

Abstract

This dissertation offers a novel reading and a critical development of Edmund Husserl's seminal work on the deeply interrelated, but mutually irreducible, themes of intersubjectivity and selfhood. Drawing upon a significant body of still-unpublished texts (the manuscripts originally prepared by Husserl for the second volume of his *Ideas*), it argues that Husserl's take on the self-other relation can only fully come into view once we trace out its implication in his rich discussions of empathy, embodiment, and personal life. By relating these discussions to recent work on personhood, self-consciousness, agency, narrativity, empathy, and recognition, the dissertation also aims to put into practice the conviction that Husserlian phenomenology can be furthered by engaging with, and ultimately contributing to, the contemporary philosophical landscape.

Chapter 1 introduces and motivates the dissertation by offering a preliminary take on one of its central thematic threads: the phenomenology of empathy. Building also upon the work of Husserl's student and philosophical collaborator Edith Stein, empathy is characterized as a *sui generis* mode of intentional experience in which other embodied subjects are presented and comprehended as such, an account which stands in contrast to both inferentialist and simulationist theories of social understanding. Chapter 2 then explicates Husserl's conception of material nature as a layer of the world given in embodied perception; Chapter 3 unfolds Husserl's thought that other embodied perceivers are also implicated in the very sense of worldly objects as perceived. It is then argued that this latter thought leads towards a conception of 'animate empathy,' which comprises our empathetic understanding of animate others, whether human or non-human, as bodily beings perceptually sensitive to a common world. Chapter 4 breaks thematically with the previous chapter, in that it temporarily puts empathy aside and focuses instead on the issues of self-consciousness and personal self-acquaintance, by means of a detailed consideration of Husserl's first-personal phenomenological analyses of agency, selfhood, and the temporal endurance of attitudes. Whereas Chapter 4 was concerned with offering a solely first-personal account of personal selfhood, Chapter 5 introduces and discusses a further mode of empathetic experience, 'interpersonal empathy,' and considers the degree to which personal subjectivity is itself an interpersonal accomplishment. It first surveys a number of different ways in which subjects are understood as persons, before explicating the origins of these modes of comprehension in pre-reflective agency, interpersonal empathy, and mutual recognition.