfahrung, der Bewertung, der begehrenden und handelnden Abzielung (Bezweckung) beschäftigt, *niemals zu einer Zufriedenheit kommt* oder vielmehr dass keine Befriedigung im Einzelnen und in der Endlichkeit wirkliche und volle Befriedigung ist."

“*striv[e] for a perfected life*, namely, as a life that in all its deeds would indeed be able to be justified, a life able to guarantee a pure, firm satisfaction.”⁴⁴

The concept of vocation plays an essential role in striving for a perfected life for two reasons. First, Husserl argues that the only way to move beyond the axiological devaluations of material desires is to focus on one’s life as a whole. He writes, “Contentment arises not from single...satisfactions, but is grounded in the certainty of the greatest possible satisfaction in the entire life as a whole.”⁴⁵ Just as individual values are subject to devaluating in changing circumstances, different aspects of life can be satisfying or disappointing. The only insurance against such axiological depreciation is to take the perspective of one’s complete life; it is only from the vantage point of a task broad enough to encompass the entirety of one’s life that it is possible to escape the threat of disappointment due to the unpredictable nature of factual reality.

Of course, this task is nothing other than the life-task established by one’s vocation. Thus, it is the adoption of a vocation that allows an individual to escape from the inevitable disappointments of material values.

Second, Husserl argues that reflection upon one’s life eventually reveals the primacy of subjectivity as a source of value. Husserl considers the case of a person with a profession who has suffered a disappointment because his work has failed. Upon reflection, Husserl argues that

⁴⁴ *Hua*. XXVII, 30, translated by Buckley.

⁴⁵ *Hua*. XXVII, 31–2, translated by Buckley.

if he does examine himself he will find it is not the external work which has absolute value and which is the end in itself, but exclusively *the person himself* as the one willing and creating this work.⁴⁶

Since individual values are subject to disappointment, the only thing that can be absolutely valuable is that which makes possible the act of valuation itself, viz., the person.

The transition from valuing things to valuing persons is made possible through the adoption of a vocation. In a vocation, the person acquires a standard to which he or she is absolutely responsible. The standard is a standard for the person's life; it is not a standard of external values. If it were a standard of external values, then it would not make sense for Husserl to speak about these values as coming from the depth of the person's soul or to consider the sacrifice of those values as a sacrifice of the self. In other words, a vocation constitutes the person as valuable by demonstrating the intimate link between the absolute values and the identity of the person.

Husserl seems to confirm this shift from valuing things to valuing persons when he describes how striving is transformed in a vocation. He writes,

The more freely and clearly a human person surveys and evaluates his or her entire life and ponders practical possibilities; the more critically this person tabulates the sum of life and takes everything into account for his or her entire future life; the more resolutely the human person takes up into his or her will the recognized rational form of life and makes it the unbreakable law of life: that much more is the human person complete—as a human person.⁴⁷

Husserl's claim is that the person develops as he or she grants primacy to the *rational form of life*, i.e., as the person lives according to the norms of his or her

⁴⁶ *Hua*. XXV, 290; "Fichte's ideal of humanity," 129.

⁴⁷ *Hua*. XXVII, 35, translated by Buckley.

vocational life. As we shall see in chapter six, Husserl argues that a living a life according to the norms of one's values is a life of reason, although this is a broader sense of reason than the rationality of the non-participating observer. Because loved values erect norms, which can find intentional realization in one's actions, Husserl argues that these values establish the ground for justification according to reason.

Melle explains,

For Husserl it belongs to the essence of the personal subject to strive for the autonomy of reason. In every personal subject there lives...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.⁴⁸

One could also say that the vocational striving of the person is rational because his or her intentional activity is driven by reason and guided by the norms of his or her vocation. The person, as an awake and active director of his or her intentional life, decides what possibilities to pursue in light of his or her loved values. These values present themselves as absolute through a self-giving intuition, in this case literally: it is the person herself who gives these values as originating from the depths of her soul.

Since the person, through his or her vocation, becomes what is absolutely valuable, the concept of vocation establishes a unique kind of teleology. As Husserl states, "This person is both subject and object of his or her striving, the infinitely becoming creation of which he or she is the creator."⁴⁹ Rather than seeking something external to oneself, the adoption of a vocation motivates the person to

⁴⁸ Melle, "Husserl's Personalist Ethics," 7.

⁴⁹ *Hua*. XXVII, 37, translated by Buckley.

see himself or herself, in perfection, as what he or she is striving to become. This self-encompassing teleology reinforces the personal unity that emerged with the embrace of a vocation. As Melle notes, “This professional duty is the authentic task of my life, and gives my life an all-embracing, rational goal—a teleological unity.”⁵⁰

In short, the concept of vocation introduces a transformation in the teleology of striving. Instead of striving after particular things, a person who has a vocation strives to realize herself as a form of life ruled by norms of reason. We have seen how the depth dimensions of the individual—his or her instincts, habits, and worldliness—contain a teleological structure that motivates the individual in his or her striving. With the introduction of the concept of vocation, this teleology is extended and uplifted so that the person herself becomes the object of striving, and his or her life as the subject of striving becomes realized as what is absolutely valuable. The values that may first be given passively, in a genetic analysis, as incomparably valuable are integrated into the very being of the person via the embrace of a vocation, and the decision to endorse the person’s loved values is transformed into the life-task of living in accordance with the norms that are grounded on the absolute values of the person’s vocation.

However, this life-task can never be fully realized. When Husserl described the shortcomings of material objects, he noted that no satisfaction can be found in individual, *finite* things. Likewise, Husserl understands that the life-task established by a vocation cannot be a finite goal for two reasons. Not only would a finite task be unable to escape the possibility of future axiological deprecations, but also a finite

⁵⁰ Melle, “The Development of Husserl’s Ethics,” 132.

task cannot be the source of absolute bliss for an individual because the individual, as a living entity, is not yet done. Thus, the life of perfection that a vocation establishes as a goal is a limit-ideal, which cannot ever be fully realized. Husserl explains,

If we go here to the ideal limit...then distinguishable from a *relative* ideal of perfection is an *absolute* one. It is nothing more than the ideal of absolute, personal perfection—of absolute theoretical, axiological, and in every sense, practical reason. That is, it is the ideal of a person, as the subject of all elevated, personal capabilities in the sense of absolute reason.⁵¹

It is clear that Husserl understands this ideal of perfection in terms of a Kantian regulative ideal. It is not an ideal that can actually be attained, but is a goal towards which one strives and towards which one should aspire. Melle highlights that Husserl's language of the endless progress of the person echoes Kant, Fichte, and Brentano in establishing a goal that is aspirational rather than expected.⁵² He also connects Husserl's understanding of endless progress with his language of infinite tasks; according to Melle, the development of the person is a task whose completion lies in infinity, and thus is an ideal from which actual human persons will inevitably fall short. This shortcoming of personhood, however, should be understood in the same way as our inability to develop a perfect science; it is part of the nature of both personhood and knowledge that they are tasks whose work is always to be continued, and neither is to be abandoned simply because the task

⁵¹ *Hua*. XXVII, 33, translated by Buckley.

⁵² Melle, "The Development of Husserl's Ethics," 129.

cannot reach its ultimate end. As Husserl remarks, even the relative ideal of absolute perfection “still carries within itself the mark of infinity.”⁵³

To explore the manner in which the ideal of absolute perfection uplifts and transforms the person, it is necessary to turn to the larger context in which the person finds himself or herself. In the next chapter, we will explore the concept of the community, which Husserl names a “personality of a higher order.” By examining the concept of community, we can see how the teleology of the person develops in an intersubjective context. This broader context will also provide the resources to critically reflect upon one’s vocation in order to distinguish legitimate vocations from individual fetishized values. Finally, an investigation into the intersubjective context of the person’s community provides an opportunity to see how the vocational teleologies of different persons become integrated in a further teleological progression.

⁵³ *Hua. XXVII*, 34, translated by Buckley. See also Natanson, esp. ch. 9, for a discussion about how the infinite task of reason fits into Husserl’s account of human subjectivity in the *Crisis*. One could make a similar argument about the intrinsic incompleteness of moral behavior; because every practical situation is different, moral judgment requires practical wisdom in order to know how to apply the moral rules to a given situation. It would be interesting to contrast the role of practical wisdom in contemporary virtue ethics with Husserl’s notion of the material *a priori* in his early ethics, as there are clear similarities between the purposes of these concepts even though their execution is quite dissimilar.

Chapter 5. The Community of the Person

There exists in man the idea of Reason, and of reasonable acts and thoughts, and he is necessitated to realize this idea not only within himself but also without himself. It is thus one of his wants that there should be around him reasonable beings like himself.
—Johann Gottlieb Fichte

Just as the instinctive dimension of subjectivity is influenced by the worldly context in which the subject lives, the ethical dimension of personhood is also shaped by the background for the person's actions. The social dimension of worldliness, which we explored in chapter three, needs to be expanded to consider the social milieu of the person in order to give a full account of the person's situation. As this chapter will argue, the social dimension is crucial for the concept of personhood. Husserl's own account of subjectivity is steeped in intersubjectivity. It should be no surprise, therefore, that the role of intersubjectivity cannot be neglected in the more concrete concept of subjectivity provided by the notion of personhood.

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first section (§22) will demonstrate that the social dimension is essential to understanding the concept of personhood. In the second section (§23), I will develop Husserl's notion of culture as a source of norms that can guide the development of the person. The third section (§24) will argue that these norms provide a method by which to critique an individual person's vocation; I will argue that Husserl can distinguish legitimate loved values from false fetishes on the basis of how well those values can be harmonized with the community in which the person lives. The fourth section (§25) will discuss Husserl's notion of the harmonized community as a "personality of a

higher order,” which will provide additional insights into the nature of personhood. Finally, the fifth section (§26) will sketch the concept of a *Liebesgemeinschaft*, or a community of love, which Husserl uses to describe the regulative ideal of a community living in full harmony.

§22. The Social Dimension of Personhood

The publication of Zahavi’s *Husserl und die transzendente Intersubjektivität* marked a resurgence in interest among Husserl scholars regarding the intersubjective character of Husserl’s phenomenology.¹ Zahavi provides a concise summary of the intersubjective character of Husserl’s philosophy, explaining,

[Husserl] claims that the subject can only be world-experiencing insofar as it is a member of a community, that the ego is only what it is a *socius*,...and that a radical *self*-reflection necessarily leads to the discovery of absolute intersubjectivity....Husserl takes transcendental subjectivity to be (at least in part) dependent on transcendental intersubjectivity.²

Although Husserl’s phenomenology has been mischaracterized as Cartesian in the sense of being solipsistic, Welton argues convincingly that, even in the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl’s solipsism is methodological rather than ontological: “The analysis of intersubjectivity in the Fifth Meditation is an *explication* of that sphere of subjectivity provisionally opened in the First and Second Meditation, not a supplement that goes beyond it.”³ Finally, Husserl’s 1910–11 lecture course “Basic Problems of Phenomenology” demonstrates that Husserl recognized the importance

¹ Zahavi, *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity*. The book originally appeared in German in 1996. An earlier wave of interest in intersubjectivity originated with the publication of the three intersubjectivity volumes in the *Husserliana* series (XIII–XV, all edited by Iso Kern).

² Zahavi, *Husserl’s Phenomenology*, 121; parenthetical citations omitted. See also Zahavi, “Husserl’s Intersubjective Transformation of Transcendental Philosophy.”

³ Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 150.

of intersubjectivity extremely early in his career, even if he had not yet developed the genetic method necessary to fully realize this insight: he explicitly responds to the objection that phenomenology is solipsistic by explaining that the objection of solipsism confuses psychological and phenomenological immanence.⁴

Because Husserl's transcendental ego is inherently intersubjective, it is no surprise that the concept of personhood incorporates an intersubjective dimension as well. In fact, Husserl argues that the person truly emerges through his or her interactions with others. He writes that the subject "becomes an I and therefore a *personal subject*...in the I-you relationship."⁵ He describes how empathy makes it possible for the other to be motivated by me and vice versa; this ability to not only understand the motivations of another but to in fact have the motivations of another become motivations for my own actions is the foundation of what Husserl refers to as both a community of striving [*Strebensgemeinschaft*] and a community of willing [*Willensgemeinschaft*].⁶ In other words, social acts go beyond intending experiences or knowledge that are merely publicly accessible to others; through social acts, I also intend the other as another person whose actions and motivations are connected to mine via some form of relationship.⁷

⁴ *Basic Problems*, 47. Cf. also my review of this lecture course, in which I show that Husserl already realized the significance of intersubjectivity for phenomenological research (Hahn, esp. 246).

⁵ *Hua*. XIV, 170–71: "wird zum *Ich* und damit zum *personalen Subjekt*...in der Ich-Du-Beziehung."

⁶ The connection between transcendental subjectivity and the community is acknowledged by many scholars, especially in the German literature. For instance, Zeltner, 309 explicitly identifies the community as the concretion of transcendental intersubjectivity.

⁷ See, for instance, *Hua*. XIV, 214. Although Husserl himself mentions social acts, he does not explore the concept as systematically as his contemporaries. The most

Husserl clarifies that these social acts are essential to the formation of personhood. He writes, “The *origin of personality* lies in empathy, in the further emergence of *social acts*.”⁸ He contrasts the ego as a pole of (individual) actions with the concept of a subject who participates in a community. Because the subject who lives in a community and is related to others via social acts is motivated by the desires of the other, the subject begins to be formed in the ethical dimension. This initial ethical formation exists only at the simple level of seeking approval and shunning disapproval, but it establishes the foundation for reflection and critique of one’s actions.

The relationship between the ethical individual and the community runs both ways. Not only does the community encourage the individual person to reflect on his or her actions, but the ethical individual also finds himself or herself directing action towards the community. Husserl writes,

Every personal subject is an ethical subject and has as such its universe of ethical values and disvalues. This ethical universe, however, is not a private

notable phenomenological accounts of social acts come from Adolf Reinach and Alfred Schutz. Both of these authors expand Husserl’s account of intentionality in order to account for social phenomena in a more detailed manner. Reinach discusses social acts in terms of acts that “need to be heard” by another (Reinach, 19); similarly, Schutz describes social acts in terms of ego-acts that are “intentionally directed upon a Thou as upon another self having consciousness and duration” (Schutz, 144). For the purposes of this dissertation, what is significant is that social acts are acts that are essentially related not only to an intentional object but also to another consciousness who experiences that object within a shared world.

⁸ *Hua*. XIV, 175: “Der *Ursprung der Personalität* liegt in der Einfühlung in den weiter erwachsenden *sozialen Akten*.” Husserl treats empathy and social acts as nearly synonymous in this passage. The concept of a social act, however, seems to go beyond the formal characterization of empathy (i.e., the structure of as-if-I-were-there) that dominates the Fifth Meditation. Social acts are explicitly other-directed, rather than a projection based on analogous apperception.

matter; all these universes are related to each other in the human community and form a single universal connection.⁹

This connection between subject and community extends Husserl's claim that the world influences one's field of practical possibilities. As we saw in chapter three, the world establishes a horizon in which the subject acts. Husserl describes how the worldliness of subjectivity makes possible the existence of transcendental intersubjectivity. He writes, "This objective world becomes a substrate of spiritual, of subjective predicates as valued, as the practically formed world, wherein a new kind of predicates, and indeed intersubjective predicates, are constituted."¹⁰ Husserl's reasoning is that the worldliness of subjectivity makes it possible for intersubjective predicates to emerge, since the existence of intersubjectivity depends on the openness of subjectivity to not only other objects, but also the possibility of others existing in the world that could view those objects.

Husserl develops the connection between worldliness and intersubjectivity by arguing that the person's surrounding world cannot be understood

⁹ A V 21, 122b: "Jedes personale Subjekt ist ethisches Subjekt und hat als das sein Universum ethischer Werte und Unwerte. Dieses ethische Universum aber ist nicht Privatsache, alle diese Universa sind in der Menschengemeinschaft aufeinander bezogen und bilden einen einzigen universalen Zusammenhang."

¹⁰ *Hua.* XIV, 208: "Diese objektive Welt wird zum Substrat geistiger, subjektiver Prädikate als bewertete, als praktisch gestaltete Welt, wobei eine neue Sorte von Prädikaten, und zwar intersubjektiven Prädikaten, sich konstituieren." This manuscript, from 1922, does not explain precisely how intersubjective predicates arise out of the objective world; the most that can be said is that Husserl here seems to anticipate the line of argument he will develop in the *Cartesian Meditations* about how the encounter with the other can be made intelligible from the reduction to the sphere of ownness. Briefly, Husserl's argument is that the *factum* of something alien is brought out by the reduction to the sphere of ownness, in the transcendence of an Objective world that is the same world for not only my ego but also other possible egos, and Husserl develops the sense of this alien ego through an analogical apperception that begins with the physical predicates belonging to the living body [*Leib*]. See *Hua.* I, esp. §§44–49, as well as Vandavelde, 283–6.

solipsistically. He writes, "Every person has...not only his individual surrounding world...and he has not only his own personality...but also the alien surrounding worlds, the alien psychophysical acts and act-possibilities, the alien personalities, etc."¹¹ He reiterates the point by contrasting this view with the "naïve ontology" of personhood; the naïve view sees the person (and by extension the personal world) as strictly individual forms rather than communal structures.¹²

Because intersubjectivity, as an extension of the worldliness of the subject, has a horizontal character, Husserl argues that intersubjectivity will likewise influence the development the subject. First, the intersubjective community constitutes norms and values that become sedimented in the world and make possible the development of the moral dimension of personhood. As Husserl explains,

I live, however, in a personal community and in the communalization of a life lies also the communalization of responsibility. The individual-ethical problem, that of the principal possibility of a self-responsible life, is thus inseparably connected with the social ethical problem of a principal possibility of social life, social action, understood as the action of sociality itself.¹³

Second, the intersubjective community provides a context in which the person can act as a purposeful subject, rather than a merely theoretical, non-

¹¹ *Hua.* XIV, 194: "Jede Person hat...nicht bloss ihre individuelle Umwelt...und sie hat nicht nur ihre eigene Personalität...sondern auch die fremden Umwelten, die fremden psychophysischen Akte und Aktmöglichkeiten, die fremden Personalitäten etc."

¹² *Hua.* XV, 147.

¹³ B I 21 17b: "Ich lebe aber in personaler Gemeinschaft und in der Vergemeinschaftung eines Lebens liegt auch Vergemeinschaftung der Verantwortungen. Das individualethische Problem, das der prinzipiellen Möglichkeit selbstverantwortlichen Lebens, ist also untrennbar verbunden mit dem sozial ethischen Problem einer prinzipiellen Möglichkeit sozialen Lebens, sozialen Handelns, verstanden als Handeln der Sozialität selbst."

participating observer. Husserl notes that the communal world is the world of our practical field; I live and act in the center of the “ring” established by my own people [*meines Volkes*], which is extended by the ring of other peoples [*Außenvölker*], in an ever-expanding series of rings culminating in the total we-community, or what Husserl also calls a “historical community of fate,” in recognition of the fact that the community ought to have a destiny or a *telos* towards which it is directed.¹⁴ These rings of community establish not only the forms of life that are possible for individuals to adopt, but also the way that those forms of life are realized. Steinbock explains the influence of a community on a person’s vocation by using Husserl’s example of the artist:

Thus, Husserl would say that an ethical human being is not simply an artist because she writes, dances, and paints, but rather that she becomes an artist insofar as this style of life is “required” for the co-realization of the moral tenor of the self and community. And we could say the same of the teacher, the carpenter, the politician, or the lawyer.¹⁵

Finally, Husserl argues that the social community’s influence on the development of the person also influences the ethical reflection of the individual. He writes,

Humans live within this historical, communal milieu, in such a surrounding-world that determines and binds practical behavior. Among them are those who are ethically awakened....In such a situation, the ethical reflection, which from the outset has included the community as our surrounding-world, tells us that the ethical form of individual life can only give to this communal milieu a very limited content-value and that we, as with all well-disposed

¹⁴ A V 20, 8a. The concept of a Volk is complicated in this passage; the best reading is to interpret it as an ideal community rather than a descriptive claim about, e.g., a national identity.

¹⁵ Steinbock, “The Project of Ethical Renewal and Critique,” 453–4.

people, must influence the community to approximate as closely as possible the idea of a good community in the sense sketched above.¹⁶

In order to explain how the community can shape the ethical form of life of the individual, it is necessary to discuss the concept of culture, which generates the norms according to which individual lives within the community can be molded.

§23. Culture as a Source of Norms

The previous section demonstrated how Husserl's account of community extends the notion of worldliness insofar as the community contributes to the horizon in which the person finds him- or herself. One of the primary aspects of the community's influence on the person is the dimension of culture. Husserl himself does not systematically develop a theory of culture, although he uses the term extensively in his later works.¹⁷ It is clear that, for Husserl, culture is more than just another term for the lifeworld. As we shall see, the domain of culture enriches the content of the lifeworld by fleshing out the role of values, activity, and achievements for the background context of one's activities. In addition, culture invokes an aspirational element by establishing a normative ideal for one's communities.

Particularly in the *Crisis*, Husserl refers to two kinds of culture. At the simplest level, culture is a mundane term that includes any human creation, such as

¹⁶ *Hua*. XXVII, 47, translated by Buckley.

¹⁷ This is not to say that Husserl does not write on culture frequently. It seems plausible that he did not tackle the problem of culture systematically in part because he did not want to simply reduce phenomenology to a philosophy of culture, believing that the method of the reduction was a more important topic. In this respect, Husserl's marginal notes to Misch's *Lebensphilosophie und Phänomenologie* are instructive because Husserl emphasizes the importance of the transcendental dimension in doing historical investigation. See van Kerckhoven, "Edmund Husserl's Randnotizen," esp. 157–8, 165–6, and 174, as well as Makkreel, esp. 273 ff.

artifacts, agriculture, and domestic arts.¹⁸ However, culture can also be used in a higher sense, to refer to the spiritual life of the community; thus, Husserl refers to European culture, and scientific or philosophical culture, as being motivated by the idea of a progression towards an infinite goal. Husserl writes,

there arises a new type of communalization and a new form of enduring community whose spiritual life, communalized through the love of ideas, and through ideal life-norms, bears within itself the future-horizon of infinity: that of an infinity of generations being renewed in the spirit of ideas.¹⁹

In both the simple and higher forms, culture bears and cultivates the values of the community. In his manuscripts, Husserl draws out the axiological dimension of culture:

In this play of axiological passivity and free activity and in the play of the passions of the will and the actions of the will (according to all *a priori* possible modalities), the world of values and world of goods is constituted, spoken in the broadest sense the world of culture, in which the human subjects are at the same time subjects and objects of culture.²⁰

Husserl also emphasizes the particularity of culture. A generic “culture” is never encountered in the world; rather, a community has its own culture, which develops from its concrete situation, values, etc., and contains the possibility of

¹⁸ *Hua.* VI, 323; *Crisis*, 277.

¹⁹ *Hua.* VI, 322; *Crisis*, 277. Although Husserl claims that this kind of communalization first arose in ancient Greece, it is clear that he has in mind an ideal spiritual movement that, at least in part, could be identified in Greek culture, rather than Greek culture itself.

²⁰ A V 21, 104b: “In diesem Spiel der axiologischen Passivität und freien Aktivität und in dem Spiel der Willenspassionen und Willensaktionen (nach allen apriori möglichen Modalitäten) konstituiert sich die Werte- und Güterwelt, im weitesten Sinn gesprochen die Welt der Kultur, in der die Menschensubjekte zugleich Subjekte und Objekte der Kultur sind.” There are striking parallels between this conception of culture and the Marburg concept; see, e.g., Cassirer’s programmatic exposition of a critique of culture in *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 80, as well as his lecture “Critical Idealism as a Philosophy of Culture” (in *Symbol, Myth, and Culture*, 64–91).

renewal for both the community and the individuals that comprise it. Husserl writes,

In particular, it is clear that the forms of life, of activity, of cultural formation in which a community is concrete and has in totality its determined typical formal structure, must be of greatest significance for values: that the community must stand under the norms which represent the condition of possibility of a valuable community and included in it *eo ipso* the condition of possibility of the relative value of individuals.²¹

As an example, the value of a lawyer's vocation rests upon the values of the community; the value of a lawyer within a community with a strongly sedimented cultural value of justice will be greater than the value accorded to that lawyer's vocation in a community whose values embody an incommensurable set of priorities. Husserl uses the language of tradition to describe these sedimented values and practices; he argues that cultural norms establish a "style of communal life" [*Stil des Gemeinschaftsleben*] that exerts a normative pull on the individual members of the community.²² As Steinbock summarizes, Husserl maintains that the ethical norms for individual persons are shaped by the evolving norms of a community:

The ethical human life is normal because it is bound to norms and lives in them; an ethical norm is neither an ahistorical principle to which one must slavishly conform, nor a mere historical fact, a being [*Sein*]; it is rather a binding should-be [*Seinsollen*] that itself arises out of the framework of human communal normality.²³

In other words, tradition is a historical, malleable normative influence on the lives of the members of the community, which is itself generated by the practices

²¹ *Hua.* XXVII, 48, translated by Buckley.

²² *Hua.* XV, 143–4. Brand also notes the normative dimension of culture; he writes, "So hat das Traditionelle den Charakter des Gesollten" ("Die Normalität," 118).

²³ Steinbock, "The Project of Ethical Renewal and Critique," 454.

and history that constitute the community. The language of generation here is crucial: because norms are not ahistorical but at the same time are binding oughts, Husserl maintains that these norms must be genetically/generatively investigated and constituted, as the static register is inadequate to explain how historically-constituted norms could escape the problem of cultural relativism.

The fact that tradition establishes a normative influence upon the members of the community is especially important for addressing situations in which individuals have different goals. For an individual subject, a particular value may be of higher or lower importance, depending on how it relates to the individual's goals. Cultural traditions, on the other hand, are shared, and thus provide a framework for evaluating other values. Husserl emphasizes the shared nature of cultural traditions, writing,

The world becomes a human world, divided into communities; the community directed at a historical tradition that belongs specifically to them, in which a common culture has arisen, for everyone among them accessible and in the whole authenticatable in common, commonly valid.²⁴

Because culture establishes this shared framework within which norms are established, developed, and ultimately sedimented into the historical tradition, culture has a normative influence that goes beyond merely positing values. As Steinbock writes, "Culture then is axiological, not in the sense of being a doctrine of value, but in the sense that all of culture's domains are guided ultimately by ethical norms that come into being through human action, and more specifically through

²⁴ *Hua*. XXXIX, 32: "Die Welt wird zu einer Menschenwelt, gegliedert in Gemeinschaften, die Gemeinschaft bezogen auf eine speziell ihnen zugehörige historische Tradition, in der eine ihnen gemeinsame Kultur erwachsen ist, für jedermann unter ihnen zugänglich und im Ganzen gemeinsam ausweisbar, gemeinsam gültig."

the ethical human life.”²⁵ As we shall see when we get to the problem of harmonizing vocations, the fact that culture forms a common framework for evaluating values is crucial to reconciling the tension between the obligations of an individual vocation and the norms of a society.

While culture in a general sense relates to the values, norms, and practices of the relevant community, Husserl also speaks about “genuine culture” as something qualitatively different from normal culture. For example, in the *Kaizo* articles, he writes,

The totality of subjective goods...achieved within personal acts...can be called the *realm of the person's individual culture* and specifically, the person's genuine culture. The person is then simultaneously subject and object of culture; and again, the person is at once object of culture and *principle* of all cultural objects. For all genuine culture is only possible through genuine self-culture and the norm-giving ethical framework within it.²⁶

In reading this passage, it is necessary to remember that, for Husserl, “subjective goods” are not solipsistic. Although in a genetic analysis the values may originate with the individual person, the very fact that values exert a pull on the individual means that they must be communalized so that that pull can be articulated to others, in the same way that the view of an object must be able, in principle, to be shared by others.

Given that the subjective goods of the person must be able to be understood by others, the question is what it means to call the culture established by those values “genuine.” Husserl goes on to explain that a “genuine culture” is a culture whose norms and goods are immune from axiological depreciation. What this

²⁵ Steinbock, “The Project of Ethical Renewal and Critique,” 454.

²⁶ *Hua*. XXVII, 41–2, translated by Buckley.

requires is that the norms must be grounded in reason, or more precisely, rational critique, so that their justification is not dependent on empirical circumstances. This sense of genuine culture, as a culture whose norms are critically justified through rational critique, is the sense of culture that Husserl intends when he speaks of European culture or philosophical culture, and this notion of culture is clearly aspirational rather than descriptive. The idea is that genuine culture is a culture that, on the one hand, uses reason to critique its members on the basis of its norms and, on the other hand, simultaneously submits its own norms to a rational critique.²⁷ The notion of rationality at work in this critique will be described in the next chapter; for now, what is important is that genuine culture is justified in a more rigorous manner than mundane culture.

§24. The Justification of a Person's Vocation

In chapter four, we noted the problem of justifying an individual's vocation. Briefly stated, the problem is that it is unclear how to distinguish a legitimate vocational value—for example, the mother's value of protecting her child—from a fetishized value such as valuing a lucky rabbit charm. We noted that, because absolute values spring from the depths of a person, it would be necessary to go beyond the perspective of the individual person in order to critique the legitimacy of

²⁷ The language of reason and rational critique might suggest that reason is supposed to displace feeling in the case of legitimate values. However, this would be a misunderstanding of Husserl's point. The feeling dimension of values is their affective allure upon the person. The process of rational critique does not eliminate this affective dimension, but elevates it, insofar as the value motivating the affective response is demonstrated to be in harmony with the shared norms of the community. Husserl would not say that reason compels us to ignore the affective aspect (since that is an essential part of who I am), but rather to make sure that that aspect is chosen and embraced in light of my vocation and the norms of my community. For further explanation, see Melle, "Edmund Husserl," 244–5.

one's absolute value. Now that we have discussed the fact that personhood is a social category and we have seen how culture can establish norms according to which individual values are judged, we can develop a Husserlian method to critique the legitimacy of absolute values.

Husserl himself noted the problem of fetishized values as early as his Göttingen lectures. He describes a savage who fetishizes an object and thus gives it value that would not be recognized by a neutral observer: "The savage who reveres superstitiously a fetish may value...what is altogether 'value-less.'"²⁸ Throughout his ethical writings, there is evidence that he considered the problem of justifying absolute values, and in several places he sketches a response to the problem. However, these sketches are just that—they are not fully developed arguments or critical strategies. This section will attempt to synthesize these sketches into a plausible account of how the legitimacy of a person's absolute values can be established.

For Husserl, the crucial distinction between the higher form of vocational life, which can legitimately be considered in ethics, and the lower lives such as sensuous self-preservation is that "[t]he form of life of ethical humanity is...not only relatively the most valuable, but the only form of absolute value."²⁹ Individual professions are

²⁸ *Hua.* XXVIII, 83: "Der Wilde, der in abergläubischer Weise einen Fetsch verehrt, mag etwas werten...was überhaupt ,wertlos' ist." Husserl's choice of the savage for this example is unfortunate not only because of the colonialist overtones but also because the question of justifying a value emerges within the context of one's culture, as we shall see below. A better example would be an individual within a shared culture who fetishizes a value in a way that is contrary to the understanding of values within that shared culture. Within our culture, for instance, a glutton who values gustatory pleasures above all else could be accused of fetishization.

²⁹ *Hua.* XXVII, 29.

relatively the most valuable because, although they reflect the most valuable values of an individual subject, that value is relative to that subject; the profession of a painter may not be of highest value to a lawyer. However, this poses a problem: precisely because vocations belong to a person, rather than being objective impersonal values, it seems that every vocational value will be relative to the person who feels the calling of that vocation. As we saw in chapter four, I can appreciate the values of another without those values being loved or absolute values for me. Yet Husserl maintains that absolute values should not be relative to the individual: he writes, "Every absolute value <is> at the same time a value for everyone."³⁰ There is obviously a tension between these claims. The way that Husserl reconciles that tension is through expanding the scope of values to that of the community.

Within a community, individuals have their own goals and projects. Husserl claims, however, that in a true community, those goals will harmonize in some manner. He states that, ideally, "For the people of a community, the general goals of the individuals are also the general goals of all."³¹ While a lawyer may not place an absolute value on the vocation of the painter because the lawyer feels called by a different loved value, the loved values of the lawyer and the painter can be seen as absolutely valuable in a broader context. Husserl explains,

so an absolute value can only be given if the entire world with all personalities and all the worlds of experience and worlds of cognition that

³⁰ A V 21, 99b: "Jeder absolute Wert <ist> zugleich Wert für jedermann."

³¹ B I 21, 35b: "Für die Menschen einer Gemeinschaft sind die allgemeinen Zwecke des Einzelnen auch allgemeine Zwecke aller."

are factually constituted for them form a self-enclosed teleological system, in which every I, <every> absolute ought has its teleological position.³²

By arguing that the values can be harmonized in a teleological system, Husserl attempts to preserve both the absolute nature of absolute values as well as their relativity to the person. Loved values, because they stem from the core of the person, are relative to the person since only the person with the appropriate disposition will experience the love that makes the value of highest importance to the individual's life. But, legitimate loved values are also absolute insofar as the pursuit of those values contributes to the goals of the community in which the person lives. In short, the mother's love for her child is a legitimate absolute value insofar as the mother's value has a place within the teleological orientation of her community, while the fetishization of a value can be critiqued as illegitimate if it does not harmonize with the goals of the person's community. In either case, the legitimacy of the loved value depends upon its ability to withstand critical scrutiny from not merely the individual who holds the value, but also from the community in which that person lives.³³

³² A V 21, 12b: "so kann es einen absoluten Wert nur geben, wenn die ganze Welt mit allen Personalitäten und allen für sie faktisch konstituierten Erfahrungsumwelten und Erkenntnisumwelten ein in sich geschlossenes teleologisches System bilden, in dem jedes Ich, <jedes> absolute Sollen selbst seine teleologische Stelle hat." The notion of a teleological system is vague in this passage; as we will show in chapter six, Husserl has in mind the teleological ideal of a fully harmonized world, which he sometimes refers to as the ideal of a divine world.

³³ Although Brand does not use the language of critique, he notes that one of the key functions of cultural tradition is to unify the individual life of the subject with the life of his or her community; see Brand, "Die Normalität," 119. Obviously, this evaluation becomes extremely complicated in practice. To name but one example, if there is a just war (and Husserl did not renounce the concept of a just war until 1920; cf. Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 81), then the evaluation of the mother's love for her child becomes extremely problematic.

The idea that the community can have its own goals seems to be an outgrowth of Husserl's claim that persons can share the motivations of others within their community. Describing the development of common goals, Husserl writes, "Thereby my will goes through his will, and his through my will, and the goal is a *common goal* for us both."³⁴ When (and only when) an individual empathetically experiences the desires of the other, it is possible for the individual to adopt the same goal as the other.

However, Husserl acknowledges that the goals of individual persons will sometimes come into conflict. When this happens, the goals must be brought into harmony or unity.³⁵ Husserl explains how the practical conflicts between persons can be reconciled, writing,

whenever practical incompatibilities result in communal activity within the same surrounding-world...an ethical agreement takes place, and in "harmonizing justice and fairness" decisions are made and activity is distributed according to type and objective. Therein lies an ethical organisation of active life in which individuals work neither beside nor against each other, but act within different forms of the community of will.³⁶

While Husserl remains vague about the specifics of such an "ethical organization of active life," what is clear is that the members of the community work together to incorporate each other's objectives into a collective purpose. Husserl argues that the process of harmonization is its own distinctive teleological striving, explaining, "The unity is, in shared life as in individual life, frequently a unity of goals, that is, a

³⁴ *Hua.* XV, 511: "Dabei geht mein Wollen durch sein Wollen, und seines durch mein Wollen hindurch, und der Zweck ist *Gemeinzweck* für uns beide."

³⁵ A V 20, 2b–3a. Husserl seems to use the terms "Harmonie" and "Einheit" interchangeably throughout the manuscript passages in which he reflects on the relationship between persons and their community.

³⁶ *Hua.* XXVII, 46, translated by Buckley.

teleological unity in the diversity of individual goals, which are thus connected in the unity of a universal goal of a higher order.”³⁷

If we follow the process of harmonization to its ultimate conclusion, we would end up with a “unanimously” shared world. Husserl describes the world in which the goals of the individuals are unanimously united in a higher purpose, writing,

The world has sense. That is: personal life in the world and in relation to it has “concordance,” harmony, unity of purpose in absolute goals, harmony among all personal absolute purpose-setting, harmony among all possible duties, without which the I cannot live and the community cannot live, namely insofar as it could not be blessed, could not live such that it could be satisfied with itself, following its absolute Must.³⁸

It is clear that such a world is a regulative ideal because it would require the unity of all cultures and peoples, not merely the synthesis of a subset of people into a personality of a higher order. As Husserl notes, such unanimity is a goal lying *in infinitum*, with the ultimate achievement being the connection of one’s community with “alien home communities” [*fremden Heimgenossenschaften*].³⁹

Hart summarizes this process of harmonizing the values of different persons.

For Husserl, the position-taking acts that constitute the person are inherently

³⁷ B I 21, 116a: “Die Einheit ist im Gemeinschaftsleben wie in Einzelleben offenbar eine Einheit des Zweckes bzw. eine teleologische Einheit in der Mannigfaltigkeit einzelner Zwecke, die so verbunden sind in der Einheit eines universalen Zweckes höherer Ordnung.” The parallel to the language of a personality of higher order is almost certainly intentional.

³⁸ A V 21, 13a: “Die Welt hat Sinn. Das heißt: Persönliches Leben in der Welt und in Bezug auf sie hat ‚Einstimmigkeit‘, Harmonie, Einheit der Zweckmäßigkeit in absoluten Zwecken, Harmonie zwischen allen personalen absoluten Zwecksetzung, Harmonie zwischen allen möglichen Pflichten, ohne die das Ich nicht leben und die Gemeinschaft nicht leben kann, nämlich sofern sie nicht selig sein könnte, nicht so leben, dass sie mit sich selbst zufrieden, ihrem absoluten Muss folgend, sein könnte.”

³⁹ *Hua*. XV, 235.

intersubjective, and the dedication to the absolute values of the person can only be understood within the context of the person's community. Hart writes,

The abstract meditation on a life of true self-preservation, i.e., on an unregrettable and irrevocable position-taking in spite of inevitable disturbances, disappointments and surds, as a necessary condition of true personhood, is inserted into its fuller context in the idea of a self-preserving unanimous community in which each member's good is maximally realized.⁴⁰

However, it is important to emphasize that this integration of the individual person into the community is not a one-way relationship. Although we have discussed the need to harmonize the person's values with those of his or her community, Husserl did not believe that the person should be subordinated to the community. Rather, he saw the community and the persons who comprise the community standing in a symbiotic relationship.⁴¹

In order to demonstrate that the values of the community do not subordinate the justified values of an individual person, Husserl clarifies that the values of the community are not merely extensions of the values of specific individuals within the community. He explains, "These values are not reducible to individual values, but rather are founded in the work of individuals with all their individuality-values. The founded values in turn impart to these individual values a higher, indeed, an incomparably higher value."⁴² To understand how individual values can be uplifted by the value of a community, consider the vocation of a lawyer. It is hard to imagine someone whose loved values deal with helping individuals to navigate the laws of

⁴⁰ Hart, *The Person and the Common Life*, 294; cf. also E III 4, 6.

⁴¹ Buckley, "Political Aspects of Husserl's Call," 10–1 develops this position by citing Husserl's example of the medieval church as an imperialist unity that is an inauthentic community precisely because it is organized exclusively from the top down.

⁴² *Hua*. XXVII, 48, translated by Buckley.

society being able to fulfill such a vocation if he lived in a “community” of thieves. By contrast, the lawyer’s values are enhanced if he or she lives in a society that values justice and seeks to promote individual values that contribute to that goal.

In addition, Husserl argues that the community is not parasitic upon the values of an individual person because persons, as social creatures, require an intersubjective context to find meaning in their own lives. He writes, “My life is nothing for itself; it is one with the life of Others; it is a piece in the unity of the life of the community and reaches beyond this into the life of humanity. I cannot evaluate my life without evaluating the interwoven life of others.”⁴³

Finally, Husserl claims that the community does not marginalize the justified values of an individual person by noting that part of being a good human being is wanting to live within a community. He writes, “To be a true human being is to want to be a true human and contains within itself the desire to be a member of a ‘true’ humanity or to wish that the community to which one belongs is itself true, within the limits of practical possibility.”⁴⁴ For Husserl, a life lived entirely divorced from others is not a genuine life insofar as that desire could not be rationally justified. Because being a human being entails an intersubjective dimension of experience, a good human life cannot seek to exclude this aspect of one’s being. This claim makes sense in light of Husserl’s discussion of harmonization. If a person asserts that his or her loved value is incompatible with life in a community, that would provide *prima facie* evidence that the value is not legitimate precisely because it cannot be harmonized with the values of others.

⁴³ F I 24, 115, translated in Hart, *The Person and the Common Life*, 294.

⁴⁴ *Hua*. XXVII, 46, translated by Buckley.

§25. The Personality of a Higher Order

The previous sections have developed the claims that communities bear their own norms by means of culture and tradition. These norms influence the development of individuals within the community, and the individual persons can also help shape the norms of their community. The ideal relationship between the vocations of individual persons and their community is one of harmony. In this section, we will explore the notion of a “personality of a higher order,” which is a term Husserl introduces to describe a community whose purpose is so harmonized with that of its members that the community can be said to have its own unified personality.

As we have seen, Husserl argues that communities are more than mere collections of individuals; the community develops when members begin to take on the motivations of others within the community as their own motivations. This community need not be formally unified, like a state; Husserl gives the example of the community of mathematicians who are all interested in discovering mathematical truths.⁴⁵ Husserl describes the community at this level as being “many-headed” and yet “headless” in that the community has a number of members but is not its own unity.

However, there is a level of development of the community that goes beyond the “headless” conglomerate. Husserl describes the “personality of a higher order,” or a community that “accomplishes communal achievements which are not merely aggregates of the achievements of individuals, but rather are in a true sense

⁴⁵ *Hua.* XXVII, 22.

personal achievements of the community as such, realized in its striving and willing.”⁴⁶ To illustrate the contrast, Carr gives the example of a group of spectators at a football game. It is true that the crowd has some level of unity, since its interest is directed to the same object of the football game. However, the crowd’s achievements are primarily aggregations: each individual yells at the same time, and the result is a deafening roar. By contrast, the participants in a shared project (e.g., raising a barn) have a deeper level of unity because their accomplishments are accomplishments of the group as such. The accomplishment of a shared project is different in kind from participation in an aggregative achievement, since the terminal accomplishment is more than the sum of its parts.⁴⁷ A personality of a higher order is a community whose achievements constitute the latter kind of unity.

In other words, what distinguishes a personality of a higher order from lower levels of communities is that the personality of a higher order contains a unity of its intentional achievements. Husserl elaborates on this point in a research manuscript:

Overall, we have a multitude of persons with many personal capabilities, with many streams of consciousness, in which many acts of consciousness are entering and integrating—and therefore “a spirit,” a personality “of a higher order” as the ideal bearer of a character, a capacity...with a consciousness that encompasses all the individual consciousnesses in a selection, etc.⁴⁸

Husserl’s description of the personality of a higher order mentions several ways in which the community is unified. The community has its own character and its own

⁴⁶ *Hua*. XXVII, 22, translated by Buckley.

⁴⁷ Carr, *Interpreting Husserl*, 273.

⁴⁸ *Hua*. XIV, 199: “Überall haben wir da eine Vielheit von Personen mit vielen personalen Vermögen, mit vielen Bewusstseinsströmen, in sie eintretend und sich einfügend viele Bewusstseinsakte—and doch ‚ein Geist‘, eine Personalität ‚höherer Stufe‘ als ideeller Träger eines Charakter, eines Vermögens...mit einem Bewusstsein, das alle die Einzelbewusstseine in einiger Auslese umgreift usw.”

abilities, as well as its own consciousness. Husserl clearly did not intend the overly literal implication that there is a separate stream of consciousness that emerges in the community of a higher order; what he means is that the higher-order community has its own identity and its own shared awareness in the sense that the individual members of the community identify themselves as part of the community and act in light of their common situation.⁴⁹ Nor did he mean that the community is unified by means of an already existing goal: the spirit of the community is an ideal of harmony, towards which the community as a whole is directed.

Thus, a personality of a higher order requires a stronger unity than merely possessing a shared background, such as is present in a linguistic community. Husserl writes, "Therefore, however, it must be distinguished between personalities of a higher order, genuine personal associations, and *mere* communicative communities, communities of effects."⁵⁰ Nor is it sufficient to have a personal relationship between members of the community. Husserl describes the relationship between an artist and his or her public, or between a merchant and a tradesman; he writes, "Obviously, there are personal relations, which run from I to I,

⁴⁹ Carr notes several texts where Husserl affirms that the language of "personality of a higher order" is not a mere analogy; see Carr, *Interpreting Husserl*, 267. It is clear that Husserl thinks that there is a genuine sense in which the personality of a higher order constitutes a personal unity, but he also steers clear of making metaphysical claims about the personality of a higher order.

⁵⁰ *Hua*. XIV, 201: "Da muss aber gescheiden werden <zwischen> Personalitäten höherer Ordnung, echten Personalverbänden, und *bloss* kommunikativen Gemeinschaften, Wirkungsgemeinschaften." The importance of the person relationship among members of the personality of a higher order is emphasized in Brand, "Die Normalität," 116.

but no association, no personality of a higher order.”⁵¹ A personality of a higher order only emerges when the community itself constitutes and thus bears its own purpose, above and beyond the purposes of the individual members.

In addition to having its own purpose, a personality of a higher order must also exhibit a unity among the community as a whole and its constituent persons. Husserl clarifies the nature of the unity within a personality of a higher order. He explains, “The community is a personal, so to speak many-headed, and yet united subjectivity. Its individual persons are its ‘parts,’ functionally interwoven with each other through multifarious ‘social acts’...which spiritually unite person with person.”⁵² By functionally interwoven, Husserl simply means that the persons within a personality of a higher order are working together to cooperatively bring about an end. Just like the individual parts of the body work together to accomplish a particular purpose (e.g., the feet and hands moving in coordination in order to lead a specific dance pattern), the individual persons within a community of a higher order have their efforts co-mingled so that their activities contribute to the purpose of the higher community. It is worth noting that Husserl does not treat this relationship as a simple ordering of persons-to-community; the persons are also linked with each other directly by means of the social acts that constitute and/or contribute to the purpose of the community. Husserl’s point is that the empathic ties

⁵¹ Hua. XIV, 183: “Da sind offenbar personale Beziehungen, die von Ich zu Ich laufen, aber kein Verein, keine Personalität höherer Ordnung.” We have already mentioned the development of a theory of social acts in Reinach. Husserl’s comment here is also suggestive of a notion of collective intentionality. See, e.g., Searle, “Collective Intentions,” as well as *The Construction of the Social Reality*, and Schmid, *Subjekt, System, Diskurs* (offering a Husserlian version of collective intentionality), *Wir-Intentionalität*, and *Plural Action*.

⁵² Hua. XXVII, 22, translated by Buckley.

that give rise to any form of community (i.e., the empathy that allows me to take on the motivation of the other as my motivation and vice versa) are deepened in a personality of a higher order; the persons are linked, at both the passive level of motivation as well as the active level of striving and willing, to the telos of the community as a whole.

It is noteworthy that the coordination of purposes within a personality of a higher order is achieved through the same process of harmonization—i.e., of reflective critique—that was used to justify the vocation of an individual person. Because the community of a higher order has its own purpose, Husserl argues that the community can critique its own purpose in ethical terms in much the same way as an individual person can reflect on his or her vocation. Husserl writes,

The community can have a self-valuation and a will directed towards this, a will of self-formation. All acts of community are founded in the acts of the individuals which found the community. Therein lies the possibility that a community is able to become an ethical subject, just as the individual subject reflecting upon itself in a valuing and willing manner.⁵³

The key to this transformation is the same as in the case of the individual person: the harmonization of the community's goals within a broader context. In the context of the individual person, the broader context is whether the person's vocation can be integrated with that of the community. In the case of the personality of a higher order, the broader context is provided by the norms and traditions of the community. Husserl writes,

A correlative normality, namely as the correlate of the appropriate personal life, is the appropriate form of the communal surrounding world, it [the surrounding world] in the form of the traditional....In life, which in the normal form of the progress of the life of the person and the "communities"

⁵³ *Hua*. XXVII, 49, translated by Buckley.

and communities of a higher order, reflection performs the role appropriate to its form: reflection on what is appropriate, by means of the connection with the consultation of the elders.⁵⁴

In short, reflection functions as an intra-community regulating process, in which the personality of a higher order becomes critical with respect to itself and its own purposes in order to provide an internal justification of its communal life. Husserl's claim that there is an appropriate form of communal life that can be determined via reflection upon the tradition of the community should not be misunderstood as a claim that tradition is always right, or even necessarily as a defense of conservative traditionalism. Rather, tradition can provide the "spiritual shape" of a group of people, whose development strives for a more perfect realization of that spiritual shape as well as a more perfect clarification of what that spiritual shape ought to be.⁵⁵

In addition to the pull of harmony from the direction of the past (i.e., tradition), Husserl suggests that there is also a pull towards harmonization in a higher direction. He notes that there is a teleology running all the way from the level of the individual person through the personality of a higher order to an "all-personality." Husserl writes,

We know that to all this belong *constituted norms*, which are imagined [*eingebildet*] in the being of the individuals and the being of communities; norms, thus, which belong constitutively to the persons as human persons and to the personalities of higher order—all of which transposes itself

⁵⁴ *Hua.* XV, 144: "Eine korrelative Normalität, nämlich als Korrelat des schicklichen personalen Lebens, ist die schickliche Form der gemeinschaftlichen Umwelt, ihre in der Form des Traditionellen....Im Leben, dem in den Normalformen verlaufenden Leben des Personen und der ‚Gemeinden‘ und Gemeinden höherer Ordnung, spielt die Besinnung ihre selbst zur Form gehörige Rolle: Besinnung über das Schickliche, mittelbar in Konnex mit der Befragung der Ältesten."

⁵⁵ *Hua.* VI, 318–9; *Crisis*, 273–4.

naturally into transcendental subjectivity. This designates, hence, at the same time the highest level of the constitution of personality, of the individual and communal personalities, up to the all-personality, through which alone the person exists concretely.⁵⁶

We will have to wait until chapter six to unpack the notion of the all-personality. For now, what is important is that the personality of a higher order, like the individual person, can be transformed according to norms. In this sense, norms—such as those constituted by tradition—have a forward-looking characteristic, as a development towards an ideal, in addition to the reflective, backward-looking characteristic of articulating the spiritual shape of the community.⁵⁷

In fact, according to Husserl, all individuals stand under an obligation to transform themselves towards, and in light of, the norms of their communities.

Steinbock articulates this obligation with the language of generativity that we introduced in chapter three:

Living according to an ethical self-regulation is not fully ethical because it is still based on the *contemporary individual*, on a “self”; methodologically it is still genetic rather than generative. Ethically, I am responsible not only for my own becoming but for the *generation* of an ethical context which I take up

⁵⁶ *Hua.* XV, 421: “Wir wissen, dass zu all dem in Sein der einzelnen und im Sein der Gemeinschaften eingebildete, *konstituierte Normen* gehören, die also konstitutiv zu den Personen als menschlichen Personen und zu den Personalitäten höherer Ordnung gehören—was sich natürlich in die transzendente Subjektivität überträgt. Das bezeichnet also zugleich die höchste Stufe der Konstitution der Personalität, der einzelnen und der Gemeinschaftspersonalitäten, bis zur Allpersonalität, durch die erst konkret Person da ist.”

⁵⁷ While it is beyond the scope of the dissertation to explore this topic, I think there is a productive comparison to be made between Husserl’s notion of the community, and the forward-directed nature of its norms, on the one hand, and Heidegger’s notion of the projection of *Da-sein* through being-towards-death, on the other. Briefly, it seems that Husserl’s notion of communal norms could capture the insight that *Dasein* is ecstatic without requiring the mood of *Angst* in order to reveal that projectedness. For more on being-toward-death, see Hoffman.

and in which I am inextricably involved....The dimension lacking is the *generative* dimension as *communal* and *historical*.⁵⁸

Obviously, this obligation to generate an ethical context for one's actions is not an obligation to uncritically accept the ethical norms of one's culture. Rather, it is an obligation to participate in the generation of one's own context, through a combination of self-reflection and communal influence. For Husserl, the ultimate level of responsibility towards one's entire ethical context is encapsulated by the notion of the community of love, or *Liebesgemeinschaft*.

§26. The *Liebesgemeinschaft*

As we have seen, there is a close connection between the person and the community. Husserl argues that this relationship extends to the level of value, writing, "the levels of value of the individual human and the concrete community stand in a functional relationship."⁵⁹ Husserl's claim is that the person and community can each enhance the value of the other; an ethically-driven individual is an asset to the formation of a genuine community, and a genuine community in turn can contribute to the formation of its members under ideal norms. He explains,

Thus the community would progress towards the practically leading idea of a community of good individuals, all of whom live knowing that there is, and that there ought to be [*Seinsollen*] a community; a community constantly maintained through self-work and also maintained through continuously on-going culture in the form of the education of apprentices. And this community would no longer be a mere collection of individuals with a similar will according to similar ideals, but it would be, rather, an already constituted community of will. A communal will would run through the unity of individual lives and the individual subjects and individual willings.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Steinbock, "The Project of Ethical Renewal and Critique," 456–7. See also Hart, "The Rationality of Culture."

⁵⁹ *Hua*. XXVII, 48, translated by Buckley.

⁶⁰ *Hua*. XXVII, 52, translated by Buckley.

The previous section discussed the concept of the “personality of a higher order,” which is intended to capture the unity of willing present in such a community. In his manuscripts, Husserl occasionally refers to a particular type of higher-order community that embodies this ideal of the functional relationship between person and community through the experience of love, using the term *Liebesgemeinschaft*.⁶¹ As summarized by Schuhmann, “The highest form of monadic life is thus the ‘spiritual love and community of love.’”⁶²

Husserl explains that a *Liebesgemeinschaft* is something more than a community in which individuals interact with each other. He writes, “Not every community is a mutual community, and not every mutual [community] is a community of love.”⁶³ What distinguishes the *Liebesgemeinschaft* is that, in a *Liebesgemeinschaft*, I have an enduring disposition of love towards the other. It is clear that Husserl is not using the term love in an emotional sense; instead, acting from love means that I not only see the striving of others and respond to it but that I strive to have a personal connection with others. Husserl describes this kind of love as “a striving...for personal ‘contact’.”⁶⁴ He notes that this love is different from the

⁶¹ Although the concept of the *Liebesgemeinschaft* belongs to Husserl’s later philosophy, it is interesting that he used the term as early as 1916 in connection with the ideal transcendental I as well as the notion of God; see Schuhmann, *Husserl-Chronik*, 200. Since this was approximately the same time as Husserl addressed the problem of love in his ethics, it seems plausible that Husserl began using the concept of love in general, and the *Liebesgemeinschaft* in particular, partially as an outgrowth of his development beyond his early ethics.

⁶² Schuhmann, *Husserls Staatsphilosophie*, 78: “Die höchste Form des monadischen Lebens ist also die ‚geistige Liebe und Liebesgemeinschaft.’” The internal quotation is from F I 24, 69b.

⁶³ *Hua*. XIV, 172: “Nicht jede Gemeinschaft ist wechselseitige Gemeinschaft, und nicht jede wechselseitige ist Liebesgemeinschaft.”

⁶⁴ *Hua*. XIV, 172: “[e]in Streben...nach personaler ‚Berührung’.”

concern about others surrounding me that is experienced in other communities:

“Those who love live not next to each other and with each other, but in each other.”⁶⁵

The clearest example of living “in another” comes from Husserl’s discussion of empathy that we examined earlier; when one person takes the motivations of another as his or her own motivations, the two are living “in another.”⁶⁶ When this sense of living in another is the primary kind of relationship between members of the community, therefore, the community deserves the title “community of love.” Husserl gives the example of Christ’s love for humanity as the kind of love embodied in a *Liebesgemeinschaft*; he argues that love in this sense strives to connect to another at the deepest level possible.⁶⁷ Donohoe describes this notion of love, writing, “The relationship to and recognition of the importance of the vocation of the Other takes the form of an ethical love. This love has no boundaries, no restrictions to one community over another, but takes on the infinite nature of a universal love.”⁶⁸

Since Husserl’s notion of love within the *Liebesgemeinschaft* is complicated, it is worth taking a few moments to clarify what this sense of love entails. First, it would be a misreading of Husserl to argue to the ideal of the *Liebesgemeinschaft* is a

⁶⁵ *Hua.* XIV, 174: Liebende leben nicht nebeneinander und miteinander, sondern ineinander.”

⁶⁶ Davis distinguishes between empathy, in which one is aware of what the other is experiencing, and sympathy, which entails actually *feeling* what the other is feeling along with that person (e.g., *Mit-leid*). Although Husserl does not draw a rigorous distinction between the two, the overall point that living “in another” or in sympathy with another highlights a deeper connection than mere awareness of the other’s perspective is well-taken. See Davis, 567.

⁶⁷ *Hua.* XIV, 175.

⁶⁸ Donohoe, *Husserl on Ethics and Intersubjectivity*, 142.

departure from the rationalistic conception of the person. As Bello notes, “The idea of a community of love is concomitant with the ideal of a ‘rational’ humanity, that is, a humanity that is aware of its own ethical task.”⁶⁹ What the *Liebesgemeinschaft* represents is an expansion of the ethical task of a rational person from merely evaluating his or her vocation to a concern about how all members of the community can live in harmony and fulfill their tasks (as well as the vocation of the community itself). Insofar as there is an apparent tension between reason and love, Melle argues that this tension is a consequence of not grasping the total context in which reason and love function. Melle writes, “Reason and love, Husserl seems to think, are one only if placed into their full context of a divine world-order. Only through faith in God can we overcome any apparent contradiction between the rule of reason and the rule of love.”⁷⁰ We shall have to defer to chapter six the discussion of what Husserl means by a faith in God; what is important right now is that Husserl does not see the *Liebesgemeinschaft* as a rejection of the ultimate rationality of the person.

Second, it is clear that Husserl’s sense of love within the *Liebesgemeinschaft* is not an emotional or sexual love. The Christian tradition has articulated an alternative to these forms of love using the Greek term *agape*. Love as *agape* is distinguished from the striving, appetitive love of *eros*; *agape* is a gift, rather than a desire, and it is given unconditionally to the other. The Biblical injunction to “love thy neighbor” articulates the love of *agape* insofar as the “neighbor” is loved regardless of his or her worthiness (or blameworthiness); the listener is

⁶⁹ Bello, *The Divine in Husserl*, 56.

⁷⁰ Melle, “Edmund Husserl,” 247.

admonished to elevate the concern for the other so that there is no priority of the self.⁷¹ Husserl describes the love of a *Liebesgemeinschaft* in similar terms: the love animating that community is “infinite, absolute, and universal,” and love involves regarding the life of the other “as if it were mine.”⁷²

Finally, this unconditional love must be understood in the context of the community. In the Christian tradition, the term “*agape*” is sometimes translated as “charity” because this concept of love recognizes the obligations we have towards others. Husserl makes a similar claim; for Husserl, the *Liebesgemeinschaft* is an expression of love insofar as persons live “in another,” i.e., take the concerns of the other as being extensions of their own projects. Because those projects must harmonize with each other and with the telos of the community, it is not the case that an individual within the community of love can do whatever he or she wishes. In other words, Husserl is not calling for us to love a thief by tolerating his or her behavior. Rather, the imperative of love calls for us to harmonize the desires of all individuals in the community with the shared project of the *Liebesgemeinschaft* itself. It is consistent with this imperative to critically reflect upon and perhaps modify the spiritual shape of the community, but it is not permissible for an individual to simply reject that shape for himself or herself, and Husserl’s

⁷¹ In this dissertation I can only scratch the surface of the Christian articulation of love. For a further discussion of love as *agape*, see Warnach, esp. II. Teil. Nygren articulates the Christian sense of love as an assimilation of *agape* and *eros*. Finally, Sadler discusses love in the phenomenological tradition, although his reading of Husserl is very abstract and Cartesian.

⁷² E III 4, 20, translated in Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 383; E III 2, 40a: “Sein Dasein, sein Leben ist, als ob es das meine wäre.”

imperative to love does not require other members of the community to condone such a rejection.

What universal love does demand is a sense of solidarity within the community, with the *Liebesgemeinschaft* representing the highest ideal of such a community. Davis writes,

In the community of love, I suffer in the face of the stranger's suffering, and I am guilty for the actions of persons I have not even met. *Liebesgemeinschaft* is the articulation of a sense of solidarity permeating between all human beings and indicates the best possible communal form for the human race in general.⁷³

In other words, the love of the *Liebesgemeinschaft* is a love that takes on the concerns of others to such a degree that no one is left out or marginalized. Unlike a typical human community, in which our sphere of moral concern is centered around those who we know well, life in a *Liebesgemeinschaft* is oriented around reaching out to actively include the concerns of others so that a restriction of our sphere of moral concern is neither possible nor desirable.⁷⁴

There are obvious similarities between Husserl's articulations of a personality of a higher order and a *Liebesgemeinschaft*, most notably the unity that belongs to those kinds of communities. In short, the *Liebesgemeinschaft* seems like the ideal limit of a personality of a higher order insofar as all of the vocations and projects of the members of the community have been harmonized. There is a

⁷³ Davis, 569-70.

⁷⁴ Husserl's account of the *Liebesgemeinschaft* as a community in which there is no restriction of the sphere of our moral concern bears suggestive parallels to Scheler's notion of the saint as an ethical archetype, although Husserl's claims about the critical justification of the *Liebesgemeinschaft's telos* would obviously conflict with Scheler's description of the value spheres of each archetype as being incommensurable.

difference in emphasis, however. While the unity of the personality of a higher order stems from the harmonization of the goals of the individual community members, the unity of a *Liebesgemeinschaft* originates in the attempt to take the life of another into my life in a profound manner. In other words, the emphasis of the personality of a higher order is on the *telos* of the community, whereas the *Liebesgemeinschaft* draws attention to the connection between members of the community. In addition, the concept of a personality of a higher order focuses on the striving of the community as a whole (as opposed to the striving of the aggregation of its members). As an ideal limit, the *Liebesgemeinschaft* is what is striven for.

Nonetheless, both concepts come together in practice, as the process of harmonization establishes a shared *telos* for the community while at the same time helping the individual members to take on the concerns of other members of the community. In striving to realize one's own goals—which inevitably has a social dimension and thus must be harmonized with the goals of one's community—Husserl argues that the good of the other becomes a matter of self-interest for the person:

In social relationships, the subject sees that the other, insofar as the other is a good person, is also a value for the subject, and not merely a utilitarian value, but a value in itself. The subject thus has a pure interest in the ethical self-work of the other, a self-interest that, if possible, others fulfill their ethically good desires to live their lives in the correct form....Consequently, this too belongs to the categorically postulated: that the best possible being and will and realization of the other belongs to my own best possible being and willing and realization, and vice-versa.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ *Hua*. XXVII, 46, translated by Buckley.

As Schuhmann summarizes, “the community of love presents an unsurpassable telos of intersubjectivity.”⁷⁶

Although it is clear that the *Liebesgemeinschaft* represents a teleological endpoint of the development of personal communities, the exact form of that community is still uncertain. In part, this vagueness is required by Husserl’s insistence that communities, just like persons, are particular and concrete and therefore cannot be investigated entirely in formal terms. Nonetheless, we can still ask if there is a common factor that gives legitimacy to particular forms of communities. Is there a unique feature that makes possible the harmonization of the various individual *teloi* within a community? Or, as Husserl himself wonders,

what possible form does the spread of tradition of the genuine that is awakened already in the individual, in “community” (“church”), have as “ethical” politics? And how do all the forms themselves come together in a form and belong to a universal teleology?⁷⁷

The answer to this question will provide the unifying thread that runs through the method of critical reflection and harmonization that we have discussed in both the dimension of the individual person as well as the social dimension of the person’s community. As the next chapter will argue, that unifying feature is nothing other than reason.

⁷⁶ Schuhmann, *Husserls Staatsphilosophie*, 83: “die Liebesgemeinschaft ein unüberbietbares Telos der Intersubjektivität darstellt.”

⁷⁷ *Hua.* XV, 380: “welche mögliche Form hat die Verbreitung der Tradition der schon in einzelnen, in ‚Gemeinden‘ (‚Kirchen‘) erwachten Echtheit,...[als] ‚ethische‘ Politik? Und wie hängen alle Formen selbst in Form zusammen und gehören zur universalen Teleologie?”

Chapter 6. The Teleology of Personhood

*It is his spirit, and the perfection of his reason in
that spirit. For man is a rational animal.*
—Seneca

In the previous chapters, we have examined the various aspects of Husserl's concept of personhood. This chapter will show how those aspects are connected via a teleology of personal becoming. This teleology, which strives towards an infinite regulative ideal, is ultimately a teleology of phenomenological reason. This chapter will therefore demonstrate how this teleology develops through the progressive striving of the person towards intentional fulfillment. In order to capture the teleological nature of personhood, I will develop the interpretation of Husserl's transcendental person as an entelechy of reason.

The first section (§27) will explicate how the concept of personhood unifies the various teleologies we have encountered thus far. In the second section (§28), I will describe the regulative ideal of this teleological progress, which Husserl calls "God." The third section (§29) will demonstrate how this teleological progression towards God is a teleology of reason. In the fourth section (§30), I will explain how this teleology of reason relates to Husserl's conception of the task of the philosopher. The fifth section (§31) will synthesize all of these insights into the concept of an entelechy of reason. In the sixth section (§32), I will show how this dissertation contributes to the Husserlian discussion of personhood. Finally, I conclude with some thoughts on additional avenues of research for personhood in Husserl (§33).

§27. Personhood as a Teleological Concept

Each of the previous chapters has noted that there is a teleology present in the respective aspects of Husserl's concept of personhood. What remains to be shown is that these teleological progressions are in fact various levels of a single teleology: a teleology of personhood. This section will therefore argue that there is a unified teleological progression that runs through all the aspects of personhood.

Although it is not always evident from his published writings, Husserl's thinking is heavily influenced by teleological concepts. Throughout his manuscripts, teleological thinking emerges in meditations on topics as diverse as the evolution of humanity, the development of culture, the structure of consciousness, the principles of practical reasoning, and the moral order of the world.¹ In these and other fields, Husserl makes use of teleological principles in order to either develop or demonstrate the organization of specific phenomenological analyses. As Bernet summarizes,

Edmund Husserl's phenomenology is essentially dominated by teleological concepts. This is true of his philosophical analyses of the development of biological organisms as well as of his philosophical considerations of cultural phenomena. Both animal and human (transcendental) life has a goal. The history of interpersonal relationships as well as the tradition of philosophical thought are to be understood in terms of a teleologically organized meaningful context.²

¹ Strasser, "History, Teleology, and God," 318; see also Tymieniecka, Hart, "Entelechy in Transcendental Phenomenology," and Hoyos. Sancipriano, 356 links the notion of teleological accomplishment to three major domains in Husserl: the theoretical, ethical, and religious. Dupré, 207-8 argues that Fichte was a key influence in the development of Husserl's teleological thinking; we have already discussed Fichte's influence on Husserl's ethical thought in chapter four.

² Bernet, "Perception as a Teleological Process," 119; italics removed.

In the context of personhood, we have already seen teleologies at work in the instinctive and habitual striving of the transcendental subject, in the expansion of the lifeworld, in the idea of a vocation, and in the development of the intersubjective community. For Husserl, however, these teleologies are not isolated from each other. From the ever-expanding horizons of the lifeworld to the ever-new decisions that need to be reconciled with one's vocation, striving for the absolute life is a goal that lies in infinity. Husserl gives an extended description of this teleology, which is worth quoting at length since this description will guide the analysis of this chapter. He writes,

this teleology is understood in its relationship to absolute subjectivity as the infinite way to develop itself into true being; or, it may be understood as the infinite accomplishment (proper to subjectivity in its absolute and ultimate sense) of the constitution of a world as nature and as cultural world of human and personal communities (uppermost, generative societies of nations) ascending into infinity of relative accord and relative truth. And, corresponding to this accomplishment of constitution, there is an absolute supreme idea as the ultimate total meaning-giving principle for truth and being, yes, even for the being of the absolute subject and the totality of subjects, which itself as absolute subjectivity, consists in the mutual implication of the universe of subjects.

Corresponding to the world which has its validity in the flux of validations and in the relativity of a stream of experience, thought and valuation; corresponding to a world which enjoys necessarily a unity in the flux of world appearances which mounts unto infinity in its validation and unity of verification; furthermore, corresponding to the transcendental all-subjectivity which in its streaming changes unto infinity within the infinite stream of the socialized constitution of the world-validation and thereby of the infinite constitution of "the true world" by way of the unification of the verified relative pieces of evidence—corresponding to these is the absolute *ideal pole-idea*. This ideal pole-idea is of an absolute in a new transworldly, trans-human, supra-transcendental-subjective sense. It is the absolute *logos*, the absolute truth in the complete and full sense, as the *unum*, *verum*, and *bonum* toward which each being is bound, and toward which all transcendental subjective life, as vital being living toward constituting truth, tends. This idea is borne by every transcendental I, and in a socialized way by every transcendental We, in its transcendental personality as the ideal norm

for all relative norms. Thereby does the individual and communalized transcendental subjectivity bear in itself an ideal of its true being toward which it is predisposed in its factual personal being. However, this ideal is but a ray of the absolute ideal, of the idea of an all-personality which is infinitely superior to everything actual, to all becoming and to all development toward the ideal by what is factual. The idea stands over all development toward it as a pole which lies infinitely removed. This pole-idea is the idea of an absolutely perfect transcendental universal community.³

This text is extremely rich as a meditation on the teleology of transcendental subjectivity. There are four claims within this quote that I want to isolate and develop. First, Husserl is explicit that there is a *single telos* running through the levels of human experience—there is an “absolute ideal pole-idea” that is correlated with all of the levels of human experience in combination, and which is borne by the transcendental I through its entire development. Second, this *telos* begins in the depths of the passive dimension; it does not emerge *sua sponte* with the acts of the subject. Third, the teleological progression develops towards an “infinitely removed pole” or, in Kantian terms, a regulative idea. Finally, this teleology establishes a unity running throughout all the aspects of human experience covered through its development. I shall develop these claims in order to clarify the nature of Husserl’s teleology of personhood.

In this passage, Husserl remarks that this teleology encompasses all of the accomplishments of subjectivity, from the constitution of a natural world and an intersubjective community to the absolute pole-idea. Dupré explains that there is a single teleological principle that unifies all of the aspects of consciousness that appear in the flow of internal time-consciousness. He writes,

³ E III 4, 36a–b, translated in Hart, “A Précis,” 137–8.

In Husserl's later writings, it is precisely this forward moving force of an all-comprehensive, teleological principle which secures the unified, homogenous character of the inner time flow. As ordering principle of a dynamic universal harmony, this teleological "ultimate" proceeds from preconscious life through animal and subconscious awareness to full reflection. It even transcends individual consciousness by connecting all conscious monads and directing them toward the constitution of one common, objective world. According to this view, all intentionality of consciousness is founded in a transconscious universal drive.⁴

It is noteworthy that this teleology begins at the preconscious (i.e., the passive) level and spans upward through the active dimension of reflection. In other words, the teleology of instinctive striving is not disconnected from the teleology of reflectively critiquing one's life vocation; both of those teleologies are revealed as components of the same fundamental teleology of conscious life.

The claim that teleology begins at the passive level is supported by our earlier results. As we saw in chapter two, there is a teleology latent in instinctive striving. In chapter three, we noted that Husserl correlates this instinctive striving to the horizon of the world in which this striving occurs, and the horizontality of the world also manifests a teleological progression towards a more all-encompassing horizon. Thus, already at the latent levels of the structures of consciousness and world, we find that these structures are organized teleologically. Allen describes how this teleology structures the passive dimensions of consciousness, writing,

Moreover, if I follow a Husserlian train of thought I find that the world is pregiven, even at the level of instincts, as being goal directed and, correlatively, that my consciousness is instinctively oriented toward a telos.

⁴ Dupré, 207. Dupré explicitly cites E III 9, 66 to support this claim; there are additional passages that support this reading cited below.

Thus, I find that teleology is implicit in the *life-world*, prior to any attempts to reflectively thematize it.⁵

Our arguments in chapter two and three demonstrated how individual passive strivings could become sedimented into habits and how worldly horizons could expand into a broader concept of the world. However, Husserl also explicitly argues that these passive teleologies do not remain limited to the level of latent intentionality. He asks rhetorically a series of questions that can only be answered in the affirmative:

May we not or rather must we not presuppose a universal driving intentionality (*Triebintentionalität*), one which unifies every original present into a lasting (*stehende*) temporalization and which, concretely, propels (*forttreibt*) it from present to present in such a way that every [temporal] content is the content of a fulfillment of the drive (*Trieberfüllung*) and is intended before the goal? [Must we not presuppose that this intentionality] also [propels it] in such a way that in each primordial present there are transcending impulses (*Triebe*) of a higher level that reach out into every other present, binding them like monads together, in the course of which they are all implicit in one another—implicit intentionally?⁶

In another manuscript, Husserl goes on to describe how the development of the I spans the entire range of conscious and pre-conscious experience:

It [development] enacts itself in every transcendental individual I for itself as its intentional development from a primordial disposition in instinctive “unconscious” drives and driven by them from the very ground, in higher levels from the awakened νοῦς θεωρητικός and as practical reason.⁷

⁵ Allen, 214; cf. *Hua.* XV, 385. Bello emphasizes that teleology is grounded on the hyletic level of consciousness; see “The Divine in Husserl,” 52–3, as well as “Teleology as ‘the Form of all Forms,’” 338.

⁶ *Hua.* XV, 594–5, translated in Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 340.

⁷ E III 4, 17a: “Sie [die Entwicklung] vollzieht sich in jedem transzendentalen Einzel-Ich für sich als seine intentionale Entwicklung aus einer Uranlage in instinktiv ‚unbewussten‘ Trieben und von ihnen zuunterst geleitet, in höherer Stufe aus dem erwachten νοῦς θεωρητικός und als praktische Vernunft.”

In the same paragraph, Husserl emphasizes the intersubjective character of this development. He writes, “But the development of every individual I is directed and indirectly intertwined intentionally with that of other [Is]. [...] Thus its development is the forgoing process of the fulfillment of intersubjective intentionality.”⁸

In this manuscript passage, Husserl describes the absolute ideal-pole of the absolutely perfect community using phrases like the “absolute *logos*,” the verification of evidence, and the absolute principle of truth. As Mensch argues, this fulfillment of intersubjective development is directed by reason insofar as the absolute life represents striving towards the ultimate synthesis of all possibilities into a unified whole. He comments on this synthesis by using Husserl’s concept of the *Liebesgemeinschaft*, writing,

Teleologically conceived, its full objectification [i.e., the objectification of the *Liebesgemeinschaft*] always remains transcendent to us; it is present only as a goal directing our lives. This goal is an inherent one insofar as its progressive realization is through the actualization of our possibilities. It embodies reason in the sense that it is rationally explicable in terms of the progressive synthesis of such interdependent possibilities.⁹

The third section of this chapter will unpack the sense of reason Husserl has in mind in this passage. For now, it is noteworthy that Husserl emphasizes the idea of synthesis or harmonization in his notion of the absolute: he speaks of the unification of pieces of evidence and the *unum, verum, bonum* towards which all being is directed. As Husserl concludes in the paragraph after he describes the upward propulsion of the universal driving intentionality that runs from the passive

⁸ E III 4, 17a–b: “Aber die Entwicklung jedes Einzel-Ich ist intentional mit dem der anderen unmittelbar und mittelbar verflochten. [...] Also ihre Entwicklung ist der fergehende Prozess der Erfüllung der intersubjektiven Intentionalität.”

⁹ Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 390.

dimension up through the higher levels of intentionality, “This would lead to the conception of a universal teleology.”¹⁰

The claim that these various teleologies of personhood share an underlying unity within the flow of conscious experience suggests that personhood itself may be, at its root, a teleological concept. Several passages in Husserl’s research manuscripts support this suggestion. Husserl claims that “teleology...[taken] as an ontological form, determines the universal being of transcendental subjectivity.”¹¹ It is important to be clear that Husserl is not describing an Aristotelian form that constitutes the essence of transcendental subjectivity; Husserl’s claim is rather that transcendental subjectivity is permeated by teleological impulses. He clarifies that teleology is what makes possible the individuation of transcendental subjects—a notion that would be contradictory if Husserl understood the ontological form of teleology as an Aristotelian essence. As Husserl writes, teleology is immanent in subjects “as the form of their individual being, as the form of all the forms in which subjectivity exists.”¹² Even if the form that makes possible subjectivity can be further specified in its essence—and as we will shortly argue, Husserl specifies this essence as reason—this cannot be understood as something static and fixed. Strasser explains, “However...*the reasonable mind does not have an invariable form; its existence is a becoming.*”¹³

¹⁰ *Hua. XV*, 595, translated in Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 340.

¹¹ *Hua. XV*, 378, translated in Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 307.

¹² *Hua. XV*, 380, translated in Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 307.

¹³ Strasser, “History, Teleology, and God,” 322.

In addition, Husserl frequently describes subjectivity, and especially the person, using the language of development and unfolding. Many of these passages have been cited in earlier chapters; one more will suffice. In the *Crisis*, Husserl writes, “being human is teleological being and an ought-to-be and...this teleology holds sway in each and every activity of an ego.”¹⁴ In this passage, Husserl is advancing the claim that human being—and we might add “as transcendental subjectivity,” since it is clear that he is speaking of human subjectivity in the transcendental rather than natural register—is teleological because of its constitutive activity. In other words, the role of teleology in the life of consciousness is evidenced in all egoic activity. This is obviously true, albeit in a somewhat trivial sense, insofar as intentional activity is directed towards an end and an ideal fulfillment of the intention. However, Husserl seems to be implying the stronger claim that, because human consciousness is self-constituting through its intentional activity, it makes sense to speak about human beings as being fundamentally teleological creatures. The human being decides how to order his or her life, values, and facticity in light of the goals that he or she has taken up.

As Husserl notes, this teleological development is directed towards an infinite, or regulative, ideal. The nature of this ideal will be explained in the next section on God; for now, what is significant is that the concept of personhood establishes a teleological endpoint towards which the person in the present strives. In fact, as Hart argues, one of the unique features of personhood is that it is both a subject and object of teleological progression. He writes,

¹⁴ *Hua*. VI, 275–6; *Crisis*, 341.

The first and most abstract [thesis] is that ipseity as the “myself” is actualized in the world through personhood; in this sense, personhood is the telos of the “myself.” But personhood is also the means because the ideal person, which is the telos, is realized through the personification of the “myself,” i.e., actual development and metamorphosis of the person.¹⁵

For Husserl, the person both actualizes himself or herself in the world through his or her position-taking acts, and at the same time establishes an ideal for his or her life by means of those position-taking acts. The distance between the current position-taking acts and the ideal established by those acts motivates the person to continue his or her development towards this ideal.

In other words, the teleological development of the person is a progressive construction. Just as genetic analysis makes evident what is not immediately present via a reconstructive procedure, the teleological unfolding of the person is a progressive procedure that brings transcendental subjectivity closer to its ideal limit, even though that limit is not immediately present. Through the progressive construction of the person towards the ideal, the endpoint of the person’s striving—his or her fully realized self—*becomes* in an ever-clearer and more complete realization.

One consequence of the claim that the teleology of personhood is a becoming rather than a static essence is that the teleology itself must not have a fixed progression; instead, the teleology of personhood is open and the teleology itself

¹⁵ Hart, *Who One Is. Book 1*, 184. The similarity between this passage and Husserl’s description in the *Kaizo* articles (*Hua*. XXVII, 37, quoted in chapter four) of how a vocation constitutes a person, insofar as the person is both subject and object of his striving, is striking. One way of understanding this claim is as an explanation of what it means for consciousness to transcend itself, which is interesting because it shows the connection between the transcendental and the teleological within consciousness.

may be modified as the person develops along his or her teleological trajectory. Thus, Husserl's description of the "endpoint" of the teleology as a "regulative ideal" or an "infinite goal" must be tempered with the qualification that these terms do not refer to a pre-determined state towards which development is necessarily directed, and in fact there cannot be a *single* perfected state towards which this teleology is oriented. Instead, the *terminus ad quem* of this teleology is an organic unfolding to the same extent as the person herself is; the upward development of the person unfolds additional possibilities for the ultimate harmony that is to be realized in this teleology.

The idea that personhood is an open teleology can be clarified by contrasting Husserl's self-understanding of teleology with his reading of Hegel. Although Husserl acknowledges Hegel's role in developing his own understanding of teleology, Husserl's self-understanding differs from Hegel in several significant ways.¹⁶ First, Husserl was suspicious of classical German idealism insofar as it lacked phenomenological grounding. Valori collates a list of citations in which Husserl describes the teleology of German idealism as obscure, metaphysical, lacking scientific rigor, constructed, and mythical.¹⁷ For Husserl, scientific rigor demands that one obey the constraints of the reduction, and to only speak about transcendent entities insofar as they exhibit their manners of givenness to intending subjects. As Husserl has argued, however, transcendent objects cannot, *a priori*, be

¹⁶ Cairns, *Conversations*, 52, referring to a conversation with Husserl and Fink in 1931. In another conversation in 1932, Fink elaborates on a Husserlian critique of Hegel (although the critique itself is articulated by Fink) insofar as Hegel maintains a mundane, rather than transcendental, understanding of being and non-being; cf. Cairns, *Conversations*, 97.

¹⁷ Valori, 189.

given in their entirety to consciousness; the same point applies, *a fortiori*, to the Absolute. As a result, Husserl could not claim to capture the entirety of the absolute without violating the strictures of phenomenology. Whether it is accurate or not, Husserl evidently believed that Hegel's philosophy of absolute spirit with its all-encompassing role for history transgressed these limits of legitimate philosophy.¹⁸

As Stähler contrasts Husserl and Hegel,

The character of this teleology is thus distinguished: Hegel sees in his own times the perfection of the historical process, while Husserl proceeds from the claim that the goal that leads the teleological development is an unattainable ideal.¹⁹

Stähler cashes out this contrast by noting Husserl's insistence on the openness of teleological progression. She concludes, "In opposition to Hegel, Husserl however emphasizes the openness of history: the telos is an idea of absolute perfection lying in infinity."²⁰ The point of this contrast is for Husserl to acknowledge the role of an absolute ideal limit for teleology while simultaneously refusing to give more detail about what that limit looks like than is phenomenologically justified. Husserl's fear is that speculative idealists like Hegel have created an artificial construction that cannot be made evident in the

¹⁸ Indeed, most Hegel scholars would argue that Husserl had misunderstood the nature of the Absolute in Hegel. See, for instance, Beiser, esp. ch. 3, and Pippin, esp. ch. 2, for two prominent understandings of how Hegel's philosophy stays within the legitimate bounds of transcendental philosophy. The following section will develop Husserl's understanding of the Absolute via his concept of God, which Husserl attempts to investigate in phenomenological terms.

¹⁹ Stähler, 217: "Der Charakter dieser Teleologie unterscheidet sich jedoch: Hegel sieht in seinem eigenen Zeitalter die Vervollkommnung des geschichtlichen Prozesses, während Husserl davon ausgeht, daß das Ziel, welches die teleologische Entwicklung leitet, ein unerreichbares Ideal ist."

²⁰ Stähler, 223: "Im Gegensatz zu Hegel betont Husserl allerdings die Offenheit der Geschichte: Das Telos ist eine um Unendlichen liegende Idee absoluter Vollkommenheit."

phenomenological sense. In particular, Husserl feared that speculative idealism has systematized the teleological development of history to such an extent that it attempts to describe an inevitable path of the unfolding of history—a description which Husserl believed to blatantly transgress the limits of what can be brought to phenomenological evidence. Husserl’s alternative is thus to say that there is a teleological development to transcendental consciousness, but that the specific content of this development cannot be specified in advance. The teleology is open because there are many vocations, communities of a higher order, and homeworlds that could have their *teloi* harmonized with each other; the purpose of phenomenology is therefore not to pick the specific vocations that will develop but rather to clarify the criteria according to which those *teloi* ought to develop. As we quoted at the beginning of the chapter, Husserl maintains that the life lived in perfect harmony points towards the *unum, verum, bonum*. However, the specific manner in which a person’s vocation contributes to that harmony is an open range of possibilities.

While it is evident that Husserl’s teleology of personhood is directed towards an infinite ideal, it is still unclear how best to describe that ideal, or how it would even be legitimate to do so given the methodological constraints of phenomenology. Providing such a description will therefore be the task of the next section.

§28. The Teleological Ideal of God

The previous section argued that there is a teleological progression towards an absolute idea-pole. Husserl uses many different terms for this absolute, from All-personality to an absolute idea of reason. In his manuscripts, Husserl frequently

describes this absolute idea in terms of the divine. As Buckley notes, “Teleology and theology mingle throughout Husserl’s thought, and it might not be too strongly put to say that the goal of Husserl’s thought is the will to be God.”²¹ This section will unpack that claim by exploring the concept of God in Husserl’s philosophy in order to better characterize this teleological end-point. I will defend the view that God serves as Husserl’s solution for how to talk about the Absolute in phenomenological terms.

The problem of God is generally not recognized as a central element in Husserl’s philosophy, but the relative paucity of published materials from Husserl concerning his thoughts on God should not suggest that this problem was an afterthought for Husserl. In fact, Husserl was once asked by Roman Ingarden what the fundamental problem of philosophy was, and Husserl’s response was unequivocal: “The problem of God, of course.”²² As Strasser notes, Husserl struggled with the problem of God throughout his life both as a human being and as a philosopher.²³

What becomes clear, as one reads Husserl’s manuscripts and private discussions, is that Husserl was strongly influenced by the Christian conception of

²¹ Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility*, 141.

²² Dupré, 201.

²³ Strasser, “History, Teleology, and God,” 317. It is worth noting that, despite Husserl’s own personal investment in religious questions, his manuscripts reveal almost no personally oriented theological meditations. This absence suggests that Husserl viewed the philosophical question of religion as separable from the personal question.

God.²⁴ At the same time, he maintained a belief that religion was naïve without the rigor of phenomenological analysis. Although Husserl never directly states that the personal God of Christianity is not amenable to phenomenological analysis, his use of more rational conceptions of God—especially the conception of God as *logos*—demonstrates Husserl’s effort to understand God in terms of philosophy. As Husserl remarked in a conversation with Cairns and Fink, “The ethical-religion questions are the last questions of phenomenological constitution.”²⁵ Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the difficulty of these questions, Husserl did not feel ready to make his views on God public. Cairns reports, “The term God is used occasionally by Husserl in private conversation to mean the community of *transcendental egos* which ‘creates’ a world, but this is for Husserl a ‘private opinion.’”²⁶

Given how exploratory Husserl’s unpublished works are in general, the fact that Husserl explicitly cautioned that his thoughts on God were not to be shared indicates that this area of his thinking was even more unsettled than usual. In fact, it behooves us to acknowledge just how bizarre the notion of God is from a phenomenological perspective. We have already documented Husserl’s antipathy towards speculative idealism because speculative philosophy exceeds the strictures imposed by the phenomenological method. The notion of God, or any concept of the Absolute, thus seems to be squarely outside the domain of phenomenology. For Husserl to nonetheless insist that religious questions are the ultimate questions of

²⁴ Bello, *The Divine in Husserl*, Part II, ch. 1, esp. 69–71, describes Husserl’s own religious conversion to the Lutheran church at age 27, after reading the New Testament.

²⁵ Cairns, *Conversations*, 47.

²⁶ Cairns, *Conversations*, 14. See also Hart, “I, We, and God.”

constitution and to maintain that the problem of God is the most important problem of philosophy is puzzling. When combined with Husserl's own hesitancy to publicly state his views on these questions, it becomes clear that our own analysis of Husserl's concept of God must be accompanied by the disclaimer that Husserl himself seemed ambivalent about how to approach the problem of God, and our conclusions need to reflect that uncertainty.

Yet despite Husserl's reluctance to make his views on God explicit, there is sufficient material in his manuscripts to draw at least some conclusions about the phenomenological concept of God.²⁷ Within the reduction, the phenomenologist is interested in the manners of givenness of an object. The phenomenological investigation of God is no different; the phenomenologist seeks to discover the manners of givenness of God. As Laycock summarizes, "God cannot be invoked to explain experience, but must be discovered through experience."²⁸ The obvious challenge is that God is not merely another object among objects. Just as the givenness of the world is different from objects because of the horizontal character of the world, so too will the givenness of God differ from typical objects. Husserl explains that God is given through teleology:

God can be no object of experience (as in the sense of a thing or a human).
But God would be "experienced" in each belief that believes originally-

²⁷ The concept of God does appear in some of Husserl's published writings, most notably in *Ideas I*. While Husserl's concept of God is limited at this point by the lack of a genetic method, many of the themes in his later manuscripts are present in this work. Although unpublished by Husserl, another early text that discusses the concept of God is the 1908 text "Empathy of the Alien Consciousness and Divine All-Knowing Consciousness," now published in *Hua*. XIII, Beilage IV, 8–9. For a discussion of God that focuses on Husserl's early works, see Boehm, "Husserl's Concept of the 'Absolute.'"

²⁸ Laycock, 171.

teleologically in the perpetual value of that which lies in the direction of each absolute ought and which engages itself for this perpetual meaning.²⁹

This explanation of God's manners of givenness makes sense if we consider it in light of Husserl's explanation of objectivity. As we saw in chapters one and two, the object itself is always transcendent to any given experience because the object has multiple profiles or adumbrations that could be given to me if I were, e.g., at a different location or viewing the object under different conditions. Because consciousness is objectifying (i.e., has an objectifying instinct, in the language of chapter two), consciousness can "experience" the object as such by synthesizing the various possible perceptions into an ideal of "the object." Husserl's claim is that the motivational impetus for the constitutional synthesis of all possible objects and values—i.e., the idea that justifies believing that there is an ultimate fulfillment of intentional activity—is nothing other than the "belief" in God.

It must be clarified that Husserl is not using the word "belief" in the traditional sense of religion. Rather, this belief is more akin to the Kantian belief in the idea of freedom. For Kant, the *factum* of freedom is something that is believed in as a necessary pre-requisite for a moral order.³⁰ In a similar manner, Laycock describes an "*Urdoxa*" within Husserl's thought of a necessary commitment in order for there to be sense in any individual theme of the natural attitude. He writes that, for Husserl, "We cannot cease believing in the possibility of relatively approximating the *Gotteswelt*."³¹

²⁹ A V 21, 128a, translated in Hart, "A Précis," 148.

³⁰ See Henrich, esp. ch. 4, on the role of freedom in Kant's philosophical system.

³¹ Laycock, 184.

In other words, the concept of God is what secures the belief in the ultimate fruitfulness of any teleological process—whether it be the synthesis of adumbrations into an object, the unity of intersubjective expectations into a shared world, or the development of the person as a transcendental subject whose life is shaped by an absolute ought. Strasser states explicitly that Husserl’s God is the absolute idea of the teleology that we discussed in the first section. He writes, “*In the thought of Husserl, the idea and this ideal telos are doubtlessly the divinity itself...God is always called an idea or ideal goal, ideal telos, entelechy, etc.*”³² In the language of the extended quote at the beginning of the chapter, Husserl’s concept of God can be understood as the “infinite accomplishment” of an “absolutely perfect transcendental universal community.” If we combine this claim with the discussion of the *Liebesgemeinschaft* in chapter five, we can also say that God represents the teleological ideal of absolute harmony among the community of monads in their constitutive activity.

Husserl himself identifies the concept of God as the *terminus ad quem* of the specific teleology of personhood. He writes,

Genesis. The developmental path of humanity to God. The necessary motivation, in which in the life of consciousness of humanity, God is constituted as the “creator of the world,” God is constituted as the universal principle of an ego running through all absolute subjects, towards which all absolute subjects strive at first passively, then actively, as a pole of perfection, such that they thus realize, in striving constantly towards perfection, the idea of a perfected absolute universe of personalities.³³

³² Strasser, “Das Gottesproblem,” 141: “*Im Denken Husserls ist die Idee und dieses ideale Telos zweifellos die Gottheit selbst...Gott wird immer Idee genannt oder ideales Ziel, ideales Telos, Entelechie usw.*”

³³ A V 21, 19a: “Genesis. Der Entwicklungsweg der Menschheit zu Gott. Die notwendige Motivation, in der sich im Bewusstseinsleben der Menschheit Gott als

Husserl makes the connection between personhood and God because the transcendental life of consciousness is a life of striving, intentional achievement (through both active and passive dimensions). God serves as the universal principle of a complete harmonization and unity of intersubjective consciousness, and thus represents the limit-ideal of the perfection of transcendental life.

However, Husserl's concept of God cannot be restricted to an absolutely transcendent limit-ideal. Landgrebe notes that it is a misunderstanding to identify absolute subjectivity strictly with an infinitely distant pole; he argues that it is also necessary to acknowledge an immanent or what Landgrebe terms a "pantheistic" dimension of Husserl's theology.³⁴ For Husserl, God is in the world insofar as the divine provides the motive force for teleological unfolding. He writes,

God, himself, is not the monadic totality. He is rather the entelechy lying within it; this, as the infinite telos of the development of 'mankind' from absolute reason, as the telos necessarily regulating monadic being and regulating it from its free decisions.³⁵

Thus, God is not merely a regulative ideal but is also a principle of teleological development that "lies within" every factual teleology of reason. In other places, Husserl describes this immanent aspect of God as a "ground" of teleology. Thus, he tentatively suggests, "Can we say in this situation that this teleology, with its primal

,Schöpfer der Welt' konstituiert, Gott als das universale Prinzip eines durch alle absoluten Subjekte gehenden Egos konstituiert, gegen das alle absoluten Subjekte zunächst passiv, dann aktiv hinstreben als Pol der Vollendung, derart, dass sie so strebend immer vollkommener die Idee eines vollendeten absoluten Universums der Personalitäten verwirklichen."

³⁴ Landgrebe, *Phänomenologie und Metaphysik*, 190. In conversation with Cairns, Husserl affirms the immanent dimension of his theology: "Even God is still essentially 'of this world'" (Cairns, *Conversations*, 47).

³⁵ A V 22, 46, translated in Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 368.

facticity, has its ground in God?”—a question which he seems to answer in the affirmative.³⁶

It is important to note that Husserl connects God not only with the teleological concept of entelechy—an unfolding from within—but also with the idea of absolute reason. He amplifies this connection in the *Crisis*, writing, “The problem of God clearly contains the problem of “absolute” reason as the teleological source of all reason in the world.”³⁷ In the Vienna lecture, Husserl goes so far as to connect God and reason with the task of philosophy. After describing how philosophy can either overthrow traditional validities or reform them in light of philosophical insights into the ideality and validity of traditional ideas, Husserl explains that “in the general process of idealization, which proceeds from philosophy, God is logicized, so to speak, indeed he becomes the bearer of the absolute *logos*.”³⁸

So far we have established that personhood is a teleological concept directed towards a regulative ideal of God, and that this regulative ideal of God is related to the idea of absolute reason. The next section will therefore turn to Husserl’s concept of reason in order to complete the description of the endpoint of Husserl’s teleology.

§29. The Phenomenological Concept of Reason

The previous section linked God, as both the pinnacle and the condition of the possibility of the teleological impulse in Husserl, with the concept of the

³⁶ E III 9, 51b: “Kann man bei dieser Sachlage sagen, diese Teleologie, mit ihrer Urfaktizität, habe ihren Grund in Gott?”

³⁷ *Hua.* VI, 7; *Crisis*, 9.

³⁸ *Hua.* VI, 335; *Crisis*, 288. Held also describes the connection between Husserl’s concept of God and his teleology of reason, which culminates in the absolute *logos*, although he prefers to describe God in terms of the Platonic Good; see Held, “Gott in Edmund Husserls Phänomenologie.” In particular, Held emphasizes the sense of development in Husserl’s concept of God.

absolute *logos*. In this section, we will argue that what Husserl has established is a teleology of reason, understood in a phenomenological sense dealing with the fulfillment of intentional activity. This section will then connect this teleology of reason to the concept of personhood, arguing that the key characteristic of the person is the teleology of reason.

In order to set up this argument, it is necessary to note Husserl's background assumptions about humanity and reason. In the *Crisis*, he claims that the pressing questions of human life—what is true knowledge, what is genuinely valuable, and what is ethically good—are “*problems of reason*.”³⁹ He also introduces the *Crisis*-problematic by noting that what has been lost in the crisis is the foundation of the Enlightenment view of humanity, which was significant precisely because it took the ancient view of humans and transformed it insofar as humans are fashioned through the free exercise of reason.⁴⁰ According to Husserl, in other words, for genuine humanity there is an intimate connection between what is significant in human life and reason.

Husserl explicitly links this reason-oriented conception of human life with the concept of the person. He writes,

Reason is the specific characteristic of man, as a being living in personal activities and habitualities. This life, as personal life, is a constant becoming through a constant intentionality of development. What becomes, in this life, is the person himself.⁴¹

For Husserl, the development of the person through his or her position-taking acts, passive affections, and intentional activity ought to be governed by reason.

³⁹ *Hua*. VI, 7; *Crisis*, 9.

⁴⁰ *Hua*. VI, 5–6; *Crisis*, 8–9.

⁴¹ *Hua*. VI, 272; *Crisis*, 338.

Given that Husserl draws such a close connection between personhood and reason, it is important to understand the concept of reason that Husserl has in mind. Husserl's concept of reason is best described as a phenomenological understanding of reason. Although the project of understanding what reason is receives its clearest articulation in the later works, Husserl starts this project relatively early within his transcendental phase. Indeed Part IV of *Ideas I* (entitled, "Reason and Actuality") is dedicated to explicating the sense of reason at work within phenomenology. For Husserl, a posited characteristic is rational "if and only if it is a position on the basis of a fulfilled, originally presentive sense."⁴² When a noetic act is fulfilled, then, it is "rationally motivated."⁴³ This notion of reason as the fulfillment of intentional expectations culminates in Husserl's statement that "'truly existing object' and 'object to be rationally posited' are equivalent correlates."⁴⁴ In other words, what is truly existing is what is rational, and what is rational is what is phenomenologically justified on the basis of originally presentive evidence.

Husserl expands on this description in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, when he writes,

Thus evidence is a universal mode of intentionality, related to the whole life of consciousness. Thanks to evidence, the life of consciousness has an all-pervasive teleological structure, a pointedness toward "reason" and even a pervasive tendency toward it—that is: toward the discovery of correctness...and toward the cancelling of incorrectnesses.⁴⁵

⁴² *Hua.* III/1, 315–6; *Ideas I*, 327. The connection between this definition of reason and the Principle of all Principles is obvious.

⁴³ *Hua.* III/1, 316; *Ideas I*, 328.

⁴⁴ *Hua.* III/1, 329; *Ideas I*, 340.

⁴⁵ *Hua.* XVII, 168–9; *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 160.

In this passage, Husserl takes the fundamental claim from *Ideas I* that reason is the evidence that fulfills one's expectations and emphasizes the genetic/teleological dimension, in that evidence is never fully given in conscious life but is instead an ideal goal of intentional activity. Reason then becomes understood not merely as fulfilled (a perfect tense) but as the movement towards fulfillment (a progressive tense). This genetic progression towards ever-more-correct intentional corroboration and the concomitant canceling of incorrectness confirms the teleological nature of reason.⁴⁶

This phenomenological notion of reason as the fulfillment of intentional positings allows Husserl to argue that the person is ultimately grounded in reason. First, Husserl notes that transcendental phenomenology is "a philosophy with the deepest and most universal self-understanding of the philosophizing ego as the bearer of absolute reason coming to itself."⁴⁷ Because all of the constitutive activity of the transcendental ego is ultimately an activity of reason, the transcendental ego is a bearer of reason. The claim that the philosophizing ego is the bearer of absolute reason *coming to itself* recognizes that the ego is not an empty pole but is shaped by its constitutive activity. Because the activity of the ego ought to be activity guided by reason, it makes sense to also refer to the ego itself as being shaped by reason. Hart

⁴⁶ Although in *Ideas I* Husserl acknowledges that evidence exists on a spectrum rather than as a binary feature, he does so primarily under the language of modalization: a belief is certain, probable, doubtful, etc. The genetic dimension is not articulated nearly as clearly as it is in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, which is no surprise given that *Formal and Transcendental Logic* was written during the time that Husserl was working out the details of his genetic method. See also Drummond, esp. 442.

⁴⁷ *Hua*. VI, 275; *Crisis*, 340. There is an unmistakable existentialist dimension to this idea; cf. Loidolt, esp. §4.

makes this connection between the subject and reason explicit, writing that, for Husserl,

not only am *I* to be, in a strong sense, identified with *reason*, but *reason* is inseparably *I myself*. Reason in the proper sense...is always I-acts, and even the non-intellectual, non-cognitive acts are I-acts and in this sense acts of reason.⁴⁸

In other words, reason in Husserl's sense is not something universal, like Kantian pure reason. For Husserl, I do not measure what I ought to be by an abstract notion of rationality; instead, there is something inherently individual about reason, according to which it is possible to articulate my whole being—including my embodied, enworlded, and axiological dimensions—in light of reason.

Finally, Husserl explains that this conception of reason is not limited in scope; rather, the will to be rational permeates and transforms all genuine humanity. In a passage worth quoting at length, Husserl elucidates how reason, as a teleological concept, elevates the self-understanding of the ego to the domain of philosophy. He describes the meaning of human existence, which entails

mankind understanding itself as rational, understanding that it is rational in seeking to be rational; that this signifies an infinity of living and striving toward reason; that reason is precisely that which man *qua* man, in his innermost being, is aiming for, that which alone can satisfy him, make him "blessed";...that being human is teleological being and an ought-to-be, and that this teleology holds sway in each and every activity and project of the ego; that through self-understanding in all this it can know the apodictic *telos*; and that this knowing, the ultimate self-understanding, has no other form than self-understanding according to a priori principles as self-understanding in the form of philosophy.⁴⁹

This description of rational humanity matches Husserl's description of the absolute ideal of teleology. If we synthesize these descriptions with Husserl's idea of God as

⁴⁸ Hart, *Who One Is*. Book 2, 323.

⁴⁹ *Hua*. VI, 275–6; *Crisis*, 340–1; cf. Sindoni, 287.

an ultimate harmony of the world of monads, then Husserl's claim that God becomes logicized makes sense; the teleology of reason is precisely a teleological progression towards the ideal of absolute unity, which is the phenomenological concept of God. In the next section, we will elaborate on how this development of the person as a teleology of reason relates to the ultimate task of philosophy.

§30. The Philosophical Task of Personhood

We are finally in a position to discuss the infinite task of reason assigned to the person, which will turn out to be the task of philosophy. Because the teleological progression towards God is guided by an infinite regulative ideal, it is no surprise that the will to be rational, as a description of this drive towards the ultimate fulfillment that characterizes the nature of the divine, must also be a regulative ideal rather than a fully realized description of human life. As Buckley summarizes,

Husserl is always aware that the goal of a life guided entirely by reason is indeed best characterized as a dream. This is not to say that the goal of a fully rational life is an impossibility. Rather, the attempt at a dominating and all-encompassing life of reason, as fantastic as it might seem, is described by Husserl not as an impossible goal, but as an infinite task. It is a task never to be fully accomplished, but always moving along the path of completion to the fully perfect rational being.⁵⁰

While the description of the fully rational life as an infinite task makes sense given our earlier analysis of teleology as a regulative ideal, it remains unclear what the task itself is.

The answer, for Husserl, is that there is a task of willing reason in its infinite realization. Husserl's description of the task of subjectivity starts with the insight that reason is grounded in the irrational. As we mentioned in the second chapter,

⁵⁰ Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility*, 140–1; see also Mall, as well as Siles i Borràs, esp. ch. 5.

Husserl notes that the starting point for the development of rational subjectivity is what is not yet rational. He writes,

This innate primal essence, the primal foundation of the I is presupposed for all constitution. In it is enclosed, statically and “genetically,” the constituted world with its essential forms, i.e., the universe of rationality. Thus, the innate foundation of subjectivity is the irrational, which makes possible rationality, or it has its rationality in being the “teleological ground” for all that is rational.⁵¹

Husserl’s comment that irrationality bears the teleological ground for reason is obscure on its own. We can better understand this comment by noting that, in another manuscript, Husserl discusses the problem of irrationality in the context of facticity.⁵² For Husserl, *facticity* is irrational insofar as it has not yet reached the level of what is freely chosen. Husserl also describes the irrational in terms of chance or accident [*zufällig; Zufälle*]. The implication seems to be that the irrational foundation of subjectivity can be freely chosen. In fact, Husserl seems to be making an existentialist point that subjectivity can, in some way, choose its facticity and elevate it to the level of reason. Obviously it is not possible to literally choose one’s past or one’s homeworld, but it is possible to take the facts of one’s experience—birth, heritage, and so forth—and transform them into part of the person’s life-encompassing vocation. This is the interpretation that Buckley defends, writing,

⁵¹ E III 9, 4b: “Diese angeborene Urwesen, die Uranlage des Ich vorausgesetzt für alle Konstitution. In ihr statisch und ‚genetisch‘ geschlossen ist die konstituierte Welt mit ihren Wesensformen, bzw. das Universum der Rationalität. So ist die angeborene Anlage der Subjektivität das Irrationale, das Rationalität möglich macht, oder es hat seine Rationalität darin, der ‚teleologische Grund‘ für alles Rationale zu sein.”

⁵² A V 21, 118a–b. Husserl turns to this topic by saying, “Aber nun gerate ich mit Rücksicht auf die Irrationalitäten der Faktizität auf das Problem eines möglichen Sinnes meines und unseres ethischen Strebens”; the following paragraphs sketch out the suggestion that an authentic life, or a life lived in accordance with one’s vocation, transforms the irrational so that it becomes rational.

“For Husserl, such events are indeed just that, ‘facts,’ able to be ‘overcome’ and transformed by the *habitus* of the will to reason.”⁵³ In saying that these facts must be “overcome,” Husserl clearly does not mean that they must be annulled; the point is that these facts ought to have their latent rationality brought to light by means of the person synthesizing his or her facticity into his or her vocation. Thus, Husserl can say that the absolute life is ultimately not irrational or accidental precisely because it is brought to reason.⁵⁴

This interpretation of Husserl’s comments on the irrational and facticity contains an echo of the Kantian project. Kant’s critical philosophy begins from the *factum* of reason and inquires back to its conditions of possibility in order to better understand the appropriate use of reason. In a similar manner, Husserl’s contemporaries, the neo-Kantians, began from the *factum* of the sciences and work backwards in order to give the sciences their proper legitimacy. Husserl’s thinking follows an analogous path: he recognizes that the facticity of human life is present as a starting point. However, he also notes that this facticity is irrational, and as a result the philosopher cannot merely accept it uncritically. The irrational, for Husserl, ought to be transformed in accordance with the norms of reason. Husserl therefore describes the irrational as the teleological ground of reason precisely because the

⁵³ Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility*, 138; see also Mensch, *After Modernity*, ch. 8.

⁵⁴ A V 21, 118b. This interpretation is supported by Husserl’s claim in *Ideas I* that “in the phenomenological sphere there are neither accidents [*Zufälle*] nor facticities [*Faktizitäten*]” (*Hua*. III/1, 321; *Ideas I*, 332). In *Ideas I*, Husserl claims that these disappear once one has uncovered the essential determinations that motivate the object to appear as such; in the manuscripts, it seems that the essential determinations are nothing other than the fully justified vocational life of the person.

irrational is amenable to this transformation. Mensch elaborates on the potential for facticity to develop teleologically in light of an ideal unity of reason; he writes,

Given that this process is teleological, facticity itself is teleological. For Husserl, to affirm the facticity of the world—i.e., its “could have been otherwise”—is also to affirm its becoming other than what it is. It is to affirm that the process of such becoming is teleologically directed to an ideal unity of constituted existence, a unity which embodies the logos or reason.⁵⁵

The crucial point for all of this is that, according to Husserl, it would be a mistake to think about the irrational as being incompatible with reason, or anti-rational.

Husserl’s insight is that even what is irrational or accidental is amenable to reason and indeed ought to be integrated, via reason, into the teleological becoming of the person.

This synthesis of one’s facticity into the ideal unity of one’s life is a deliberate choice of how to regard one’s facticity. In other words, it is an active decision rather than something that one merely falls into by default. This should be no surprise given the role of position-taking acts that we explained in chapter four. When one decides how to relate to one’s facticity, the ego is “free” in Husserl’s view. He writes, “The personal I is *free*, it determines itself as itself, it can however determine itself otherwise.”⁵⁶ This freedom manifests itself in taking responsibility for everything related to the ego. Buckley explains, “For Husserl, the true self knows what it does and why it does what it does, and thus is fully responsible for itself, truly

⁵⁵ Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 377.

⁵⁶ E III 2, 7b: “Das personale Ich ist *frei*, es entscheidet sich, wie es sich entscheidet, es kann sich aber anders entscheiden.” For more on the Husserlian conception of freedom, see Mensch, “Freedom and Selfhood.”

'answerable' for its actions. For the true self, nothing is left to chance or the irrational quirks of fate."⁵⁷

Given Husserl's discussion of how the absolute life overcomes irrationality and the claim that the teleological ideal of personhood is an infinitely distant, regulative ideal, it would not be too strong to say that persons are called to the infinite task of overcoming the irrationality of all facticity. Ultimately, they are called to take a critical stance towards not only all of their own position-taking acts but even their inherited history. Steinbock summarizes this process in the context of the generation of a tradition for a homeworld, writing,

the phenomenologist takes a critical stance within various homeworlds and in relation to alienworlds as a participation in an ongoing generative process. For Husserl, this is a matter of self-responsibility as the responsibility towards humanity; accordingly, philosophy as critical becomes a normative task as an *ethical* project. That there may be many ways of becoming more ethically human is certainly entailed by Husserl's analyses of normality, abnormality, and teleology, if it is not explicitly stated by Husserl. In any case, such an ethical responsibility is the sense in which Husserl speaks of the philosopher as the "functionary" of humanity.⁵⁸

This process of taking responsibility for the formation of not only one's self but also one's culture and history is what Husserl describes in the *Kaizo* articles as the problem of renewal.⁵⁹

Because the self is called to take responsibility for its actions, passions, and even facticity, Buckley characterizes Husserl's philosophy as a form of voluntarism.

⁵⁷ Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility*, 137.

⁵⁸ Steinbock, "The New 'Crisis' Contribution," 583–4.

⁵⁹ See especially the third *Kaizo* article; in particular, section II-A explains renewal in terms of absolute self-regulation, which is precisely what Buckley's notion of voluntarism is intended to capture. Husserl's discussion of the reactivation of geometric insights in *The Origin of Geometry* likewise presents an example of how one could take responsibility for a tradition, although he does not use the language of responsibility in this essay. See *Hua*. VI, 370–1; *Crisis*, 359–61.

The teleological progression towards reason, and the accompanying drive to master the unreason of facticity, is what characterizes the truly human life:

Husserl's crisis-philosophy is thus decidedly *voluntaristic*. Among other things, this implies that what is at stake in a crisis-situation is always in function of will or lack of will. For Husserl, to be authentically human, to be a true self, means to act in accordance with reason....The notion that to be truly human involves a willing to be rational carries with it the sense that authentic human life is a constant struggle against irrational impulses and irrational fate, against that which has not been chosen and willed in a rational manner by the subject.⁶⁰

The claim that a truly human life is a life in which the person lives according to a rational willing echoes our earlier realization that position-taking acts like the commitment to one's vocation must be justified. With the phenomenological understanding of reason that we have articulated, we are finally in a position to describe this process of justification as a critique of reason. As we saw in chapter five, the ought of a vocation should be subjected to critical justification. It is this process of critique that transforms what is irrational in accordance with norms of reason. What Husserl argues is that this critical reflection is in fact the task that uniquely separates the person, in its full sense, from lower levels of transcendental subjectivity. In other words, living a personal life is a commitment to not only taking positions but also critiquing those positions on the basis of reason. In a manuscript, Husserl describes a life that holds absolute oughts under critical reflection as "a self-formation of the I, through absolute reflection, to the absolutely genuine human."⁶¹ In the same manuscript, Husserl argues that it is this reflexive self-formation that

⁶⁰ Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility*, 136. Hart also describes Husserl's philosophy as voluntaristic; see *The Person and the Common Life*, esp. ch. 2.

⁶¹ A V 5, 16b: "einer Selbstgestaltung des Ich durch absolute Reflexion zum absolut echten Menschen."

gives historicity, tradition, and other aspects of one's facticity their proper place within the life of the human, and he uses the term "person" to capture this genuine sense of humanity.⁶²

Buckley describes this life in which active position-takings are themselves actively subjected to critique (or what he calls "activity in activity") as the development of a "*habitus* of critique."⁶³ The ultimate goal of the *habitus* of critique is to reach a complete rational justification of one's life so that it is immune to disappointment; such a life would be "a life the subject of which is able always and perfectly to justify itself" or, as Melle aptly summarizes, "a life with no regrets."⁶⁴ In other words, the ideal would be to find a life-encompassing vocation that could be affirmed for all eternity. As Husserl asks, "Can a self-willing according to an idea of the individual Self be absolute, so absolute and central, that it is a decision that is irrevocable for eternity?"—from what we have seen, the ideal ought to be the life in which one can answer that question affirmatively.⁶⁵ The idea of a self-identifying act

⁶² See A V 5, 14b: "Der echte Mensch <ist> bezogen auf das für ihn konstituierte ganze Leben und seine Historizität—aber auch bezogen auf die ganze Menschheit, deren Gleid er ist (Nation), und auf ihr gesamtes historisches Sein und Leben—als Person."

⁶³ Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility*, 135. Although the idea of a "*habitus* of critique" is present in the third, fourth, and fifth *Kaizo* articles, Husserl only uses that specific expression in the fifth article, *Hua*. XXVII, 63–4.

⁶⁴ *Hua*. XXVII, 32, translated by Buckley; Melle, "The Development of Husserl's Ethics," 125.

⁶⁵ *Hua*. XIV, 19, n2: "Kann eine Selbstwollung gemäss einer Idee vom eigenen Selbst absolut sein, so absolut und zentral, dass sie eine Entscheidung unwiderruflich für die Ewigkeit ist?" Husserl also refers to such an absolutely justified life using the language of "self-preservation" (although obviously in a higher dimension than mere sensible self-preservation); see A V 10, 18a as well as Cairns, *Conversations*, 52–3.

that could be affirmed for all eternity is an expression of what Bernet refers to as “absolute responsibility.” As Bernet explains,

The practical motivation at work in Husserl’s philosophical theory is the ethical demand for *absolute responsibility*; a responsibility which extends not only to theoretical statements and investigative activities, but also to human life as a whole....The highest form of human life is, according to Husserl, a search for absolute self-responsibility.⁶⁶

For Husserl, the task of living a life of no regrets, or a life of absolute responsibility, is ultimately a philosophical task. Husserl speaks about the philosopher in several senses. One sense, which is the more technical sense, is the philosopher as the phenomenologist who performs the reduction, investigates the correlational *a priori*, and identifies the eidetic laws pertaining to particular material domains. This is the sense of the philosopher behind the “philosophical attitude” of *Ideas I* and the philosopher who follows the tradition of Descartes in the *Crisis*.

However, Husserl also invokes a second sense of the philosopher as someone who is dedicated to living an ethical life, which for Husserl is synonymous with a life based in rational justification. As Husserl writes in the *Kaizo* articles, “Philosophers are the called representatives of the spirit of reason, the spiritual organ in which the community originally and continuously comes to awareness of its true determination (of its true self).”⁶⁷ The philosopher, in this sense, is primarily described in terms of his or her obligation to uphold the value of reason against uncritical attitudes, values, and life philosophies. In these descriptions of the philosopher, Husserl emphasizes the practical and political role of the philosopher.

⁶⁶ Bernet, “Perception as a Teleological Process,” 131.

⁶⁷ *Hua*. XXVII, 54, translated by Buckley.

He argues that philosophy is “the rational foundation, the principle and condition of the possibility of an authentic human community.”⁶⁸ This possibility of an authentic human community, which is clearly linked to Husserl’s project of renewal in his later works, is dependent upon those individuals who are able to carry out the rational critique that is constitutive of the higher order of human life. Thus, this sense of the philosopher, for Husserl, is not and cannot be a recluse within the academy; rather, philosophers are the “functionaries of mankind.”⁶⁹

While Husserl sees an intimate connection between these two senses of philosopher—the moral-political task of the philosopher cannot be achieved by someone who does not practice the reduction because his or her critical evaluations would fall victim to naturalistic prejudices—Buckley claims that the ethical sense of the philosopher can be embraced even by those who are not transcendental phenomenologists. Buckley builds on Husserl’s insight that the attitude of rational critique is essential to the moral duty of the philosopher, writing,

Hence, the full human being who recovers himself or herself from the forgetfulness of everyday existence is able to be called the “philosopher.” While it is hardly Husserl’s goal that each person conduct constitutive investigations of the “*Urwald*” of transcendental consciousness, each person living in a fully human manner does seem called to a radical and full accounting for what he or she believes and how he or she acts. This tremendous sense of *self-responsibility*, of answering for oneself and one’s beliefs is the core of Husserl’s thought.⁷⁰

Although Buckley goes beyond Husserl himself in differentiating the two senses of the philosopher, I think he is correct to identify the centrality of self-responsibility in the task of human life. For Husserl, the philosopher is the person who engages in

⁶⁸ *Hua*. VII, 16, translated in Kelkel, 390.

⁶⁹ *Hua*. VI, 15; *Crisis*, 17.

⁷⁰ Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility*, 265.

rational critique of his or her position-taking acts and responds to the self-responsibility inherent in himself or herself as a rational agent. The philosopher is thus engaged in the “highest function of mankind...namely, as making possible mankind’s development into a personal autonomy and into an all-encompassing autonomy for mankind.”⁷¹ For Husserl, reason, self-responsibility, and philosophy are mutually intertwined, and the true philosopher is the person who uses reason in order to fulfill the obligation to take responsibility for the entirety of one’s life within the context of the person’s vocation.

When we put all of these elements together, it becomes clear that the task of personhood can only be carried out within the transcendental register. In the first chapter, we highlighted several distinguishing features of Husserl’s interpretation of transcendental philosophy, including the focus on constituting consciousness and the inquiry back into the conditions of the possibility of particular forms of experience. Personhood, we have argued, is a particularly important concept within the transcendental register because the person is both subject (constituting) and object (that which is constituted) of striving, and thus both sides of the correlation are at work within the self-formation of the person.

In addition, the task of personhood is the self-formation of consciousness according to norms, and this self-formation is directed towards an infinite ideal of the divine. We have seen how this ideal of teleological fulfillment is the condition of the possibility for any intentional striving to be meaningful, which implies that the ideal of personhood is itself a condition of the possibility for intentionality. My

⁷¹ *Hua. VI*, 273; *Crisis*, 338.

intentional activity is only meaningful insofar as it bears the potential for my self-transformation in light of the norm of absolute reason. Thus, the participation in the self-unfolding of the person is what gives significance to other constitutive activity, and serves as its transcendental foundation.

Finally, we have emphasized the role of reason in the task of personhood. What is interesting about Husserl's concept of reason is that it is interpreted in light of phenomenological constitution: what is rational is what is intentionally fulfilled and what is irrational has not found its intentional fulfillment (or maybe even has been intentionally disappointed). It goes without saying, however, that intentional fulfillment and disappointment are characterizations of objects as they are given to consciousness, i.e., within the reduction. It is transcendental consciousness that understands objects in terms of intentional fulfillment and disappointment, and hence Husserl's entire discussion about the role of rational critique in the development of the person is grounded on an interpretation of reason and critical justification that stems from the transcendental register.

In short: it is transcendental subjectivity that constitutes itself as a person, transcendental intentional activity that provides the *terminus ad quem* for the person, and an understanding of reason based on transcendental activity that presents to the person his or her ultimate task. Thus, the concept and activity of personhood—of the task of striving towards the infinite ideal of reason—belong essentially to the transcendental register.

§31. Personhood as an Entelechy of Reason

It is finally time to synthesize all of the foregoing aspects of Husserl's concept of person into a single expression. In the following section, I will describe the person as the entelechy of manifestation. Because the constitutional activity of manifestation is ultimately an expression of phenomenological reason, I will also argue that the person is an entelechy of reason.

Husserl's transcendental subject has been frequently described as a "dative of manifestation." Thomas Prufer was the first to use this grammatical terminology to express the role of subjectivity in transcendental idealism.⁷² In Husserl's transcendental idealism, the "I think" of Kantian transcendental philosophy, which is able to accompany all representations, becomes the transcendental ego that Husserl "discovered" in his famous footnote to the second edition of the *Logical Investigations*. The transcendental subject, according to Husserl, is a pole to which objects are given. The insight that there is an *a priori* correlation between the experienced object and the intentional act of the subject who experiences the object, which Husserl recognized already in the *Logical Investigations*,⁷³ implies that objectivity itself depends upon that object being able to be given to a subject. This is the key insight of Husserl's transcendental idealism and the essence of his doctrine of constitution. Describing the transcendental subject as a dative of manifestation emphasizes the role of the transcendental subject as that to which objects can appear.

⁷² Prufer, 102.

⁷³ *Hua*. VI, 169–70n; *Crisis*, 166n.

While the language of the “dative of manifestation” has been used effectively by many commentators, it is an inadequate metaphor for the person.⁷⁴ Describing the transcendental subject as a dative of manifestation captures the fact that experiences are given to the transcendental subject, but it says nothing about the transcendental subject itself. The concept still applies even if the transcendental subject is the empty, contentless pole that Husserl rejects as a misunderstanding of his philosophy. By contrast, the transcendental person is a concept explicitly designed to acknowledge the concrete, genetic, sedimented, and critically-reflected-upon dimension of subjectivity. For such a subject, the conceptual framework of a grammatical dative is too thin.

In addition, the language of the dative of manifestation suggests that subjectivity is passive, merely a witness to the phenomenon of manifestation. This suggestion is developed within the French phenomenological tradition by thinkers such as Marion and Henry, with their emphasis on manifestation and the givenness as a gift.⁷⁵ However, this language misses an essential component of Husserl’s understanding of consciousness: viz., that consciousness is *constituting*. The active role of consciousness is especially important to the concept of personhood since the activity of subjectivity is required for the accomplishment of position-taking acts and vocational commitments. The Husserlian paradigm of consciousness includes agency and the first-personal achievements of subjectivity; these elements risk

⁷⁴ See, for instance, Sokolowski’s *Presence and Absence* as well as *The God of Faith and Reason*, and Zahavi’s *Self-Awareness and Alterity* in addition to “Subjectivity and Immanence in Michel Henry.” There are also obvious Heideggerian resonances between the notion of a dative of manifestation and the idea of Dasein as a clearing, although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore that comparison.

⁷⁵ Marion, *Reduction and Givenness* as well as *Being Given*, and Henry.

being lost if transcendental consciousness is described merely in terms of being a grammatical dative.

In order to capture the depth dimension and agency of the person, I suggest that a more appropriate concept is the “entelechy of manifestation.” The etymology of the term “entelechy,” or in Greek ἐντελέχεια, is disputed, but it seems to be a term coined by Aristotle.⁷⁶ The word is composed of ἐν-τελής, a complete or perfect telos, and ἔχω, to have or to be in the sense of a continuity. Literally, then, ἐντελέχεια means having and continuing to be a complete or perfect telos.⁷⁷ However, it is *not* necessarily a claim that the complete or perfect telos has been realized. For instance, Aristotle uses the term in his definition of the soul: “the soul must be a substance in the sense of the form [ἐντελέχεια] of a natural body having life potentially within it.”⁷⁸ For Aristotle, primary substance is the composite of form and matter, so the soul cannot be the entelechy of the living body if an entelechy must be already completed. Rather, the soul is the formal cause, or the internal motive force, that gives the power of life to the body; it is not itself a full living thing.

Husserl himself uses the term entelechy to capture the idea of movement. In *Experience and Judgment*, a work in which he maintains that objects are never fully given to consciousness, he writes that, “before every movement of cognition the object of cognition is already present as a *dynamis* which is to turn into an *entelecheia*.”⁷⁹ Husserl’s commentators have also adopted this term. For instance, Hart explains that “Husserl even describes the flow of life as being under the sway of

⁷⁶ Urmson, 55; see also Ritter, 506–10.

⁷⁷ Sacks, ¶2.

⁷⁸ Aristotle, 656.

⁷⁹ *Experience and Judgment*, 29.

an *entelechy*: the *telos* of one's personal being dwells immanently within in a way which is not yet complete."⁸⁰ However, Husserl himself never used the term to describe the life of transcendental consciousness. By introducing the concept of the entelechy of manifestation in order to encapsulate the transcendental concept of the person, I hope to articulate a theme that is present in Husserl's account in a way that Husserl himself was unable to do.

The concept of entelechy allows us to stretch the framework of the dative of manifestation to account for the depth dimension and activity of the person. The person, as we have argued, is a concept that Husserl introduces in order to overcome the apparent emptiness or abstractness of the transcendental subject. If we are clear that we are using the term analogously rather than literally, we could call the person the transcendental "substratum" of subjectivity, since the affectivity and worldliness of the subject, which are sedimented along with the past activity of the subject, are what make active transcendental constitution possible. Hart suggests this kind of analogy when he writes,

For phenomenology, the *hypo* of *hypokeimenon* may be taken to mean not only that which "lies under" but also "that which is always co-given or which accompanies." And this "underlying" of substance may also, in certain kinds of beings, be taken as that which actualizes (*entelechein*) and formally-finally (teleologically) brings about some of the attributes.⁸¹

For phenomenology, of course, what always accompanies through the *a priori* correlation is the transcendental subject. Thus, the person could be understood as

⁸⁰ Hart, *Who One Is. Book 2*, 210. Bello also uses the term "entelechy" to describe this movement of human acts; cf. Bello, *The Divine in Husserl*, 48. Notably, both of these passages are explicit that this movement begins at the passive level, which reinforces the claim that "entelechy" is term that can capture the affective and sedimented dimensions of personhood better than the term "dative."

⁸¹ Hart, *Who One Is. Book 1*, 300.

the concrete underlying layer of transcendental subjectivity that develops, teleologically, as an entelechy towards its ultimate fulfillment.

The ultimate fulfillment of transcendental subjectivity, as we have argued, is Husserl's concept of God. If we recall that Husserl's concept of God also includes the immanent dimension that provides the motive force for the upward development of subjectivity, then we can draw an even closer connection between personhood and entelechy. As Hart reminds, we cannot treat Husserl's God as simply an infinitely distant ideal: "This would be to forget the divine as the principle of the rationality found in the contingent primal presencing of the dative of manifestation and its developing life."⁸² Keeping that immanent dimension of God in mind clarifies Husserl's fragmentary manuscript comments in which he describes God as an entelechy:

the ultimate meaning of being (*Sinn des Seins*) is the Good and that is the divine activity toward which the All of divine action is directed. But divine activity is the willing-to-be-real of God (*das Reale-sein-wollen Gottes*)....In everything noble and good, which I realize in me, I am therefore realized God, fulfilled will of God, mere nature has become God, a fulfilled God. God as entelechy, God as energy (*Energie*).⁸³

What Husserl is emphasizing is the nature of entelechy as a motive power that develops towards the full realization of its telos.

Let us synthesize the preceding elements in order to unpack the proposed description. The transcendental person is an entelechy of manifestation because the person goes beyond the dative of manifestation that characterizes the simple transcendental ego. Personhood includes the concrete aspects of subjectivity, from

⁸² Hart, "A Précis," 136.

⁸³ B II 2, 54, translated in Hart, "A Précis," 146.

the depth dimension of passive affectivity through the whole teleological progression towards ultimate harmony of all intentional consciousness, i.e., God. The person is also an entelechy because an entelechy involves movement, development, and striving; as we have argued, the teleological development of the person is the common thread that unites the various facets of personhood discussed in the previous chapters. In short: the person *is* teleological—it has (ἔχω) a telos towards perfection (έν-τελής), understood as the absolute harmony of all monadic life.

We can go even further, however, in clarifying the nature of personhood. While it is true that the person, like the transcendental ego, is a site of manifestation, the concept of personhood also goes beyond the description of the transcendental ego insofar as the person is necessarily reflecting back on his or her activity and subjecting it to rational critique. Thus, the development (or, the becoming) of the person is guided by this process of critical reflection. Hart comments on this becoming of the person by describing the “I myself,” which is his term for the essential core of *who* one is:

Further, the I MYSELF, we propose, is the form and telos, i.e., entelechy, of the person. As such it is “my most intimate idea,” and because it is not only I myself most formally but also, as entelechy, the dynamism for the regulative ideal of the person who I am to be, this most intimate idea of mine, the idea of me myself, is such that I am “able to become that one who I am.”⁸⁴

Hart emphasizes *who* one is rather than *what* one is in order to clarify that personhood is not captured by a list of objective qualities. Instead, as we have seen, the person truly emerges when one embraces a vocation that encompasses the

⁸⁴ Hart, *Who One Is. Book 2*, 98.

whole of one's life. This adoption of a vocation and the consequent embrace of who I ought to be, what values I should uphold, etc., expresses the most intimate idea of who I am. Given what we have said about the philosophical task of personhood, we can go beyond Hart in articulating the Husserlian claim that this most intimate ideal of who I am is an idea that is ultimately based on reason and rational justification. For Husserl, the most intimate idea of the self is not a merely existential description of who one is; it must include the normative ideal of who one ought to become; this normative ideal, in turn, is grounded in reason.

As we have argued, the ultimate expression of this self-ideal would be the ideal of an act that I could affirm for all eternity. This ideal is, however, precisely what Husserl means by the ideal of absolute responsibility, and the effort of striving towards absolute responsibility is the task of philosophical reason. Thus, we can say that the entelechy of the person is an entelechy driven by the task of reason. As Laycock remarks, "*Logos* is the subject-form of *telos*."⁸⁵ The development of the subject as rational is correlated to the teleological progression of the world to which the subject is correlated, understood in the broad sense as encompassing all of the facticity that Husserl's voluntarism strives to embrace. In other words, the person is an entelechy of reason: personhood is the site of the development towards absolute reason.

§32. Comparison with Other Husserlian Accounts

This account of personhood is closely aligned with, and indeed heavily indebted to, the interpretations of personhood recently presented by James G. Hart

⁸⁵ Laycock, 184.

and Robert Sokolowski. In this section, I will make some concluding comparisons between our approaches in order to clarify why I believe my analysis of personhood is a useful tool for Husserl scholarship.

It should be evident that my interpretation is strongly influenced by Hart's conception of the person. Hart begins from the claim that "the person is what is constituted by the 'I myself' in its actualization of itself through what Husserl calls 'position-taking acts.'"⁸⁶ In developing this foundation of the person, he recognizes the function of teleology in the person and even suggests the language of "entelechy" to capture this function.⁸⁷

My account of personhood builds on Hart's interpretation in several important areas. The analysis in chapters four through six fleshes out the role of intersubjectivity and critique in the teleology of the person. While Hart recognizes the importance of intersubjectivity, he acknowledges that this topic is not treated in depth in his latest book.⁸⁸ In particular, the mechanics of criticizing one's vocation within an intersubjective community are an important advance in understanding Husserl's theory of vocation and his process of teleological harmonization. In addition, my interpretation of reason within Husserl is a useful addition to Hart's work on personhood because it clarifies how reason relates to both the concept of God and the task of philosophy. The topic of reason does not receive a systematic treatment in Hart's work, and Hart concentrates on the limit-situation that causes

⁸⁶ Hart, *Who One Is. Book 1*, 165.

⁸⁷ For the role of teleology, see esp. Hart, *Who One Is. Book 2*, ch. 4. On entelechy, see *Who One Is. Book 1*, 228.

⁸⁸ See Hart, *Who One Is. Book 1*, vii–viii.

the person to confront the entirety of his or her being rather than the endpoint of the person's teleological striving.⁸⁹

It is clear that Hart's interest is a systematic development of personhood as a philosophical concept, and that Husserl is the *terminus a quo* rather than the domain of his investigation. His ability to synthesize different philosophical (as well as theological, cultural, and scientific) traditions is impressive, but it results in a concept of personhood that goes beyond what Husserl himself would find comfortable given the limits of the phenomenological method. In particular, his explorations on theology in Book II, chapter 7 go beyond Husserl's tentative thoughts on God towards a thorough account of theological issues based on Christian metaphysics.⁹⁰ Thus, as a compliment to Hart's systematic investigation of personhood, this dissertation offers an account of personhood that recognizes the ambiguity and hesitation in Husserl's own work on God.

A second area in which Hart's systematic investigations go beyond their Husserlian source is in his use of existentialist themes. Hart valiantly attempts to acknowledge and integrate these themes within his broadly Husserlian account. For instance, Hart's interpretation of death is a clear effort to accommodate existential concepts like being-towards-death and *Angst* within the framework of transcendental subjectivity. Hart argues that the notion of "'my death' can occasion such a gathering event...that takes in, synthesizes and condenses not just a specific

⁸⁹ See especially Hart, *Who One Is. Book 2*, ch. 2–3.

⁹⁰ While Hart undoubtedly goes beyond Husserl in these chapters, other phenomenologists are beginning to explore these questions of religion; see especially Steinbock, *Phenomenology and Mysticism*, and Dahl, *Phenomenology and the Holy*. Hart, "The Study of Religion," articulates some of Husserl's (limited) comments on religion.

recent past, but the whole of one's life."⁹¹ Thus, "my death" can be the motivation for reflection upon one's life.

However, in describing this impetus to self-reflection, Hart neglects the primary reason that Husserl was critical of his existentialist contemporaries: viz., that existentialism without the transcendental dimension lapses into anthropology. For Husserl, it is absolutely necessary to perform this reflection within the context of the phenomenological reduction. As Husserl writes, "The epoche, however, makes it clear that the apperception, 'human being,' receives its existential meaning within the universal apperception, 'world,' only in the life of the ego."⁹²

When one performs the reduction and examines the structure of transcendental consciousness, it becomes clear that the life of the ego is structured teleologically by means of the development of reason. As we have seen in this chapter, the latent rationality of human life is presented as a task of bringing that rationality to evidence. Because reflection, under Hart's interpretation, is motivated primarily by "my death" rather than the telological-rational structure of transcendental subjectivity, however, his account overlooks the crucial importance of reason within human life—as we have quoted earlier, Husserl's use of terminology like "task" and "fate" reflects the significance Husserl attributes to reason. Ultimately, the transcendental dimension of personhood emphasizes that

⁹¹ Hart, *Who One Is. Book 2*, 72; see also *Who One Is. Book 1*, ch. 7.

⁹² "Phänomenologie und Anthropologie," 8; "Phenomenology and Anthropology," 319.

reflection occurs through reason, whereas an existentialism without transcendental philosophy can regress into naïve naturalistic descriptions of the human being.⁹³

Finally, this dissertation advances on Hart's work by developing the phrase "entelechy of reason" to capture the nature of personhood. Although Hart's account of the person is extremely thorough, he does not have a simple encapsulation of what the person is. The phrase "entelechy of reason" is useful because it provides such a focal point to the concept of personhood, and the explanation justifying that phrase helps make clear the unity of the facets of personhood.

A second interpretation of Husserlian personhood to which this dissertation is indebted comes from Sokolowski. In *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, Sokolowski describes the person as the "the agent of truth."⁹⁴ The claim that the person is essentially constituted in truth bears an obvious parallel to the metaphor of the person as an entelechy of reason. Sokolowski develops his notion of veracity in order to highlight the desire towards correctness and the morally good nature of moving towards truth, which compliments our analysis of the teleology towards God being a teleology of reason.⁹⁵ In addition, Sokolowski links personhood with philosophy by noting that the philosophical use of language involves critical reflection upon how we have declared ourselves as agents of truth in our previous position-takings.⁹⁶ Finally, Sokolowski's analysis of the categoriality of acts that

⁹³ For more on Husserl's relationship to existentialism, see MacDonald as well as Spiegelberg.

⁹⁴ Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 1.

⁹⁵ Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 20.

⁹⁶ Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 32–3.

constitute the person is an excellent explanation of the mechanics of position-taking acts, especially within a shared linguistic community.

Sokolowski prefers the term “truth” to the description of humans as “rational” because “rational” carries the connotation of thinking limited to calculative modes. It should be clear, however, that Husserl’s sense of reason is sufficiently broad to make these accounts compatible, rather than conflicting. In fact, there are several ways in which describing the person as an entelechy of reason can supplement Sokolowski’s account. First, Husserl’s sense of reason is obviously a degreed property: intentional activity can be more or less fulfilled and hence more or less rationally justified, and a complete rational justification is a regulative ideal. Thus, we can say that the person who reflects on why he or she does good has a more rationally justified position than the saint who merely does good without knowing why such an action is good; as Buckley explains,

Consequently, the “saint,” the person who just *does* the good, would be compared by Husserl to “a nice little animal” (*ein gutes Tierchen*). The person who merely *does* the good is someone who lives in “activity in passivity.” ...The authentic human “saint” is the person who does good and knows *why* he or she does that good.⁹⁷

By contrast, the concept of truth is less amenable to gradation. For Sokolowski, therefore, because the naïve saint would have predicated the correct moral categoriality for the situation and hence would have taken the correct position-taking act, he or she would be an agent of truth.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility*, 137. The phrase “ein gutes Tierchen” carries the meaning not just of being a nice animal but being tame; it is clearly a diminutive comment.

⁹⁸ The language of moral categoriality is introduced by Sokolowski in order to extend Husserl’s account of categorial forms to the moral domain. For Sokolowski,

Second, the language of “entelechy” is more obviously dynamic than that of “agent.” While Sokolowski’s language of the “agent” is obviously superior to the conceptual framework of the dative of manifestation because it accounts for the activity of the ego, it does not necessarily imply that the ego is itself developing or transforming through its activity. To be clear: Sokolowski himself emphasizes that humans “declare” themselves in their use of reason⁹⁹ and that these disclosures have the power to transform both the self and others.¹⁰⁰ However, the metaphor of the entelechy of reason makes such self-transformation more immediately evident by emphasizing that the person has a *telos* towards perfection.

Finally, Sokolowski’s terminology of “truth” as well as his focus on the categoriality and syntax of reason, makes it harder to accommodate the passive, associative dimension of personhood within his metaphor. Sokolowski’s starting point for reason is the third level of language, the declarative use, beyond both proto-language and the informative use of language.¹⁰¹ He thus explains, “But if reason is expressed paradigmatically in speech, then the human person, the agent of truth, is likewise expressed primarily in it.”¹⁰²

By contrast, as we have seen, the passive dimension that exists prior to active articulation in speech is an essential foundation for the person, and especially the rationality of the person. While explicit categoriality is not present without language, this chapter has demonstrated that Husserl locates the foundation for

an act is moral if it possesses the proper formal structure (such as being a mean between two extremes); cf. “Phenomenology of Friendship,” esp. 455–8.

⁹⁹ Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 10–1.

¹⁰⁰ Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 94–6.

¹⁰¹ Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 33–9.

¹⁰² Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 39.

reason in the passive, latent dimension of subjectivity. In chapter two, we showed how this dimension is the starting point of Husserl's teleological progression towards absolute reason, and in this chapter we emphasized how Husserl's entelechy of development is grounded in the sphere of passivity. Thus, the metaphor of "entelechy of reason" is preferable in order to acknowledge the essential influence of the passive dimension and to demonstrate that passivity is not opposed to rational ordering. Sokolowski is correct that the full sense of personhood requires the declarative use of language—hence our argument about the importance of the position-taking act of adopting a vocation—but he is incorrect to treat the prior levels as degenerate cases. For Husserl, reason in the passive dimension may be inchoate, but it is not degenerative.

§33. Personhood in Further Phenomenological Research

This dissertation has developed a cohesive interpretation of personhood as it appears in Husserl's work. On the basis of this research, it is possible to explore many additional questions. The purpose of this section is to briefly outline some avenues of further investigation for a phenomenological, Husserlian theory of personhood.

The first area ripe for investigation is comparative analysis between Husserl and other phenomenologists. Several of Husserl's contemporaries, including Scheler and Stein, also wrote on personhood; with a theory of Husserlian personhood, it becomes possible to develop fruitful comparisons with these thinkers.¹⁰³ For instance, Scheler argues that the different forms of life are radically unable to

¹⁰³ See, for instance, Scheler, esp. ch. 6, and Stein.

understand the values of another form, whereas Husserl believes that all legitimate vocations must be able to be articulated and understood by others, even if others do not feel the pull of the loved values in the same way as the person who has that vocation.

Second, there is much research currently being done on the relation between Husserl's ethics and other ethical traditions.¹⁰⁴ Because of the centrality of the person to Husserl's post-war ethics, a well-established theory of Husserlian personhood can contribute to these efforts. For instance, phenomenological virtue ethics would benefit from a more detailed examination of how Husserl's understanding of happiness—which has strong Aristotelian characteristics—relates to the choice of a vocation. The role of the will to reason in the Husserlian person could clarify how Husserl transforms the Kantian categorical imperative as well as the transcendental notion of freedom in the ethics of Kant and Husserl.

Finally, there are several questions left unanswered in this dissertation that are worth further study; I will mention two. First, the relationship between reason and love stands in need of clarification. While Husserl obviously maintains that values of love are amenable to rational justification in the sense of being brought into harmony with other axiological positions, the mechanism of that justification could benefit from additional study. It is also unclear how Husserl's sense of love in his ethics relates to the emotion of love, and whether Husserl believes that the latter can be brought to reason.

¹⁰⁴ Some of the major names involved in Husserlian ethics research include John Drummond, Ullrich Melle, Henning Peucker, and Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl.

A second lingering question relates to the process of critique and renewal. While this dissertation has suggested a possible method of critique—through establishing a harmony within the intersubjective community—there is much work to be done in making Husserl’s analysis sufficiently robust as to be useful in applied ethics research. There are many open questions about how precisely one can determine when a vocation harmonizes with a community, what to do in the case of a conflict between the community and the individual (e.g., in Husserl’s case of the mother), and under what circumstances a person may be asked to sacrifice his or her own vocation for the sake of the community. Although Husserl believes the process of critique and the concomitant renewal of the community provides the method for reconciling the differing goals of individuals within a community, these questions must be answered before it becomes possible to use his notion of critique as a tool in applied ethical reasoning.

With these questions in mind, it is worth remembering that philosophy, like the becoming of the person itself, is an infinite task. As philosophers and therefore functionaries of mankind, we are called to pursue these questions with a desire for reason, a willingness to reflect, and a belief that our pursuits will move closer to the teleological endpoint of all conscious striving. The pursuit of this task is what makes us persons.

Conclusion

§34. Summary of Results

This dissertation has argued that Husserl develops a transcendental account of personhood that is intended to account for the concrete dimensions of subjectivity in a richer way than was possible under Husserl's description of the transcendental ego, while still remaining within the framework of transcendental phenomenology.

The first chapter identified the topic of subjectivity as a prominent theme throughout the philosophical tradition, especially in modern philosophy, and its continuing relevance to several areas of contemporary philosophy. When these accounts use the term "person" in a pregnant sense, they tend to pick out features like the agency, rationality, and moral significance of the person. Several topics within contemporary analytic philosophy have likewise made use of the pregnancy of the term *person*: questions about personal identity and the distinguishing features of personhood recognize the metaphysical uniqueness of the personal self, and the problem of personhood in applied ethics emphasizes the moral, social, and political significance attached to the term "person."

What Husserlian phenomenology offers beyond these analytic accounts is a method to investigate the subjective experience of personhood from the first-person perspective, i.e., from the inside. This investigation, which is grounded on lived experience rather than positivistic frameworks, is better suited to the richness of personhood than the abstract and reductive accounts privileged by analytic philosophy.

We have established that Husserl's insight into the intentionality of consciousness becomes fleshed out in his investigations into the nature of subjectivity. With the performance of the phenomenological reduction, Husserl uncovers the transcendental dimension of consciousness, which is responsible for the constitution of worldly objects. Husserl adds a depth dimension to the transcendental subject with his genetic method; a genetic phenomenology of transcendental subjectivity reveals that the transcendental subject is not a static ego but is rather affected by its past constitutive activity, worldly horizons, and personal commitments. By genetically reconstructing the features of subjectivity that become sedimented as the person, we can give an account of transcendental personhood as it is revealed from within the reduction.

We then explored the structures of personhood, starting from the lowest layers of subjectivity. The second chapter used the transcendental function of instincts to explore the passive foundation for personhood. Husserl's ontological way to the reduction, which emphasizes the correlation between subjectivity and world, makes it possible to describe the depth dimension of transcendental life. One of the key features of this depth dimension is the function of instincts. For Husserl, transcendental instincts are a form of intentionality in which objects are passively constituted through the affective allure of the hyletic data.

Since passive constitution occurs by making "objects" which are as-yet unthematic emerge from the background of consciousness, the fact that there is a capacity for transcendental subjectivity to respond passively indicates that there must be a depth dimension to transcendental subjectivity itself. By investigating this

depth dimension, we were able to begin to distinguish one ego from another on the basis of *that* ego's actions and passions, experiences and activities. In addition, we noted that the intentional activity of the subject (including passive "acts" such as instinctive drives) can become sedimented in the background of the subject's life; these sedimented experiences can in turn individuate transcendental egos. In particular, Husserl's notion of habituation explains how specific intentional responses can become abiding tendencies for the subject, shaping the future intentional activity of the subject. This process of individuation is a necessary foundation for the emergence of the person as an agent with a character, a history, and so forth.

In the third chapter, we investigated the background for the passive activity of the subject, i.e., the worldliness of transcendental subjectivity. Husserl discusses the worldliness of subjectivity using a plethora of terms—from lifeworld to homeworld—so we began by focusing on the function of the world as a horizontal structure. The world, in its transcendental function, is a horizon from which objects emerge and which makes possible the appearance of objects. What Husserl realizes is that this horizon is intrinsically intersubjective, i.e., it is shared amongst all possible others living within that world. As a result, Husserl argues that there is a social dimension to the lifeworld, which he describes in terms of culture.

The discussion of culture led to an analysis of how normality is constituted within a cultural tradition. Briefly, the interaction of individuals within a community establishes a common basis for what is typical, which then becomes sedimented into an expectation of how such experiences ought to be. These expectations, which are

reified and passed down through historical traditions, can become part of the shared worldly background for future generations.

We then used Steinbock's interpretation of generativity in Husserl in order to examine how the expectations of the cultural world could become normatively significant. Husserl uses the concept of the homeworld to describe a cultural world that is normatively privileged, and we saw that the homeworld is generatively constituted in a dialectical encounter with an alienworld. The opposition homeworld/alienworld establishes the homeworld as not merely a horizon but also as a ground, from which and in relation to which all objects and experiences have any sense at all.

Finally, we connected the functions of the world as horizon and as ground in order to argue that worldliness is an essential aspect of personhood. Transcendental subjectivity necessarily enworlds itself through its constitutive activity; because subjectivity belongs to a world, it is necessary to speak of the world in which transcendental subjectivity lives in order to account for the concrete elements of subjective experience. In addition, the worldliness of the person allows us to acknowledge the historical character of subjectivity by establishing a transcendental interpretation of history, culture, and tradition in light of their constitutive effects upon, and interaction with, subjectivity. Lastly, we noted that the worldliness of subjectivity is what makes possible the emergence of higher-level elements of personhood, such as values, norms, and intersubjective communities.

Having established the passive foundation for the person on both sides of the correlation (instincts and habits on the noetic side, worldliness on the noematic

side), chapter four turned to the active dimension of subjective life. We noted that personhood is an achievement of subjectivity and therefore the person only truly emerges once the depth dimension is supplemented with deliberate position-taking acts on the part of the person, which establish a commitment to similar position-takings in the future.

For Husserl, one of the most significant types of position-taking acts is the choice of a vocation, which is a form of life determined by a loved value. Husserl recognized the need to acknowledge values loved by individual persons in addition to objective values when he considered the problem of the mother. Because the mother's life is oriented around her child, the child represents an absolute value for the mother. Because the mother's value of her child is incommensurable with objective values, as evaluated by a non-participating observer, the discussion of vocation is intended to create a framework within which to understand this kind of value.

The values represented in a vocation are absolute because they are constitutive of the person's identity: to go against such a value is to betray the self. Consequently, genuine loved values must be comprehensive enough to encompass the whole of the person's life and establish a project around which the rest of the person's striving is oriented. This, in turn, constitutes a unity to the person's life and striving, which allows Husserl to speak about the person as a unique subject with its particular values, commitments, and practical possibilities. Finally, the concept of a vocation constitutes a regulative ideal, viz., a life-task, towards which the person strives and against which his or her actions can be measured. The person's vocation

calls the person to transform his or her life in light of that life-task; therefore, the vocation of the person establishes an ideal of perfection for the person's life. In other words, the person's vocation erects a guiding purpose around which all of the person's other activities, decisions, and values ought to be oriented.

In the fifth chapter, we examined how this ideal develops in the context of a community. We noted that, even in his early works, Husserl maintained that there was an essentially intersubjective dimension to the transcendental ego, and thus it is no surprise that the more concrete concept of the person should likewise have a social dimension. This social dimension has a bidirectional influence: on the one hand, the person's community influences his or her constitutive possibilities, and on the other hand, the actions of the person contribute to the formation of his or her community.

One of the most significant ways in which the person and community interact is through the constitution of cultural norms. We noted how norms for how persons ought to behave are, in part, made meaningful by the intersubjective community that establishes the context for the actions of that person. For Husserl, the sedimentation of these cultural norms constitutes a historical tradition, and that tradition provides a framework within which the potentially conflicting goals of individuals can be evaluated and, ideally, harmonized. We qualified this conclusion by noting that culture and tradition are not determinative of the legitimacy of a person's vocational goals; persons can critique, reaffirm, or reject the norms of the tradition. What these norms give us, however, is a starting point from which critique can take place. In light of these malleable norms, it becomes possible to critique the

vocational choices of individual persons insofar as those vocations can be brought into harmony within the community at large.

We then described Husserl's concepts of the personality of a higher order and the *Liebesgemeinschaft*. For Husserl, a community that has such a deep harmony among its members as to form an intentional unity of its achievements is known as a personality of a higher order. At this level of unity, the community has its own identity and *telos*. This shared identity arises from the harmonization of its members' individual purposes, and the ultimate ideal of this harmonization is a community of love, or *Liebesgemeinschaft*. Husserl describes the *Liebesgemeinschaft* as motivated by a love for others such that no one is marginalized or left out of the sphere of moral concern; the good of others has become the self-interest of the person living within the *Liebesgemeinschaft*.

The sixth chapter argued that all of these dimensions of personhood—from the passive, habitual life of subjectivity to the active choice of one's vocation and the harmonization of that vocation with others within a *Liebesgemeinschaft*—are united in a teleology of personhood. We noted that, within each of the dimensions of personhood, there was a teleological progression, and that, in fact, Husserl claims that these teleologies all fit together within a single teleological progression. The flow of consciousness is itself teleologically ordered, and all of the activities and accomplishments of the ego within that stream are unified by this teleology.

We noted that this teleology is directed towards an infinite ideal, which Husserl describes as God. The concept of God is particularly challenging to describe phenomenologically; Husserl does so by describing the faith in the fruitfulness of

any teleological process as the mode of givenness for the divine. The “faith” that there is a completion to what is given, even though that completion is transcendent to what is immediately experienced, is the primal belief that makes it possible for the natural attitude to have any sense whatsoever.

Husserl connects this notion of the divine—as the ultimate endpoint of teleological striving—with the concept of an absolute *logos*. We then drew a connection between this notion of God and Husserl’s descriptions of reason within the context of phenomenology, insofar as the rational structure of intentionality is motivated towards evidential fulfillment and the cancelling of incorrectness. This motivational structure of reason parallels how the belief in God, properly understood, grounds intentional activity.

For Husserl, this sense of rationality is what truly exemplifies humanity, and thus he describes the rational unfolding and development of the person as what leads to the divine. However, because this notion of divinity is a regulative ideal, there is a concomitant obligation to strive towards this realization even though doing so is an infinite task. Husserl describes this obligation as the ultimate task of humanity and uses the concept of the philosopher to describe someone who has taken up this task as her life’s mission on behalf of both herself and society, and lives every day with the habit of rational critique and justification.

In order to capture these insights into the teleological structure of personhood, we developed the concept of the person as an entelechy of reason. We first noted that the concept of an entelechy is richer and more active than a grammatical dative, which reflects the importance of the depth dimension and the

active position-takings of the person within the concept of personhood. Because the motive force for this entelechy is reason, it makes sense to describe the person using that conceptual framework.

§35. Contributions to the Literature

In reconstructing Husserl's own work on personhood and connecting ideas that Husserl did not himself completely work out, this account advances Husserl scholarship in several ways. First, this research demonstrates the unity and development inherent in Husserl's account of the person. While the individual elements of personhood have been discussed by many scholars, this dissertation demonstrates how those elements are unified in a teleology of reason.

In particular, the description of the person as an entelechy of reason captures the dynamic striving and development of the person for Husserl, as well as the importance of rational critique in Husserl's philosophical project. Indeed, it turns out that the relation between reason and the development of transcendental subjectivity is at the core of what constitutes the transcendental person. Because this entelechy encompasses all the dimensions of human life, from instinctive reactions all the way up to the divine ideal, it becomes clear that reason is the culmination of the concrete, emotional, and practical life of the person rather than a pure concept that exists in tension with the material reality of life.

In addition, by working through the passive and active dimensions of personal experience on both the noetic and noematic sides of the correlation, this dissertation provides a systematic account of the elements of personhood rather than a rhapsodic list of elements of personhood. While the teleology of personhood

is never completed and thus there is always the possibility for additional dimensions of personhood to emerge, the account developed in this dissertation uses the structure of transcendental subjectivity to provide the most comprehensive description of personhood possible.

The unity of the person also substantiates Husserl's claim that all philosophical problems return to the problem of subjectivity. In particular, the concept of the person demonstrates that Husserl's works on ethics and intersubjectivity are not merely side projects; the problems of ethical justification and of intersubjective experience flow directly out of the richness of subjectivity.

Next, this account emphasizes the transcendental character of personhood in Husserl, which has been neglected in most phenomenological discussions of personhood. By describing the person within the transcendental register, this dissertation corrects the ontological misunderstanding of Husserl's idealism and demonstrates that Husserl's transcendental subject is not divorced from worldly experience. On the contrary, the transcendental person is essentially related to the world and its intersubjective community.

By showing how the transcendental dimension of personhood not only permits, but in fact demands a treatment of traditionally "existentialist" themes such as embodiment and passivity, the worldliness of subjectivity, and responsibility for the choices of the person, this dissertation offers a conceptual framework for investigating the concrete dimensions of subjectivity while making use of the resources of Husserlian phenomenology.

Finally, this dissertation can function as a corrective to the pervasive tendency to dismiss transcendental idealism as a form of obscurantism. Even among Husserl scholars, there is a tendency to speak about Husserl's transcendental idealism as some sort of mystical dimension of experience; among non-specialists, transcendental idealism is often rejected as an occult or speculative theory divorced from reality. By emphasizing the concrete nature of Husserl's transcendental person, this dissertation combats these misinterpretations. Husserl's transcendental idealism is neither mystical nor speculative; it consists in describing the constitution of meaningful reality in light of the *a priori* correlation between consciousness and intentional object, and in fact prevents speculative or occult explanations by insisting that everything described in the correlation must be able to be brought to evidence. The transcendental dimension of experience is not otherworldly, and this dissertation helps to deflate the mystical inflations and interpretations of transcendental idealism.

§36. Limitations of This Research

While these contributions are hopefully genuine advancements to the field, there are nonetheless some important limitations to this study. First, it must be acknowledged that this interpretation of personhood is an attempt to think with and beyond Husserl himself. In other words, there are several ideas in this dissertation—most notably the process of critiquing a vocation, the interpretation of God in phenomenological terms, and the description of the person as an entelechy of reason—that push further than Husserl himself was able to, or willing to, articulate. There are many questions regarding these topics for which Husserl did

not have a complete answer: how can one distinguish a legitimate example of a loved value from an inappropriately fetishized value without lapsing into cultural relativism? What can we legitimately say about God within the confines of phenomenology, and what transgresses into speculative construction? What is the relationship between the philosopher-as-transcendental phenomenologist and the philosopher with moral-political obligations? This dissertation has defended an interpretation of these questions that is present in Husserl, but it would be inappropriate to ignore the fact that Husserl was unsettled on these questions and frequently raised counter-arguments to which he had no satisfactory response. Because Husserl's philosophy has no final shape, this dissertation necessarily had to go beyond Husserl himself in order to develop this interpretation.

A second limitation is that this dissertation only superficially addresses the analytic literature on personhood. It is clear that Husserl's philosophical project—however it is described—is attempting something different from the way mainstream analytic philosophy has been carried out over the last decades. Nonetheless, analytic thinkers such as Searle and Nagel have tried to tackle some of the same issues that motivated Husserl, including intentionality and the first-person perspective. The fact that they have come at similar problems from a different starting point, coupled with the increasing interaction between analytic and continental perspectives (and indeed the erosion of that divide as a fault line of philosophy), suggests that it may be worthwhile to compare the results of Husserlian research more carefully with the conclusions that come from more analytic roots. In particular, it would be worth examining their research in light of

Husserl's phenomenological reduction, in order to assess what aspects of their concepts of subjectivity fall within what Husserl has demarcated as transcendental phenomenology.

A third limitation of this study is that it does not consider how the phenomenological method has developed after Husserl. While Husserl's method of the reduction is a clear starting point for phenomenological research, that method has been extended, criticized, and revised by subsequent phenomenologists. This dissertation has attempted to articulate how to understand the phenomenon of personhood within Husserlian phenomenology; having done so, it would be worthwhile seeing how well those results can stand in light of the critical scrutiny that the phenomenological tradition has brought to bear on Husserl. The obvious criticism is that Husserl's method is hamstrung by the latent Cartesianism that Husserl himself was never able to fully overcome. While I think this criticism is misguided, it would be worth setting the results of Husserlian research into personhood next to these critiques in order to highlight to what extent Husserl's method can in fact overcome its Cartesian roots. Other possible topics of comparison include to what extent the reduction, and by extension the philosophical life, can be completed (which is the critique raised most pointedly by Merleau-Ponty, among others), and whether the constitution of a historical tradition is indeed a continuous development or is instead marked by radical discontinuities (such as Foucault would aver).

§37. Further Research

The obvious question for phenomenologists today is, given the breadth of work being done in phenomenology: why Husserl? An important answer is that Husserl remains an important figure within phenomenology whose work is still being uncovered and understood. The current generation of Husserl scholars have done great work in bringing his manuscript writings to the awareness of the general philosophical community, and the insights from these writings are shaking once widely held (mis-)conceptions of Husserl as a thinker. In the specific case of personhood, this dissertation has argued that Husserl's interpretation of the concept, especially with respect to the transcendental dimension of personhood, can contribute to our understanding of subjectivity in an important way.

At the same time, we should keep in mind Husserl's own willingness to start afresh in order to genuinely understand the phenomenon at hand; Husserl scholarship would betray his intention by fossilizing his texts as the last word in phenomenology. The future of Husserl scholarship, especially with respect to concrete dimensions of experience that are found in the transcendental person, instead lies in using Husserlian insights, methods, and concepts in order to illuminate new research in phenomenology. The field of phenomenological ethics is emerging as a particularly vibrant domain at the moment. Some potential avenues for research informed by Husserl's concept of personhood include understanding the sources and constitution of normativity, the relation between reason and the emotions, and the process of justifying ethical values. In addition to these systematic questions, Husserl's concept of personhood raises interesting historical-

comparative questions: is the formation of the person in Husserl analogous to the habituation of moral virtues in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics? Does Husserl's understanding of reason provide a way to mediate between the formal morality of Kant's *Groundwork* and the material ethics found in his *Metaphysics of Morals*? Can Husserl's notions of fate and the task of philosophy supplement Sartrean claims about the authentic life? Even meta-ethical questions, such as the objectivity of values, can be approached by comparing, e.g., Scheler's and Husserl's treatment of forms of (vocational) life.

In addition to comparative work in moral theory, Husserl's concept of personhood offers resources for understanding politically charged aspects of subjectivity, such as race or gender identities. Using Husserl's concept of personhood, we can ask whether specific normatively significant practices (e.g., affirmative action) contribute to the harmonization of a community's *teloi* (on both the individual and collective levels) or if these practices inhibit the realization of the legitimately justified vocations of specific individuals. Husserl's concept of personhood can also provide a vocabulary for articulating the effects of discrimination—for instance, refusal to acknowledge someone as a full member of the community or marginalization of the person's loved values—in a way that demonstrates the connection between discrimination and the inhibition of a person's life projects.

Finally, Husserl's concept of personhood provides a reminder of the value of philosophy in human life. For Husserl, reason is ultimately practical, and the need for philosophy is a need born out of the crisis of contemporary life. The concept of

personhood demonstrates the centrality of philosophical inquiry to human existence. In this respect, Husserl's concept stands within a larger tradition that insists that having a life worth living requires the exercise of philosophy. Husserl's concept of personhood brings this tradition into a contemporary context with his discussion of the fact-minded people whose particularly human questions are excluded by the sciences they triumph, and his account of the genuinely human, philosophical life functions as a corrective to the idealization, abstraction, and mathematization of the contemporary world. In short: Husserl's concept of personhood is the gadfly of our spiritual crisis, and it is through the philosophers who embrace the task of a critically reflective life that we are renewed to those questions that are ultimately meaningful for human existence.

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