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# HUSSERL'S FIFTH MEDITATION

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Although there is a great deal of literature on Husserl's attempt, in the fifth meditation, to come to grips with the problem of intersubjectivity, insufficient attention has been paid to the arguments therein. It seems that some commentators became so preoccupied with the particulars of Husserl's analysis that they overlooked the ostensible justification for some of the key positions. This paper is an effort to provide that needed attention in the form of a careful and critical assessment of Husserl's arguments in the fifth meditation. Since I have written about the problem of intersubjectivity elsewhere, [1] this paper will be about Husserl's solution exclusively. But a summary of my conclusions concerning the problem is necessary before discussing Husserl's solution.

I argued that the problem of intersubjectivity is not identical with the problem of other minds, since Husserl does not attempt to prove the existence of anything in the fifth meditation. Rather, Husserl wants to clarify the sense of 'other subjects' by carefully describing and analyzing the paradigm case of those conditions under which we believe the expression has application – that is, when we believe we perceive someone else. But much more is involved, as a number of passages in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and *Cartesian Meditations* show, for Husserl tries to clarify the sense and status of phenomenology itself by addressing the problem of intersubjectivity.[2] Husserl aims for a set of what he calls "objectively valid results", a number of results that can be refined by and withstand intersubjective criticism. Any truths that comprise phenomenology must be truths that could be recognized as such by other rational subjects *if* there are such subjects. Whatever justification there is for phenomenological positions must be recognizable as such by other rational subjects if there are others. The possibility of communication fits into this pattern as well.

The antecedent, 'if there are others', is important because the phenomenological reduction requires neutrality as to whether there are (or are not) others. The adjective 'rational' is significant, too, as only those possible subjects that can do things associated with rationality (such as recognize relevant evidence) are relevant to clarification of the sense and status of phenomen-

ology. To this the adjective 'transcendental' should be added, since Husserl wants to clarify the sense of 'other subjects' relative to which there can be an objective world or objectively valid results for us at all.[3] It should be clear that I interpret the fifth meditation as a prelude to some of Husserl's analyses of his own enterprise, especially those in *Formal and Transcendental Logic.*

We are now in a position to outline the aim of this paper. The first order of business is to take a close look at Husserl's first step in addressing the problem, which he calls the "reduction to the sphere of ownness". What is it? And how does it play a role in Husserl's strategy? Secondly, we shall consider Husserl's arguments for two key positions: (1) that one's consciousness of another subject must be "mediate", and (2) one's identification of what one takes to be another subject *as* another subject must be derived from one's own case. Just what does Husserl mean by 'mediate' and associated terms? What is the justification for the first thesis? Since the second thesis resembles a key premise in the analogical argument for other minds, a careful examination of its meaning and the reasons for it is certainly in order. Then we shall be able to assess the fifth meditation as a whole. Is the fifth meditation an acceptable prelude to Husserl's analyses of phenomenology itself?

## I. The Sphere of Ownness

Husserl's first move is to perform what he calls a "reduction to the sphere of ownness". What is the motive for this step? Just what does 'the reduction to the sphere of ownness' mean? What, specifically, does 'the sphere of ownness' mean? I shall maintain that some of Husserl's statements about the reduction to the sphere of ownness are misleading. I shall then argue that the sphere of ownness, insofar as we can make sense of it, is something that is already yielded by the phenomenological reduction and that, consequently, the so-called "reduction" to the sphere of ownness is not a new reduction at all.

Let us consider a couple of the proposed motives for performing the so-called "second epoché". Ricoeur says that there are two motives. First,

> Since the Other figures as a special transcendence, the temptation to hypostatize this transcendence must be thrust aside through an abstention appropriate to this temptation. This Husserl calls 'reduction to the sphere of ownness.'[4]

But if this were the motive, then, since the phenomenological reduction includes abstaining from positing or denying the existence of others, the reduction to the sphere of ownness would be nothing over and above phenomenological epoché. However, Husserl takes the reduction to the sphere of ownness to be an addition to the phenomenological reduction.[5]

Ricoeur thinks that there is another motive, that of allowing Husserl to put the primary and secondary senses of the word 'me' in correct order (AHP, pp. 120–21). This second proposal, however, is not altogether clear, since I

do not identify another subject as a second "me", another subject being precisely *not* me. Ricoeur probably means 'consciousness' by 'me', since Husserl proceeds to say that my own consciousness is the original from which I derive the sense 'conscious subject' (CM, p. 112). Besides myself, only another subject could refer to or regard himself in the accusative as "me". I shall try to show that Husserl's "second epoché" is linked with an ordering of problems rather than senses of 'me'.

Elliston has still another proposal. He thinks that the second reduction is an attempt to avoid begging the question. [6] His interpretation is not without textual support. After all, Husserl introduces the second epoché by writing that it is a requirement for correct procedure right after noting that the constitution of other subjects and the sense 'other subjects' are in question (CM, pp. 92–93). So, Husserl seems to be saying that since those things are in question, we must start by excluding them (i.e., reduce to the sphere of ownness).

Although there is evidence for Elliston's interpretation, he and I disagree about the nature of the so-called "question-begging". He believes that the point of the second reduction is to avoid presupposing the phenomenological epoché so that his formulation of the problem and solution will not be infected by the method used to solve it (H:E&A, p. 218). But Husserl could avoid formulating and solving the problem in phenomenological terms only if the reduction to the sphere of ownness were employed *instead of* phenomenological reduction. However, the text shows that the reduction to the sphere of ownness is used *in addition* to phenomenological reduction (CM, pp. 95 and 148). Accordingly, if Husserl is trying to avoid begging the question, Elliston has at least misidentified the nature of it.

Moreover, there is some reason to believe that Husserl was not trying to do so, since something can beg the question only if it is an argument. Although one finds arguments in the fifth meditation, it would be a mistake to say that the fifth meditation as a whole is an argument. Rather, it is an analysis of a certain kind of experience and a corresponding sense, which Husserl probably realized. It is unlikely, then, that Husserl was trying to avoid begging the question.

I believe that we shall be in a better position to ascertain the philosophical motive for the reduction to the sphere of ownness if we find out what the second epoché and its correlate (the sphere of ownness) are. What, then, is the reduction to the sphere of ownness?

Husserl introduces the "second epoché" in the following manner.

> For the present we exclude from the thematic field everything now in question: *we disregard all constitutional effects of intentionality relating immediately or mediately to other subjectivity* and delimit first of all the total nexus of that actual and potential intentionality in which the ego constitutes *within himself a peculiar ownness*. (CM, p. 93)

Unfortunately, this passage is ambiguous. There are a couple of possible interpretations. Let us consider each of them in turn.

First, we may ask "What are the constitutional effects of other subjectivity?" That appears to include everything that requires the sense 'other subjects' for its constitution. This would include all cultural objects and the senses corresponding to them. It would also include physical objects and nature as a whole (CM, p. 92).

But not only things (such as tables and stones) require the sense 'other subjects' for their constitution. I tried to show briefly at the beginning of this paper that evidence and truth do, too. But if this is conjoined with the fact that Husserl makes phenomenological statements about the sphere of ownness, then Husserl's statement that *all* constitutional effects, immediate or mediate, are excluded from the sphere of ownness appears to be false. When Husserl describes the sphere of ownness, it is the referent of a number of phenomenological statements. But if that is so, then the evidence for those statements is "there for everyone". But the evidence for those statements is derived from the sphere of ownness. Thus, it seems that the sphere of ownness must be "there for everyone", which does not square with the assertion that *all* constitutional effects of other subjects are excluded.

It is important to distinguish *the* sphere of ownness from a particular subject's (say, Husserl's) sphere of ownness, for I might be taken to be saying that each person's sphere of ownness must be numerically the same as everyone else's. Even if each person experiences a world of private objects (that is, a world of objects that do not require the constitution of other subjects), my point is that each and every person's sphere of ownness must be the same *in kind*, and recognizable as such, if Husserl's statements about the sphere of ownness are corroborated by evidence. Husserl even says that everyone has access to *the* sphere of ownness late in the fifth meditation (CM, p. 145). Thus, Husserl probably does not mean that he no longer supposes it is possible for other possible subjects to be conscious of the sphere of ownness after performing the "second epoché". But what else are we to make of Husserl's statement that the *sense* 'objective' vanishes completely (CM, p. 96)?

Only a world of private objects would be objects that do not include the constitutional effects of other subjects. But Husserl says that one's experience is "wholly unaffected" by the reduction to the sphere of ownness (CM, p. 98). But if my experience is *wholly unaffected*, then I continue to experience what I take to be an intersubjective world. Perhaps, then, I have misinterpreted what Husserl means by 'disregarding all constitutional effects of other subjectivity' in the particular passage being discussed. One thing, however, is certain: we have not misinterpreted the meaning of 'the constitutional effects of other subjectivity' as Husserl uses the phrase throughout his writings. Husserl himself refers to the sentence we are considering as "misleading" (CM, p. 93f).

How can we interpret Husserl's statements such that they do not imply an absurd conclusion? One may try to defend Husserl along the following lines. Husserl does not say that he does not make use of the sense 'other subjects' in his analyses, but says that he excludes the effects of the constitution of other

subjects from his *theme*. One can make use of a concept without discussing it.

This leads to the second interpretation of the meaning of 'the constitutional effects of other subjectivity'.

> *What is specifically peculiar to me as ego, my concrete being as a monad,* purely in myself and for myself, *with an exclusive ownness*, includes my every intentionality and therefore, in particular, the intentionality directed to what is other; but, for reasons of method, the synthetic effect of such intentionality (*the actuality for me of what is other*) shall at first remain excluded from the theme. (CM, p. 94, last emphasis mine)

But if the synthetic effects of other subjectivity are identical with the actuality for me of what is other, then the reduction to the sphere of ownness is nothing over and above the phenomenological reduction. For it is precisely by phenomenological epoché that I adopt a neutral attitude towards what I took to be actual in the natural standpoint. It should be noted that this reading supports Ricoeur's interpretation, according to which Husserl performs the "second epoché" in order to avoid the temptation to hypothesize the transcendence of other subjects (AHP, p. 118). This reading also supports my interpretation, according to which the so-called "reduction" to the sphere of ownness is not another reduction at all. [7]

It is noteworthy that Husserl says that he is "excluding from the theme" the constitutional effects of other subjects so that he can "delimit the total nexus of actual and potential consciousness whereby an ego constitutes his ownness" (CM, p. 93). But to disregard certain phenomena is not to perform a reduction, since one disregards certain phenomena every time one analyzes one thing as opposed to another. Thus, if a shift of attention were a sufficient condition for being a reduction, there would be a reduction for every subject matter to be analyzed. Since that is absurd, the "reduction" to the sphere of ownness is not another reduction.

Striking the distinction between two senses of the word 'transcendence' will enable me to confirm this interpretation further. Something transcends$_1$ someone's consciousness if it retains its identity throughout his actual acts of consciousness. This table, for example, transcends$_1$ my consciousness in that it is the same table that I could see if I move about the table. Something transcends$_1$ my acts of consciousness by refererence to my possible acts. But it is important to note that all these acts, actual and possible, are mine (the individual's). This is not so for transcendence$_2$. The table transcends$_2$ my consciousness in that it is the same table, the underside of which could be seen at the same time that I see only its top. However, it is impossible for me to see the underside at the same time. Only another subject could do so. 'Transcendence$_1$', then, means 'irreducible to one's actual acts of consciousness', whereas 'transcendence$_2$' means 'irreducible to one's possible acts'. Transcendence$_2$ alone requires the explicit introduction of the sense 'other subject' into the theme. Husserl is, of course, trying to achieve, in part, a philosophical clarification of the transcendence$_2$ of the world and things in

it. How does this distinction pertain to the sphere of ownness and the so-called "reduction" to it?

The point of the reduction to the sphere of ownness is to delimit in general terms all and only that which transcends$_1$ an individual's consciousness. But transcendence$_1$ is yielded by phenomenological reduction alone. Long before discussion of the reduction to the sphere of ownness (and post-epoché), Husserl refers to the sense of 'object' and 'world' in terms of transcendence$_1$ (CM, p. 62). Husserl opens the fourth meditation with the following sentence: "Objects exist for me, and are for me what they are, only as objects of actual and possible consciousness" (CM, p. 65). Husserl explicitly links the reduction to the sphere of ownness to transcendence$_1$ (CM, p. 104). So, there is no difference between the phenomenological and second epoché to warrant calling the so-called "reduction" to the sphere of ownness another reduction. Elliston and I concur in thinking that "This new epoché is a selection of phenomena from the field of philosophical inquiry uncovered earlier by the phenomenological reduction in order to solve a particular problem" (H:E&A, p. 218). But we differ in that I contend that a mere selection of phenomena does not make a reduction.

When Husserl leads us to believe that he performs a second reduction, he is actually describing and delimiting all and only that which transcends$_1$ his consciousness. David Carr and I agree on this matter (PPH, p. 92). The interpretation of the reduction to the sphere of ownness as not being another phenomenological reduction is further confirmed by paragraph 96a of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. There Husserl discusses transcendence$_1$ and the sphere of ownness. Although Husserl does not use the expression 'sphere of ownness', his discussion of the "intrinsically first nature" is a reference to the sphere of ownness. But there Husserl does not even *mention* another reduction.[8]

Before the *clarification* (but not prior to the *use*) of the concept 'other subject', Husserl can account for that which transcends$_1$ his consciousness. I add "but not prior to the *use*", since Husserl cannot provide a philosophically clarified account of the objectivity of his analyses *of* the sphere of ownness before explicating the sense 'other transcendental rational subject'. He must, rather, make use of that concept, supposing that the truth of his analysis is "there for everyone". That is, Husserl can account for the sphere of ownness prior to the analysis of the sense 'other transcendental rational subject', but cannot account for his *account*. This is consistent, since Husserl merely excludes from his *theme* the constitutional effects of other subjects. That does not imply that the objectivity of Husserl's analyses is not being taken for granted. Those effects simply are not discussed.

Thus, there is a nonvicious circularity in Husserl's clarification of the constitution of other subjects. He must make the philosophical presupposition that *if* other transcendental rational subjects exist, they can check his analyses and see that they are true, while simultaneously clarifying that presupposition. I say "nonvicious", since I take it to be obvious that one does not have to

suppose that one's analyses are untestable in order to clarify the concept 'testability' (and the related concept 'other transcendental rational subject').

We have some answers to the questions that we posed. We wanted to know what the reduction to the sphere of ownness and its correlate are. We have seen that the sphere of ownness is everything that can be considered as falling within the scope of one's actual and possible consciousness; and the so-called "reduction" to the sphere of ownness is simply a focus on transcendence$_1$ so that the transcendence$_2$ of the world and Husserl's analyses will come to the fore, which means that it is already yielded by the phenomenological reduction (PPH, p. 98). I say "already yielded by the phenomenological reduction", since one can account only for that which is within the scope of one's actual and possible consciousness if one does not introduce constitution by others. Since Husserl begins from an obstensibly "solipsistic" point of view post-phenomenological reduction, he does not introduce constitution by others *explicitly* prior to an analysis of the sense 'other subject'.[9]

Since the so-called "second epoché" is not a reduction at all, one may ask "What is the motive for the description of what can be considered as transcending$_1$ my consciousness?" David Carr has provided us with a partial answer: In order to put in relief the role and nature of transcendence$_2$. I think that there is another but unrelated motive, that of allowing Husserl to state the problems to be addressed in their correct hierarchical order. What is the evidence for this interpretation?

Husserl writes that he must delimit "transcendental solipsism" in order to set out the problems of transcendental intersubjectivity correctly (CM, pp. 30–31). Delimiting "transcendental soipsism", of course, is describing all and only that which transcends$_1$ one's consciousness. Further, Husserl closes his discussion of the sphere of ownness by indicating a hierarchy of problems to be addressed in paragraph 49. Husserl opens paragraph 50 by saying that the analysis of the sphere of ownness is "very important" immediately after setting out the problems. I suggest, then, that Husserl regarded the description of the sphere of ownness as important because it is necessary in order to state the problems of intersubjectivity in their correct order. Parallel passages in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* substantiate this interpretation (FTL, p. 240).

This interpretation cannot be persuasive, however, until I have made it clear just *how* the description of the sphere of ownness supposedly helps one set out the problems in a hierarchy. According to Husserl, the "ownness-reduction" allows us to distinguish what is "found*ing*" from what is "found*ed*", to discern that the world's being *for me* is a necessary condition for its being for *us*. And one must address the problem pertaining to the founding "level" of constitution before proceeding to the found*ed* set of problems (CM, p. 106). Thus, the first problem is "What is constituted solely by me?", whereas the second problem is "How do *I* constitute "another ego" (any ego whatsoever) as transcending$_1$ my consciousness?" The *third* problem, then, would be

"How do *we* (the other ego and I) make transcendence$_2$, and thus the objective world, possible?" The description of the sphere of ownness helps us to distinguish between the first and second questions to be addressed, clearly. Supposedly, it also helps us to differentiate between the second and third problems, too. For *I* constitute the other ego; and, as constituted by me, he is constituted only as transcending$_1$ my consciousness.

> What must be understood about this whole account is that, while the alter ego makes it possible that the 'rest' of the world exceeds my actual and possible consciousness, the alter ego does not *himself* exceed my actual and possible consciousness. That is, he is described in the Fifth Meditation in the same way that everything else was described before the problem of 'solipsism' was raised, namely, as transcendent only in the weaker sense: not reducible to the particular act or acts in which he is given to *me*. (PPH, p. 97)

That is, the delimitation of all and only that which transcends$_1$ my consciousness helps us to avoid the confused belief that we can account for the transcendence$_2$ of the alter ego while addressing the second question. We see that transcendence$_2$ (and thus the objective world and things in it) can be accounted for only after one brings co-constitutors into the philosophical picture. Thus, the delimitation of the sphere of ownness permits us to see that the response to the third question is at least a consequence of answering the second.[10]

The three questions that I distinguished correspond to the problems that Husserl presents in paragraph 49 of *Cartesian Meditations* (CM, pp. 106–8). There is a fourth problem, however; one that Husserl does not emphasize in *Cartesian Meditations*, but which is *the* problem as far as a clarification of phenomenology is concerned. It is a "higher" question, that of the constitution of a theoretical world.

> Among the higher questions are those concerning the constitution of what we may call a theoretical world: the world truly existing in the theoretical sense, or the world pertaining to an unconditionally and Objectively valid theoretical cognition. (FTL, p. 243)

This problem does not pertain simply to the objective world, but to any world that is constituted theoretically. This includes the provinces of mathematics, logic, and phenomenology, none of which is identical with intersubjective reality.

Let us clarify just how this is a higher-order question. A theoretical world is any world of which one can have objectively valid theoretical cognition, any world about which one can attain "objectively valid results". Husserl says that 'objectively valid results' means ". . . results that have been refined by mutual criticism and that now withstand every criticism" (CM, p. 5).[11] If *mutual* criticism could occur, then it must be possible for there to be other rational subjects. Since Husserl's first problem pertains to any other transcendental subject whatsoever (CM, p. 107), and since the extension of 'other transcendental rational subject' is smaller than that of 'other transcendental

subject', answering the first question about the existence of others for me is a prerequisite for showing how a theoretical world is constituted. The clarification of the constitution of a theoretical world emerges only with the analysis of the concept 'other transcendental rational subject'.

We frequently refer to objectively valid results as truths. In order for truths about the theoretical world to be possible, one must presuppose that the province of one's science exists (FTL, p. 199). *For* the scientist, then, there must exist a theoretical world to be explored. Otherwise, there would be no truths to be discovered; rather, they would be created, which is countersensical. This holds even for phenomenology. A phenomenologist necessarily supposes that his province (*ego-cogito-cogitatum*) exists in order to do phenomenology. This is not to suppose, of course, that the world (constituted in the natural standpoint) exists. So much for the sphere of ownness and the rationale behind it.

## II. Perception of Someone Else as "Mediated"

Let us turn to the analysis itself and examine Husserl's arguments. Husserl begins by arguing that the perception of someone else must be a "mediated" intentionality. His argument is as follows:

1) When I perceive someone else, I perceive him "in person".
2) But if I experienced the other ego, his appearances or subjective processes "originally", then the other subject and I would be identical.
3) Obviously, the other subject and I are not identical.
4) Therefore, although I perceive someone else "in person", I experience neither the other ego, nor his appearances, nor his subjective processes, originally. (CM, pp. 108–9)

Husserl refers back to premise 2, saying "The situation would be similar as regards his animate organism, if the latter were nothing else but the 'body' [*Körper*] that is a unity constituted purely in my actual and possible experiences . . ." (CM, p. 109). That statement is somewhat ambiguous. Husserl appears to be saying that

5) If I experienced the other's animate organism originally (i.e., if the other's *Leib* were nothing but a *Körper* that transcends$_1$ my consciousness), then the situation would be similar to that described in premise 2 (i.e., the "other's" *Leib* would be identical with my *Leib*).

If I have interpreted 5 correctly, then a couple of questions arise. Why does Husserl say "similar" (*ähnlich*) in the passage? That locution suggests that there is a difference between the other's ego and his animate organism (*Leib*), since the situation would be the same if the two were identical, rather than

merely similar. The same conclusion is suggested by the fact that Husserl discusses the other's *Leib* in a separate sentence, in a sentence that immediately follows the one in which Husserl talks about experiencing the alter ego originally. If it is true that Husserl is implicitly distinguishing between the other's ego and *Leib* (and thus between my ego and *Leib*), then it is fair to ask "What is the phenomenological evidence for that position?". It is not a plainly obvious truth, or one that is uncontroversial. Merleau-Ponty, for example, argues that the distinction between subject and object is blurred in one's body (the body being a *Leib–Körper*) and that one's body (considered as an animate organism) is one's subjectivity. Moreover, some Anglo-American philosophers have argued for mind–body identity.

Perhaps this is a misinterpretation, since Husserl believes that some objects are constituted (in part) by the sense of touch. Husserl's description of "my" animate organism (CM, p. 97) requires that one's body is not a mere object, but a constituting subject as well. The premise we are considering (5) appears to have something to do with Husserl's statements that only my body is an animate organism (*Leib*) within the sphere of ownness, and that every other subject *qua Leib* transcends$_2$ my consciousness and does not, accordingly, fall within the scope of my sphere of ownness. The other's *Leib* transcends$_2$ my consciousness because it *is* the other subject, or at least presupposes the notion 'alter ego'. But what does that have to do with what I experience "originally"?

A closer analysis of 2 should help clarify Husserl's thesis. Premise 2 appears to involve a confusion between having an experience and experiencing an experience. It is obviously true that if I have any experience belonging to something that is ostensibly not me, then that ostensible other is identical with me. But it is not an obvious truth that I cannot experience another's experience.

If Husserl has not conflated the distinction between having and experiencing an experience, then there must be some connection between what I experience originally (what is "directly accessible") and my sphere of ownness. I suggest that the connection is that Husserl is making use of a suppressed premise, namely:

6) Everything that I experience originally falls within the scope of my sphere of ownness (i.e., is reducible to my actual and possible consciousness of it).

If we suppose that 6 is a premise in Husserl's argument (cf., CM, p. 114), then we can explain 2 and 5. Since the other's ego, appearances and subjective processes transcend$_2$ my consciousness, they do not fall within the scope of my sphere of ownness and cannot (by 6) be experienced originally. If we interpret premise 2 in light of 6, then, premise 2 means

2*) If I experienced an ostensible other ego originally, then (by 6) it would fall within the scope of my sphere of ownness, and therefore not be another ego.

We can also reinterpret premise 5 in light of 6:

5*) If I experienced an ostensible other *Leib* originally, then (by 6) that "other" *Leib* would fall within the scope of my sphere of ownness and thus not be another animate organism.

If 5* is an accurate account of the corresponding part of Husserl's argument, then Husserl is basically restating a position that he took while describing the sphere of ownness, namely, that "I" am the sole animate organism in my sphere of ownness (CM, p. 97).

Now 6 is the only way I can make sense out of premises 2 and 5 and save Husserl from the objection that he has conflated the distinction between having and experiencing an experience, or at least has presented no evidence for those premises. But if we accept 6, we have a new problem when we learn that that which is experienced originally is that which is presented. This point emerges from Husserl's assertion that since I experience others "in person" and yet do not experience their subjectivities "originally", there must be appresentation in the experience of someone else (CM, p. 109). Here, then, that which is experience originally is contrasted with that which is appresented. Since that which is appresented is opposed to that which is presented, what I experience originally would be that which is presented.

But that which is presented is not coextensive with what falls within the scope of my sphere of ownness. My sphere of ownness includes all and only that which is within the scope of my actual *and potential* consciousness. That which is appresented at one time can be presented at another. Thus, if the sphere of ownness were identical with what is presented, then 'sphere of ownness' would have to mean 'whatever falls within the scope of my actual consciousness'. Obviously it does not.

But we must not leave out of consideration the important difference between appresentation of another subject and different sorts of appresentation. Seeing a physical object, for example, involves appresentation. I see this desk and yet see (strictly speaking) only its top. Since I take myself to see the desk (rather than the top), the other sides are appresented. Now the sort of appresentation that is an isolable aspect of seeing a physical object differs from appresentation of another subject in an important respect. In the case of this desk, I can move and see its other sides; but this kind of verification is excluded *a priori* in the case of experiencing another subject (CM, p. 109).

Since appresentation of another subject is a special case, it appears that we can retain the equation of that which is experienced originally with that which falls within the cope of my sphere of ownness. Husserl is *not* saying that that which is experienced originally is identical with that which is

presented generally. He is saying that what I experience originally is whatever is presented or presentable. This understanding of what Husserl means by 'what is experienced originally' or 'what is directly accessible' serves to exclude presentation of another's mental life while retaining premise 6.

However, treating appresentation of another's mental life as a special case by saying that another's mental life cannot be presented, is practically to restate premise 2. But the reader will recall that we began this line of interpretation in order to save Husserl from an important objection to premise 2, namely, that he either confused the distinction between having and experiencing an experience, or at least did not present evidence for saying that if I experienced "another" subject directly, "we" would be identical. We were looking for a principled way of connecting what I experience originally with my sphere of ownness *independently* of 2, such that Husserl would not be vulnerable to the objection just stated.

Of course, it is possible to understand premise 6 as a definition of 'what I experience originally'. Thus, we could take 'what I experience originally' to mean 'whatever is reducible to my actual and possible consciousness'. If we take 6 in this way, then (presentative) consciousness of other subjects (insofar as it introduces transcendence$_2$) is excluded and (it seems) we cannot criticize Husserl for offering no justification for 2 or 5. But Husserl uses his argument to justify the conclusion that the perception of another subject involves appresentation. So, there ought to be some principle about presentation and appresentation in general that allows Husserl to infer his conclusion. Instead, he appeals to a consequence of premise 2 in an apparently question-begging manner. The point of the objection is this: because Husserl asserts 2 as if it were an obvious truth, he *seems* to be supposing a quasi-Cartesian, private notion of consciousness. This is a possible explanation for the fact that Husserl discusses the other's *Leib* and consciousness separately. We require adequate criteria for distinguishing between that which is (or can be) presented and that which is (and must be) appresented so that we can determine on principled grounds whether Husserl is entitled to 2 and 5. What, after all, does Husserl mean by 'presentation (or original experience) of another subject' and why is that impossible? Let us try to defend Husserl against this objection.

We can clarify Husserl's thesis by contrasting the experience of *my* ego (which is purportedly "original") with the experience of any other ego (which is and must be "nonoriginal"). A passage in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* that parallels what we are discussing is an important clue as to what Husserl means by 'original experience'.

> Experience is what tells me here: I have experience of myself with primary originality; of others, of another's psychic life, with a merely secondary originality, since another's psychic life is essentially inaccessible to me in direct perception. (FTL, p. 223)

Clearly, Husserl is equating experience with primary originality (or original experience) and direct perception. So Husserl's thesis is that if I directly perceived an ostensible other, "we" would be identical.

Unfortunately, the substitution of 'direct perception' for 'original experience' does not solve our problem, since we must now clarify 'direct perception'. Husserl does discuss perception of myself:

> When I am effecting transcendental reduction and reflecting on myself, the transcendental ego, I am given to myself perceptually as this ego – in a grasping perception. Furthermore I become aware that, although not grasped before this perception, I was 'already given', *already there for myself continually as an object of original intuition (as perceived in the broader sense).* (CM, p. 101, last emphasis mine)

'Perceived in the broader sense' is identified with 'original self-experience' (or 'direct perception') in the passage just cited. What, then, is this continuous self-consciousness that I cannot have of any other consciousness?

It is the same as what Sartre calls "pre-reflective self-consciousness", the kind of consciousness that makes it possible for any individual to know the way in which he is/was aware of an object. Because I am pre-reflectively aware of not only this table, paper, pen, etc., but of my perceiving of them as well, I can recognize these facts reflectively. This pre-reflective self-consciousness does not guarantee knowledge of one's mode of consciousness. It is a necessary, rather than sufficient, condition for such knowledge. Pre-reflective self-consciousness (which is perceptual) is consciousness of the "living present". "Since it goes on in the living present, self-explication can find, strictly perceptively, only what is going on in the living present" (CM, p. 102). 'Original self-consciousness', then, means 'continuous pre-reflective self-consciousness'. Now any conscious being is necessarily conscious of himself in this way. Obviously, I cannot be conscious of any other subject in this way. I cannot necessarily have continuous pre-reflective consciousness of another's *Leib* as the "absolute here", as the "zero point" of perceptual experience. That is not the continuous self-consciousness that I necessarily exist *qua* consciousness. My consciousness of another subject as the zero point of his perceptions is occasioned by my perception of him, and is anything but continuous. When I perceive another subject and identify him as the zero point of *his* perceptions, I am simultaneously conscious of myself as that around which my perceptual experience is organized. If I necessarily were conscious of both my and the other's *Leib* as that around which perceptual experience is organized, then I would *have to be* conscious of the other *Leib* at all times when I am awake or (what amounts to the same thing) those zero points would have to be identical. Therefore, there is evidence for 2 and 5. We have thus defended Husserl against the objections raised against his argument.

Husserl's position, then, is that a person has privileged access to his own consciousness, which is to say that only the subject can be conscious of his own consciousness in the way that he is. Husserl's conclusion is that the perception of any other subject involves apperception. One apperceives $x$ when one does not (directly) perceive $x$, but takes $x$ to be there, too. Whereas the apperceived other side of a physical object can be perceived, another subject cannot be (directly) perceived.

This argument, at least, survived the attempts to criticize it. But let us consider Husserl's second major argument.

## III. The Role of One's Own Consciousness in Apperception of Someone Else

Let us return to Husserl's argument. We have seen that perception of another subject involves apperception. Only one's own consciousness is given to oneself originally; every other consciousness is given appresentationally. At this point in the argument, Husserl introduces an important premise:

> How can appresentation of another original sphere, and thereby the sense 'someone else', be motivated in my original sphere and, in fact, motivated as experience – as the word 'appresentation' (making intended as co-present) already indicates? Not every non-originary making present can do that. *A non-originary making present can do it only in combination with an originary presentation, an itself-giving proper; and only as demanded by the originary presentation can it have the character of appresentation* – somewhat as, in the case of experiencing a physical thing, what is there perceptually motivates belief in something else being there too. (CM, pp. 109–10, emphasis mine)

Let us add a couple of premises that we have already mentioned to the argument:

7) One's consciousness of another subject is appresentative.
8) Only one's own consciousness is presented.

Whereas 7 is a consequence of 2, 8 may be regarded as a presupposition of it. Now let us add the premise that is stated in the quotation just cited:

9) All appresentation necessarily involves (past or present) presentation, and only as motivated by what is presented is there appresentation.

We can see that an ostensible consequence of 7–9 is:

10) One's consciousness of another subject *as* another subject must be derived from one's own case.

It is no surprise to find this conclusion in the text:

> Since, in this Nature and this world, my animate organism is the only body that is or *can be* constituted *originally* as an animate organism . . . the body over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as an animate organism, *must* have derived this sense by an *apperceptive transfer from my animate organism*, and done so in a manner that excludes an actually direct and hence primordial, showing of the predicates belonging to an animate organism, specifically, a showing of them in perception proper. (CM, pp. 110–11, all but last emphasis is mine)

I believe that Husserl's conclusion is false. The thesis that one's identification of someone as another subject must be "derived" from one's own case is simply not borne out by the evidence. Let anyone consult his experience. Does one find, even upon close analysis, that one bases one's identification of another subject on one's own case? Does some sort of "transfer" from one's own consciousness take place? I submit that the answer to both of these questions is "no".

Sartre's accurate descriptions of the experience of others is the best evidence against Husserl's conclusion. Suppose that I see a man sitting on a park bench. If I identified him as merely a thing, I would identify him as having only objective properties and relations, such as weighing a certain amount, being a certain distance from a nearby tree, etc. When I identify him as a man, however, I identify him as fundamentally different from things. I identify things as organized *around him*, as oriented from his point of view.[12] Objects "converge" around him. True, all of this is *for me*. That, however, is a fact that I discover upon reflection. One does not find any "transfer" from one's own consciousness, for when I identify someone as a man, as someone around whom objects are organized, I take myself as an actual or possible object *for him* (BN, pp. 344–45). I consider the identification of another subject as someone for whom I am or can be an intentional object an isolable aspect of ordinary perception of another subject. Unlike Sartre, however, I do not infer that perception of another subject is consciousness of him as an object (where "object" is opposed to "subject", as Sartre interprets it).

The point is to show that my perception of someone as another subject does not involve any "transfer" from my own case. When I identify another subject as someone for whom I am (or can be) an object, I am not "transferring" from my own case since, if I did, I would be identifying myself as an object. Further, I would be aware of this fact upon reflection. But I do not identify myself as an object. I identify the *other* subject as a subject for whom I am or can be an intentional object, which is not quite the same as identifying myself as an object. I identify *him* as the basis for the identification of me.

It may be objected that one is an object for himself in reflection; after all, one reflects on one's conscious life when one does phenomenology. So, it is not correct to suggest that one cannot be an object for oneself. My reply is that I did not suggest that one cannot be an object for oneself. I am saying, rather, that one usually *is* not an object for oneself when one perceives someone else. After all, one must reflect on one's own consciousness to be conscious of oneself as an object. The preceding objection invites us to conflate reflective consciousness of oneself with pre-reflective consciousness of someone else. When one perceives someone else, one is usually not reflectively conscious of oneself. Yet one pre-reflectively identifies another subject as someone for whom one is or can be an intentional object. Pre-reflectively, one is non-positionally conscious of a consciousness that one subsequently (upon reflection) identifies as one's own. But if Husserl's position were correct, there

would have to be pre-reflective and yet positional consciousness of consciousness whenever one perceives someone else. Thus, the identification of someone as another subject does not involve any "transfer" from one's own case.

Of course, Husserl insists that the "transfer" from one's own case is not reflective. Husserl carefully distinguishes between "analogizing apperception" and "inference from analogy" (CM, p. 111). But it seems to me that if one's apperceptive consciousness involves a "transfer" from one's own case, then phenomenological reflection on that experience would bear out Husserl's claim.

I suggest that Husserl allows his reflection on the experience of another subject to distort his description of the phenomenon. This is the same criticism that Sartre made of Husserl on another matter, whether transcendental consciousness is a transcendental *ego*. I shall summarize Sartre's argument before turning to the point at issue. Sartre points out that philosophers who contend that a transcendental consciousness is a transcendental ego base the thesis on reflective experiences.[13] Whenever one reflects on one's own consciousness, the experiences appear as one's own. Defenders of the thesis that there is a transcendental ego maintain that an *I* appears. But they have thereby conflated the distinction between the reflect*ing* consciousness and the consciousness reflected *upon*. The reflect*ing* consciousness does not take itself as an object; the cogito concerns solely the consciousness reflected upon (TE, p. 44). Since Husserl takes the consciousness reflected upon to be identical with the reflecting consciousness, Husserl has mistaken a product of distorting reflection for the original, pre-reflective phenomena. In all strictness, Husserl should have said that a me, rather than an I, appears upon reflection. The ego is an object for consciousness; thus, the word for this phenomenon should be in the accusative, rather than the nominative case.

Sartre does not rest his entire case on this abstract argument. He turns to a representative example and describes it carefully. Suppose that I am reading and want to describe adequately that pre-reflective mode of consciousness. Should we describe it as "I am reading the book?" No. "There is no doubt about the result: while I was reading, there was consciousness of the book, of the heroes of the novel, but the I was not inhabiting this consciousness" (TE, pp. 46–47). Although one would answer "I am reading" to the question "What are you doing?", that is not an accurate description of what is there for consciousness while one was immersed in the book. Suppose that I am pursuing a streetcar. I am conscious of the streetcar-to-be-overtaken, rather than of myself running after the streetcar (TE, pp. 48–49).

Now what does this have to do with the consciousness of another subject? Can a similar description be made of ordinary consciousness of another subject? I believe so. The description is complicated by the fact that to identify someone as another subject is to identify him as someone for whom one is or can be an intentional object. That fact appears to support Husserl. But let us look more closely. I step off the elevator and see Smith walking this way. I do not see myself; I do not, in particular, find myself as a source from which a

appresentative transfer takes place. I see Smith walking this way – period. Of course, the use of the phrase 'this way' indicates my body as the zero point of the perception that I, upon *reflection*, identify as mine. But this point is not sufficient to derive Husserl's conclusion. For I may say that the pack of cigarettes is to the right. 'To the right' points, once agin, to my body's position (or, more precisely, my body as *Leib*, as that around which my experience is organized). 'To the right' is the same kind of phrase as 'this way'. Yet there is no apperceptive transfer from my own case, for the simple reason that I do not identify the pack of cigarettes as another subject.

We must analyze ordinary perception of another subject more closely. We can approach this problem indirectly by criticizing Husserl's argument. Since I have been arguing against the conclusion of Husserl's argument (premise 10), it is incumbent upon me to show that either at least one of the premises is false, or that the argument is invalid.

I think that premise 9 is suspect. It is necessary to clarify the key term 'motivated' (and its grammatical cognates) in order to criticize it on solid grounds. Laws of motivation are similar to causal laws, except that motivation pertains to the relationships that obtain between consciousness and its intended object, whereas causal laws have to do with regular connections between things. I believe that Husserl is wise to choose another word to talk about those relationships between consciousness and its intended object, since talk of causality is in the natural (sometimes the naturalistic) attitude, where the presupposition of the existence of both cause and effect is in play. Moreover, causal talk precludes any talk about transcendental consciousness, as both cause and effect are identified as "in" the world. Clearly, Husserl does not want his discussion of motivation to be conflated with naturalistic talk about two (or more) things.

Consider, for example, perceiving a physical object. My perception of this side of (say) this desk motivated me to take the other sides to be there, too. There is an ordinary word for Husserl's topic, namely, 'prompts'. We say that my perception of this side of the desk prompts me to take the other sides to be there. 'Motive', on the other hand, suggests a reason of explanation, as in 'He is motivated by greed.' Now Husserl says that I am motivated to appresent content $x$ only on the basis of the presentation of $y$. For example, I believe that the unseen sides of this desk are present, too, only because I perceive this side; and if I had not perceived this side (or, some side), I would not take the unseen content to be there, too.

Now that we understand the meaning of 9, we can evaluate Husserl's argument. Since Husserl concludes that my appresentative consciousness must be derived from my own case, it is clear that 9 must be interpreted as follows:

9*) All appresentation of something of the kind $x$ necessarily involves (past or present) presentation of *the same sort* of intentional object, and only as motivated by presentation of the latter is there appresentation of the former.

In short, Husserl is saying that appresentation of any kind of intentional object must be based upon presentation of the same sort of intentional object. Only with 9* can Husserl conclude that my pre-reflective acquaintance with my consciousness is a precondition for identifying something as another consciousness. For if one's appresentative consciousness of another subject is or can be based on the presentation of something other than a consciousness, then Husserl is not entitled to infer that one's identification of another subject must be based upon one's pre-reflective acquaintance with one's own consciousness.

Now the question is "Is (or can) the appresentative consciousness of another subject (be) based on the presentation of something other than a consciousness?" Upon what basis do I identify, say, Smith as a person? I identify him as a person on the basis of my perception of his body, movements, voice, etc. One simply finds no "transfer" from one's own case, provided that one is careful not to confuse what is experienced pre-reflectively with the products of reflection. I do not mistake my glasses for a person because they do not look, sound, or feel like one. Premise 9*, in short, is false. One's identification of something as another subject is based on the presentation of something other than one's own consciousness. Sheer analysis and description simply do not bear out Husserl's position. No I appears in pre-reflective consciousness of another subject. We see the rationale behind raising Sartre's criticisms of the transcendental ego theory. Husserl's theory that one transfers from one's own case requires the same kind of descriptive mistake that Sartre discusses.

## IV. Concluding Remarks

Though much more can be said about Husserl's fifth meditation, I have considered some of the most important parts in sufficient detail to be able to address the question with which I opened this paper, namely, "Is Husserl's fifth meditation an acceptable prelude to his analysis of phenomenology itself?"

It should be clear that I think the answer is "no". In the first place, the discussion of the so-called "reduction" to the sphere of ownness is misconceived as well as confused. It is confused, for the "reduction" to the sphere of ownness is not another phenomenological reduction at all. Rather, Husserl merely delimits a particular subject matter for discussion when he misleadingly refers to a "second epoché". The discussion of the "second reduction" is misconceived, too, insofar as it is supposed to make us see the hierarchy of problems that is connected with the descriptive analysis of the perception of someone else. For there is a difficulty with the very set of problems that Husserl distinguishes.

The so-called "reduction" to the sphere of ownness ostensibly allows us to see that the following three problems are arranged in a hierarchy: (1) What is

constituted solely by me? (2) How do I constitute another ego as transcending$_1$ my consciousness? and (3) How do we (the other ego and I) make transcendence$_2$, and thus the objective world, possible? The difficulty is with problem 3, since it presupposes that another ego who merely transcends$_1$ my consciousness can be a co-constitutor of the world.

That presupposition is false. In order to make the transcendence$_2$ of everything but himself possible, the other ego must be someone for whom the world is, as Husserl says, "there, too". If I identify the alter ego as someone who constitutes the world along with me, I have identified things as being for him even if he is not for me, actually or possibly. In short, the alter ego must transcend$_2$ my consciousness in order to be a co-constitutor of the objective world.

A simple thought experiment shows this. My death would amount to the cessation of my actual and possible consciousness; yet that *can* be true while things continue to be for another constituting subject. If that could not be true, the subject simply could not be someone for whom the world is "there, too".

If the alter ego must transcend$_2$ one's consciousness in order to co-constitute the world, then Husserl cannot account for the transcendence$_2$ of the world in terms of an alter ego that merely transcends$_1$. This is not to mention the intersubjective identifiability and testability of the assertions that comprise Husserl's analysis. This means that it is necessary to recognize the primacy of intersubjectivity in phenomenology, a primacy that Husserl does not recognize in his hierarchy of problems. In order to account for the transcendence$_2$ of things, the transcendence$_2$ of another possible subject must be presupposed. It cannot be derived from more primitive concepts. The primacy of intersubjectivity does not preclude a phenomenological analysis of the sense 'other subject'. It precludes only Husserl's particular approach to the analysis.

When this is conjoined with the descriptive error I discussed earlier, it becomes clear that Husserl's fifth meditation is not an acceptable prelude to his clarifications of his own enterprise.

Yet there is much to be learned from Husserl about the philosophical problem of intersubjectivity. Husserl had, I think, a clear insight into many of the conceptual connections between intersubjectivity and phenomenology (see HPI). Moreover, some of his descriptions, even in *Cartesian Meditations*, are not entirely in keeping with the descriptive mistake that I criticized. Even in *Cartesian Meditations* Husserl writes of the identification and reidentification of another subject in terms of behavior (CM, p. 114). Husserl's discussion of the perception of a mannequin in *Experience and Judgment* can be modified slightly in order to illuminate the perception of other subjects.[14] Husserl's clarification of internal time-consciousness would play a role in a solution, too. It seems that some of Husserl's insights, along with modifications and supplements (which would include taking into account what some other writers have noticed), could be used to work out a quasi-Husserlian solution to the problem of intersubjectivity.[15]

NOTES

1. Peter Hutcheson, "Husserl's Problem of Intersubjectivity", *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 11, no. 2 (May 1980):144–62. Hereafter: HPI.
2. Husserl himself invites us to interpret *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and *Cartesian Meditations* in connection with each other. See Lester Embree, ed., *Life-World and Consciousness* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), p. xv.
3. David Carr, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 85. Hereafter: PPH.
4. Paul Ricoeur, *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology*, trans. E.G. Ballard and Lester Embree (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 118. Hereafter: AHP.
5. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 95. Hereafter: CM.
6. Frederick Elliston, "Husserl's Phenomenology of Empathy", in F. Elliston and P. McCormick, eds., *Husserl: Expositions and Appraisals* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), p. 218. Hereafter: H:E&A.
7. The reader will note that I rejected Ricoeur's interpretation only on the condition that the "second reduction" is genuine.
8. Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), pp. 237–44. Hereafter: FTL.
9. I say "*ostensibly* solipsistic", since I argued that there is no principle whereby one can distinguish between a solipsistic and an intersubjective stage of phenomenology in "Solipsistic and Intersubjective Phenomenology", *Human Studies* 4, no. 2 (1981): 165–78. Husserl's talk of a "solipsistic" stage of phenomenology can be construed only as a name of a discussion of a certain subject matter. Otherwise, there are unanswerable objections to what Husserl says.
10. At this point I am merely explicating Husserl's rationale. Below I reject Husserl's ordering of problems.
11. Although Husserl says "*have been* refined by mutual criticism", that is a mistake. If objective results required *actual* mutual criticism, then the assertion that some results are objective would involve commitment to the existence of others, which means that there could be no objectively valid results in phenomenology, for Husserl's phenomenology begins and ends with neutrality on existential questions. In order to allow for the possibility of such results in phenomenology, then, 'objectively valid results' must be defined as 'results which could be refined by mutual criticism and which would withstand all criticisms if there were others'.
12. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), p. 343. Hereafter: BN.
13. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego*, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: Noonday Press, 1957), p. 44. Hereafter: TE.
14. Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, trans. James Churchill and Karl Ameriks (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 91–96. I say "can be modified slightly", since Husserl is trying to show that logical concepts have a perceptual basis in the passage, rather than making a point about the perception of other subjects.
15. I am indebted to David Carr and J.N. Mohanty for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.