



# The Givenness of Other People: On Singularity and Empathy in Husserl

Matt Rosen<sup>1,2</sup> 

Accepted: 18 April 2021  
© The Author(s) 2021

## Abstract

Other people figure in our experience of the world; they strike us as unique and genuinely other. This paper explores whether a Husserlian account of empathy as the way in which we constitute an intersubjective world can account for the uniqueness and otherness of other people in our experience. I contend that it can't. I begin by explicating Husserl's theory of empathy, paying particular attention to the reduction to a purely egoic sphere and the steps that ostensibly permit a subject to re-inhabit a world of others from out of this sphere. In querying Husserl's theory, I consider a series of problems, raised by Zhida Luo, concerning the apparent centrality of bodily similarity in empathy. I sketch Luo's solution, which involves a shift to tactile similarity. While it makes for a better theory of empathy, this solution isn't sufficient to make room for the givenness of another person not originally predicated on similarity. To clarify what's at issue here, I turn to the Husserlian pictures of empathy presented by Heinz Kohut and Edith Stein. I conclude with a remark about what might be required, given the inability of Husserlian empathy to make room for the experience of others as singular and other, for a picture of our phenomenal life to have a shape that accounts for the coexistence of empathy to others who are like oneself and hospitality to others as genuine others.

**Keywords** Husserl · Empathy · Other people · Hospitality · Phenomenology · Stein · Kohut

1. When we come across other people, those we encounter seem to be both other *people* and *other* people. One way to set up this distinction is as follows. We encounter people who in principle experience the same world that we do, and in such a similar way that this experience is recognizable as experience. We also encounter

---

✉ Matt Rosen  
matt.rosen@new.ox.ac.uk

<sup>1</sup> New College, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

people—the very same people—who are singular, and given to us with an alterity that is not at all captured by positing fundamental sameness and understanding qualitative differences by means of analogies employed to bridge whatever lacunae seem to stand between us.<sup>1</sup>

Two observations thus characterize the way in which others are given to us in our everyday relations with them. First, other people have an experience of the world sufficiently like our own to be what we might legitimately consider an experience of the world. They share in something like a human condition, which is to say that their way of perceiving and making sense of the world is not so utterly foreign to us as to preclude from the first instance the very possibility of communication, reciprocation, and empathy. In this sense, our similarities run deeper than our differences, for it is these similarities that make individuation possible *within* the constraints of communal life. One can, at least in many cases, presumably come to have a handle on what it is like to live with the differences that give another person's life its singular character. This is because more fundamental similarities—that we commonly experience a shared world, that even in conflict we can engage in sustained episodes of joint attention or cooperate in joint action to see our collective aims realized—underlie whatever qualities and identities serve to distinguish us. We can bridge the gaps between us that these distinguishing attributes might seem to foreground by emphasizing what we take to be basal sameness or comparability.<sup>2</sup> Through this emphasizing, in which we appeal to the purportedly ordinary likeness of human experience no matter the singular human who, so to say, instantiates it, we are able to set up analogies between ourselves and others such that we can come to

<sup>1</sup> One might presumably ask, does this mean that the latter sense of the other person – as singular and as genuinely other – is given *as* eluding, or as separate from, their givenness to oneself? Note 30 deals with this question in more explicit detail, but I can say here that this may be one sense in which the other is given as other: i.e., the other is given as that which exceeds the noematic correlate of our noetic act. But I think that there is another sense in which the other is given as other, as singular, and not merely in a way that phenomenologically mirrors a kind of negative theology. The other as other is not simply what transcends the given, for this other *is* given; we experience the other in their alterity. So there is a sense, though it is of course not the only sense that the other person has in our everyday experience, in which the other is given “without givenness,” in Laruelle’s phrase, or in other words, in which the other is *given* as irreducible to the correlate of our consciousness.

<sup>2</sup> It will not be too controversial to suggest that the ability to try another’s qualities and identities on for size has its limits. It is one thing if the quality of the other with which we seek to empathize is, for example, their short stature, a quality that leads them to feel unhappily unnoticed in certain social situations. In empathizing with such a person, we may very well recollect a time at which we too felt unnoticed for this or that reason, and we may consider the similarities between the quality that led to this and the other’s short stature, thus getting some sense of what it might be like to have the other’s particular experience. But suppose that the other bears some quality or identity that is structurally oppressed: say, a gender or race or sexuality that leads to an experience of the world completely foreign, let us imagine, to our own. Can empathy bridge such gaps? Similarities – that oneself and the other are human beings, that both experience a world, and so on – presumably might not be sufficient to allow one to get a grip on the other’s experience as structurally oppressed. If this is the case, then we might wonder how we can relate to the other’s experience. Setting empathy aside, in what fashion or by what means are we to comport ourselves toward this other? When we cannot grasp another’s experience, but still wish to respond to them in some way: this, I think, is the sort of situation in which a conception of hospitality to others no matter their qualities, rather than empathy per se, becomes quite important. When we cannot empathize, our moral obligations do not run out.

understand, to some extent, what it might be like to experience the world as these others do. It is in this sense that we can say that an important part of our relations with other people is that they are people *like us*, despite our qualitative differences.

However, we do not merely experience other people as people like us, as people whose difference from us can be wholly comprehended, understood, or taken up by us as knowledge of their experience. Other people, beyond the positions they occupy in collective life, or the particular qualities that individuate them to us such that we come to see them as *this* or *that* kind of person, are given to us in their singularity and alterity. The other is not what one is. Nor is the other inextricably correlated with one's own perceptions or consciousness of them (see Levinas 1991a: 87). The other is not grasped in being identified as the noematic correlate of one's noetic act. Nor are they totalized in what one makes of them. But the singularity and alterity that render the totalization of the other in one's consciousness unthinkable are, it nevertheless seems, given in our experience of them: we experience the other *as singular, as other*, and not in such a way that more basic similarities could allow us to try this singularity and otherness on for size.<sup>3</sup>

An aspect of this inability to totalize the other by picking out differentiating and defining features, with a background of commonality that makes analogy possible, is no doubt related to the potential for the other to become otherwise than what they qualitatively are. No finite set of perceptions of the other, we might say, can grasp the whole of what they are able to become. But this aspect is not the only sense in which the other is given to us as non-totalizable.<sup>4</sup> In the moment in which a singular

<sup>3</sup> One may reply: but are we not other too? Are we not the other as far as the other is concerned? This line of questioning, one assumes, will lead us to see the centrality of reciprocation and mutual recognition, over and above the supposed importance of hospitality to the other no matter what they show in return. Surely reciprocation occupies a vital place in collective life, and it would not be sensible to dispute that. However, moral life does not consist *only* in such reciprocation, in empathy and analogy and mutual recognition, but also in acts and experiences in which one expects nothing in return. Consider, for instance, such phenomena as love for strangers, self-abnegation, some cases of gift-giving, etc. When hospitality is reciprocated, we can picture two people with two separate, unidirectional arrows running between them. When mutual recognition is reciprocated, we can picture two people with a single, bidirectional arrow running between them. We can then ask, as I think we should, about the coexistence of these two pictures.

<sup>4</sup> Linda Zagzebski, in her illuminating paper 'The Uniqueness of Persons,' proposes that persons "have irreplaceable value because of their incommunicable subjectivity" (Zagzebski 2001: 418). She distinguishes helpfully between *irreplaceable value*, which cannot be compared between persons such that we can call one person more valuable than another, and *infinite value*, which is at minimum open to comparison, since what is infinitely valuable is more valuable than what is finitely valuable and is as valuable as whatever else is infinitely valuable.

The former sort of value is linked to subjectivity (following Wojtyła). Why subjectivity? Because it is not a "what," not an instantiation of a property or quality that precedes it and grants it its sense. Since subjectivity, on Zagzebski's view, is not qualitative, it is not given over to the comparability inherent to the concept of infinite value (qualities can be instantiated by more than one person, whereas subjectivity is not this sort of thing). Thus it can ground irreplaceable value, the singularity of persons. Zagzebski tells us that "what is irreplaceable about a person is something non-qualitative that nobody else has or even could have" (2001: 415). She adds in a note, "persons have qualities in addition to possessing subjectivity. Some/one of the former grounds their infinite value; the latter grounds their irreplaceable value" (2001: 418, n. 18). As should be clear in this paper, I am rather sympathetic to this view. Indeed, I think that understanding the relationship between moral life and social or communal life involves under-

other person is at first given to us, it is not only the possible lives they might lead, or the attributes they might be concealing, that produce in us the sense that they are altogether other than us, that likeness and qualitative difference cannot in fact carry the day. The other is ungraspable *in* their very presentation to us, and the inability to totalize whatsoever they are as they are given to us, unrealized qualitative possibilities or masked attributes aside, plays an indispensable role in ethical experience.<sup>5</sup> When we feel ourselves to be responsible for others, when we consider it imperative to show a certain hospitality to others no matter the qualities they bear or the positions in society they occupy, the sense of the other person that is constitutive of the experience of them that is so consequential in this regard is the sense they have as singular and in excess of our capacity to comprehend them in full.<sup>6</sup>

There are then two basic ways in which other people figure in our experience: as people fundamentally like us with whom we can set up analogies that permit us to empathize across whatever differences might function to distinguish us,<sup>7</sup> and as others fundamentally singular and distinct from us, others who are given with a sense of alterity that is not captured by the sort of qualitative unlikeness putatively seen to be secondary to basic commonalities that pave the way for empathetic acts. It is of

---

Footnote 4 (continued)

standing the relationship between the irreplaceable value of non-qualitative persons and the comparable and qualitative value of communal subjects.

Now my view is that an understanding of this relationship that allows for their coexistence must entail the *priority* of the former. Zagzebski seems to hint at this (2001: 240), but the view is not sketched in full. In Rosen 2019, I sketch what I take to be a more complete view of this coexistence: I think that non-qualitative value is what is involved in love for strangers, while qualitative value is what is involved in preferential love. I contend that their coexistence has to be understood as ordered in a particular way.

That being said, my account differs from Zagzebski's in several stark ways. For one thing, I follow Levinas in using the term "infinite" to refer to the non-qualitative and "finite" to refer to the qualitative, where my use of "infinite" refers to that which is *not* comparable. Second, I do not equate non-qualitative value with subjectivity as such, for I worry that this may unhelpfully pave the way to comparability (so-and-so is a subject like me, God is an omnibus subject while I am not, etc.). Third, Zagzebski wants to make the non-qualitative and qualitative distinction one that separates the sense of a human being qua person from the sense of a human being qua instance of "human nature". My view is that what is really important about qualitative value is its communal and social function in terms of identities, qualities, etc., in collective life. And fourth, I think that the irreplaceable value of the non-qualitative is tied up with its alterity vis-à-vis the qualitative (hence the role that otherness plays in my picture). Zagzebski does not discuss this, but it is here that I see singularity, alterity, and genericity (in the sense of not being qualitative) to be linked.

<sup>5</sup> The reader may find it helpful to refer to Levinas 1991b, where this idea occupies much of the discussion of one's moral relations to other people.

<sup>6</sup> I have elsewhere argued that this sense of the other person plays an important role in the phenomenon of neighborly or non-preferential love; see Rosen 2019. Seeing other people in this way may further prove to be a substantive part of what it is to lead a moral life. Consider, from Murdoch's 'Vision and Choice in Morality': "When we apprehend and assess other people... we consider something... elusive which may be called their total vision of life, as shown in their mode of speech, their choice of words, their assessments of others, their conception of their own lives... in short the configurations of their thought which show continually in their reactions and conversation" (Murdoch 1999: 80f.). Murdoch evidently thinks that such configurations are rather consequential for the moral life. And the way in which we see others, the way in which we make sense of how they show up to us, is no small part of this.

<sup>7</sup> Analogies are not necessarily inferential. They can characterize one's experience of others *itself*. See note 19.

great consequence that these two ways in which other people figure in our experience are understood to be *coexistent*. The sense of the other person as someone who shares an essential sameness with oneself is of the utmost importance for much of what typifies communal life. For instance, when joint attention develops in infants, generally at about nine months of age, it emerges in a context that is communicative; that is, it emerges on the basis of a pre-linguistic structure that exists between infants and their caregivers, and it in turn supports language acquisition.<sup>8</sup> In joint attention, the infant secures a given reference to the world by making it alongside a caregiver, ensuring that their experience intersects with that of the caregiver. This is essentially a communicative development: the infant communicates a reference and wants the caregiver to secure that reference by joining in referring through attending. The understanding that an infant has to have of an adult co-attender such that the episode at hand can be one of joint attention is an understanding that the adult co-attender is someone sufficiently *like* the infant to have a similar experience of a shared world. The second-personal relation here is one of analogy. And of course, the capacity to jointly attend to a common world in this way, which to be sure is a part of what it takes to jointly act in that world to achieve collective ends, is of pivotal significance for community.

On the other hand, the sense of the other person that is so crucially operative here is unable, by itself, to do justice to our moral experience. When we care about others, or ask about whether we should or should not treat them in such-and-such a way, it is of real consequence that they be *others*, and not inextricable from, or necessarily correlated with, oneself. We do not experience our ethical concerns as inevitably self-centered or self-indulgent, and the singularity and alterity of the other person allow for these concerns to be genuinely other-directed (for it is only in this way that there are genuine others).<sup>9</sup> No matter how we conceive of the rules or obligations of moral life, it is a feature of this life that we attempt to act *toward others* in a specific

<sup>8</sup> On joint attention, see Bruner 1983. It may also be helpful to see Eilan 2005.

<sup>9</sup> An objector may respond: “This may be the case if one thinks that ethics is principally about how we should treat other people, or how we ought to act in light of their presence in our lives, but suppose that one instead thinks that ethics is principally about self-cultivation. If the ethical task par excellence is the acquisition of certain values, or the work to realize particular virtues in oneself, then it seems that ethics is basically a self-directed enterprise. One labors to better oneself, and other people are something of an afterthought. Sure, one can serve as an exemplar for others, or admire others as virtuous, but the aim is to become a virtuous agent, to aspire to a set of moral values, to limit one’s vices, and so on. Ethics is about the self”. I do not believe that we need to find this kind of objection very worrisome. For an agent that treats others poorly – an agent that does not care at all for the way in which their attitudes and actions affect others – will not, by my lights, be virtuous. Self-cultivation entails, we might plausibly think, other-directedness.

Now, the objector may reply to this: “That is all fine and good, but one nevertheless treats others in a virtuous way *for the sake of oneself*, in order to be a moral agent, an upstanding person, etc. The other person is in some sense a means to this”. Here, it seems to me that the objector is mistaken. They have an unconvincing picture of what self-cultivation involves. For I think it is rather dubious that employing the other as a means to become a virtuous agent for one’s own sake is in fact virtuous (on most views of the cultivation of virtue, this cultivation must itself be virtuous). Non-self-indulgent moral concerns still seem to be an irreducible aspect of that to which an agent who seeks to cultivate herself aims to attend.

way.<sup>10</sup> For that to be the case, there have to be legitimate others: other people whom we experience in their singularity and otherness.

The coexistence of the other with whom one can analogize and the other who is fundamentally non-totalizable is thus rather pertinent for the coexistence of communal and ethical experience. In communal life—two atomic instances of which are joint attention and joint action—the other has to be understood as someone with whom it is, all things considered, conceivable to empathize. It matters that we are able to pick out sameness as definitive. And in moral life, insofar as our responsibility to others, our sense that we owe them a hospitality without regard to their supposedly characterizing qualities, is rooted phenomenologically in our experience of them, the other has to be understood as someone who is singular and alteritous, someone who cannot be set in place or held in our grasp. Any way in which we seek to make sense of how other people are given to us in our experience, inasmuch as these two senses of the other are seen to be consequential for the sorts of communal and moral lives we lead, therefore has to be able to accommodate their coexistence.

In this essay, I want to ask whether phenomenological accounts of empathy as the method whereby we arrive at, or constitute for ourselves, a world of others, a world in which we partake of intersubjective experience, can effect or be reconciled with a picture of the givenness of other people with the general shape I have sketched above. I begin by explicating Husserl's theory of empathy in light of the prominent role it plays in his transcendental phenomenology, paying particular attention to the reduction to a purely egoic sphere (§2), and to the aspects or steps of empathy that ostensibly permit a subject to re-inhabit a world of others from out of this sphere (§3). In the course of querying Husserl's account, I consider a series of problems, raised by Zhida Luo, concerning the apparent centrality of physiomorphic bodily similarity and visual perception of the other's body (§4). I sketch Luo's solution, which involves a shift to a focus on tactile similarity (§5). Although Luo's adjustments may render the Husserlian theory more convincing as a theory of empathy, I do not believe that these adjustments are sufficient to make room for the givenness of another person not originally predicated on similarity. I thus argue (§6) that one cause for concern regarding Luo's solution is that similarity remains the primary motivator for empathy. To clarify what is at issue here, I look briefly to the picture of empathy presented in the psychoanalytic self psychology of Heinz Kohut. Another cause for concern, I contend (§7), is the role that an assimilating apperception of the other continues to play in the account. I turn to Edith Stein's phenomenology of empathy, as expounded in her 1917 book, *On the Problem of Empathy*, to throw what I mean here into starker relief. A third cause for concern, I then argue (§8), is that other people are still constituted through their discovery by the ego, still fundamentally comprehended by way of the ego's categories and self-same concepts.

<sup>10</sup> One may think that others are to be treated in such a way that one's actions manifest a certain set of virtues; or one may think we are to act toward others such that our action could be universally willable; or one may think that in acting we should seek to maximize the pleasure and minimize the suffering of as many others as possible; etc. In each case, however, one thinks that *there are others who are not oneself*, and that *it matters how one treats them*.

I conclude (§9) with a remark about what might be required, given the inability of the phenomenological accounts of empathy considered to make room for the experience of others as singular and genuinely other, for a picture of our phenomenal life to have a shape that permits it to account for the coexistence of empathy to others as people like oneself and hospitality to others as genuine others.

2. For Husserl, making sense of the givenness of other people requires a movement from out of a sphere that is at first wholly solipsistic, or egoic.<sup>11</sup> In our ordinary experience of the world, the presence of other people plays a substantive part in constituting a great deal of the meaning we perceive in various acts and customs, the signification we grant to, or find in, various objects and practices. So much of what we do each day is given its sense by being placed contextually within collective life. To understand the givenness of other people in our experience, to arrive at this without incorporating from the start our judgments about other people or the fashion in which we comport ourselves toward them, it is necessary, Husserl thinks, to bracket everything in our experience that is not due to the workings of exclusively subjective consciousness. Since our aim is to arrive at the existence of others in our experience without naively taking the existence of others for granted from the initial stages of phenomenological exploration,<sup>12</sup> part of this bracketing consists in setting aside anything in our consciousness that concerns intentional directedness toward others (Overgaard 2002). As Luo puts it, in this way it is possible to “articulate a realm consisting merely of one’s own ego and one’s conscious life, a genuinely egoic sphere that is deprived of all reference to the other” (Luo 2017: 47). Through this bracketing, Husserl claims that we are able to strictly distinguish the properly egoic realm from that which is foreign, that which is collective, or in which other subjectivities play a constituting role. Thus, those sense-validities that involve or concern others are essentially pasteurized, cleansed of the contamination of other subjectivities so that a world apart from any others, or references to others, can be demarcated and phenomenologically inhabited. Once this bracketing has been undertaken, it is possible to ascertain a particular sort of entity in which the ego resides with immediacy: this is the lived body (*Leib*). It is around the lived body, having abstracted away whatever is constitutively distinct from it and its determinations, that an ego structures its world. It is through this entity that an ego orients itself in its world.

The reduction from a world of others and references to others to a purely egoic sphere, in which it is possible to pick out the lived body, prepares the ground for a theory of empathy. Such a theory aims to spell out how to rediscover a world of others from the bareness of the egoic sphere, thereby legitimizing that world by founding it *in* the wholly egoic, debarring skeptical challenges from solipsism in

<sup>11</sup> It may be helpful to refer to Husserliana VIII: 176, and Husserliana XVII: 276. Zahavi puts it this way: “the phenomenologist must start as a solipsist... and necessarily, at least initially, effectuate a so-called primordial reduction, that is, a reduction that has the aim of isolating a sphere of ownness – the totality of which can be constituted by an isolated ego without the contribution of any other subjects” (Zahavi 2003: 100, emphasis removed). See also Husserliana XVII: 248.

<sup>12</sup> Husserl accuses Max Scheler of presuming that the existence of others is a basic fact about the world, a fact that is not open to any further inquiry, requiring no further phenomenological grounding. See Husserliana XIV: 335.



painstakingly demonstrating the precise movement from the egoic to the intersubjective sphere.<sup>13</sup>

Several questions can already be raised here. First, we may worry that Husserl's strategy—to bracket the world of others, inhabit a purely egoic sphere, and then rediscover (and thus legitimate) a world of others in a purportedly rigorous fashion—is not in fact phenomenological, but rather theoretical or even speculative. For the world as it is given to a subject is *not* a world devoid of others. Our experience of the world is not one in which a purely egoic realm, a realm without even so much as a reference to other subjects, is regularly inhabited or seems to root our experience of the wider world. Indeed, our experience of the world as inhabited by other people, whom we encounter with some frequency, does not seem from a phenomenological perspective as if it should be in need of external theoretical legitimacy granted by the rigors of a movement from out of a voluntary solipsistic reduction. After all, the world that is given to us is already a world of others.<sup>14</sup>

Second, we may wonder whether the other who is arrived at via a movement from out of the egoic sphere, should this be found to be possible, will inevitably be fixed to our discovery of them. In our everyday encounters with others, it does not seem to be the case that these others are given *as* those we have reached through strenuous mental or theoretical exertions, linked in their very existence to our rediscovery of them from the initial point of the wholly egoic sphere and the lived body (which

<sup>13</sup> Zahavi demurs: “Transcendental phenomenology is only apparently solipsistic, and the reason for introducing the primordial reduction is methodological in nature. It is only possible to realize the full extent of the significance of intersubjectivity when we realize how little the single subject can manage on its own” (Zahavi 2003: 111, emphasis removed). Merleau-Ponty makes a similar point when he writes that “the most important lesson of the reduction is the impossibility of the complete reduction” (Merleau-Ponty 2012: lxxvii). Insofar as this is the case, the reduction seems to serve an anti-Cartesian aim, precisely by going along with a phenomenological version of the Cartesian project in order to rigorously demonstrate its impossibility. One engages in the reduction, trying to cast off the world of others, in order to show that it cannot get off the ground, to show that intersubjectivity really is fundamental after all. The reduction, as a form of reflection, will be shown to depend on a life on which one at first does not reflect.

This view of the reduction, held in tandem with a positive view of Husserlian empathy, faces at least two problems. First, it is not clear that this is what Husserl himself had in mind. Perhaps he came to this view eventually, but he certainly took the Cartesian project quite seriously; it is doubtful that he meant it merely as a kind of *reductio*. Second, and more importantly, it seems dubious that such a method is required to show that we cannot fully separate ourselves off from a world of others. But even if it is, it is still the case that it renders the empathetic process – the movement from the purely egoic sphere to a reconstituted world of others – both impossible (since there is no purely egoic sphere) and needless (since a world of others is fundamental and cannot be thoroughly doubted).

<sup>14</sup> We can wonder here whether the demarcation of the phenomenological attitude from the natural attitude is really so fixed. First, we might plausibly think that some phenomena in ordinary experience manifest to us in such a way that their existence is not at issue. We may not have undertaken the reduction, and yet we may not much care about the reality of a phenomenon. Lacoste, in his *The Appearing of God*, gives the example of listening to a piece of music in the natural attitude. In attending to the sound of the music, he claims, one cares about the sound and what it produces in oneself, not about its reality. Second, we might reasonably worry that a complete reduction, if it is possible, distorts the phenomena at issue. Lacoste speaks of “irreducible phenomena” that are in some way lost or warped in the reduction to a phenomenological attitude. Now, I think that it *does* matter for moral experience that others are given as real others (and as really other), that they exist (and exist as what I am not). Attending to moral phenomena without losing or distorting them, we might then think, involves a commitment to realism about other people. Such a “metaphysical” belief may be of great moral consequence.



is of course not really the initial point, for we begin in *bracketing* what is initial: a world of others who are given to us without the exertions of a movement out of solipsism). So we might worry that the Husserlian movement will color our experience of others artificially, giving us a sense of other people that is not at all originary.

And third, we may think that the bracketing of the world as it is first given to us, the reduction to the lived body alone, is not possible. For we might claim that some substantial part of our first-personal self-consciousness, or interpretation of ourselves, requires second-personal relations or other-directedness from the start.<sup>15</sup> Or we may think that, even if this bracketing *is* possible, the movement back to a world of others is *not*, thereby stranding us in a solipsism we feel unable to escape (at least if we share Husserl's conception of the rigor required).

The principal question for my purposes, however, is whether the other reached after the reduction to the egoic sphere and the rediscovery of a world of others through empathy is another person in the sense of being *both* someone with whom one is able to analogize and someone who is genuinely other and singular. To get clearer about this, it will be useful to elucidate Husserl's theory of empathy in further detail. My strategy for doing this will be as follows. First, I shall elaborate this theory according to the four aspects of it identified by Klaus Held. Second, I shall point out several issues raised by this elaboration of the theory and its usual interpretation. Third, I shall turn to what I believe is Luo's compelling suggestion about how to answer some of these issues, a suggestion that makes for a more convincing picture of empathy, even while it remains unable to accommodate the singularity and alterity of other people.

3. Husserl's conception of empathy describes the path by which a subject who has reduced itself to a properly egoic sphere, a subject who has picked out the centrality of the lived body, returns rigorously to a world of others. It consists, according to Held's interpretation, of four main aspects (Held 1972: 33f.).

To begin with (1), the subject who now inhabits a fully egoic sphere oriented around the lived body, having expunged the influence of, or reference to, any other subjectivity, perceives a foreign body that is sufficiently similar to its own body to appear significant. What is important here is *bodily similarity*, since it is the prominence of this that permits an "automatic" recognition that the foreign body is like, or can be paired with, the lived body. The automaticity here might be fruitfully compared to the non-agential ability that allows me to understand someone speaking my own language, without trying, and without really being able to resist.<sup>16</sup> It is the similarity of bodies that renders the foreign body, once it enters one's perceptual field, distinctive, i.e., like one's own body. Then (2), one experiences one's own lived

<sup>15</sup> At certain points, Husserl himself seems to claim this, such as in *Husserliana* XIII: 175, and *Husserliana* IV: 204f.. In *Husserliana* IX: 210, he acknowledges that the purely egoic sphere is in some sense an abstraction. And in *Husserliana* XIII: 170f., he recognizes the importance of social development for the capacity for self-understanding. Levinas further centralizes such claims with formulations of this kind: "I am 'in myself' through the others," or "I exist through the other and for the other" (Levinas 1989: 102, 104).

<sup>16</sup> I am indebted to Tom Frankfort for this point. He helpfully raised it at the Autumn 2019 London–Warwick Mind Forum.

body as a “twofold unity”: that is, it is experienced at once as a manifestly physical body (*Körperlichkeit*), and as a body with an experiential and psychological life (*Leiblichkeit*). The lived body is experienced as a unity with these two aspects.

Having recognized, in a kind of automatic way, the similarity of one’s own lived body and that of the other (3), one’s own body is “passively associated” with the foreign body such that one becomes aware of “what I would look like if I were viewing myself from where the other’s body is” (Luo 2017: 47). The mechanism here is first-personal: the other’s body is associated with my own through a kind of *de se* projection, since it is *I* who put myself in the other’s position. This *de se* projection is then experienced *from the inside*: I do not experience myself in the other’s position third-personally, as if from outside, but from within. This association having taken place, one’s own sense, in the egoic sphere, of being a lived body is *transferred* empathetically to the similar foreign body, which is now seen to be a lived body as well. This transfer is “motivated” by bodily similarity, though not in a reflective way, for the process is in some sense “automatic”.

Finally (4), one’s awareness of what one would look like from the vantage point of the foreign body, an awareness achieved in the *de se* projection, leads to an “assimilating apperception of the foreign body,” which is to say that one recognizes the *potential reciprocity* of this projection and comes to perceive the foreign body as a subject for whom there is a world, and not merely as an object in the world like any other. The foreign body is seen to be a subject like oneself whose recognition relativizes the absoluteness of my “here” as experienced in the egoic sphere, centered on the lived body.<sup>17</sup>

This empathetic process requires, from the very first step, a bodily similarity between oneself, in the egoic sphere, and the other. This similarity must be sufficient to make the other—the foreign body—prominent when it appears in one’s perceptual field.<sup>18</sup> But the foreign body cannot be given to me in the *same* way that my own body is given to me, for I inevitably experience it *as an external body* and not in the absoluteness of its “here,” its egoic sphere: the body of the other “is in fact not constituted in the same way as my own lived body, insofar as it cannot be given in the manner of null-appearance” (Husserliana XIII: 273f.). That is to say, it appears to me in a way that is *different* from how my own body is given to me. A troubling question then arises: as Luo perspicuously asks, “how do I experience and become

<sup>17</sup> Luo writes: “My lived body... is given to me in an immediate and unique way. It is the absolute ‘here’ that I can neither depart from nor move into, one that always orients my perceptual field as a ‘there’” (Luo 2017: 48). See also Husserliana XIII: 273f.

<sup>18</sup> On this point, see Husserliana I: 34, 150, Husserliana XIII: 270, and Husserliana XIV: 163. Zahavi contends that “Husserl takes empathy to presuppose a certain similarity between the foreign embodied subject I encounter and myself,” as we have observed. He further notes, however, that this “does not imply... that my experience of the Other is, in reality, a case of analogical inference... We are not dealing with any kind of inference, but with an actual experience” (Zahavi 2003: 113). That may very well be, but we should note that what is *not* implied is that the similarity, the analogy one draws between oneself and another, is inferential rather than simply experiential in nature. The similarity is not inferred but experienced. It is not thereby a problem to think that *this very experience* is importantly analogical, or minimally that it can be understood that way in stepping back and reflecting upon it.

aware of the physiomorphic similarity in question,” the similarity that is presupposed by the empathetic process elaborated above?

As Peter Reynaert suggests, one strategy we might devise to deal with this apparent non-synchronicity of the givenness of the foreign body and one’s own body involves a “self-physicalization” (*Verkörperung*), or self-objectivation, in which the foreign body in its physical manifestation (qua *Körper*) is seen to be essentially similar to one’s own physical manifestation (Reynaert 2001: 207, 210). This can be accomplished by drawing into comparison my body’s ability to alter its own spatial location, to be mobile, and the foreign body’s like ability (Husserliana XIII: 55, 266, 277, 289, 331f.). Thus, it can be said that one’s own body, through this self-objectivation, overlaps with the bodily appearance of the other, already physicalized in manifesting as an external body.

4. There are at least four problems with the physiomorphic account of the similarity that motivates the empathetic movement from the purely egoic sphere to a reconstituted world of others. For one thing, the givenness of the other *as a subject*, and not merely as a foreign object, remains rather opaque. And the self-objectivation that allows one to identify with the other, conceived in this light, seems to leave us with two objects rather than two subjects. This self-objectivating strategy, as Luo recognizes, “can provide little by way of a positive description of the givenness of the other’s subjectivity” (Luo 2017: 50). That is to say, it remains unclear how we are to move from an understanding of the other as a physical body, qua *Körper*, to an understanding of the other as a lived body, qua *Leib*. Second, one’s own body and the other’s body, both physicalized, nonetheless still seem to be given differently. It is generally possible to perceive the other’s body in a much more complete way than one can perceive one’s own body (especially assuming that one has no visual access, without the aid of tools such as mirrors, to many parts of one’s own body).<sup>19</sup> So it is not entirely convincing to suggest that self-physicalization can even motivate bodily similarity, let alone the movement from this similarity to the conception of the other as a subject.

Third, Reynaert persuasively argues that the self-objectivation strategy fails to bring into the light the bodily similarity required to get Husserl’s empathetic process going. The lived body is, for Husserl, necessarily tied to its absolute “here,” its center, such that it cannot successfully objectivate or physicalize itself in the manner prescribed by the strategy. The objectivation of the lived body, Reynaert contends, *already* requires the presence of an other *for whom* that body could be seen from the outside, an other who supposedly has no place in the purely egoic sphere. Thus, the self-objectivation strategy is inherently circular and renders impossible the bracketing of the egoic sphere that is meant to precede the empathetic movement. And that is not to mention that the agent that undergoes and enacts the objectivation of the subject seems to be none other than the subject itself, which in objectivating itself remains fundamentally a subject, since objectivation as a process seems to require this. And fourth, the self-objectivation strategy faces what I call a “zombie problem”: it might be argued that a foreign body could plausibly be very similar to my

<sup>19</sup> This issue is raised by Kozłowski 1991, 114.

own without being in any way conscious. So it seems as if the self-objectivation strategy has to tarry with a skepticism that threatens to expose the movement out of the egoic realm as resting on shaky ground.<sup>20</sup>

5. With these problems in view, Luo suggests that *physiomorphic* similarity “cannot truly motivate empathy” (Luo 2017: 50). For Luo, “the real problem... consists precisely in taking vision to be the privileged access to the foreign body and interpreting bodily similarity as physiomorphic in kind” (Luo 2017: 50). In order to preserve the Husserlian thesis that it is bodily similarity between oneself and the other person that motivates the whole empathetic process from its initial stages, Luo argues that the unitary yet twofold givenness of the lived body—roughly, as physical and as psychical—requires that we take seriously the priority of *tactile* experience.<sup>21</sup> Grounding this contention in paragraphs 36 and 37 of Husserl’s *Ideas II*,<sup>22</sup> Luo claims that the priority of the tactile as the motivating factor for bodily similarity is due to the fact that the “touching organ is undividedly related to what is touched” (Luo 2017: 51). In touching, one can shift one’s attention such that *either* aspect of the unitary lived body—as physical or as psychical—can be attentively inhabited. There is not sufficient space here to rehearse Luo’s argument in full, so suffice it to say that the principal claim is that, in establishing contact with others through our tactility, an interpersonal relation “comes into being,” which can motivate empathy without the requirement for *physiomorphic* bodily similarity (Luo 2017: 56). In Luo’s words, the detailed elucidation of “prereflectively functioning similarity in... tactual contact... can make clear the nature of bodily similarity” required for empathy to get going (Luo 2017: 56). This will allow us to “probe into the most original sort of bodily givenness of the other,” since the constitution of the other is “fundamentally similar to how my own body is tactually constituted as a twofold manifestation,” i.e., with a physical aspect and a psychical aspect (Luo 2017: 57).<sup>23</sup>

It seems likely that Luo’s proposal offers a conception of empathy that is preferable to the more customary interpretation of Husserl’s picture, simply because of the problems I have mentioned.<sup>24</sup> This is true at least insofar as the fundamental objections that Husserl’s account faces are due to the necessity of *physiomorphic* bodily similarity discovered in visual perception for empathy to so much as begin. Luo does not rely on self-objectivation, and does not seem as obviously to run into a zombie problem. But if we take a step back and consider the sense of the other person given in the form of empathy to which Luo’s proposal would lead us, I believe that we shall see that there is still no way in which to account for the singularity and

<sup>20</sup> As Luo notes, “if bodily similarity is defined as physiomorphic in kind, then Husserl’s theory of empathy encounters a skeptical threat instead of avoiding it” (Luo 2017: 50).

<sup>21</sup> On this notion of the unitary yet twofold givenness of the lived body, see Husserliana XIV: 57.

<sup>22</sup> That is, Husserliana IV.

<sup>23</sup> As Zahavi summarily puts this, “when my left hand touches my right hand, I experience myself in a way that anticipates the way in which I would experience an Other and an Other would experience me” (Zahavi 2003: 113).

<sup>24</sup> We still might ask whether tactile similarity is sufficient for empathy to get going. Are not certain social similarities, for instance, relevant at the very first stages of empathy, such that without them it cannot really get started?

alterity of the other person after the bracketing of the egoic sphere, the recognition of shared tactility, and the progression through the remaining steps of Husserlian empathy.<sup>25</sup> There are three salient reasons to think that this is so.

6. The first point to be made is that, after Luo's revision, similarity remains the motivating factor that sets empathy into motion. I empathize with another person precisely insofar as they appear as a foreign body that is significantly *like* my own, whether the likeness that is seen to be relevant is that of physiomorphy or tactility, that which is picked up by visual or tactile perception.<sup>26</sup> We can shed further light on the difficulties that thereby remain in the account by considering the psychoanalytical self psychology of Heinz Kohut, in which empathy—taken to be the “observational method” that “defines the contents and limits” of the psychological field (Kohut 1984: 465)—is likewise predicated on fundamental similarities (in this case, between the analyst and analysand). The psychoanalytical method of empathy, as Kohut understands it, consists of identifying a certain attribute that is therapeutically at issue and trying this attribute on for size. Kohut gives the example of an especially tall analysand who feels conspicuous because of this. The analyst, in trying the analysand's tallness on for size, recalls a time in which they felt conspicuous, thus “vicariously introspecting” into the inner life of the analysand.<sup>27</sup>

As Bruce Reis rightly has it, this method has been critiqued by those who worry that the resultant knowledge of the other's experience is “compromised, influenced, shaped and made uncertain by unacknowledged subjective aspects of the analyst's involvement” (Reis 2011: 75). Reis' solution is to read Kohut “through Husserl” in such a way that the analyst can be understood as “a cosubject with his patient,” who, through using “his own subjective reactions as the indication of the experience of others, and from his particular perspective, given his personal and cultural history *scientifically comes to know the mind of the other as it is instantiated intersubjectively*” (Reis 2011: 81, emphasis added).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> In fact, we may worry that the movement of empathy in some sense *replaces* the singularity and alterity of other people experienced in ordinary circumstances with a notion – which thus appears to be theoretically inflected, and not merely a description of phenomenal life – of intersubjectivity that no longer leaves any room for other people except as totalized, as being just the noematic correlate of one's noesis. Husserl seems to enoble such a worry when he writes, “in general, the serious mutual exteriority of ego-persons, their being alongside one another, *ceases* in favor of an inward being-for-one-another and mutual interpenetration...” (Husserl 1996: 13, emphasis added).

<sup>26</sup> Nietzsche seems to be objecting to a similar kind of maneuver when he writes that “to view and take in the experiences of others *as if they were our own...* this would destroy us, and in very short order” (Nietzsche 2011: §137).

<sup>27</sup> This anecdote can be found in Kohut 1959. It may also be helpful to refer to Ornstein 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Reis leaves opaque the sort of work that the locution “as it is instantiated intersubjectively” is doing here. What does the “intersubjectively instantiated” mind of the other have in common with the private mind of the other? Is the latter mind communicable, or is there even a mind of the other that is not “intersubjectively instantiated”? A great deal evidently hangs on whether the other's mind into which empathy qua vicarious introspection is supposed to peer is that mind as such, a distortion of it, or something else entirely. For Kohut, it seems that what one experiences in empathizing is what it is like to have the quality, and the experience to which that quality leads (say, tallness and conspicuousness), of the other. But of course this is by no means the other's “mind” or subjectivity *as such*.

There are two questions we might ask about this. First, is it a convincing account of empathy? And second, is it a convincing account of the givenness of others in our experience? For Husserl, and it seems for Kohut, the latter question is, at the most basic level, straightforwardly a way of rephrasing the former question. But we need not think this to be the case to find the account offered of empathy compelling. Consider the tall analysand who feels conspicuous: on the basis of fundamental similarities—the analyst and analysand are both human, they both experience the world in markedly similar ways, they may share a culture, etc.—the analyst is able to try on for size a particular differentiating quality that the analysand possesses, which the analyst does not possess. The analyst can introspect into the inner or psychological life of the analysand vicariously, because similarities, which set empathy into motion and permit differentiating qualities to be tried on for size, carry the day. The other is not other in any absolute way. They are in principle open to view, comprehensible, graspable. The analyst can set up analogies with the analysand such that the analysand’s inner experience can be vicariously experienced outside of its original context in the lived body of the analysand. Intersubjectivity is thus grounded on the sameness that allows for analogy and empathy. But it is by no means clear that the other with whom one empathizes is given as singular or alteritous here. What matters is that they are given as *sufficiently like oneself* to allow for a movement out of the solipsism of the egoic sphere. However, it then remains obscure in what sense one has in fact escaped from solipsism, since the other of the newly constituted intersubjective world is not obviously other. We at least have reason, it seems, to sound a skeptical note about whether the sense of the other given in and through empathy is genuinely other. Luo’s tactile interpretation of Husserlian empathy provides no solution here. Nor does Reis’ reading of Kohut through Husserl.

7. The second reason why Husserlian empathy, even in the formulations offered by Luo and Reis, remains unable to internally account for the singularity and alterity of other people is that an “assimilating apperception” of the other continues to play a vital role in the empathetic process. Recall that the fourth aspect or step of Husserl’s account of empathy, as expounded by Held, consists in an “assimilating apperception of the foreign body” in which that body is recognized to be a subject of the world, and not merely an object in the world. As we saw, Husserl’s own account may be unable to bring this about, insofar as it relies on the visual perception of physiomorphic bodily similarities or a strategy of self-physicalization. But even insofar as Luo’s tactility strategy, or Reis’ elaboration of empathy as Kohutian vicarious introspection, makes this assimilating apperception of the foreign body possible, it nonetheless remains the case that the other is, in empathy’s accomplishment, *assimilated*, or seen to be a subject who is, as a subject, fundamentally like oneself.

Even when Edith Stein, in her phenomenology of empathy as explicated in her 1917 book, *On the Problem of Empathy*, argues that the feeling that drives and sustains empathy is not one of unity, of being “at one with” the other, she nevertheless contends that there is in empathy always a correlation with the other (Svenaeus 2018: 745). In feeling one’s way into the experiences of another person, the Steinian empath is “pulled into” the experience of the other such that the empath is “at the subject of the original experience, at the subject’s place” (Stein 2008: 18f., emphasis added). The singularity and alterity of the other person never explicitly figure.

The other is the subjective position *at which* I come to be. This *being at the other's position* is the achievement of empathy, and one can then step back and reflectively “comprehensively objectify,” or get a grip on, the other's experience as *their* experience. A *de se* projection experienced from within gives way to empathetic understanding. But the other as other is not expressly given.

Now it may be claimed that this sense of the other person is given as a horizontal feature of our experience of the other in the empathetic sense. Perhaps we are implicitly aware of the alterity and singularity of the other, even if this is not explicitly given. Or perhaps we infer this from the originary sense of the other with whom we can empathize and analogize. Or perhaps the alterity and singularity of the other are given, included in our experience, as that which is excluded, that which simply exceeds our grasp.<sup>29</sup> It seems to me, though, that such suggestions, made with a gesture that is something like grasping at straws, neither reflect our genuine experience of the way in which singular others who are not us, and not inextricable from us, are given to us, nor allow for the importance in the moral life of the way in which this sense of the other—as legitimately other—shows up for us.<sup>30</sup>

8. There is a third reason why it does not seem that Husserlian empathy is capable of making sense of the givenness of other people as singular and as other: the movement from the bracketed egoic sphere to a reconstituted world of intersubjectivity,

<sup>29</sup> It may be tempting to suggest that the givenness of the other person as singular and as genuinely other resembles the givenness of the saturated phenomenon in the work of Jean-Luc Marion. For Marion, a saturated phenomenon is a phenomenon that manifests with such potent fulfillment, such profuse or shattering givenness, that it *saturates* those acts of consciousness that intend it. The other, qua saturated phenomenon, would be given to me with such potency of manifestation that my intentions aimed at it would be overwhelmed. It cannot be objectivated. In this case, the other would be given as *that which I cannot grasp*, as the non-totalizable par excellence. The alterity and singularity of the other are then seen to consist purely in negativity, exclusion from the intentional act, saturation, or excess.

But this *simpliciter* is not my contention. I do indeed think that the other is non-totalizable, not reducible in principle to the noematic correlate of one's noetic acts. But I also think that the positive experience of the other in ordinary circumstances is of the other *as singular* and *as other*. It is not the excess of the other that, in being given to me, gives the other's otherness. The other is given in the first instance, in my very experience, as other than me. Zahavi seems close to Marion here: “The self-givenness of the Other is inaccessible and transcendent to me, but it is exactly this limit that I can experience... I am exactly experiencing that the Other... eludes me” (Zahavi 2003: 114). This may be true, but I do not think that this observation has in its sights the originary experience of the other person as other. I experience another person as other, and not originarily my own limits or those of my projections.

<sup>30</sup> Concern for the way in which the sense of the presentation of others in our experience is consequential for the moral life is to be found in much of the phenomenology that succeeded Husserl and Heidegger. Emmanuel Levinas, for example, begins his *Totality and Infinity*, which Derrida later called a “treatise on hospitality,” this way: “Everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality” (Levinas 1991b: 21). Levinas understood this to be an explicitly phenomenological project, a clarification of the way in which we, in our phenomenal life, stand in relation to others. A study of our experience of being in the world is a study of ethical experience, and it is only in this study that we can know whether or not we have been duped by morality. Michel Henry too, in *Incarnation*, sought the root of community in life's auto-affection – the givenness of givenness to itself – and in a phenomenological reading of the “mystical body of Christ”. Questions remain for these accounts. We may ask of Levinas, in virtue of what capacity is the other as other given to us? Perhaps Levinas' “hospitality” names this capacity, but what is it and how do we cultivate it or wake up to it? We may ask of Henry, how does the individuation of others arise if we are all joined in the auto-affection of Christ's life? In any case, the ground I tread on here is by no means novel, even if many questions remain.



of others and references to others, seems to tie the very existence of others in our consciousness to our own discovery of them, linking the being of others to our own labors to escape the reduction to solipsism. But other people in ordinary experience are not given with this genealogy, this debt to our own philosophical toil. And conceiving of the givenness of others in this way seems to render any other-directed ethical concern or act essentially self-directed, since the very presence of the other in moral consciousness is one's own doing.<sup>31</sup> I think that the phenomenology of other-directed or self-forgetful moral states and activities, such as non-preferential love for strangers, self-abnegation, and the self-emptying of kenosis, then poses a very convincing objection to the Husserlian account. Luo's adjustments to this account do not seem sufficient to answer this objection, nor do the developments of empathy found in Kohut or Stein.<sup>32</sup>

9. The shape that a picture of our phenomenal life would have to take in order to accommodate the coexistence of the sense of other people arrived at via empathy and the sense of other people as singular and genuinely other remains to be further detailed.<sup>33</sup> We can say, however, that an account of empathy in a generally Husserlian shape does not seem in itself to be up to the task. It may be that Husserl's account, along with the adjustments made by Luo, or as elaborated by Kohut or Stein, provides a picture of the way in which we can reach a sense of the other with whom we can analogize that is able to coexist with a separate picture of the way in which a sense of the other who is singular and alteritous is given to us.<sup>34</sup> But how two such pictures could coexist—what such a coexistence would entail—bears considerable further elaboration that cannot be undertaken here. Be that as it may, it seems fair to say that, while phenomenological accounts of empathy as the way in which we arrive at a world of others, a world in which we partake of intersubjective experience, may be able to be reconciled with a picture of the givenness of other people as singular and alteritous, such accounts are unable in themselves to provide

<sup>31</sup> Zahavi seems to lend credence to this view when he writes, "the ego constitutes the Other... To speak of an Other or of something foreign is to use concepts of relation whose meaning *presupposes the ego* as contrast. The foreign is exactly foreign *for me*, the Other is exactly an Other *in relation to me*..." (Zahavi 2003: 115, emphasis added).

<sup>32</sup> Elements of Stein's phenomenology of empathy, it should be said, do seem to admit of a reading in which a more substantive sense of the otherness of the other person plays a part. Statements to this effect can be found especially in the sections entitled 'Negative Empathy,' 'Empathy and a Feeling of Oneness,' and 'Soul and Person' in *On the Problem of Empathy*. Stein refers to what at certain points seems like a genuinely foreign subject, experienceable as separable from the intersubjectivity one constitutes in empathizing. Other elements of Stein's book seem to vitiate such references. These elements are for the most part identifiably elements of Husserl's own account of empathy, or elaborations of that account in a Steinian register. Whether the more compelling elements of Stein's account can be brought out without the less compelling elements – which make up much of the theory of empathy itself – is a matter that admits of more discussion than is possible here.

<sup>33</sup> I attempt to further elaborate such a picture in regard to the coexistence of non-preferential love or love of others as others and preferential love or love of others to whom one stands in relation in Rosen 2019.

<sup>34</sup> And, perhaps, given to us in virtue of capacities we exercise or can learn to exercise. See my question regarding Levinas' account in note 31.

such a picture. To arrive at a satisfactory picture of the givenness of other people, we shall have to look elsewhere.

**Acknowledgments** I would like to thank the faculty and students at the University of Warwick, who provided me with a welcoming place to do this research. I was greatly helped by Peter Poellner and those students in the 2019–20 Origins of Phenomenology seminar.

#### Declarations

**Conflict of interest** On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

## References

- Bruner, J. (1983). *Child's talk: Learning to use language*. W. W. Norton & Co.
- Eilan, N. (2005). Joint attention, communication, and mind. In N. Eilan, C. Hoerl, T. McCormack, & J. Roessler (Eds.), *Joint attention: Communication and other minds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Held, K. (1972). Das Problem der Intersubjektivität und die Idee einer phänomenologischen Transzendentalphilosophie. In K. H. Ulrich Claesges (Ed.), *Perspektiven transzendentalphänomenologischer Forschung: Für Ludwig Langdgrebe zum 70. Geburtstag von seinen Kölner Schülern*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Henry, M. (2015). *Incarnation: A philosophy of the flesh*, trans. Karl Hefty. Northwestern University Press.
- Husserl, E. (1950). Husserliana I: *Cartesiansche Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*. In S. Strasser (Ed.). Martinus Nijhoff. English translation: *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns. Martinus Nijhoff, 1969.
- Husserl, E. (1952). Husserliana IV: *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch*. In M. Biemel (Ed.). Martinus Nijhoff. English translation: *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy – Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer. Kluwer, 1989.
- Husserl, E. (1959). Husserliana VIII: *Erste Philosophie (1923/24). Zweiter Teil. Theorie der phänomenologischen Reduktion*. In R. Boehm (Ed.). Martinus Nijhoff, 1959.
- Husserl, E. (1968). Husserliana IX: *Phänomenologische Psychologie. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925*. Walter Biemel (Ed.). Martinus Nijhoff. English translation: *Phenomenological Psychology: Lectures, Summer Semester, 1925*, trans. J. Scanlon. Martinus Nijhoff, 1977.
- Husserl, E. (1973). Husserliana XIII: *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Erster Teil: 1905–1920*, ed. I. Kern. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Husserl, E. (1973). Husserliana XIV: *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Zweiter Teil: 1921–1928*. I. Kern (Ed.). Martinus Nijhoff.
- Husserl, E. (1974). Husserliana XVII: *Formale und transzendente Logik. Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft*. In Paul Janssen (Ed.) Martinus Nijhoff. English translation: *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns. Martinus Nijhoff, 1969.

- Husserl, E. (1996). The Vienna Lecture. In R. Kearney & M. Rainwater (Ed.), *The continental philosophy reader* (p. 7–14). Routledge.
- Kohut, H. (1959). Introspection, empathy, and psychoanalysis: An examination of the relationship between mode of observation and theory. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 7(3), 459–483.
- Kohut, H. (1984). *How does analysis cure?* The University of Chicago Press.
- Kohut, H. (2010). On empathy. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 5, 122–131.
- Kozlowski, R. (1991). *Die Aporien der Intersubjektivität: eine Auseinandersetzung mit Edmund Husserls Intersubjektivitätstheorie*. Königshausen & Neumann.
- Lacoste, J.-Y. (2018). *The appearing of God*, trans. Oliver O'Donovan. Oxford University Press.
- Levinas, E. (1989). *The Levinas reader*, ed. Seán Hand. Basil Blackwell.
- Levinas, E. (1991a). *Otherwise than being or beyond essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis. Kluwer.
- Levinas, E. (1991b). *Totality and infinity: An essay on exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis. Kluwer.
- Luo, Z. (2017). Motivating empathy: The problem of bodily similarity in Husserl's theory of empathy. *Husserl Studies*, 33(1), 45–61.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). *Phenomenology of perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes. Routledge.
- Murdoch, I. (1999). *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*. Penguin Books.
- Nietzsche, F. (2011). *Dawn*, trans. Brittain Smith. Stanford University Press.
- Ornstein, P. H. (2011). The centrality of empathy in psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 31, 437–447.
- Overgaard, S. (2002). Epoché and solipsistic reduction. *Husserl Studies*, 18(3), 209–222.
- Reis, B. (2011). Reading Kohut through Husserl. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 31, 75–83.
- Reynaert, P. (2001). Intersubjectivity and naturalism—Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation Revisited. *Husserl Studies*, 17(3), 207–216.
- Rosen, M. (2019). On neighborly and preferential love in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*. *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture*, 8, 1–20.
- Stein, E. (2008). *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*. Gesamtausgabe Bd. 5. Verlag Herder, [1917]. English translation: *On the problem of empathy*, trans. Waltraut Stein. ICS Publications, 1989.
- Svenaeus, F. (2018). Edith Stein's phenomenology of sensual and emotional empathy. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 17, 741–760.
- Zagzebski, L. (2001). The uniqueness of persons. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 29(3), 401–423.
- Zahavi, D. (2003). *Husserl's phenomenology*. Stanford University Press.

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.