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Self-Responsibility and Responsibility for Others

Abstract

Because of the transcendent nature of the experience of my own self, responsibility for myself necessarily leads to responsibility for others. The aim of this paper is to approach this experience of the transcendence of the self and to show how it relates to a new sense of responsibility, which transcends the self through a number of stages. First, the author outlines what might be called the "standard" view of authenticity in Husserl and how this particular view yields a certain view of responsibility as the ability to answer completely for "who" one is and "what" one does. Second, this standard view is challenged with another reading of the "self" in Husserl – one that emphasizes a necessary and productive division within the self. Thus, the author suggests that it is this second view of the self, which is developed by Heidegger. Third, he demonstrates how this different view of the "authentic" self, that is inextricably linked to a "loss" of self, leads to a radically distinct view of responsibility for oneself, and for others.

Keywords: Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, phenomenology, authenticity, responsibility, intersubjectivity, self, other

The phenomenological movement has made a substantial contribution towards new reflection on the nature of "selfhood" and how the "self" can be said to be "responsible" for itself. However, from Husserl and Heidegger through Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Ricoeur and Michel Henry, these new philosophies of "selfhood" are also inclined to be rather "anti-subjectivistic" insofar as they are motivated by the desire to free philosophical thought definitively from outdated conceptions of the subject. It is perhaps their critical positions regarding psychologism, so-called "reism" (the subject as a special sort of thing), solipsism and idealistic spiritualism that phenomenologies of the subject have had their greatest effect on present-day philosophy. This critique of the traditional notion of the subject brings with it a critique of the notion of responsibility. In this paper, I will trace through this simultane-

ous critique of the self and the accompanying development of a new sense of responsibility that occurs in the work of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. The main point is that the very experience of the self is an *experience*, which *necessarily* goes beyond itself, and the interest in the experience of self is never directed, simply and solely, at my own self. Because of this transcendent nature of the experience of my own self – responsibility for self necessarily leads to responsibility for others. I shall approach this experience of the transcendence of my own self and how it relates to a new sense of responsibility which transcends the self through a number of stages. First, I will briefly outline what might be called the "standard" view of authenticity in Husserl and how this particular view yields a certain view of responsibility as the ability to answer *completely* for "who" one is and "what" one does. In the second part of the paper I will challenge this standard view with another reading of the "self" in Husserl – one that emphasizes a necessary and productive division within the self, and I will suggest that it is this second view of the self which is developed by Heidegger. This experience of oneself as "divided" is an experience of transcendence of the own self that is connected to a certain loss of self. In the concluding section, I will suggest how this different view of the "authentic" self that is inextricably linked to a "loss" of self leads to a radically distinct view of responsibility for oneself, and for others.

1. A "standard" view of authenticity in Husserl

Although the notions of authenticity and inauthenticity are most often connected to Heidegger and Sartre, this distinction plays a crucial role in the thought of Husserl as well. At the outset of the second part of his early work *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, Husserl himself credits Brentano with the invaluable distinction between authentic and inauthentic or symbolic representation. Husserl then provides the following definition:

> Eine symbolische oder uneigentliche Vorstellung ist, wie schon der Name besagt, eine Vorstellung durch Zeichen. Ist uns ein Inhalt nicht direkt gegeben als das, war er ist, sondern indirekt durch Zeichen, die ihn eindeutig charakterisieren, dann haben wir von ihm statt einer eigentlichen eine symbolische Vorstellung. (Hua XII, 193)

The distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity ultimately designates the difference between an *intuitive* thinking characterized by immediacy and "having insight" into what is thought, and a thinking, which is *symbolic* or mediated. Not only objects of external perception are able to be given authentically or inauthentically (for example, the difference between seeing the picture of a house and the house itself), but general or abstract concepts

can also be given in one manner or another. (ibid., 194) Husserl's treatment of the difference between "counting" and "calculation" (or what Dallas Willard calls "thoughtless enumeration," [Willard 1984, 107]) helps illustrate this distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity.

Counting, in an authentic sense, is an act, which has some sort of intuitive content. A possible example of such authentic counting is given by the adult who employs the sensuous, intuitive presence of objects in order to teach a child to count. However, such a need for the intuitive presence of objects themselves is rapidly transcended. At a very young age the normal person has already developed a propensity to calculate numerically, that is, to derive conclusions and conduct operations solely on the basis of number-symbols, with neither a need nor usually an interest in the intuitive base of the symbols, nor in understanding the actual procedure of authentic counting which Husserl claims underlies all such calculation.

This ability to calculate is a great power of our intellect. Indeed, without this power, the human mind would be capable of little arithmetical progress. Not only this, but symbolic or inauthentic thought tends to be very "efficient." It allows for the greatest result from the least amount of effort, and hence is representative of the principle of "economy of thought" of Avenarius and Mach to which Husserl devotes substantial commentary in the *Logical Investigations*. (Hua XVIII, 196-213) This ability of thought to "economize," above all, not to have to retrace every step back to its intuitive origin and not always to be inquiring into what it is doing plays a central role in the rapid progress which science in general is able to make. However, there is a negative aspect to this power. The ability to calculate may indeed be economical, but it also implies a certain "blindness."

The danger for Husserl is that while symbolic representations are possible only on the basis of authentic representations, this founded, derivative nature of the "inauthentic" concepts has a tendency to be "overlooked" or "forgotten." Moreover, the *way* in which inauthentic concepts are used can also be forgotten. This "forgetting" *does* aid the rapid progress of mathematics and Husserl is in no way suggesting that one should not calculate! He declares at one point that all cultures, which have lifted themselves out of barbarism have developed a symbolic number-system. (Hua XII, 272-273) However, the forgetfulness of inauthentic thought can "get out of control." Indeed, what Husserl describes more than 40 years after *Philosophy of Arithmetic* in his most widely read text *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, is nothing more than a crisis engendered by such inauthentic thought.

Husserl is thus somewhat ambivalent in his understanding of authenticity and inauthenticity. On the one hand, inauthentic thought has numerous practical advantages, is nec-

essary for making progress, seems almost intrinsic to science, and indicates an advanced culture. On the other hand, when inauthentic or symbolic thought is not linked to authentic insights and awareness, it loses the right to be called "science" and becomes for Husserl mere *technique*. This in no way prevents science from "working" – it even allows it to become ever more active. But Husserl calls this inauthentic functioning "activity in passivity." (Bernet 1986, 100ff) It is acting without real insight into what one is doing, without a thorough awareness of the meaning of one's action, without true understanding. Husserl became more and more convinced that despite all the proclamations of mastery which science made, and even all of the advanced technical manipulation evident everywhere, science was actually becoming impoverished in terms of its self-awareness and enslaved in "activity in passivity." Another way of putting this is that science was behaving "irresponsibly", functioning without the intuitive insight, which is the ground of all true knowing.

Moreover, the danger of this irresponsible thinking reaches far beyond science. In *On the Origin of Geometry*, Husserl gives an account of *language*, which parallels closely what has just been said about number.[1] For Husserl, philosophy too is inauthentic when it displays activity in passivity, either in the unquestioned assumption of standpoints from the past, or in the more subtle acceptance from the tradition of unnoticed prejudices and one-sided or incomplete views. Husserl also points to religion as a potential example of inauthenticity getting out of control. The passivity and traditionalism, which characterize naive, naturalistic religion, can reappear in the religion of the modern age, and Husserl says bluntly that this is the "religion of the conventional churches." (Hua XXVII, 123)

If inauthenticity is marked by "activity in passivity," then authenticity for Husserl might be described as "activity in activity." Inauthenticity is always able to be overcome through an active and brave willing not to live in passivity, through an active seeking of insight into what one does and why one does what one does, through the constant effort to justify one's theoretical and practical "position-takings" (*Stellungnahmen*) on the basis of evidence, through what Husserl calls at one point a "heroism of reason." (Hua VI, 348) According to Husserl, authentic human life consists in pulling oneself out of the life of

[1] The manuscript containing this essay was published after Husserl's death by Eugen Fink as "Die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Geometrie als intentional-historisches Problem," (Husserl 1939), 203-225. Due to its content, it has always been read in the context of the "crisis"-problematic, and is found as "Beilage III" (Hua VI, 365-386) of Husserl's *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*. As is well known, this text of Husserl is itself the origin of much that is interesting in the work of Jacques Derrida. Derrida, however, does not see the "out of control" aspect of language as a danger, or rather, he sees it as a danger *essential* to language, *constituitive* of language itself. He thus brings to the surface the surpressed ambiguity in Husserl's approach to authenticity and inauthenticity.

simply living along in a current of irrational tendencies and pre-given validities, and the formation of a life of critical choice.[2]

The acquisition of this *habitus* (Hua XXVII, 64) to critique, to understand and to justify all of one's positions, can only take place on the basis of a willed effort, of a choice to direct one's life in a new way. (Hua VI, 147-148) In all the various overcomings of inauthenticity, a solemn decision must be made to consciously and consistently escape from the "passive" actions and thoughtlessness, which characterize inauthentic life. The notion of a "resolve of will" cannot be stressed enough in the context of authenticity.

Not only is authenticity a *decision* to live in a certain way, but this is a decision that is constantly exercised in one's life. The notion of *habitus* expresses well this consistency, for it entails neither a single decision nor one noble act, but a way of life acted out continuously, always and everywhere, regardless of circumstance.

The idea that to be authentically human involves a will to know that encompasses both the theoretical realm and the realm of praxis 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. In a manuscript of his lecture-course on ethics from 1920, Husserl suggests that the desire for a fully rational life brings about a splitting of the ego into the higher ego of reason and the lowly and sinful ego of drifting along either in impulses or pre-given validities. Authentic human life is a *Kampf* against both individual impulses and social tendencies, which run contrary to the rational self-determination of the subject by the subject.

The classical definition of the human person as *animal rationale* can thus be said to take on a special significance for Husserl. This term might be taken as disclosing the difference between the true self and the false self, or as a symptom of struggle within the self. The *animal* is the lower self, the self of passivity, of unawareness, of empty and meaningless functioning, a self lacking insight. But there is a higher self, which for Husserl is the true self. This higher self is the self of *ratio*, a rational self infused by the *habitus* of critique and the will to know and understand. Human life might be said to consist of a struggle between the two selves, but the goal of *authentic* human life consists in the triumph of the higher self. For Husserl, the true self knows what it does and why it does what it does, and thus is fully responsible for itself, truly "answerable" for its actions. For this reason, the

[2] "Leben ist in sich Streben und ist als menschliches ein Aufsteigen von Passivität in Aktivität, von einem Sich-gehen-und-tragen-lassen, von einem Leben nach Neigung, zu einem überlegten Wählen, zu einem kritischen, höher bewerteten bevorzugenden Leben." (Husserl 1923) I am grateful to Ullrich Melle for offering his insights on this manuscript.

succinct description of authenticity is "self-responsibility" and the ultimate characterization of Husserl's philosophy is one of *absolute* self-responsibility.

2. Towards another reading of Husserl

There is plenty of evidence to support this reading of Husserl, which claims that authenticity consists in the sovereignty of the rational, active self over the self of passivity – and that the authentic self is a self of *absolute*, rational self-responsibility. But perhaps there is another reading or sense of rationality in Husserl, what Ullrich Melle has called the "unofficial" notion of rationality. (Melle 1995, 111-128) This notion is one, which is radically open to otherness within the self and beyond, and hence is a genuinely pluralistic sense of rationality. By trying to get away from a narrow epistemological and Cartesian reading of Husserl, we uncover a much broader sense of rationality, which brings with it a much different sense of individual authenticity, of responsibility, and by extension, a much different sense of authentic community. James Hart accomplishes an undermining of narrowly epistemological and solipsistic views of reduction by tracing a close connection and continuity between transcendental reduction with its goal of uncovering the transcendental constituting origin, which lies at the basis of the "world" and what he terms the "ethical reduction." (Hart 1992, 37) Let me briefly outline the possibilities Hart's ethical reading of reduction has for a broader conception of Husserlian reason.

At first glance, ethical reduction seems confined solely to the concrete personal and social world and hence to be an aspect of "mundane" phenomenology. In our everyday life in the world, we can come to the realization that we do not know what we are doing, that we are not responsible for our lives but have been living-along in a life which belongs not to ourselves but to what Heidegger calls *das Man*. In the previous section, we focused on Husserl's account of the forgetfulness of "theoretical" reason – but with Husserl as with Heidegger there is a forgetful and thoughtless functioning of everyday life in the. According to Husserl, true human life consists in pulling oneself out of the life of simply living along in a current of blind instinct, mere tendencies and pre-given validities, and the formation of a life of critical choice. True human life is a constant effort to justify not only one's theoretical reason, but also one's axiological and practical "position-takings" (*Stellungnahmen*).

Ethical reduction from this viewpoint, that is, the struggle to become responsible for one's life through self-examination seems to be merely a parallel to the type of return to the origin of one's conscious life which is the task of transcendental reduction. But while we know that for Husserl the full meaning of all "mundane" activity, including ethical activity,

is uncovered only by "transcendental" reduction, what is most noteworthy in such a parallel is that one can see even at the core of transcendental reduction a type of ethical imperative. The desire to go back "to the things themselves" (whether in mundane ethical life or in transcendental phenomenology) is based on this ethical imperative which arises within ourselves and is itself only uncovered in transcendental reduction. In brief, Hart claims that phenomenological reflection and its struggle to escape from transcendental naiveté by turning back to the ultimate forms of self-experience inscribes an "infinite ideal" that ultimately is an "ethical" (rather than purely theoretical or epistemological) ideal of absolute self-responsibility.

From such an ethical perspective, the analysis of the depths of subjective life takes on a different tone than the search for absolute "certainty." Reduction can be recast as the investigation of the structural preconditions of the personal identity for which we are responsible. A person "acts" and through the activity of various "position-takings" the concrete identity of the person is formed. The answer to the question "who am I?" is found in the first instance in the connection of my "position-takings" vis-à-vis various goals and objects, the coherency of my judgements and decisions. But how are these "position-takings" made possible? This activity is itself grounded in prior forms of "passive synthesis," of which the most fundamental are internal time-consciousness and association. Even at this fundamental level, however, there is a form of volitional intentionality, a form of willing that Hart identifies as a general will. (ibid., 82) This will is general in that it is not a specific intentionality but aims at an ideal form of truth and selfhood. It is both the foundation of individual acts of will and overall horizon within which these specific acts of will function. The general will is ultimately a "theological" concept in that it is a transcendental "pull" that at the same time is immanent at the core of self-experience. The identification of the "*Ur*-constitutive" stream with a divine entelechy running through the heart of one's existence can be understood in neo-Platonic terms: there is a type of fundamental *Eros*, which cuts through human existence, providing both the possibility of personal life and directing that personal life towards an absolute, infinite ideal.

One of the great virtues of such a perspective is that it places Husserl's "voluntarism" in an entirely different light than a totalizing (totalitarian) willing of rational self-control. The desire towards the *habitus* (Hua XXVII, 64) to examine, to understand and to justify all of one's concrete and personal "position-takings," to constantly inquire into the unreflective habits and "passive" actions of everyday life, is no longer some form of obsessive rational self-control, but is rooted in the general will that lies at the core of one's being. The specific direction of will rooted in the choice to direct one's life in a new way is certainly a solemn, active decision to move away from the passive tendencies and thoughtless-

ness, which characterize everyday life. (Hua VI, 147-148, Husserl 1990, 145) This "resolve of will" is also certainly a decision to live in a particular way, but this decision must be a continuous deciding, not solely a "once and for all" decision. Or perhaps better, it is a "once and for all" decision that is continually re-willed, a concrete direction of will that is rooted in the general will constantly functioning at the basis of one's life. The notion of *habitus* expresses well this consistency, for it entails neither a single decision nor one noble act, but a way of life acted out continuously, always and everywhere, regardless of circumstance. Hart paraphrases Husserl to say that "I can never be good but can only become good" (Hart 1992, 119) and the implication here is that "being true to myself" is not a deciding for one stable and fixed self which knows concretely with absolute certainty what it is deciding for, but it is a deciding for the self as *able* to decide. Being true to myself is hence not being true to some fixed self but being true to what Hart identifies as the divine entelechy moving through me at the core of my being. In a two-fold sense, there is a fundamental "receptivity" enunciated here. First, there is a sense in which a demand is placed upon me, a call issued to me from the outside; put otherwise, the fundamental form of self-experience can be re-articulated as a sense of being the recipient of a "gift." Second, one must accept or receive oneself at the basis of one's being as that type of being which is never fully the source of one's own being. The recognition of this fundamental receptivity alters the sense of the subject's rational existence from one of autonomy and control to one of dependence and vulnerability.

This "ethical" reading of Husserl produces a radically different view of the "I": an "I" unthinkable without the "Not I"; the "I" which contains a foundational layer of passivity (*Urhylé*) that cannot be reappropriated; an "I" penetrated by some sort of "alterity"; an "I" for whom the "splitting" mentioned in the manuscript quoted in section one above is the paradoxical condition of its own appearance; and hence an "I" for whom the crisis of division can just as easily be considered a *gift* rather than a loss,[3] the basis of an ethically motivated desire rather than a falling away from an original unity. While the notion of this "originally" divided subject is evident in Husserl, it is in the subsequent phenomenological tradition that it has been more clearly articulated. Various thinkers who are in many respects remarkably diverse – Heidegger, Sartre, Lacan, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Derrida – seem to hold in common the view that whatever the "crisis" of the subject might be, it is not the *loss* of the primordial unity or identity which authenticity is traditionally thought to be. To the contrary, self-identity is rooted in a fundamental *division* of the subject. A sense of self emerges not out of an experience of unity, but precisely out of the "dividedness" we

[3] Important research in this direction has been conducted by Rudolf Bernet (see f.ex. Bernet 1994).

encounter at various levels of our being (e.g. temporal, linguistic, social). For these thinkers, much of human activity – including philosophy – consists of various ways of fleeing the vulnerable and fragmented beings we *are*, and seeking a stable, fixed and unified self. But to do so is actually to cover up the originary experience of our self.

In the early Heidegger, the sense of the divided self is expressed by the co-constitutive nature of inauthenticity and authenticity, or an oscillation or being thrown back and forth between these two modes of being which are *equiprimordial* for *Dasein*. The co-constitutive or equiprimordial nature of authenticity and inauthenticity leads to the paradoxical situation that forces Heidegger to speak in apparent contradictions. At one point in *Being and Time*, Heidegger declares that "inauthenticity is based on the possibility of authenticity." (Heidegger 1962, 303) Taken by itself such a statement would seem to suggest that there is a primordial authenticity upon which the possibility of its loss is based, an original self-possession from which the self-loss and self-separation of inauthenticity come about; a view that I am claiming his early thought calls radically into question. At other times we read that authenticity is itself a "modification" of inauthenticity. (ibid., 168) Putting these two assertions together, the conclusion is that authenticity is *both* condition of possibility and modification of inauthenticity. Rudolf Bernet summarizes wonderfully the paradoxical or ambivalent nature of *Dasein*'s life by saying:

> This divided manner of existence belongs irreducibly to the essence of Dasein; Dasein is its own dividedness. Having a conscience is therefore also a fundamental form of self-experience because it relates the two ways of existing to each other without annulling their difference. In having a conscience, the authentic self addresses the anonymous self, but this latter self does not recognize in this voice its own hidden self. On the other hand, it is also true that the authentic self requires the opposition with the anonymous self in order to begin the address. If Dasein were always nothing other than its own self, then the subject would neither speak nor listen, neither gain nor lose, neither give nor receive. Dasein experiences itself as a subject that is divided, that is, as a subject that neither fully coincides with itself nor completely falls apart. Dasein is neither its own self nor the anonymous self; it is both and yet not in the same way. (Bernet 1991, 29)

The structure which allows for this oscillation is of course "temporality" – and it is the fact that as temporality *Dasein* is never fully at home with itself which allows it not only to encounter itself, but other *Dasein* as well. Heidegger's assertion that *Mitsein* as constitutive of *Dasein*'s own being precedes "empathy" is a recognition that the genuine philosophical problem of "inter-subjectivity is not the question about how two self-encapsulated subjects are able to recognize each other; but at a far more fundamental level

what is it in the subjectivity of the subject that allows such recognition to occur. For Heidegger it is this form of temporal displacement within the being of *Dasein* that first makes *Dasein* "open" to others. (Hiedegger 1962, 153ff) For Husserl too, it is the temporal structure of subjectivity and my own fundamental experience of time-consciousness and its presencing-absencing flow, which is the condition of possibility for encountering the "other." For both Husserl and Heidegger, it can be asserted that the foreignness in myself is the precondition of there being "others" for me.

3. Responsibility for Otherness

It is worth noting that this division of the subject and this experience of self as confrontation with one's own dividedness is also central to the work of Freud. According to *Freud,* consciousness and the unconscious are cut from the same material, which strangely enough, he calls "thinking." Nevertheless, consciousness and the unconscious differ from each other so much that they are unable to recognize each other. Unconscious representations function best when they do not become conscious, and when they do become conscious, this is a purely qualitative modification, which in principle alters nothing within the content of these representations. Unconscious representations, which do reach consciousness, appear to consciousness as something, which cannot be accorded a familiar place (*unheimlich*). The logic of the unconscious remains foreign to consciousness. On the other hand, these unconscious representations are only "mine" when they become conscious, that is, when I recognize them without really recognizing myself in them. For Freud (in opposition to Lacan) there is therefore no real subject of the unconscious, the unconscious only becomes subjective by becoming conscious. The subject is the place where the unconscious becomes accessible to consciousness and where consciousness experiences its own dependence upon the unconscious. The subject is divided and experiences itself only when it is confronted with its own division.

Freud – in language remarkably similar to Husserl in the manuscript mentioned above – speaks of an "Ich-Spaltung", of a "splitting of the "I". (Freud 1951, 55-62) He makes mention of a "rip" (*Einriss*) in the subject that can never be "healed" (*verheilen*). This rip or cut is due to the following: the ego recognizes something as inextricably linked to itself (Freud gives the example of castration-fear) without the ego being in a position to appropriate it. Given that Freud here points to the "extraordinarily important synthetic function of the ego," it is quite clear that this unity of the ego is not something that precedes the splitting. It is first through the experience of the dividedness of the own self that the synthetic unity of the ego becomes "extraordinarily important." The experience of one's own

dividedness is a wound that never heals. The ego of Freud does not invalidate dividedness; it only prevents a psychotic falling-apart of the subject. The experience of self is thus for Freud too an affective, and more specifically, a painful experience of the dividedness of the self. The unity of the subject is nothing else than the experience of irreducible dividedness. The subject is the possibility of its *own* being touched by the foreign, of its *own* being able to be surprised or "shocked" by the new, of losing *itself* without sinking away.

As a result, it is not surprising that the subject consists not of self-knowledge, but of desire, and this desire has a mimetic structure. According to Freud, "one" desires, in the first instance, what others desire. Only in the resulting conflict with others does there arise something like a subjective appropriation of this desire. This appropriation is actually the confirmation of the heteronomy of one's own desire. It is only through the imitation and taking over of something from the others that one becomes aware of oneself. In this self-consciousness I experience myself as somebody who coincides neither with the others nor with itself. The experience of this division is that which is most my own.

Naturally, we know from Freud as well that this division can be painful, and indeed that this encounter with a foreignness within only remains an experience of self insofar as no self-destruction takes over. Freud calls the threat of such a destruction of the own self "Trauma." A trauma arises when the subjective tension caused by the encounter with the unconscious representation is so great that the subject reaches a point of being completely overwhelmed. An impression becomes traumatic when the subject in no way can defend itself against it, can give no meaning to it, is turned inside out by it, and is crushed by it. The subject becomes pure openness with no defense, trace with no reference. In trauma, there is the danger that the subject as subject capable of experiencing its own otherness will die. Psychotic patients who claim themselves to be dead have frequently undergone an experience of trauma, such as incest or the suicide of a family member. And we know too that it would be incorrect and immoral to hold a psychotic patient "responsible" for their own trauma. For indeed – they are not, but not merely in the normal sense of responsibility as "control" over what we do and its effects. The traumatized self is precisely "unable" to respond to an otherness within, and as result is often also unable to respond to others. On the other hand, the non-pathological subject, who experiences itself precisely in its own dividedness, is able to face the otherness within, to respond to it in a manner, which sees this otherness not as something that can be controlled, or overcome, or fled, but rather "accepted" as an integral part of itself.

This sense of responsibility is clarified well by speaking. A subject arises only when something is spoken, and in its speaking the subject appears to itself at the same time as something that is spoken about in a language which has its own rules, independent of the

subject. The "first word" of the subject is already a response to something beyond, and as soon as it is spoken, it no longer belongs solely to the subject. Whoever speaks in his or her own name about himself or herself, simultaneously experiences what is said as the effect of a chain of signifiers, of the discourse of others, and of an anonymous language-code. The subject speaks neither exclusively in its own name nor exclusively in the place of others. It is only a subject when it speaks in its own name, and when it does so speak, it experiences its dependence on the others. It is therefore easier to describe myself negatively, to say what I'm not rather than to say what I am. Furthermore, I only come into contact with myself by means of the experience of what I am not and what concerns me nevertheless. I remain, to a certain extent, always foreign to myself, though I must at the same time continually rely on myself. The human subject is an entity that can never say with complete lucidity: "I am what I am." To speak *about* myself as somebody with a particular fixed character contradicts the very manner that I experience myself

Speaking is therefore not an experience of the loss of self whereby a self previously possessed by the subject is lost, but rather an experience of the loss of self, wherein the own self *first* appears in the experience of the loss. The experience of self in speaking is necessarily connected to the experience that the significance of everything that I say about myself has its origin simultaneously and undecidably both inside and outside myself. As Derrida reminds us, only a subject who wants to say something discovers that this personal speaking is at the same time a type of mere quotation. Only somebody who must hold a lecture discovers that he or she is continually paraphrasing other authors (as I am here) and speaks as well in the name of colleagues and friends. Yet it would go against the rules of holding a lecture, if he or she were to ask his or her colleagues to respond in his or her place to objections which are raised. Somebody who talks and writes, but also anybody who lives in a human manner, is personally responsible for that which to a great extent lies outside of one's own responsibility and control. In one's own name, and in one's own name alone, is one responsible for that which one in one's own name never could have said or done. Feeling responsible for a self that never comes simply from oneself is the sort of self-experience, which characterizes the finite subject.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing the radical distinction between the notion of responsibility enunciated here on the basis of my own experience of the otherness in myself and that of traditional responsibility, and then take a brief turn back to Husserl. A traditional grasp of responsibility has much to do with control and with what the later Heidegger would call calculative thinking. What is usually intended when we say that a person is responsible for their actions is that one is responsible for the *results* of one's actions. A responsible person is therefore the person who takes into account these possible

results, who estimates and predicts the effects a particular action will have. The debate around the limits of such responsibility centers on the limits of estimation and prediction, and the absolution of responsibility usually occurs at the point where it is admitted that nobody could have possibly predicted such and such an outcome, that certain results were "unforeseen." Those who do not wish to see any diminishing of responsibility are forced to an argumentation, which claims that one *should* have foreseen these consequences, that what is claimed to be "unforeseen" was able to be seen, and that indeed, it probably remained unseen not due to a lack of ability but due to a lack of *willing* to see. The defense of a traditional notion of responsibility is inevitably connected to the desire and attempt to *see* all.

This traditional sense of responsibility means to be in control of that which comes *from* us, and the efforts to extend this sense of responsibility lead to extended notions of what comes from the subject. To the contrary, the sense of responsibility we have attempted to cull from Husserl's and Heidegger's thought does not mean to control or to manage, but rather to respond to what comes from afar and to assume the care for that which we can never master. The far-reaching consequences of our actions, how people react and how these actions return to affect us are certainly beyond our control. It is implausible to assume that we could ever know the full consequences of our actions; and yet, it would seem an inhuman life if we were to totally deny responsibility for our actions and their results. Could it not be said that authentic responsibility is precisely this – to assume responsibility for those people or things, which are *given* to us? To claim responsibility only for that which we can predict with certainty or control with ease, or to abdicate responsibility on the basis that we cannot predict or simply cannot control, these seem less than human ways of behavior.

There are elements of Husserlian responsibility, which are compatible with this notion of non-calculative responsibility. To be sure, we have seen in Part One that Husserl's notion of responsibility can linked to a controlling subjectivity, to the attempt to take control of that which comes from beyond. But it is important to note that Husserlian responsibility never functions within the realm of calculative thought. Husserl is never one to say that the responsible person is one who is willing to *estimate* well the effects of his or her actions. Self-responsibility for Husserl is linked much more with an attitude of self-critique, with the willingness to engage and question oneself, to provide the evidence for that which one believes, and to discard that for which no evidence can be provided. Responsibility for Husserl is self-justification. However, this justification is not rooted in showing how one had calculated properly, but in producing "*Evidenz*." In fact, evidence is precisely that which Husserl had seen to be missing in purely calculative thinking. The willingness to provide evidence is thus linked to the willingness to critique oneself and to *assume* responsibility for one's beliefs. Evidence is something that humans have an "ability" to gather, but

it is also something to which we "respond." It is something that comes from beyond, and it too can be seen as a "gift." The experience of "truth" which occurs when an "empty intention" is "fulfilled," when there is evidence for something, is not just a subjective feeling. The evidence to which one is able to point comes from the outside. For sure the reception of this evidence is rooted in a readiness, in a skill at "seeing," but the origin of that "seeing" is rooted in a *desire* to have evidence, and the fulfilment of this desire is never solely of the subject's making.

Indeed, the subject, insofar as it experiences itself as a self, which is never fully commensurate with itself, is to be found wherever human beings live. We often encounter great difficulty with ourselves because of this fact, and we dream of being able to forget ourselves. Given that our own selfhood is inextricably linked with that which does not belong to the self, we would indeed, together with the forgetting of self, forget as well all other people and the entire world. In doing this, we would surrender their own humanity. Without accepting oneself, one cannot accept others, and without accepting others one cannot accept oneself. This is not easy. Still, this shared endeavor – which might also be called "*Mitleid*" – leads to an experience of self as a gift. In compassion, this gift of self by the other is also experienced as an invitation to lose oneself for the other. Instead of fearing or fleeing the otherness within, the compassionate person is happy to share the burden of his or her own self with the other. In compassion with and for other selves, the "self" that is "experienced" through its own dividedness loses its unbearable weight.

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