Developmental Epochè: A five-years-old child had an ‘I-am-me’ experience and afterwards created the ‘incarnation doctrine’

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ABSTRACT: One may have spontaneously experienced a kind of epochè at a certain stage of normal personal development, especially in childhood, even if one were neither a philosopher undertaking the phenomenological epochè nor Blankenburg’s patient suffering from a psychopathological epochè. I name such an experience the “developmental epochè”. It was first investigated by Spiegelberg (1964) under the title of the “I-am-me” experience, and is currently being researched by several Japanese psychologists. Recently another variation of this epochè, “solipsistic experience”, was reported. Based on the “descriptive phenomenological method” of Giorgi (2009), I conduct phenomenological analysis of representative cases of the developmental epochè, comparing them with psychopathological cases. Then, I locate the two types of developmental epochè into “Husserlian worlds”, and thereby demonstrate that each of them can be compared to Husserl’s different phenomenological epochès. Reconstruction of the developmental theory of self using the idea of developmental epochè is suggested.

KEYWORDS: descriptive phenomenological method, Husserlian worlds, normal personal development, phenomenological epochè, psychopathological epochè
Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to propose the idea that phenomenologically reduced worlds exist not only as philosophical fictions or psychopathological delusions but also as psychological realities in the course of our normal personal development, especially in childhood. I will try to attain this object by elaborating the concept of “developmental epochè,” proposed to refer to a certain kind of experience in one’s normal personal development (Watanabe, 2011), and by integrally understanding three kinds of epochè in the domains of phenomenological philosophy, psychopathology and developmental psychology. As an empirical psychologist, I use the modified descriptive phenomenological analysis developed by Giorgi (2009) to make phenomenological analyses of several representative examples of developmental epochè. Elaborating this method is the second purpose of this paper.

0.1. What is a developmental epochè?

Blankenburg (1969) used the “Case of Anne” as an example of the “schizophrenic epochè.” According to Anne’s complaints, a lot of self-evident practical knowledge in our daily life was not self-evident to her. Blankenburg compared her psychopathological “loss of the natural self-evidence” to a phenomenologist’s conscious effort for bracketing all self-evident knowledge. Afterwards, Japanese psychiatrist Yamamoto (2007) compared a certain condition of autistic children to the “special kind of phenomenological reduction” described in Husserl’s Cartesian Meditations (Husserl, 1970). This reduction asks researchers to bracket the existence of “alter egos.” According to Yamamoto, phenomenological
philosophers practicing this reduction and autistic children both live in a kind of solipsistic world. Here is another type of psychopathological epoché. Based on the considerations of these epoché, the concept of developmental epoché was proposed: “Neither as a philosopher undertaking phenomenological epoché nor as the Blankenburg’s (1971) patient suffering from pathological epoché, would one encounter the fundamental split in the subject (Husserl’s Ich-Spaltung) at certain stages of normal personal development, especially in childhood” (Watanabe, 2011, 94).

0.2. From Spiegelberg’s “I-am-me” experience to the solipsistic experience

The developmental epoché was first investigated by phenomenological philosopher Spiegelberg (1964). He termed this event the ‘I-am-me’ experience. The example below is taken from texts gathered through questionnaires and surveys (note that the number of each “Example” is not that of original text):

【Example 1】(The case of a female senior high school student)

One day when I was about five years old, I was just sitting around, doing nothing, when I realized I was me, and began to wonder why I wasn’t somebody else. It bothered me for about a week afterwards and since then. The thought has come up from time to time, though less often recently (Spiegelberg, 1964, 18).

Spiegelberg’s studies on the “I-am-me” experience did not attract the attention of researchers in Western countries. Currently several Japanese psychologists are studying this phenomenon (see Watanabe, 2004, 2011). These studies have identified previously unknown
features of this type of experience. It is typically expressed as questions such as these: “Am I really me?”, “Why am I me?”, and “Why am I here and now?” Research has indicated that approximately 30 percent of undergraduates and 60 percent of junior high school students have had this experience at least once in their lives. The first such experience is most likely to occur in childhood; however, these memories may fade before adulthood. Recently, empirical research into the “I-am-me” experience has been extended to include solipsistic experiences. This type of experience is typically expressed in thoughts such as, "There might be no other 'selves' except myself in the world." Approximately six percent of undergraduates reported having such an experience.

Solipsistic experiences may be compared both to the “special kind of phenomenological reduction described in Husserl’s Cartesian Meditations” and to a certain condition of autistic children described by Yamamoto (2007). The example below, obtained through questionnaires, is cited from Watanabe:

【Example 2】 (Case of a Woman, age 19)

In the lower grades of elementary school, when I was studying in class, occasionally an idea came to mind: I wondered, “Is it only me who is now thinking in this way? Are the other people around me also human beings?” (Watanabe, 2011, 99).

Developmental epoché, therefore, consists of two kinds of experiences: the “I-am-me” experience and the solipsistic experience.

Both experiences also can be defined descriptive-phenomenologically by introducing “self-evidence” (Selbstverständlichkeit) related to one’s own self, as suggested by
Blankenburg (1971) and Kimura (1973, 2001): “An ‘I-am-me’ experience is a disruption in the self-evidence of one’s own self-identity, whereas a solipsistic experience is a disruption in the self-evidence of one’s own self as a member of the species. Both experiences can thus be integrally understood as two sides of one phenomenon: disruption in the self-evidence of one’s own self” (Watanabe, 2011, 102-103). Additionally, remarkable progress has been made with regard to research methodology: an assessment manual for the “I-am-me” experience and the solipsistic experience has been developed (Table 1).

Table 1: Assessment manual for the “I-am-me” experience and the solipsistic experience (abbreviated version of the “Table 3” in Watanabe, 2011). If a case involves Criterion (1) and at least one of the Criteria (2)-(4), it can be classified as an “I-am-me” experience. If it involves Criteria (1) and Criteria (5), it can be classified as a solipsistic experience. The reader will see later, in Table 2, how the manual can be applied to the Case of Emily.

<table>
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<th>Criteria</th>
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<td>(1) In the text, what matters is the self.</td>
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<td>(2) Suddenness, unexpectedness</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Feeling of strangeness or being out of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Separation of two selves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Feeling of being unique and isolated</td>
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0.3. Outline of this article

In Watanabe’s (2011) paper, however, phenomenological analysis is not elaborated enough for the integral understanding of the three kinds of epochè: phenomenological, psychopathological and developmental. In sections 1, 2, and 3, based on a “modified descriptive phenomenological method” (Giorgi, 2009), I make a phenomenological analysis
of a representative case of this experience. In this “Case of Emily,” a 5-year-old child had an “I-am-me” experience and immediately afterward created an “Incarnation Doctrine.” In Section 4, having compared a schizophrenic case, an autistic case, and a “solipsistic experience,” I clarify what is common to and what is different among these three kinds of experiences. In Section 5, based on considerations made in previous sections, I locate the “I-am-me” experience and the solipsistic experience in “Husserlian worlds,” and thereby demonstrate that each of these experiences may be compared to Husserl’s different kinds of phenomenological epochè. I conclude this paper by suggesting the possibility of reconstructing the developmental theory of the self using the idea of developmental epochè.

§ 1 “Case of Emily”

The “Case of Emily” is an episode described in a story by English novelist Richard Hughes (1929). This episode attracted the attention of Erich Fromm (1941) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1947). Both of them discussed it as a notable example of “the first discovery of self”. Spiegelberg, before developing questionnaire surveys on the “I-am-me” experience, cited and discussed several episodes he encountered in European literature. Among these, the Case of Emily is the longest and most illuminating. As will be seen in Section 3, it is a rare and valuable case illustrating how an “I-am-me” experience, one type of developmental epochè, evolved to the other type, a solipsistic experience. In addition, there is a certain reliability to this text; Spiegelberg (1964) wrote to Hughes and received a reply explaining that this episode was based on the author’s own personal experience at the age of 5 years. That is why I regard it as an exemplar case of developmental epochè and challenge its phenomenological
analysis.

【Example 3】 (Case of “Emily”)  

. . . And an event did occur to Emily of considerable importance. She suddenly realized who she was.

There is little reason that one can see why it should not have happened to her five years earlier, or even five later; and none, why it should have come that particular afternoon.

She had been playing houses in a nook right in the bows behind the windlass; . . . and tiring of it was walking rather aimlessly aft, thinking vaguely about some bees and a fairy queen, when it suddenly flashed into her mind that she was she.

She stopped dead, and began looking over all of her person which came within the range of her eyes. She could not see much, except a fore-shortened view of the front of her frock, and her hands when she lifted them for inspection; but it was enough for her to form a rough idea of the little body she suddenly realized to be hers.

……………………

Once fully convinced of this astonishing fact, that she was now Emily Bas-Thornton (why she inserted the “now” she did not know, for she certainly imagined no transmigrational nonsense of having been anyone else before), she began seriously to reckon its implications.

First, what agency had so ordered it that out of all the people in the world who she might have been, she was this particular one, this Emily; born in such-and-such a year out of all the years in Time, and encased in this particular rather pleasing little casket of flesh? Had she chosen herself, or had God done it?

At this, another consideration: who was God? She had heard a terrible lot about Him,
always: but the question of His identity had been left vague, as much taken for granted as her own. Wasn’t she perhaps God, herself? Was it that she was trying to remember? However, the more she tried, the more it eluded her. (How absurd, to disremember such an important point as whether one was God or not!) So she let it slide: perhaps it would come back to her later. (Hughes, 1929, 83-84)

A sudden terror struck her: did anyone know? (Know, I mean, that she was some one in particular, Emily - perhaps even God - not just any little girl). She could not tell why, but the idea terrified her. It would be bad enough if they should discover she was God! At all costs, she must hide that from them. - But suppose they knew already, had simply been hiding it from her (as guardians might from an infant king)? In that case, as in the other, the only thing to do was to continue to behave as if she did not know, and so outwit them.

But if she was God, why not turn all the sailors into white mice, or strike Margarete blind, or cure somebody, or do some other Godlike act of the kind? Why should she hide it? She never really asked herself why, but instinct prompted her strongly of the necessity. Of course, there was the element of doubt (suppose she had made a mistake, and the miracle missed fire): but more largely it was the feeling that she would be able to deal with the situation so much better when she was a little older. Once she had declared herself, there would be no turning back; it was much better to keep her godhead up her sleeve for the present (ibid, 86)

§ 2 Toward a modified descriptive phenomenological analysis of the “Case of Emily”

Modified descriptive phenomenological analysis is a “scientific method” developed by Giorgi (2009) to apply Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology to empirical studies in
human sciences, especially in psychology. “Modified” means the modification of Husserlian phenomenology for empirical use. I further add a few modifications to Giorgi’s method for applying it to the study of developmental epochè. As a consequence, my own phenomenological analysis has two main modifications of Husserlian phenomenology: “first-person reading, modification of the phenomenological reduction,” and “diagramming the structure of inner experience, modification of the eidetic reduction.” I will show them successively.

2.1. First-person reading, modification of the phenomenological reduction

First-person reading is the method of reading and interpreting texts literally as the interpreter’s own memorandum. The reason is that it would be difficult to understand a sentence, for example, such as “Why was I born as me, George Bush?” as an “I-am-me” experience without replacing “George Bush” with one’s own name. Similarly, it would be difficult to understand the text “I occasionally wonder if everybody around me is only an illusion” as a solipsistic experience without interpreting the “I” in the text as the interpreter’s own self rather than as the author of the text. The secret of understanding examples of developmental epochè is to interpret texts written by others as the interpreter’s own texts. In this point, there is a difference between this kind of first-person reading and so-called empathetic reading. Empathy is a concept presupposing the real existence of others. On the contrary, in first-person reading, readers should interpret the text, not as if, but literally as their own narrative. For these reasons, a first-person reading is one way to complete a phenomenological reduction, as it brackets the real author of the text, that is, the existence of others. Bracketing the existence of others is inevitable to a phenomenological understanding
of experiences in which the existence of others is spontaneously bracketed.

2.2. Diagramming the structure of inner experience, modification of the eidetic reduction

Husserlian phenomenology consists of two kinds of reduction. One is phenomenological reduction, and the other is eidetic reduction. In the latter reduction, phenomenological philosophers seek essences through the method of free imaginative variation. However, according to Giorgi’s modified descriptive phenomenological method, “the scientific phenomenological method” (Giorgi, 2009, 94) is described as follows: ”[I]nstead of searching for essences through the method of free imaginative variation, I seek the structure of the concrete experiences being analyzed through the determination of higher-level eidetic invariant meanings that belong to that structure” (ibid, 100).

To put into practice this methodology, I use the method of diagramming the structure of inner experience (see, Watanabe, 2011). This method consists of three stages. The first is to collect at least two examples of the concrete experience. The second is to diagram the inner structure of these experiences. The third is to identify the structural characteristics corresponding to the descriptive phenomenological definitions of the experiences. I attempt these procedures of the “I-am-me” experience first and of the solipsistic experience in the next.

a. Collecting at least two examples of the experience of the “I-am-me” experience

For the scientific analysis, the more examples there are, the better. In this paper, due to space limitations, only two examples of “I-am-me” experience are available: Example 1 (Case of a senior high school girl) and Example 3 (Case of Emily). However, for
phenomenological analysis, these two are sufficient. Recall that Blankenburg (1971) obtained the concept of the “loss of natural self-evidence”, based on only one schizophrenic example (Case of Anne). The “Case of Emily” is, as previously described, an exemplar case of the developmental epochè, just as the “Case of Anne” was a superb example of schizophrenic epochè. As for Example 1, of the many texts gathered by the questionnaire method, it is the most “typical case” in the sense that it may most exactly correspond to the Spiegelberg’s clearest comment about the “I-am-me” experience:

“Most children and adolescents are affected by sudden seizures of an experience which they sometimes express in such seemingly tautological sentences as ‘I-am-me’. And nearly all of them seem to be bothered by persistent questions such as ‘Why am I me?’

“ (Spiegelberg, 1986, 57)

b. Diagramming the inner structure of the “I-am-me” experience

First, we turn to Example 1. In this text, the “I-am-me” experience consists of two parts.

The first part: “when I realized I was me,”

The second part: “I … began to wonder why I wasn’t somebody else.”

The first part is a little ambiguous. However, comparing it with the Case of Emily will clarify the ambiguity. In the text of the Case Emily, the “I-am-me” experience seems to consist of three parts:

The first: “… it suddenly flashed into her mind that she was she.”

The second: “Once fully convinced of this astonishing fact, that she was now Emily Bas-Thornton …”

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The third: “what agency had so ordered it that out of all the people in the world who she might have been, she was this particular one, this Emily …”

Therefore, the first part of Example 1 may be analyzed as consisting of two parts such as: “when I realized that I was I,” and “I recognized the astonishing fact that I was X!” (I would like to ask you, the readers, to replace “X” for your real name. Here is the first-person reading!)

The inner structure of the new first part “I realized that I was I” is diagrammed as Figure 1-a:

The new second part is diagrammed as Figure 1-b. In the world of “natural attitude” (in Husserlian meaning), “X” is a person among many persons {A, B, C …}. The white arrow indicates that “I am this ‘X’.” Dotted lines connecting X, A, B, C… indicate that all of them belong to the same “human” species. Figure 1-c diagrams the former second part of Example 1, “I began to wonder why I wasn’t somebody else”. Naturally Figures 1-a, 1-b, and 1-c correspond to the first part, the second part, and the third part of Case of Emily if “X” in these Figures is replaced with “Emily.”
c. Identifying the structural characteristics corresponding to the descriptive phenomenological definitions of the “I-am-me” experience

Let us recall the descriptive phenomenological definition of the “I-am-me” experience: “A disruption in the self-evidence of one’s own self-identity.” We are easily able to identify the structural characteristics corresponding to the definition. In Figures 1-b and 1-c, one’s “self” is divided into “I” and “X”, each of which belongs to a different world. One lives in a doubled world! This double affiliation of one’s “self” may cause the disruption in the
self-evidence of one’s own self-identity. In Figure 1-b, this induces the surprise, ”I am me!”, and in Figure 1-c, the question, “Why am I me?”

2.3. Diagramming the inner structure of the solipsistic experience

**a. Collecting at least two examples of the solipsistic experience**

At first look, there seems to be only one example of the solipsistic example in this paper: Example 2. However, it is possible to recognize the second half of the Case of Emily as another example of this experience. Recall the descriptive phenomenological definition of the solipsistic experience: a disruption in the self-evidence of one’s own self as a member of the species. In Example 2, in the suspicion “Are the other people around me also human beings?”, her sense of self-evidence of her own self as a member of the species was disrupted because other members than herself might not be human beings. Also, in the Case of Emily, the thought the “she was . . . perhaps even God—not just any little girl” reveals that her sense of self-evidence of her own self as a member of the species was disrupted, because other members than herself were none other than humans! Diagramming and comparing these two examples will show that there is one structural characteristic common to them, which corresponds exactly to the descriptive phenomenological definition of the solipsistic experience.

**b. Diagramming the inner structure of the solipsistic experience**

Figure 2-a diagrams the inner structure of Example 2. Dotted lines connecting A, B, C . . . indicate that each of them belongs to the same species. Between “I” and others, there are arrows instead of dotted lines. This indicates that, watching others, “I” wonders if they are also human beings or not. It is to be noted that “I” is drawn by a double box, while others are
indicated by single boxes. This corresponds to “I”’s solipsistic skepticism that only “I” may be a human, that is, an existence with an “inner side,” and that other people around “I” may not be human beings, that is, may be existing without an “inner side.”

Figure 2-b diagrams the inner structure of the experience described in the second half of the Case of Emily. In contrast to the Figure 2-a, others are indicated with double boxes because they are human beings. Emily is drawn with triple boxes. That is because she is a little girl, and at the same time “perhaps even God,” as represented by the most inner circle.

c. Identifying the structural characteristics corresponding to the descriptive phenomenological definitions of the solipsistic experience

Now we are able to identify the structural characteristics corresponding to the definition of the solipsistic experience: “A disruption in the self-evidence of one’s own self as a member of the species.” In Figure 2-a, one’s self is represented by a double-box, whereas others are shown with a single box. In Figure 2-b, one’s self is represented by a triple-box, whereas others are shown with a double-box. What is common to Figure 2-a and Figure 2-b
is represented as: *I always have one higher dimension of the inner side than have others. Here is the structural characteristic corresponding to the definition of the solipsistic experience.*

§ 3 Integral analysis of Case of Emily through three steps

In Table 2, I show integral analysis of the Case of Emily simulating Giorgi’s method of three steps. In Step 1, “one breaks the description into parts by establishing what are called ‘meaning units’” (Giorgi, 2009, 142). Then, in the left column, I have divided the original text into six parts (due to space limitations, I was obliged to omit some sentences).

In step 2, the researcher is required to “express each meaning unit more explicitly in language revelatory of the psychological aspect of the lived-through experience with respect to the phenomenon being researched” (ibid, 145). So, in the middle column, I have extracted passages corresponding to the definitions of the “I-am-me” experience and the solipsistic experience. Parts corresponding to the Criteria in Table 1 (in Section 0.2) are underlined. Numbers at the end of each underlined part correspond to the number of Criterion in Table 1. Additionally, third-person expressions ("Emily," “she,” or “her”) are transformed into first-person pronouns in order to facilitate readers’ first-person reading. In some case, I have made a few changes to the original texts in order to elucidate the implicit meaning of the text as a “developmental epochè.”

In step 3, apart from immediately simulating the step 3 of Giorgi’s method, I show in the right column outcomes of the diagram of the inner structures of the “I-am-me” experience and the solipsistic experience that were illustrated in sections 2.1 and 2.3. Note that figures in
Yes, I am E.

The right column are just abbreviated copies of those in these sections. Several figures are added to illustrate how an “I-am-me” experience evolved into a solipsistic experience. Finally, I inserted comments useful to facilitate readers’ understanding of the table into the right column and sometimes into the middle column.

### Table 2: Three steps of the phenomenological analysis on Case of Emily

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1: The original text of Hughes (1929) was broken into six parts according to the &quot;meaning unit.&quot;</th>
<th>Step 2: Contents of “” are parts corresponding to the developmental epochè. The third-person expressions are transformed to the first-person ones.</th>
<th>Step 3: Diagrammed inner structures of experiences. “E” in each box indicates “Emily.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. She had been playing houses in a nook right in the bows behind the windlass; . . . and tiring of it was walking rather aimlessly aft, thinking vaguely about some bees and a fairy queen,</td>
<td>1. In the ordinary world, “Emily is Emily” (E=E) is self-evident, just as “Adam is Adam” (A=A) and “Becky is Becky” (B=B) are self-evident. Further, If she is asked her name, she can answer “Yes, I am E” as a self-evident fact.</td>
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</table>
II. when it suddenly flashed into her mind that she was *she*. She stopped dead, and began looking over all of her person which came within the range of her eyes…….

II. “*[I]* suddenly\(^{(2)}\) flashed into my mind that I was I.” This is the first part of “I-am-me” experience (see Figure 1). The number \(^{(2)}\) of the underlined word corresponds to Criterion \(^{(2)}\) in Table 1.

II. At the same time when the self identity (I = I) is established, the world of inner experience appears.

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<td>II.</td>
<td>“I</td>
<td>suddenly(^{(2)}) flashed into my mind that I was I.” This is the first part of “I-am-me” experience (see Figure 1). The number (^{(2)}) of the underlined word corresponds to Criterion (^{(2)}) in Table 1.</td>
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<td>II.</td>
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III. . . . Once fully convinced of this astonishing fact, that she was now Emily Bas-Thornton . . . , she began seriously to reckon its implications.

III. &ldquo;Once fully convinced of this **astonishing**\(^{(3)}\) fact that I am now Emily Bas-Thornton……&rdquo; The second part of the “I-am-me” experience (see Figure 2). The number \(^{(3)}\) of the underlined word corresponds to Criterion \(^{(3)}\) in Table 1.

III. The arrow from “I” to “E” shows that “I = E,” once a self-evident fact, was rediscovered as surprising and novel.

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<td>III.</td>
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<td>III.</td>
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IV. First, what agency had so ordered it that out of all the people in the world who she might have been, she was this particular one, this Emily; born in such-and-such a year out of all the years in Time, and encased in this particular rather pleasing little casket of flesh? Had she chosen herself, or had God done it?

IV. “What agency has so ordered it that out of all the people in the world who I might be, I am this particular one, this Emily; born in such-and-such a year out of all the years in Time?\(^{(3)}\)” The third part of the “I-am-me” experience (see Figure 3). The whole sentence in Table 1 may correspond to Criterion \(^{(3)}\).

IV. The rediscovery of “I = E” engenders the question: “Why am I not someone else, for example ‘A’ or ‘B’?”

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<td>IV.</td>
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V. At this, another consideration:

V. “Who was God?”

V. The reason why I am E, not
who was God? . . . Wasn’t she perhaps God, herself? Was it that she was trying to remember? However, the more she tried, the more it eluded her (pp. 83-84). . . . A sudden terror struck her: did anyone know? (Know, I mean, that she was some one in particular, Emily - perhaps even God - not just any little girl). . . . It would be bad enough if they should discover she was God! At all costs, she must hide that from them.

VI. But if she was God, why not turn all the sailors into white mice . . . or cure somebody, or do some other Godlike act of the kind? . . . Of course, there was the element of doubt (suppose she had made a mistake, and the miracle missed fire) . . . it was much better to keep her godhead up her sleeve for the present (p. 86)

VI. Formation of the “Incarnation Doctrine”. I am Emily, just one of many little girls, and at the same time a unique, peculiar one, even God. It is just as Jesus Christ was a human and at the same time Infinite Being who was reincarnated in the finite world. Therefore, “I should be able to do some Godlike act.”

A or B, is answered by the uniqueness of E, that is, by the fact that E is a particular one, even possibly God.

Note that dotted lines connecting “E” with “A” and “B” have disappeared.

The dynamics from I to VI in the right column can be summarized as: The world in which “I am E” was at first single, then it doubled, and finally it returned to being single. The formation of the “Incarnation Doctrine,” therefore, may be interpreted as an effort to set the doubled world back to the single. One may not be able to endure an extended period of
stress resulting from belonging to these two worlds at the same time.

The idea of the doubled world is useful and indeed critical to locate the developmental epochè into “Husserlian worlds,” as will be shown in Section 5. However, in the next section (§ 4), I compare the developmental epochè to the psychopathological one. Without such a comparison, it would be impossible to integrally understand the three kind of epochè, phenomenological, psychopathological, and developmental.

§4 Comparison of the solipsistic, schizophrenic, and autistic experiences

In Table 3, I make a phenomenological analysis comparing three examples: solipsistic, schizophrenic, and autistic experiences. In general, a comparison is effective and fruitful when there is something in common among the compared items. One of the common features shown in the table is that each experience shows a disruption in, or a loss of, the self-evidence of one’s own self as a member of the species. Here, I cite a new example of the solipsistic experience. The second half of the Case of Emily is atypical as a solipsistic experience, and Example 2, a typical solipsistic one, is too short for comparison. Example 4 in Table 3 is a typical solipsistic experience that is long and rich enough for comparative analysis. In the original paper (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2005), it was named as a “research-inducing example,” meaning that this example facilitated these authors’ planning a questionnaire aimed at researching solipsistic experiences. The example of the schizophrenic case in Table 3 is cited from an article entitled “Self, solipsism and schizophrenic delusion” (Parnas & Sas, 2001), a brilliant work that investigated the relationship between solipsism and the schizophrenic delusion. The example of the autistic spectrum was recounted by an
intelligent young patient with Asperger’s Disorder (Niki, 2000, cited by Watanabe, 2011), which appears to exemplify a total absence of the self-evidence of one’s own self as a member of the species. Due to space limitations, Table 3 is shown as having two steps, omitting the “second step.”

Table 3 Phenomenological analyses of a solipsistic experience, a schizophrenic experience and an autistic experience. Due to space limitations, only the first and the third step of the analysis are shown in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1: Original texts</th>
<th>Step 3: Diagrammed inner structures of experiences and their comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example 4) (Case of a university student, male, age 19)</td>
<td>The upper half of the figure designates the solipsistic world. I, the only one having mind, am looking at others who are “empty”. This is the world that is “understandable” for the person reporting this phenomenon. The lower half designates the “common sense”, ordinary world, which is “not understandable” but “acceptable” for the reporter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Please allow me to describe a thought that was sometimes in mind in my younger days. I cannot remember how old I was but at this time I sometimes doubted whether, in reality, other people existed. I knew that I existed because I could recognize myself. On the other hand, I could only observe other people by their appearance. So I was uncertain whether they were the same as me or they were “empty.” Finally, I remember, I arrived at a supposition that everything and everyone around me existed only for myself! My friends when they learned of this supposition, told me that it was a selfish, egoistic thought. Surely the view of life that others exist in addition to the self is common sense and should be recognized by anyone. However, it seems that everybody does not know, but accept, the truth of the view. Now I have “accepted” it, me too. … Anyway I have had no choice but to accept it because I have not

![Diagram](image-url)
been able to “understand” it by means of any answer. …. I am trying to recall these thoughts from some time ago, so I cannot describe them clearly. (Watanabe & Kanazawa, 2005, 76, translate from Japanese by the author.)

【Schizophrenic case】 A young patient reported that he had, in brief moments, a feeling that only the objects in his current field of vision were real, as if the rest of the world, including most familiar places and persons, did not really exist. Probed about suicidal intentions, he replied: “No, I could never kill myself. I can’t imagine the world not being represented [by me].” (Parnas & Sas, 2001, 110)

illusions. When one lives the understandable world, the accepted world disappears, and vice versa.

The lower half of the figure, the ordinary world, is drown by dotted lines because it has disappeared and transformed into the solipsistic world designated as the upper half of the figure.
Case involving autistic spectrum] I was about 8 years old when I became worried about the difference between others and me. I had been long aware that I was different from others. At that time, however, I found that I should be the same as others. Before then, I’d never thought that I belonged to the same category with other children. That’s because other children had “backs”. The other children’s backs were visible, while my back was invisible. (Niki, 2000, cited by Watanabe (2011, 111).

The author of the text even now lives in a solipsistic world. However, because the ordinary world seems to be in the process of taking form, it is shown by dotted lines in the lower side of the figure.

What differentiates the developmental epochè and psychopathological one is identified by the phenomenological analysis shown in Table 3. This factor is reversibility. In the former, the solipsistic world and the ordinary one are in a reversible relationship, whereas in the latter, they are not, as shown in the schizophrenic case and the autistic spectrum one. After having this insight, I should add one important point to the analysis in Table 2. If the world in VI of the table had not been in a reversible relationship with the ordinary world, “E,” or in reality, the author of this episode, would either have become the founder of a new religion or else would have been regarded as having a pathological delusion. Neither of these was true for the novelist Richard Hughes. Therefore, I conclude that the creation of the Incarnation Doctrine in the Case of Emily belongs to the developmental epochè, not to something else.
§ 5 Husserlian worlds and developmental epochè

Based on the considerations summarized in Table 2 and 3, I locate two kinds of developmental epochè in the “Husserlian worlds” (Figure 3). In the “I-am-me” experience, one’s self belongs to the two worlds at the same time: the ordinary world and the phenomenological world. That corresponds to the Husserl’s Ich-Spaltung at the phenomenological reduction, that is, the splitting of one’s self into the empirical self and the transcendental or pure self. The solipsistic experience was, as the autistic experience suggested by Yamamoto (2007), can be compared to another phenomenological reduction of Husserl’s (1960), in that it suspends the thesis of inter-subjective reality. The “world of ownness”, or in Husserl’s terminology “sphere of ownness (Eigenheit)” (Husserl, 1960, 92), is the world appearing after the reduction.

Figure 3 is drawn based mainly on Husserl’s 1913 (Husserl, 1982) and 1933 book (Husserl, 1960). I added “world of natural science,” referring to his later book Crisis (1970). The purpose of this is to note that the world of natural science is not self-evident for us.
§ 6 Conclusion

The developmental epochè, located in the Husserlian world, suggests or proposes the idea that phenomenologically reduced worlds exist not only as philosophical fictions or psychopathological delusions but also as psychological realities in the course of our normal personal development, especially in childhood. I would like to conclude this article by referring to my future plans. One is to complete the empirical investigation of this phenomenon by analyzing more examples of this epochè. Fortunately in Japanese studies hundreds of examples of “I-am-me” experience and dozens of solipsistic experience are found (for English introductions, see Watanabe, 2004, 2011). My other plan is the integration of the phenomenological study of this epochè and the developmental theories of self and personality in psychiatry and psychology. In Watanabe’s (2011) article, a possible integration of the developmental epochè into a psychiatric theory of the personal development was
suggested. Here, I suggest another possibility: the integration of this study and a cognitive theory of the self. It was over 20 years ago that the cognitive psychologist Neisser (1988) proposed the theory of five selves: the ecological, interpersonal, extended, conceptual and private selves. Since then, little progress has been made in the study of the private self, while researches on the other four selves has flourished (e.g., Neisser, 1997; Thompson, 2006; Rochat, 2003). This is because, it seems to me, the objective method in the “scientific psychology” is not appropriate to the study of the private self. Interpreting the “I-am-me” experience as a phenomenon induced or provoked through the conflict between the private self and other selves may make possible and facilitate the developmental study of the private self, however, not with a cognitive, but rather with a phenomenological approach. Thus, phenomenologically reconstructing the developmental study of the self and personality by introducing the concept of the developmental epochè would be a promising project.

REFERENCES


