Doing Unto Others:

A Phenomenological Search for the Ground of Ethics

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Hume is famous for having said that you cannot derive an 'ought' from an 'is.' But this leads to a puzzle. If you cannot get 'ought' from 'is' then where does the 'ought' come from? To say that it is societally conditioned doesn't resolve the dilemma. Society might condition the particular things ought is applied to, but the concept of 'ought' itself must be already present, already meaningful, in order for it to be applied to anything at all. Whence comes this concept? If it can't be derived from what is, where can it be derived from?

Perhaps we can gain some insight by asking why 'ought' *cannot* be derived from 'is.' This has to do with the presumed value-neutral quality of the 'is.' It is impossible to come to the conclusion that something has value from facts which are all value-neutral, for the simple reason that one cannot validly introduce into the conclusion of an argument anything that was not already implicit in the premises. If you do not begin with a value statement you cannot conclude with one. If all that exist are value-neutral facts then it is impossible to arrive at a value-laden imperative.

Kant attempted to derive the categorical imperative – that one ought to behave toward others in such a manner that the maxim of one's action can be made a universal law – from an ideal of rational consistency. To act in such a manner that the *intent* of one's action would fail if everyone acted accordingly would be inconsistent with the universality of reason. Thus, one ought always to behave in such a manner that the principle underlying one's own action can be universalized.

But why *ought* one always to behave in accordance with a universalized reason – especially if one can show that to behave otherwise in a particular circumstance can gain one an advantage? Kant here has the same problem that Hume noted. He would need to show the value of rationality itself in order to support his claim. But if he defended the value of rationality on any

other grounds than itself, say on utilitarian grounds, his entire ethic would be subverted. He must say – and does – that rationality, as such, is intrinsically valuable in itself, regardless of its utilitarian function. But how can a claim to intrinsic value be supported? It cannot be supported by argumentation, for this would entail subordinating it to another value from which it might be derived – but then it would not be intrinsic. Intrinsic value can only be pointed to.

This leads us to phenomenology. Phenomenology is that discipline which proceeds through 'just looking,' and then working out the implications of what is seen. The 'just' in the phrase 'just looking' is not to be dismissed, for it is critical. In phenomenological investigation one endeavors to '*just* look' without making any presuppositions, even those concerning the independent existence of what is looked at. Through such presupposiontionless looking one endeavors to reduce one's experience of the world to just what appears – the basis upon which all that we subsequently suppose about the world must be founded. Thus, through phenomenological investigation one aims to experience the evidentiary *ground* of all knowledge.

Can we find a legitimate basis for ethical imperatives through just looking at the phenomena that appear to us? That is the question of this paper. As ethical imperatives pertain to our relation to others, the first thing we will need to consider is how others themselves are revealed to us. To do this we will consider Husserl's treatment of the constitution of the other as presented in his fifth *Cartesian Meditation*. Then we will ask whether we can find a ground for ethical life on the basis of how the other is manifest.

Solus Ipse

Husserl begins by noting that some may think that the phenomenological reduction will lead inevitably to what he calls a 'transcendental solipsism' (CM 88). Through the phenomenological reduction we restrict ourselves to a consideration of only those phenomena that appear. But the subjectivity of others, by the very fact of their otherness, does not and cannot appear. "Transcendental reduction," writes Husserl, "restricts me to the stream of my pure conscious processes and the unities constituted by their actualities and potentialities. And it seems obvious

that such unities are inseparable from my ego and therefore belong to his concreteness itself" (CM 88). If these unities are inseparable from my ego, then how can I become aware of a unity (the other) that is distinct from my ego? The other, presumably, is also a 'stream of pure conscious processes' which, if they were to appear to me as such, would be, insofar as they appear to *me*, indistinguishable from *my* conscious processes. In other words, I cannot have immediate knowledge of the other's subjectivity, as I do my own, without *being* that subjectivity, as I am my own. But in that case the other would cease to be *other*. We would meld into one.

It follows that the other *qua* other cannot be known to me in any immediate way. The other's subjectivity, as such, can never be a phenomenon for me. This leads to a problem for phenomenology itself. The claim of Husserlian phenomenology is that the entire edifice of what we legitimately believe can ultimately be explained through reference to what is immediately given. This claim is necessary if phenomenology is to serve as the primordial foundation of knowledge, as Husserl wishes. But the other's otherness, by the very fact that it is other, can never be immediately given. How, then, do we come to be aware of it? This is the problem Husserl sets out to solve in the fifth Meditation.

Reduction to Ownness

To do so he begins by restricting awareness to only that which can be said to be known immediately, the phenomena that appear within the sphere of my 'peculiar ownness,' without any presupposition as to their existence in themselves or for others. From this stance we can then ask the question, "*How* can my ego, within his peculiar ownness, constitute under the name 'experience of something other,' precisely something *other*..." (CM 94). That is, how do we come to see the world as existing in its own right apart from our experience of it, when our only immediate knowledge of it is through such experience? How can otherness be manifest in that which is immediate?

When we have reduced ourselves to the sphere of ownness, not only does the existence of other subjectivities become questionable, but the entire objective world is called into question.

How do we come to regard *anything* as existing outside of our experience of it? The question is not *whether* an independent world exists – this is a fundamental assumption Husserl's phenomenology is not out to challenge – but *how* we come to be aware that one does. How can otherness show up when all 'showing up' is immediate? Only when we discern *how* we come to know the other can we determine whether or not, in the very way in which we know the other, there is an ethical implication.

The Body

One of the first things I note when I have reduced the world of my experience to the sphere of my peculiar ownness, is that, of all objects that appear to me in experience, my own body is unique. It is "the sole Object within my abstract world-stratum to which, in accordance with experience, I ascribe *fields of sensation*...the only Object in which I *'rule and govern' immediately*..." (CM 97). The moment I recognize that I am *embodied* in a spatio-temporal form, and that my body, thereby, exists in relation to other objects that are not my body, I am able to see myself as physically related to a world of objects 'outside of me' (my body). But this leads to a paradox. On the one hand, I am a member of a world full of objects that appear outside of me, but on the other hand, this very world, including my membership in it, is constituted by me, within the sphere of my ownness. Thus, there is the 'I' (human ego) who looks at the world of objects that it views as other than it, and there is the 'I' (transcendental ego) *in whom* both the human ego and the world of 'otherness' appear to consciousness. The first is seen as a member of a world that transcends it all about, and the second has this world, in a sense, *within it*, as its intended object.

Otherness

The transcendental ego, thus, constitutes both my human ego and the world to which it is related, but in doing this establishes a division between the two. There is that which pertains specifically to my embodied human ego, that which I call *I*, and there is that to which my human

ego is related, that which, to the extent that it does not belong to that which I call *I*, is seen as *other*. Thus, the transcendental ego divides its experience into two spheres: self and other. But, says Husserl, "every *consciousness of* what is other, every mode of appearance *of* it, belongs in the former sphere" (CM 100). The *consciousness of* what is other is thus distinguished from the actual being of the other; the former belonging to the sphere of ownness and the latter to the sphere of otherness. Thus, there need be no *immediate* experience of the otherness of the other in order for both spheres to be constituted by the transcendental ego *through* its immediate experience. It is the consciousness of the other, which itself is not other, that leads to the sense of the other's otherness. Thus we never have to leave the sphere of immediate experience to understand how, within that sphere itself, otherness might be constituted.

But, according to Husserl, the self/other distinction created by the transcendental ego to account for the difference between one's experience of one's own body and one's experience of that which lies outside one's body is *not* the basis upon which the real transcendence of the world can be inferred. The body/other division only gives us the distinction between the *human* ego and its world of 'other' objects. Both of these, however, are given *within* the transcendental ego. In a sense, we have shown how the unreflective person might rid herself of solipsism, but we have yet to show how the phenomenological philosopher can. If we are to escape '*transcendental* solipsism,' then, we must have some basis for supposing that the transcendental ego is itself confronted with an other. This we can only recognize in the experience of other subjects who, because their subjectivity is fundamentally hidden from us, must fall outside the sphere of the transcendental ego itself. Husserl contends that the recognition of the otherness of objects (their otherness to the *transcendental* ego) is ultimately mediated for us by this prior recognition of the otherness of persons for whom those objects must also exist. It is only because I recognize that worldly objects also exist for other persons that I must finally recognize them as separate existents that transcend my private experience. The question we are led to, then, is how do we come to experience the otherness of the other person.

Appresentation

The problem we must overcome, as we have said, is that the subjectivity of the other person is never immediately available to me. "If it were," writes Husserl, "if what belongs to the other's own essence were directly accessible, it would be merely a moment of my own essence, and ultimately he himself and I myself would be the same" (CM 109). We must, thus, experience the other's subjectivity, which can never be directly presented to us, through what Husserl calls an 'appresentation.' That is to say, along with experiencing the other's body, we must experience as 'there too,' but hidden from our gaze, the other's subjectivity.

Appresentation is something that occurs in our experience of objects as well. We can never see all six sides of a three dimensional object at once. Immediate looking always presents us with one side or another; we see the object only in perspectives and profiles – never in its wholeness. Yet when we casually look at an object we are not aware of seeing only fragmentary perspectives – we do indeed experience the object as a whole. The desk, although I see it only in profile, is nevertheless experienced as a whole desk and not as a mere collection of profiles. Our ability to experience the object as a whole is a result of an *appresentation* of the hidden sides of the object as we look at one of its sides: "[T]he strictly seen front of a physical thing always and necessarily appresents a rear aspect and prescribes for it a more or less determinate content" (CM 109). Thus, although we see only one side of the object, we anticipate (*qua* appresentation) its other sides as well, and this permits us to synthesize the object as a unitary whole. The result is that our experience is not of a world of miscellaneous perspectives, but of self-integrated and interrelated objects.

Analogously, says Husserl, when we look at another person, the always hidden 'inside' of that person, his or her subjectivity, is appresented to us along with the person's outward appearance. But the appresentation of the person's subjectivity presents a problem that we don't encounter with the object. In the case of the physical object, what is appresented is always subject to verification through direct perception, and has in fact been verified for us time and again in the

course of past experience with that object or objects like it. We can anticipate what the hidden sides of the object will look like because we have seen them before, and we can have confidence in what is appresented to us because we can always turn the object around and verify whether or not it is the way we anticipate. In the case of a physical object, the content of the appresentation comes from prior experiences with the object itself.

But no matter how we orient ourselves to the human 'object' we can never make its subjectivity appear. No prior experience has disclosed this subjectivity directly so that we can now apperceive it in the present case. From where, then, do we get the idea of the other's subjectivity? What is it, precisely, that is appresented to us when we apprehend this subjectivity? It cannot be a *prior* experience of this subjectivity, for that has never been and could never have been presented to us. There must be something in the sphere of *our* ownness that we attribute to the other, thereby providing the content for what is appresented: "*The perception that functions as the underlying basis* [of the appresentation]," writes Husserl, "is offered us by our *perception of the primordially reduced world*, with its previously described articulation – a perception going on continually within the general bounds of the ego's incessant self-perception" (CM 110).

In other words, what we attribute to the other is something of our experience of ourselves.

Pairing

This occurs, according to Husserl, through what he calls 'pairing': "In a *pairing association* the characteristic feature is that, in the most primitive case, two data are given intuitionally...in the unity of a consciousness and that, on this basis...they found phenomenologically a unity of similarity and thus are always constituted precisely as a pair" (CM 112). In a pairing association what is directly perceived in the one object can serve as the basis for what is *apperceived* in the other. The two data are associated with one another through their similarity, and this allows the one to be constituted through an apperception of what was originally perceived in the other. In the case of myself and the other, the two data that are paired are our respective bodies.

When I perceive the body of another, and recognize it as similar to mine in its form and behavior, a phenomenological pairing takes place, in which what is directly perceived as belonging to the body I have the greater access to (my own) is apperceived as belonging to the other body as well. Thus, as I am aware that my body is that of an animate organism, having a psychic life consisting of a stream of subjective experiences, so I *apperceive* that the other is also an animate organism having a similar subjective life. My apperception of the other as a subject is a result of my direct awareness of myself as one. In a sense, then, I apperceive myself in the other.

Of course, I do not imagine that the other is simply another 'me' inhabiting a separate body. I am aware that unlike the 'me' that I have direct access to, I have only indirect access to the 'me' of the other – and this indirect access confirms the other in his or her otherness. The other is, precisely, *not* me just insofar as I do not have direct access to the other's subjectivity as I do my own. Furthermore, the other's body, though similar to mine, is different from mine both in its physical appearance, and more importantly, in its actions. The other does not behave as I determine but as it determines, thus it is clear that the other is not simply me. I notice, though, that the other behaves *as I might* were I experiencing such and such a feeling or motivation. Thus, I am able to apperceive the other's subjectivity at any particular moment just insofar as I have had experiences that have led to behavior on my part that is similar to the behavior the other is exhibiting. In this way, I know the other through my knowledge of myself.

A criticism that might be leveled against Husserl here is that I most often see the other, not in terms of what my subjectivity would be were I behaving like the other, but in terms of how the other's behavior is affecting me – thus I may see the other as angry or loving, not because I associate my own experiences of feeling angry or loving with the other's behavior, but because the other's behavior makes me *feel* threatened or loved. This would imply a primordial apprehension of the other as, precisely, an other that affects me, experienced without the

intermediary of any pairing association. In this case, I do not attribute, by analogy, my own subjective states to the other, but I have an immediate experience of the other in terms of the subjective states the other produces within me. For Sartre, indeed, this is the primary way in which the other is manifest. He maintains that we have just such an apprehension of the other when we experience ourselves as caught in the other's gaze.

It is, of course, possible that both these positions are correct, and represent different modes of access to the other. I can have an immediate awareness of the other as affecting me and/or a mediate awareness of the other as he or she actually is in his or her own subjectivity, by analogy with myself. Indeed, the phenomenology of each of these ways of experiencing the other may be quite distinct, and the final impression I have of the other may result from how I balance these two. We will return to this point when we consider the ethical implications of our way of apprehending the other.

The Ground of Value

We are now in a position to consider some of the ethical questions we began with. Before we can tackle the domain of ethical value, however, we must attempt to get clear on the ground of value itself. Where does *value* come from? Is it manifest in the private sphere of my own experience and, if so, how? In *Ideas 2* Husserl speaks of the perception of immediate and mediate value in the experience of a violin:

> To begin with, the world is, in its *core*, a world appearing to the senses and characterized as "on hand," a world given in straightforward empirical intuitions and perhaps grasped actively. The Ego then finds itself related to this empirical world in new acts, e.g., in acts of valuing or in acts of pleasure and displeasure. In these acts, the object is brought to consciousness as valuable, pleasant, beautiful, etc., and indeed this happens in various ways; e.g., in original givenness. In that case, there is built, upon the substratum of mere intuitive representing, an evaluating which, if we presuppose it, plays, in the immediacy of its lively motivation, the role of a value-'perception' (in our terms, a value reception) in which the value character itself is given in original intuition. When I hear the tone of a violin, the pleasantness and beauty are given originarily if the tone moves my feelings originally and in a lively manner...and similarly is given the mediate value of the violin as producing such a tone. (I2 196)

I quote this passage at length because it allows us to bring up a number of important points. To begin with, Husserl seems to regard value as something of an overlay upon originally 'straightforward' (and presumably value-neutral) empirical intuitions, as if first of all we are aware of things as sensory objects and only later do we note their having value. With this I would disagree. It is easy to see how Husserl might arrive at this conclusion while engaged in what he regards as the *scientific* pursuit of phenomenological investigation, for the scientific attitude itself presupposes a certain practical disengagement from the phenomena as they appear. But I think that Heidegger gets it more right when he says that our original perception of things, when we are not being self-consciously scientific, is in terms of their 'readiness-to-hand,' i.e., their utility and function – in a word, their 'value.' What makes a desk a desk, for instance, is not its shape, size, or color – for all these are variable. It is the use to which we put it. Thus a table can become a desk and a desk a table without any change to the empirical object. We merely need change its function. This implies that the identity of objects, as we experience them, has more to do with their value than with their empirical form. *First of all*, we constitute the objects of the world in terms of that in us which *values*, and only later, through abstraction, might we come to regard them as mere empirical objects – what Heidegger calls 'present-at-hand.' We are, originally and primordially, *valuing beings*.

But Husserl makes an important distinction when he speaks of the immediate value of the violin's tone, which is experienced as pleasant or beautiful, and the mediate value of the violin itself, which has value only insofar as it produces such beautiful tones. Let us call the value of the violin itself 'secondary value,' and the value of the tone 'primary value.' Things of secondary value have value only insofar as they conduce to something of primary value. The tone, we say, has primary value. But to be more precise, it is not the tone itself that has primary value, but the hearing of the tone, with all the emotional and mental resonances entailed in this hearing. I do not merely hear but *feel* the tone. It produces a multi-faceted sensation of pleasure – emotionally, sensually, and mentally. These feelings are not mere perceptions of something 'other,' as is my visual perception of the violin. These feelings are qualifications of me myself. They are

qualifications of my own subjectivity. I am not, first of all, a valuing being because I assign value to things I perceive. Rather, I assign such value because I am first of all a valuing being. I experience my own subjective states as having value-meaning. I am an original, ontological, *matrix* of value. I am that from which value springs, the primary value to which all secondary value refers. My very being is the realm and arbiter of value. Only because of this do I 'perceive' value in things.

Let us look at the phenomenon of value more closely. I value the violin for its tone. The tone itself is phenomenally indistinguishable from the subjective modifications it produces in me. These subjective modifications have intrinsic value, their value lies in themselves and not in anything they serve to produce. The intrinsic nature of their value is manifest in the fact that I experience them as of a positive or negative sort. If instead of a beautiful tone I hear a high-pitched screech from the violin I am repulsed. The subjective modifications I undergo are negative. They are accompanied with a wish to be rid of them. This 'wish,' of course, need not be brought to explicit cognition. The 'wish' is immanent in the negativity or positivity of the subjective modifications themselves. These modifications come in various valuational flavors, so to speak; some positive, some negative, and some a complex mixture of the two. Again, we do not have to deliberately evaluate subjective modifications to determine their *primary* value, for this is immediately given. (Although we do have to evaluate them to determine any possible *secondary* value they may have – as a temporal being my state at present has implications for my future states, such that a present negative may be valuable in helping to achieve a future positive. Thus a subjective state may have both primary *and* secondary value, and these may differ). But, in all cases, my subjective states have an *immanent* (primary) value-meaning prior to any evaluative deliberation.

As a valuing being, then, I value myself implicitly. All secondary valuing must refer to a primary value that is of value in itself. Such primary value can only be a subjective state of some sort, for only a subjective state can *feel* itself, and thereby know itself, as of intrinsic value.

Human beings, we shall say – with a nod to Heidegger – are *caring* beings. That is, they are intrinsically concerned about their own subjective states. Language gets in the way of clarity here. It is not that we are concerned *about* our subjective states, as if these subjective states were something separate and distinct from our caring about them – rather these states are implicitly 'caring' states; they, in a sense, care about themselves. Their caring for themselves is immanent to them; which is the same as to say that they have intrinsic value.

It might be pointed out, further, that such self-relational caring is not necessarily selfish caring. Our caring might be wholly focused upon the welfare of someone else. The mother cares for the child, with little thought to herself. But even in caring for the welfare of the child, this welfare affects *her*, her caring. She is happy if things go well for the child and troubled if they do not. Her concern might be entirely a concern *for* the other with no thought to her own 'empirical' self. But still, the very concern she has for the other seeks *its own* satisfaction. It is still a caring that is implicitly concerned with itself, as caring. Thus all caring is self-reflective. It always cares about itself *along with* the objective thing cared about.

The Imperative of Caring

In every instance of caring, then, there is an implicit demand. It is a demand for the satisfaction of caring. This satisfaction may take the form of a release from physical pain or mental distress, a fulfillment of desire, a retention of a pleasurable state, etc. Depending upon the nature of the caring, satisfaction may come in many forms. But every caring seeks some satisfaction, and has, as one of its potentials, the possibility of failing to be satisfied. Caring, thus, is, by its very nature, teleological; it is oriented toward a goal, its satisfaction. The demand for satisfaction that caring makes is, again, implicit in caring itself. Caring does not strictly 'make' such a demand, it *is* this demand in its very being. Caring, insofar as it is caring, entails an imperative that it be satisfied.

But I am not simply a hodgepodge of instances of caring. Rather, as an empirical ego, I am a synthetic unity in which these instances are organized and prioritized, allowed expression or

suppressed, given prominence or held in abeyance. My ego is a *strategy* for resolving the terms of my caring. At the level of the ego I come to regard myself as a *unity* of value. This unity makes a unified demand to all others: it demands that its value be respected as such. This, I would say, is the birth of the ethical 'ought.' The self-valuing ego, on the basis of the intrinsic value of its caring, makes a demand that it be respected for what it is; i.e., a being of intrinsic value. The 'ought' simply expresses the imperative of caring itself. Caring prescribes that others 'ought' to respect its value. Its justification for this demand is its experience of itself as of irreducible value; an experience that is inherent to caring as such. Thus, the being of caring contains within itself its own demand for respect. Such respect, we might note, is articulated in the Kantian formula that all 'rational' beings be treated as ends. We would say the same, except we would substitute 'caring' for 'rational.' All caring beings are, by the very fact of their caring, ends in themselves. To acknowledge this, and behave accordingly, is only to acknowledge what they *are*. In this sense, then, 'ought' is indeed derived from 'is,' but only because the ought *already* is – it is inherent to the *being* of caring itself.

The Ethical Imperative

We can now tie together our discussion of value with Husserl's phenomenological account of the constitution of the other in the fifth Meditation. Insofar as my subjective being makes an implicit demand to be respected, and insofar as my knowledge of the other's subjectivity is a result of an 'appresentation' whose content is derived from my own subjectivity, I cannot acknowledge the other as another subjectivity without also acknowledging that the other's being makes the same demand that mine does. I must acknowledge that the very same demand that I experience directly in myself, in my subjectivity, is to be found in the other as well. I know the *validity* of my demand because I have direct access to the caring that is its source. I, therefore, know the validity of the demand of the other, for I know that its source is an analogon to mine. Thus, just as I recognize that I ought to be respected as a caring being, so I implicitly recognize that the other ought to be respected also. The ethical ought is implicit in the other's being, and I

know of it because of the ethical ought implicit in my own. To deny the validity of the other's ought would be to deny the validity of my own, for they have the same basis. I cannot, therefore, accept that it is right to violate the other without implicitly allowing that it is right that I be violated as well – but I cannot allow such a thing, for I would be contravening myself, the self-concern implicit in my own being, if I did so. Thus I must acknowledge the right of the other to respect.

This, then, is the ethical imperative. It is, as will be noted, the insight that underlies the Golden Rule. One must treat others as one would be treated by others, because others, as other caring beings, have the same intrinsic value as oneself. One can *learn* of the intrinsic value of others through reflection upon the intrinsic value of oneself. One has *direct* access only to one's own intrinsic value; and this is because all intrinsic value is subjectivity. A denial of the ethical imperative emanating from the other is an implicit denial of the imperative emanating from oneself. Thus, the rule of ' retributive justice' is simply the converse of the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule says: You should do to others as you would have done to you. Retributive justice says: You should have done to you what you would do to others. These rules are mirror images of one another. Both reflect the fact that the other and I, as caring beings, stand in the same relation to the ethical imperative.

If Husserl is right about the appresentation of my own subjectivity in the other, and this has the ethical implications we have claimed, how is it that we so often treat others unethically – and do so, often, casually and distractedly, without recognizing that we are doing it? If we truly see ourselves in the other we would always be vividly aware of our ethical responsibilities to the other. This pertains to the criticism brought against Husserl's account earlier. In fact, I do not always regard others as they are in themselves, but often – more often than not, perhaps – only as they are for me. I may apprehended the other, not through a pairing association with myself, but in terms of how I *react* to the other. Thus, Peter may be viewed as repugnant, not because

repugnance is something pertaining to the being of Peter (which it could not be, for as a caring being, Peter is a being of intrinsic value) but because I feel repulsed, for whatever reason, when Peter enters the room. Perhaps Peter reminds me of someone who has hurt me in the past. Perhaps I have learned to be prejudiced against people of Peter's type. Precisely to the extent that my primary determination of Peter is as a being I *react* to as opposed to a being I *associate* with, I am failing to recognize Peter as of primary value in himself, and taking him only as of secondary value for me. This is an unethical stance. It fails to acknowledge the 'ought' implicit in Peter's being. These two ways of apprehending the other, then, imply two different ethical positions – only one of which is true to the ethical imperative as it emanates from the other's caring. The reactionary mode of apprehending the other is ultimately narcissistic and exploitative, it sees the other only as a phenomenon within the sphere of my 'peculiar ownness,' something existing *for* me, and hence fails to see the other *as* the person he or she *is*. This is an inherently unethical mode of apprehension.

But there are also unethical modes that may be rooted in the pairing association itself. For instance, to the extent that I have self-contempt, and to the extent that I apperceive the other through a pairing association with myself, my very self-contempt might translate into contempt for the other. Indeed, a great deal of what we call 'evil' seems to have its roots here: we lash out against others who manifest what we (secretly) fear or despise in ourselves. There is much more that might be said about this, but we will have to leave these considerations for another occasion.

Conclusion

Thus we have answered the question we began with. 'Ought' can indeed be derived from 'is' because reflection reveals that *being* itself is not value-neutral. We do not need to go hunting for the derivation of the ethical 'ought' in elaborate metaphysical theories. It is already inherent to our own being, and discoverable through phenomenological reflection. The fact that my only entry into the other's subjectivity is through seeing it as an analogon to mine, forces me to realize that I am ethically responsible to the other as the other is to me. The only alternative to such an

acknowledgment is solipsism, in which I refuse to recognize the other as other and reduce the world of existents to only what immediately appears to me *as* it appears to me. Solipsism, it is often said, is not a viable position, and no one seriously entertains it. But to see the other as of mere secondary value, that is, in terms of how I *react* to the other (how the other *affects* me), is itself a kind of solipsism – for it fails to acknowledge the true independent being, and hence value, of the other. In the course of ordinary life, then, we are more solipsistic than we suppose.

And this realization has implications for human community. The establishment of real community entails an acknowledgment of the being-value of others, and thus must be built upon an ethical foundation of authentic *care* for others. We cannot truly participate in the *inter*subjective world of community while taking an unethical stance – not simply because it would lead to conflict but, more fundamentally, because such a stance entails a kind of intersubjective blindness. Without seeing others *as* others (deserving respect) there is no real community – we are then reduced to ourselves alone. To rise above our own lonely isolation, then, we must be respectful of the 'ought' inherent to the other's being.

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