

# Chapter 1 Rewriting the History of Empathy from Socrates to Scheler

## Abstract

This inquiry into the philosophical history of empathy will proceed from the following position. While we live in an understanding of what is empathy, and appreciate that empathy is central to our relations with other human beings, we really do not know what it is. Notwithstanding the excellent research that has already occurred, tradition has made empathy nearly inaccessible. The goal is to unblock our access to empathy by implementing the possibilities of an empathic inquiry. Of course, this is a bootstrap operation that has many interpretive (hermeneutic) overtones. In order to get started, the idea is to let our Socratic ignorance step into the foreground. This includes work with the ideas of Socrates, Aristotle, St. Augustine, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Theodor Lipps, Sigmund Freud. This will enrich both the concept of empathy and its concrete application in terms of human interrelations. Naturally, this requires a delicate balancing act in unpacking the rich intellectual traditions from which empathy—the phenomenon itself, not the word--emerged historically.

## ***A Working Definition of Empathy***

The history of empathy is not the history of different answers to one and the same question, but the history of a complex thicket of overlapping and related problems, constantly changing, whose proposed solutions are also changing with it. Of course, this paraphrases R.G. Collingwood's account of historical dynamics in his *An Autobiography*. The relationship is many-to-many. We get different answers to different questions; and even the same answer to different questions. The same answer to different questions is a characteristic of the field where empathy is proposed as a solution to problems in aesthetics, ethics, and the phenomenology of human interrelations.

Thus, a further word of caution. There is no necessary something = x that represents the concept empathy in all its themes and variations. To be sure, there is an initial something,

including the unrelated sequential and simultaneous emergence of related conceptual distinctions in parallel areas in moral sentiments (e.g., Hume), the communicability of affect (Kant), aesthetics (e.g., Lipps), phenomenology (e.g., Scheler, Husserl), Heidegger's hermeneutic reaction to the latter, etc. However, unlike a biological species undergoing variation and natural selection and struggling for survival in the environment, a concept can acquire properties, traits, characteristics in a Lamarckian fashion and pass them on to subsequent implementations (Toulmin 1972). There may simply be no natural kind named by "empathy," but rather three (or more) dynamically converging and diverging intellectual traditions that have interacted – interbred if you will – and produced a mongrel offspring that we currently call "empathy." The matter is further complicated since, within a given lineage, whatever concept is present can undergo internal transformation as a function of what Ian Hacking (1999) calls "dynamic nominalism."

Thanks to the work of Lauren Wispé, there is agreement on who said what about empathy and when it was said.<sup>1</sup>

Yet this is just the tip of the iceberg. Similarly to the way that Foucault's history of unreason (madness) illuminates reason, what was left unsaid about empathy but shown by means of distinctions in otherness illuminates empathy as much as what was explicitly stated.<sup>2</sup> For example, while Heidegger is dismissive about the term "empathy"

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<sup>1</sup> Lauren Wispé. (1987). "History of the concept of empathy" in *Empathy and its Development*, eds., N. Eisenberg & J. Strayer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault. (1961). *History of Madness*, trs. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfā. London: Routledge, 2006.

[*Einfühlung*], he holds open the possibility of authentic being with others. Such a way of being authentic with others is tantalizingly hinted at and yet remains undeveloped as most of the effort in relating to others is dedicated to the inauthentic “they self” (“the one”) and the isolated individualization of human being in the face of death. Yet the logical space is still available for an account, not exactly Heideggerian but in the spirit of *Being and Time*, of authentic being with one another. Of course, this could not be taken for granted and had to be argued for in detail. The entire Chapter with which this work began was devoted to it, and the argument ascended in proper Heideggerian fashion from the application of affectivity to empathy through a progressive ascent in the sense of an unpacking, making explicit, and abstraction of empathic receptivity into empathic understanding, interpretation, and speech of authentic being with one another. In a sense, this analysis is whole and complete in itself. It has many engaging consequences. The affectivity in which empathy is disclosed is the feeling of respect. Respect discloses the otherness of the other. The understanding that is grasped is that of the other’s possibility. The interpretation of the possibility is as ways of being in the world with one another. The speech in which empathy is articulated is as a gracious, generous listening.

A similar logic applies to several other key thinkers who bear witness to the development of the concept of empathy, even while naming it in diverging ways. As noted in the introduction, a clearing will be created for empathy by distinguishing what is said about empathy from what is shown about it by the distinctions actually deployed in the works of various thinkers. We live in an understanding of empathy and use it everyday. Yet it is covered up by the diversity of intellectual traditions and meanings that have drawn on

and contributed to trying to understand human interrelations. These traditions extend from aesthetics to ethics as well as more mainline engagements with accessing the experiences of others cognitively. For example, although Hume calls out the word “sympathy,” this overlaps substantially with what readers, informed by Edmund Husserl and modern psychotherapy, understand by “empathy.” In short, Hume speaks in such a way that we hear in the word “sympathy” an interpersonal “glue” that contributes to social relations and the formation of communities. We understand that Theodor Lipps’ use of *Einfühlung* (empathy) was most responsible for popularizing the term in the context of his theory of beauty. With the domination of Lipps’s projective empathy, it was nearly impossible for thinkers as diverse as Freud and Husserl to use the term without invoking Lipps’ theory of aesthetics in which the world is infused with life – humanized - by man’s attribution of emotional life to nature. Freud’s methods were empathic to a high degree, yet he hardly used the term. It is a further complication, not available to Wispé in 1987, that the discovery in neurology of mirror neurons has provided Lipps with an *ex post facto* justification of his definition of empathy as inner imitation.<sup>3</sup> This might in itself be warrant for reopening the conversation about the history, since the results in neurology have occasioned an explosion of interest in empathy in cognitive science, psychology, psychiatry, and mental health.<sup>4</sup> In addition, a careful reading of Hume shows that his concept of empathy evolves from sympathy as

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<sup>3</sup> V. Gallese. (2001). “The ‘shared manifold’ hypothesis: from mirror neurons to empathy,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8, No. 5-7, (2001) 30-50.

<sup>4</sup> For example, *Empathy and Mental Illness*, eds. T. Farrow and P. Woodruff, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007. L. Jackson, A. N. Meltzoff, and J. Decety. (2005). “How do we perceive the pain of others? A window into the neural processes involved in empathy.” *Neuroimage* 24 (2005): 771-779. *Other Minds: How Humans Bridge the Divide Between Self and Others*, eds. B.F. Malle & S.D. Hodges, New York: Guilford Press, 2005. See also J. Decety & P.L. Jackson. (2004). “The functional architecture of human empathy,” *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews*, Vol 3, No. 2, June 2004: 71-100.

social glue, to a “delicate sympathy” in moral relations, “delicacy of taste” in aesthetics, and, finally being degraded to a “power of suggestion and emotional contagion.” On the other hand, in the writings of Husserl, “empathy” moves progressively from the margins and periphery of intersubjectivity (“community of monads”) towards its center and foundation, especially if Husserl’s *Nachlass* are considered in addition to his published statements. Anyone writing about empathy is trying to hit a moving target. To a high degree, empathy is a concept or set of closely related concepts with intellectual roots the diverse traditions of aesthetics, ethics, and the dynamics of human understanding.

A working definition of “empathy” will be useful. This was argued for in detail in Chapter \_\_\_ when we engaged with Heidegger. At the level of phenomenal awareness and everyday human being in the world with other humans, the minimal essential constituents of empathy include: (i) a receptivity (“openness”) to the affects of others whether in face-to-face encounter or as artifacts of human imagination (“empathic receptivity”); (ii) an understanding of the other in which the other individual is interpreted as a possibility—a possibility of choosing, making commitments, and implementing them (“empathic understanding”) in which the aforementioned possibility is implemented; (iii) an interpretation of the other from first-, second-, and third-person perspectives (“empathic interpretation”); and (iv) an articulation in language of this receptivity, understanding and interpretation, including the form of speech known as listening that enables the other to appreciate that he or she has been the target of empathy (“empathic listening”).

This working definition in no way contradicts the possibility of other, orthogonal definitions, for example, from the perspective of functional causality. The other's affects are the cause of mine in the context of a self-other distinction in which a causal construct such as a "shared manifold" is deployed below the threshold of introspective awareness in our biology ("neurology") to explain the functions of perspective taking and emotional control. It is also consistent with a neuron-computational representation that uses mirror neurons to implement the transfer of affectivity from one individual to another. It is consistent with a phenomenological definition that deploys a double representation of the self's representation of the other's intentional fulfillment and the further cognitive processing of these representations.

As noted in the introduction, in our engagement with the historical dynamics of empathy, and throughout this book, the work we are doing takes its orientation from empathy, not from Hume; from empathy, not from Kant; from empathy, not from Lipps; from empathy, not from Freud (and so on). In the sense that we are applying distinctions invented and discovered by a given thinker to an inquiry into what is empathy, we are rewriting both empathy and the distinctions in such a way as to let empathy be shown for what it is in a context in which it (empathy) is not necessarily called out and described. To a great extent, this presupposes that the conceptual underbrush has been cleared away and that we have an explicit understanding of what empathy is. Hence, the expression "rewriting empathy"; and that is why this "rewriting" of empathy had to come at the backend rather than the start.

## ***Rewriting Empathy in Socrates as the Empathic Interlocutor***

Socrates deserves the credit for being the first to exercise empathetic receptivity in interhuman understanding according to the available documentation. The role of the empathic interlocutor constitutes the essence of his art of midwifery. This art is not self-centered – having to do with the eloquent exposition of his own wisdom (as was the case with the sophists) – but rather is centered on the other. There is too much resistance for the other to come to self-understanding without another to mirror back what is said and by reflecting the statement to transform it. Individuals are too close to themselves – to one’s own ideas, feelings, opinions – to develop conclusions directly and without mirroring. A second person - an other - is required to meditate the relation of the individual to himself. A second individual is needed to listen, respond, question. The second person makes explicit the relation of the one to oneself, thus resulting in three. A third person is needed to bear witness to the dialogue of the two. It is at first strange, but arguably accurate, to write of there being three, not just two, for the empathic interlocutor—i.e., the Socratic midwife mediates the birth of the second out of the first. “The child of the soul” is this offspring of wisdom, who is emerging. As Socrates says:

I am so far like the midwife that I cannot myself give birth to wisdom, and the common reproach is true, that, though I question others, I can myself bring nothing to light because there is no wisdom in me. The reason is this. Heaven constrains me to serve as midwife, but has debarred me from giving birth. So of myself I have no sort of wisdom, nor has any discovery ever been born to me as the child of my soul.<sup>5</sup>

Those whose minds are not empty or barren, but are suffering the pains of intellectual productivity require someone like Socrates, who is able to deemphasize his own individuality in order to minister to theirs. But Socrates’ art differs from that of the

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<sup>5</sup>Plato: *Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963; *Theatetus*, pp. 150c-d.

ordinary midwife in one respect. More often than not a “child of the soul” is a phantom, not wisdom but nonsense. This is why Socrates’ midwifery is balanced with irony. Things often turn out to be in reverse of what we might have expected. The search for wisdom leads to the confrontation with our own self-ignorance. He who seeks the honey of self-understanding risks the stings of distortion and disguise. The balance of midwifery and irony characteristic of the Socrates dialogue approximate that of empathic receptivity and interpretation. The empathic interlocutor is engaged in a committed but disinterested ministering to the other’s travails in bringing forth such wisdom of which the person was capable. Wisdom in this case is a deep appreciation of the limitations of our self-knowledge--Socratic ignorance. In the final analysis, the wisdom of which Socrates speaks is an encounter with our own deep ignorance—a wisdom that consists in knowing that I do not know.

### ***Aristotle’s Rewriting of Empathy as Recreation of the Listening of the Audience in the Speaking of the Orator***

If Socrates is the first to exercise the method of empathy in a well documented way, then Aristotle is the first to use the term. “*Empatheateros*” (*εμπαθέστερος*) occurs in his treatise *On Dreams* (460b).<sup>6</sup> It does not mean what the tradition understands by “empathy” or what we mean by it today. Rather it means being in a condition of being influenced by one’s emotions. When in a state of emotional excitement, sense-perception is more easily deceived by the imagination than is normally the case. When excited by the emotion of fear, the coward is more likely to think that his enemy is approaching

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<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, “On dreams” in Loeb Classical Library: *Aristotle VIII: On the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath*, tr. W.S. Hett, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936: 348f.

(though it is only a distant figure); or when excited by love, the amorous individual believes it is the beloved one approaching from a distance. This suggests the view that empathy without adequate interpretation is blind. However, projection is also operating here. The individual perceives the situation in line with his or her pre-given emotional set, and attributes to the object what is merely a function of the individual's own affective condition. The distortion of empathy emerges along with the possibility of empathy.

Some background will be useful. As one might expect, an Aristotelian account of what is entailed in capturing and responding to the emotions relies on an analysis in terms of what are usually designated as “the four causes.” With the possible exception of the material cause, what we call the formal, efficient, and final causes are redescriptions or different fashions of regarding the same phenomenon in nature. This can be particularly misleading if we think of events in terms used by David Hume as connected with one another by a causality that is otherwise invisible.<sup>7</sup> In contrast with the modern conception of causality, for Aristotle the principles of change (“causes”) are visible. For Aristotle only one event is transpiring—a change in which potential is actualized. For example, the anger aroused by an insult is not separate from that insult, but is part of the processing of the anger in context. In addition to the physiological concomitants, the occasions that arouse the anger and the persons (or things) against whom the emotion of anger is directed are a part of the activity of being angry. The object of the emotion is built into being emotional. We are dealing with a human interaction or situation.

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<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Lear. (1988). *Aristotle: the Desire to Understand*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988: 31.

For example, “Anger must be defined as a movement of a body, or of a part or faculty of a body, in a particular state roused by such a cause, with such an end in view” (*On the Soul*, 403a: 25).<sup>8</sup> The emotion of anger involves “a surging of blood and heat round the heart” (403b: 1) as the material cause. Being in a particular state involving “a craving for retaliation” (403a: 30) is the formula of the essence. It is almost impossible to describe the primary principle of change (“efficient cause”) without falling into a modern, Humean sense of disconnected events. Granted, there are certain things which arouse our anger—various insults, slights, disdain, frustration with things and people, spitefulness—Aristotle understands these as being part of the activity of being angry. Granted that our anger has a certain end in view, a target, which is usually an action directed against a person, that for the sake of which the activity is undertaken, retaliation. So Aristotle makes it clear that the understanding of emotion involves more than knowing what the other person feels like “inside.” Emotion is a complex human activity involving the possibility of redescriptions from four perspective.

The power of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* lies in recreating the listening of the audience in the oratorical performance of the speaker. Aristotle does not need to call out an explicit capacity for empathy because his method is informed by empathy from the start. The speaker’s character and how that character is shown in his speaking is responsible for how the speaking “lands” in the listening of the individual audience members, Aristotle in effect recreates the listener in the speaking of the speaker.

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<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, “On dreams” in Loeb Classical Library: *Aristotle VIII: On the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath*, tr. W.S. Hett, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936: 2f.

Being an empathic (“good”) orator depends on being a certain kind of person rather than possessing a body of knowledge. This is the lesson of Eugene Garver on *Aristotle’s Rhetoric: An Art of Character*, (1994), who is otherwise not engaged with the issue of empathy. Persuading the listener means being a certain kind of person - having the depth of character to demonstrate one’s integrity, wholeness, leadership by example – rather than rhetorically providing the best syllogism (though defective logic is not helpful either). Providing a gracious and generous response to the listener (audience), the orator forms a vicarious experience that is subject to further empathic processing. In order for the other to benefit from the orator’s, does the orator then have to persuade the listener (audience) that the speaker has listened? Does the orator then have to become an empathic rhetorician and persuade the other that the orator has gotten or captured or understood what is of utmost concern to the audience? This includes the possibility that they themselves do not fully appreciate what that is.

The account of the emotions comes into its own in the place where Aristotle gives his most complete account of the emotions, Book II of his *Rhetoric*.<sup>9</sup> Aristotle dispenses with the material cause, though if he had known of mirror neurons he might well have marshaled them as part of his account of the material cause. As things stand, Aristotle gives his analysis in terms of just three aspects of the emotion. He distinguishes the disposition or frame of mind of the emotion, the person with whom or towards whom we feel the emotion, and the occasions which give rise to the emotion (*Rhetoric*, 1378a: 9-10). Empathy is the reenactment or recreation of the audience’s listening in the orator’s

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<sup>9</sup> Aristotle, “Art of Rhetoric” in Loeb Classical Library: *Aristotle ‘Art’ of Rhetoric*, tr. J. H. Freese. London & Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann & Harvard University Press, 1926: 169f.

speaking. The choice of arguments and facts to be persuasive must be guided by the speaker's empathy with the audience. Who are they and what possibilities, potential and actual emotions, and reactions live in their listening? The speaker who can answer these questions will be most powerful and persuasive. The speaker who gets his humanness from the audience, not just that the audience confers on him his social role as orator but, in the sense that by his character and who he is as a speaker demonstrates that he is part of the community, carries the day by his example of leadership.

One may well want to take this Aristotelian analysis a step further and raise a question that did not occur to Aristotle, namely, "What are the four causes of empathy?" This did not even occur to Aristotle because, arguably, he lived in an understanding of empathy that was a fundamental part of the dynamics of emotions in practical deliberation and speaking. A brief outline of the answer is worth considering, though it goes beyond Aristotle's text.

As the material cause of empathy, I think we need to focus on the way in which the betrayal of feeling in another arouses corresponding feelings in ourselves. So someone yawns. Pretty soon I feel like yawning too. Laughter and tears can frequently be induced in this way as our "laugh lines" and "grief muscles" are activated by a kind of contagion at the level of our physical organism. The evidence of mirror neuron as a "common coding" scheme at the level of the organism also warrants recognition.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Philip L. Jackson, Andrew N. Meltzoff, and Jean Decety. (2005). "How do we perceive the pain of others? A window into the neural processes involved in empathy." *Neuroimage* 24 (2005). See also J. Decety & P.L. Jackson. (2004). "The functional architecture of human empathy" in *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews*, Vol 3, No. 2, June 2004, 71-100; V. Gallese. (2007). "The shared

If by formal cause or essence we understand Aristotle's interpretation in the *Rhetoric* as disposition or frame of mind, then the subject of empathy would be in a particular state of receptivity or openness. In everyday terms where communications are largely effected through language, the audience would be listening receptively. But this also extends to the speaker. The speaker would be recreating the listening of the audience in his own speaking by being responsible for how the message "landed." Thus, if the speaker was giving a funeral oration, he would be responsible for speaking into the loss and sadness of the listener. Yes, there is art and perhaps even artifice involved; but some of the most powerful actors recreate the actual emotions of the audience by recollecting actual experiences that cause the emotions to occur.

Thus, the final cause is another's expression of emotion, and the expression of emotion is the most likely candidate for the object of empathic receptivity, understanding the expression in its intersubjective context.

Finally, the efficient cause of empathy would be what immediately releases one's empathy. This forms a whole that is indistinguishable from the context of emotionality, though, as indicated above, we moderns represent separate, disconnected events. The practical wisdom (*phronesis*) of the virtuous individual enables the speaker to recognize details of the situation that are suited to the situation (*Nicomachean Ethics* VI.5). This requires taking the other's perspective and assessing what is relevant; and doing so with

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manifold hypothesis: Embodied simulation and its role in empathy and social cognition" in *Empathy and Mental Illness*, eds. T. Farrow and P. Woodruff, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007: 452f. [Editorial note: this material duplicates that cited below in the context of Hume – one of the occurrences should be deleted, assuming the material on Aristotle goes forward.]

the appropriate emotions. The empathic speaker deploys language to present a case that arouses a vicarious experience of the situation such that the listener is touched by it and “buys into” the request made by the speaker. The request may be “find the defendant ‘not guilty,’” “buy the product,” “marry me,” “hire me as an employee,” “elect me your representative in the assembly,” and so on. I try to imagine what would make me behave, feel, speak or otherwise respond the way the other is now behaving or I wish him to behave. If my empathy is not spontaneously released by the here and now, the speaker (or listener) will try to reconstruct the other’s situation imaginatively in order to further his empathy (and vice versa).

Of course, this is not empathy as traditionally understood. Indeed it may be a misuse of empathy to control or dominate. This too is a possibility of empathy, available already at the start. The fact that rhetoric can be misused for purposes of manipulation should not blind us to the consequences which Aristotle’s account of the emotions has for empathetic receptivity. We cannot expect our empathic receptivity to encompass the depths of another’s emotions unless we let our empathy be informed by the occasion, the object, and the disposition of the person. In a way, the introduction of empathy involves a transformation of the function of the rhetorical speaker into that of the listener. We not only strive to arouse emotions, but rather permit our own emotions to be aroused by what the other (the audience) is experiencing, what we would like the audience to experience, what imaginatively we believe the audience is likely to be experiencing, or a combination of all of these. It is a further challenge to manage or control empathy once it is explicitly used.

The act of translating the Grecian idiom into Roman thought is accomplished by Cicero in his *Tusculan Disputations*.<sup>11</sup> Feelings that are too intense (“*empathesteros*”) can cause distortions in judgment. In this way, “*empathesteros*” allow “pathology”—being affected by emotions--to get a foothold. Cicero is reconstructing the Stoical argument that distress (*aegritudo/lupe*) is an unsoundness (*insania*) of the mind of which the wise individual is free. What is engaging for our purposes is the way Cicero contrasts various kinds of disorder (perturbation/pathos) with the equability (*constantia/eupatheia*) enjoyed by the wise person.<sup>12</sup> Although the prefix “*eu-*” (in *eupatheia*) indicates that the passions present the possibility of well-being as well as disorder, it is the latter that receives most of the attention. Empathy is relegated to the margins of the discussion where, instead of empathy, intensified feeling with, we get “*eu-pathy*,” at the risk of coining a clumsy expression “*equilibrium-pathy*,” a balanced affect. Thus, one of the functions of empathy is to maintain and restore the emotional balance of the subject who is the beneficiary of empathy. Cicero bears witness to this. However, in being translated from Greek to Latin, the highly active nature of the Greek stem “*path-*” is lost in the Latin idiom.

### ***Rewriting Empathy as the “Imitation of Christ” in Saint Augustine***

One exception to this loss is Saint Augustine. The foundation of community, in particular with reference to the early Christian community, is the problematic at the center of St. Augustine’s philosophizing about love and relatedness. In adopting Cicero’s Stoic

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<sup>11</sup> Cicero. *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J.E.King. New York: G. P. Putnam, 1927.

<sup>12</sup> *Tusculan Disputations*: Books III, IV. The four kinds of disorder are fear (*metus/phobos*), pleasure (*voluptas/hedone*), lust (*libido/epithumai*), and distress.

classification of the basic emotions into pleasure (*laetitia*), appetite (*cupiditas*), distress (*tristitia*), and fear (*metus, timor*), Augustine criticizes the Stoic endorsement of *apatheia*, preferring to recruit at least some of the emotions such as the gladness associated with faith and love, to the cause of self-control. The transformation of self-love (*eros / aor*) and desire (*storge / cupiditas*) into a graceful, Godlike love of one's neighbor (*agape / caritas*) is a multi-step process. The human race is thrown into the world where "the wages of sin are death" of the individual, who lives in isolation, sin, and fear. Through grace, humans have an opportunity to implement the Christian community, the City of God, by means of imitation of Christ as a free choice.

From another perspective, the commandment of neighborly ("brotherly") love is the foundation of community and establishes a direct connection between Augustine and the application of empathy. Obviously this goes beyond anything Augustine explicitly said, but it is offered in an Augustinian spirit. From a religious perspective, God's knowledge of the human heart and mind is perfect and complete and total in itself. God does not need empathy to see into the hearts and minds of men, though at some level He is the cause and sustainer of everything, including empathy. Empathy as a lens into the hearts and minds of humans is *not* a function exercised by God because the one and only God Creator does not have emotions or a body. But wait. He does. When God was historically embodied in the form of Jesus, then God experienced empathy as a man. Jesus completed God's relationship with humans in the sense that He (Jesus) had empathy and emotions. This is usually represented as suffering and passion in both the original and derived sense(s). But it is not limited to it. It is obviously *not* the case that God "needed" Jesus in

order to forgive man's sins; He might have just enacted a performative "God forgives" and man would be forgiven, even if it remains an issue in what sense mankind would still be human after such a general absolution and high-handed undoing of the Fall from paradise. But in a broader sense, He did find it historically useful to implement the incarnation of Jesus – though only for finite man's sake -- in order to experience empathy with man as man. As a man, Jesus experienced what other men experienced including being the beneficiary of empathic parenting from Mary and Joseph. Of course, God's "needing" Jesus in order to experience empathy with man as man easily leads to paradox since it seems to imply a limitation on God. It is not. It is a limitation on man's experience of God and knowledge of God, not vice versa. Without the incarnation, would God know what man experienced? Of course, God would, but, by definition, He would know it as God, not as man.

These considerations pushes empathy down to the human level; but it also raises the individual human being up. How? Empathy raises man (humans) up because empathy creates a community of humans in which individuals get new possibilities through cooperation, collaboration, enabling them to engage in neighborly, communal activities that isolated individuals could not do on their own.

Empathy enables humans to create communities (though it is not the only way to do so). The least controversial example of Jesus' practice of community creating through empathy is in his story telling ("parables"). The paradigm example is the parable of the Good Samaritan, who was after all a Palestinian who stopped to help a Jew who had been

waylaid by robbers even when the higher social classes of the Jew's own group passed by the victim, even crossing the road to avoid him. And, yes, these groups were at odds even then, though the Romans kept them from one another's throats by thoroughly oppressing everyone without exception.

The Lord is the individual waylaid by robbers and left for dead by the side of the road. He is literally the "least of the brethren"; and what we do to him, we do also to one more powerful and all-knowing. In another way, the Lord is the one who stops to care, for the one who stops does so in "imitation of Christ." The point is not the debatable one whether the content of the parable is altruism, charity, or empathy, and which is more fundamental. The point is that Jesus tells this story in answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" This was a trick question, since you do not want to answer "Roman" or "Samaritan" (i.e., Palestinian). The boundary of the community is cast very wide indeed. The neighbor is the one in need, and I experience that need first-hand, not through altruism or charity, which are indeed the results, but openness to the human, all-too-humanity of the other, i.e., through empathy. The neighbor is the one who calls forth the imitation of Christ—the one who does not go around but stops and cares—and that is a form of empathy.

The final step is the imitation of Christ. With the incarnation of God in Jesus, God knows man as God and knows man as man. Through Jesus, God empathizes with finite man. Through imitation of Christ, humans empathize with one another. That is an impressive result. It is very empathic of God to know man as man. Thus, Augustine's interpretation

of God's commandments: ". . . First, a person is to love his neighbor as God does (*sicut Deus*); and second, he is to love his neighbor as he loves himself (*tamquam se ipsum*)."<sup>13</sup> Love is *not* empathy. Rather empathy is the receptivity to grace needed to find one's way to love of neighbor through understanding and the practice of the imitation of Christ. Going forward, empathy will contain an irreducibly ethical dimension, even if it gets buried over by aesthetics. Here "ethical" is not used in the superficial sense of approving or disapproving, judging and evaluating, but as function constituting a community of common travelers.

### ***Rewriting a "Delicacy of Empathy" in Hume's Many Meanings of "Sympathy"***

David Hume reverses the stoical relation between reason and the emotions, asserting, not only for rhetorical purposes, that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions; and Hume has one of the most complex and nuanced developments of empathy in our story. "Sympathy" is not reducible to "empathy," nor vice versa. However, it is with "sympathy" and Hume's diverse ways of understanding and rewriting it that our analysis must begin.

By "sympathy" Hume does not mean the particular sentiments of pity or compassion or benevolence but rather the function of communicating affect in general. Sympathy reverses the operation of the understanding, which converts impressions of sensation into ideas. In the case of sympathy, the operation is in the other direction. Sympathy arouses

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<sup>13</sup> Hannah Arendt. (1926/65). *Love and Saint Augustine*. University of Chicago Press, 1996: 93.

ideas in the recipient that are transformed into impressions – though this time impressions of reflection -- through the influence of the ideas. Thus, the operation of sympathy:

‘Tis indeed evident, that when we sympathize with the passions and sentiments of others, these movements appear at first in our mind as mere ideas, and are conceiv’d to belong to another person, as we conceive any other matter of fact. ‘Tis also evident, that the ideas of the affections of others are converted into the very impressions they represent, and that the passions arise in conformity to the images we form of them (T 2.1.11.8; SBN 319-20).<sup>14</sup>

Another person expresses anger or displeasure. I take up this sentiment (“emotion”) as an idea in my mind stimulated by the expression of the other’s sentiment, which is then converted into an impression of the same within me. The other’s emotion is expressed and, through sympathy, is apprehended as an idea, which, in turn, is converted into an impression of my own. Thus, sympathy reverses the operation of the understanding, which transforms impressions of sensation into ideas. Sympathy arouses impressions through the influence of ideas. The functional basis of this sympathetic conversion will turn out to be the imagination. In this view, sympathy is not to be mistaken for some particular affect such as pity or compassion, but is rigorously defined by Hume as “the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination” (T 2.3.6.8; SBN 427). The other’s anger gets expressed and is apprehended sympathetically as an idea, which idea is communicated to me, and, in turn, through the sympathetic work of the imagination, arouses a corresponding impression of my own. This is an impression of reflection that is fainter and calmer than the initial idea (or impression) of anger. I thus experience what may be variously described as a trace affect, a counter-part feeling, or a vicarious experience—of anger.

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<sup>14</sup> David Hume. (1739). *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973. Hereafter SBN refers to the Selby-Bigge addition and T refers to the Chapter, section, and paragraph in the Clarendon edition text as required by the *Hume-Studies* organization.

In short, I now know what the other is experiencing because I experience it too, not as the numerically identical impression, but as one that is qualitatively similar. This operation of sympathy, at least in this example, is also crucially distinct from emotional contagion, as in the mass behavior of crowds, since the passion and sentiments are “conceived to belong to another person.” This is crucial. This introduces the other. Significantly, the concept of the other accompanies the impression that is aroused in me as a result of the other’s expression.

However, note the analogical form of this analysis. Thus, unfortunately, if this is to be an argument to answer skeptical doubts about other minds, say, as opposed to a specific local suspicion where analogical reasoning may indeed occasionally be useful, then such an argument by analogy is subject to all the doubts that plague such an approach from a logical perspective.

However, Hume is not without counter-arguments to objections about analogical reasoning, nor does he necessarily require such reasoning. In other passages, the uptake of the other’s emotion is direct, not analogical (see below T 2.2.12.6; SBN 398). A response that works nicely is that ideas are nothing more than impressions that differ by being less lively and vivid. So the analogy vanishes in a cloud of immediacy. Given that the only difference is one of “force and vivacity,” it is easy to get from the idea of anger to its impressionistic experience. The result is that a person really perceives the happiness

in the other's smile, the pain in the grimace, the fear in the wide eyes, or the anger in the other's clenched teeth.

As indicated, Hume does even better avoiding analogical arguments when, in a later passage, he asserts that "the minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because they reflect each others emotions, but also because those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may be often reverberated and decay away by insensible degrees" (T 2.2.5.21; SBN 365). Here I do experience an immediate resonance ("reverberation") with the other, perceiving pleasure in the smile, pain in the grimace, or anger in the clenched teeth. In this case, a counterpart feeling - a vicarious feeling - is aroused in myself and becomes the experiential basis for further cognitive activity about what is going on with the other person.

In the following passage the communication of affects ("affections") is not accompanied by the concept of the other, i.e., by an awareness that the other is the source of the affect. The example falls back into emotional contagion. I am overtaken by affects as if they were my own without an awareness that I am literally at the effect of the emotions of the others around me. Otherwise we have an example of what we would also call a "vicarious experience," where I recognize that the cause of my emotion is another's experience or an imaginative recreation of the other's experience (say in a theatrical performance).

Again the evidence is gathered by Hume

A cheerful countenance infuses a sensible complacency and serenity into my mind; as an angry or sorrowful one throws a sudden damp upon me. Hatred, resentment, esteem, love, courage, mirth and melancholy; all these passions I feel

more from communication than from my own natural temper and disposition (T 2.1.11.2; SBN 316-17).

So close and intimate is the correspondence of human souls that no sooner any person approaches me, than he diffuses on me all his opinions, and draws along my judgment in a greater or less degree. And tho', on many occasions, my sympathy with him goes not so far as entirely to change my sentiments and way of thinking; yet it seldom is so weak as not to disturb the easy course of my thought. . . (T 3.3.2.2; SBN 592).

Here we do have examples of emotional contagion and the power of suggestion. In these cases, the only thing that happens is that a representation (idea or impression) of the other's feeling is aroused in the subject. The specific mechanism is not relevant to this point. However, in the case of sympathy, in the rigorous sense, two representations are conjoined; first a representation of the other's feeling—i.e., a vicarious experience of what the other experiences--and, second, an awareness (a representation) that the other's feeling is the source of one's own.

This is the crucial difference between sympathy and emotional contagion in Hume. Sympathy requires a double representation. What the other is feeling is represented in a vicarious feeling, which is what sympathy shares with emotional contagion. Second, sympathy in the full sense used in this passage requires a representation of the other as the source of the first representation, "conceived to belong to the other person" (T 2.1.11.8; SBN 319-20), the latter being what is missing in the instance of emotional contagion.

Hume has now established sympathy as the glue that affectively binds others to oneself and, by implication, binds a community of ethical individuals together. However, Hume

finds now that he is at risk of having undercut morality by giving to sympathy such a central role in creating community. Experience shows that sympathy is diminished by distance of time and proximity and relatedness (“acquaintance”). We are much less affected by the pleasures and pains of those at a great distance than by those in our immediate physical vicinity or (say) close family relations. So an earthquake in China creates less “sympathetic distress” in me than an earthquake in Los Angeles (in my own country), even if I am perfectly safe in either case. A modern speaker would likely say “empathic distress,” following the useage of Martin Hoffman (2000). But, according to Hume, my moral approbation of (and obligations to) those at a great distance from me are no less strong than to those close at hand.

We sympathize more with persons contiguous to us, than with persons remote from us: With our acquaintance, than with strangers: With our countrymen, than with foreigners. But notwithstanding this variation in our sympathy, we give the same approbation to the same moral qualities in *China* as in *England* (T 3.3.1.14; SBN 580-1).

Is this then a counter-example to the possibility of founding a morality of sympathy? Is this a contradiction? Hume provides two answers, which is perhaps a clue that he is a tad uncertain. Both answers actually reduce the scope of sympathy, though they buttress morality.

First, Hume rejects the counter-example as incomplete. The variability of an individual’s sympathy and the invariability of the moral esteem are reconciled by an ideal observer. It is not just any old, average Joe who judges and evaluates by means of a sympathetic

openness to the earthquake in China. It is a steady, general, common point of view that observes impersonally and judges:

In order, therefore, to prevent those continual *contradictions*, and arrive at a more *stable* judgment of things, we fix one some *steady* and *general* points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation (T 3.3.1.15; SBN 581-2). . . .

Thus, to take a general review of the present hypothesis: Every quality of the mind is denominated virtuous, which gives pleasure by the mere survey. . . . ‘[T]is impossible men could ever agree in their sentiments and judgments, unless they chose some common point of view, from which they might survey their object, and which might cause it to appear the same to all of them’ (T 3.3.1.30; SBN 590-1).

Hume sets up an ideal observer who is also a sympathetic one. Of course, sympathy is otherwise unrelated to the disinterestedness of being a distant observer. The ideal observer and the sympathetic one are complementary at best, and possibly even contrary. Being sympathetic reduces distance between individuals; being an ideal observer creates distance. These are not necessarily contradictory, since sympathetic reduction of distance is not the elimination of distance. However, there is a tension here with the sympathetic and ideal observer – Hume considers this a single individual - inclining in opposite directions. Thus, Hume may have felt that his argument required additional support. Hence, the second argument.

Without entirely appreciating the consequences for his use of “sympathy,” Hume starts evolving the idea in the direction of “benevolence,” the latter being specific content that interests us in the good of mankind:

‘Tis true, when the cause is compleat, and a good disposition is attended with good fortune, which renders it really beneficial to society, it gives a stronger pleasure to the spectator, and is attended with a more lively sympathy (T 3.3.1.21; SBN 585).

Virtue in rags is still virtue, as Hume famously notes, and sympathy interests us in the good of all mankind (“society”) (T 3.3.1.19; SBN 584), including communities distant from us in location or time. In answering the objection that “good intentions are not good enough for morality,” Hume argues back in so many words that good intentions are indeed good enough, granted that good intentions plus good consequences (results) are even better. However, “sympathy” has now taken on the content of benevolence, i.e., an interest in the well being of mankind. By the time Hume’s *Enquiry into the Principles of Morals* is published in 1751, “sympathy” will have been downgraded to the power of suggestion and nothing more; and the basis of morality is shifted to such sentiments as benevolence that display qualities useful and agreeable to oneself and others.

In the following passage in *Treatise*, we witness Hume’s migration of the meaning of “sympathy” from a communicability of affect, which, as noted above, includes the concept of the other that aligns with the modern concept of “empathy,” towards a narrower, but not exclusive, sense of emotional contagion. It should be noted that “sympathy” is not called out in this passage. Within the context of the *Treatise*, it is consistent of Hume’s to build a full-blown sense of sympathy out of the contagiousness of the passions by adding the idea of the other to the communicability of affect. It is just that in subsequent publication, in particular the *Enquiry into the Principles of Morals* rhiia contagiousness is all that will remain of sympathy:

‘Tis remarkable, that nothing touches a man of humanity more than any instance of extraordinary delicacy in love or friendship, where a person is attentive to the smallest concerns of his friend. . . The passions are so *contagious*, that they pass with the greatest facility from one person to another, and produce correspondent movements in all human breasts. Where friendship appears in very signal

instances, my hart catches the same passion, and is warmed by those warm sentiments, that display themselves me (T 3.3.3.5; SBN 604-5).

Meanwhile, Hume's movement of sympathy from the center to the periphery is complimented by the contrary movement of taste from the periphery to the center. The social advantages of sympathy in forming human relationships – friendship, enjoyment of the “characters of men,” fellow feeling, and sensitivity to how one's actions have an impact on others – are shifted elsewhere - amazingly enough in the direction of the aesthetic sense of taste.

By 1741 the abilities that make men more sociable in the sense of being able to make enduring friendships come under “delicacy of taste,” while most of the disadvantages of increased sensitivity (in the sense of being easily upset, irritable, choleric) come under “delicacy of passion.” No separate analysis of “delicacy of sympathy” is made an explicit theme. As we shall see, there is one parenthetical reference to a “delicate sympathy” in 1739. But by 1741 no separate reference occurs. The obvious question, using today's language is - What are these delicacies if not an enhanced capacity for sympathy in the sense of “empathy,” access to the sentiments of the other individual? It is an excess of empathy that results in “empathic distress” - irritability and over-sensitivity. The advantages of empathy such as being a better friend are attributed to delicacy of taste. My conclusion from the dynamics around the term “sympathy” is that Hume's contribution to the conversation about empathy is a substantial one, is overlooked in the literature, and deserves to be situated in relation to a contemporary definition of empathy.

Always the astute phenomenologist, our philosopher, David Hume, is of interest as a witness to the intersection of sympathy, taste, and human empathy. By the time Hume writes his 1741 essay “Of the delicacy of taste and passion,” he assimilates all the advantages for human interrelations of the above-discussed theory of “sympathy” to “delicacy of taste.”<sup>15</sup> The result is that one mode of access to empathy is through aesthetic taste. The advantages that today would be attributed to “empathy” include an increase in a person’s capacity for love and friendship and enjoyment of the “characters of men,” according to Hume.

At this point it may be useful to review the working definition of empathy with which this chapter began.

What both the empathic individual and the aesthetic one share in common is a capacity for fine distinctions of feeling (sensations and affects). Of course, the name for this in aesthetics (the theory of beauty) is “delicacy of taste.” “Taste” is the capacity for judging the beauty of something by means of the feelings aroused by the object. A brief note on terminology is required since, for Hume, “delicacy” is an eighteenth century term for the ability to make “fine-grained distinctions.”

There is evidence that Hume found it useful to intersect taste in the aesthetic sense with moral sentiment. In the *Treatise* he writes: “The approbation of moral qualities . . . proceeds entirely from a *moral taste*, and from certain sentiments of pleasure or disgust,

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<sup>15</sup> D. Hume. (1741). “Of the delicacy of taste and passion” in *Of the Standard of Taste and Other Essays*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill: 1965: 25-28. See also D. Hume. (1757). “Of the standard of taste” in *Of the Standard of Taste and Other Essays*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill: 1965: 3-24.

which arise upon the contemplation and view of particular qualities or characters” (T 3.3.1.15; SBN 581-2; emphasis added). Again in reading Hume’s discussion of “virtue in rags” and how sympathy is a source of our esteem for virtue, the contemporary researcher is amazed suddenly to be reading about the esteem shown beautiful houses and the handsome physical qualities of a strong man (T 3.3.1.20; SBN 584-5) in what seemed to be sustained argument about moral worth. Where did this material about beauty come from? In some second thoughts documented in a manuscript amendment to the Treatise’s original edition, Hume asserts that sympathy is too weak to control the passions but has sufficient force to influence our taste.<sup>16</sup> This switch is also explainable by the strong analogy Hume finds between our sentiments of approval in the cases of virtuous action and beautiful artifacts. But there is more to the switch, since Hume explicitly writes:

Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of reason and of *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood; the latter give the sentiment of beauty and deformity, *vice* and *virtue*.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Hume is engaging in what we might describe a journey back from morality to its infrastructure in taste. By 1751, “sympathy” has been reduced in Hume’s work to “natural sympathy,” which overlaps substantially with what we would call the power of suggestion. The merit of benevolence and its utility in promoting the good of mankind through attributes useful and agreeable to oneself and others looms large in founding morality (e.g., Hume 1751: 241).

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<sup>16</sup> Cited in Stephen Darwall, (1995). *The British Moralists and the Internal ‘Ought’: 1640-1740*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995: 305.

<sup>17</sup> D. Hume. (1751). *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* in *Hume’s Moral and Political Philosophy*, ed. H.D. Aiken, New York: Hafner Publishing, 1968: 173f., 269. Emphasis added.

In the course of elaborating these distinctions, Hume made extensive use of introspection and it is a source of both strength and weakness in his philosophizing. Of course, a major weakness was his implicit belief that introspection could see “all the way down.” He had no idea of mirror neurons, or any neurons for that matter. One might argue that is to Hume’s credit or that, at least, it prevented him from being distracted. Still, in spite of this limitation, Hume makes advances in the deployment of introspection in controlled, regulated ways, that are equal to any (neuro)phenomenologist, and have not been surpassed even today. That is especially so in the perception of art and taste. The point? These lessons are easily transferable to empathy.

As indicated, much of the work done by what we today call “empathy” is captured by Hume as “delicacy of taste.” This breaks new ground in the analysis of empathy. It goes behind the scenes to explain the close connection between the appreciation of beauty and the enhancement of empathy. This is so even if, as indicated above, there is no function of sympathy in relation to the violent passions parallel to that of taste in the calm passions. Still, Hume leaves a logical place for a kind of “delicacy of sympathy [i.e., empathy]” corresponding to “delicacy of taste” – which enables us to discriminate feelings in others that less reflective observers would overlook.

As indicated, Hume mentions “a delicate sympathy” one time (T 3.3.1.8; SBN 576-7), and asserts “Thus it appears, that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature, that it has a great influence on our sense of beauty, and that it produces our sentiment of morals in all the artificial virtues” (T 3.3.1.10; SBN 577-8). This sets the stage for what

can best be described as a dance between sympathy and taste – sympathy in social, including moral, relations and taste in the experience of beauty. In the course of the dance, sympathy starts out with the lead in 1739 and in the process of twirling back and forth, gets spun off, leaving taste as the leader and, mixing the metaphor, at the foundation.

As a result of this meander through Hume, we need to qualify the initial statement that “sympathy” in Hume means what today we call “empathy.” In those quotations where Hume conjoins the sympathetic communications of sentiments with the idea of an other individual, “sympathy” means “empathy.” In particular, “delicate sympathy” would capture those features of fine-grained distinction that are characteristic of empathy, but the possibility remains undeveloped by Hume. In the development of Hume’s philosophical activity, “delicacy of sympathy” is swallowed up conceptually by “delicacy of taste.” In subsequent passages (and here is the qualification), “sympathy” means “the power of suggestion” or “emotional contagion” (see above “contagious”; T 3.3.3.5; SBN 604-5). These different, over-lapping, not entirely consistent uses of “sympathy” exist side-by-side in the *Treatise* (1739) as demonstrated by the textual evidence cited in this essay. Furthermore, “sympathy” is not a static concept in Hume; but undergoes a dynamic development. By the time of the *Enquiry* (1751), the push down of “sympathy” behind compassion and taste is complete. “Sympathy” migrates in the direction of compassion as it takes on the content of qualities useful to mankind as benevolence, leaving taste to dominate the field of fine-grained distinctions in the communicability of feelings between persons (“friends”) as well as in the appreciation of beauty. This former

point is essential. Taste gives us an enjoyment of the qualities of the characters of persons in conversation, humor, and friendship that is a super-set of what empathy does with its fine-grained distinctions in accessing the experiences of other persons. The prospect of “delicacy of sympathy” in the social realm of human interrelations is left without further development by Hume.

Instead, Hume presents taste as the capacity to discriminate “particular feelings,” which are produced by beauty and deformity.<sup>18</sup> This special capacity to feel is dependent on the ability of our sensory organs to perceive the fine details of a composition. Attention to the detailed features of the phenomenon is a condition of delicacy of taste. Our taste is not tested in distinguishing (e.g.) a jagged, irregular configuration from a smooth, curvaceous one as clumsy from graceful. In this case, virtual insensitivity will do.<sup>19</sup> Arguably taste is required to make such a distinction, but it is not a good test of taste, for example, enabling us to judge that your taste is better than mine. It is just too coarse-grained. What is needed to activate our taste is an example where there are such a multiplicity of details that the capacity of our organs to perceive fine and exact ingredients in the composition is challenged.

A further question is whether another can notice all the fine details to which I introspectively attend and yet still be insensitive to the feeling aroused by them in

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<sup>18</sup> David Hume. (1757). “Of the Standard of Taste” in *Of the Standard of Taste and Other Essays*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965: 11.

<sup>19</sup> Ted Cohen makes a nice point in arguing against a distinction between aesthetic and nonaesthetic concepts based on taste. His conclusion is a Kantian one – taste judges, not by means of concepts, but by feelings. “Aesthetic/Nonaesthetic and the Concept of Taste,” *Theoria* 39 (1973): 113-52.

everyone else. After ruling out inexperience, prejudice, or organic disturbance, we would be justified in saying with regard to his delicacy of taste:

. . . If the same qualities, in a continued composition and in a smaller degree, affect not the organs with a sensible delight or uneasiness, we exclude the person from all pretensions to this delicacy (Hume 1757: 11).

A possible account of the difference between him and me consists in distinguishing impression of sensation and reflection. We both notice the same things – we have the same sensation – but he has some impairment in his capacity to feel. As a consequence the field of my impressions of reflection in introspective attention is richer or deeper than his.

Hume gives a telling example where “taste” is meant literally as referring to sensation on the tongue, not primarily aesthetically. A connoisseur is judging a cask of amontillado sherry and remarks that it is very good but has a taste of iron and leather. This is regarded as curious, if not absurd, until the cask is drained, and a rusty key on a leather thong is discovered. The connoisseur had perceived a fine-grained, micro trace of a quality that was missed by others. Although Hume does not use the term “micro impression,” it captures well what Hume is hinting at and aligns nicely with the scientific work performed by Paul Ekman on micro expressions of emotions.<sup>20</sup>

Is empathy really required to see that another is angry when he denounces and insults everyone and throws a tantrum? As indicated above with taste, in the final analysis, yes, empathy is indeed required to identify a gross instance of anger; but empathy is not

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<sup>20</sup> P. Ekman. (1985). *Telling Lies: Clues to Deceit in the Marketplace, Politics, and Marriage*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992.

properly put to the test by such an instance. Another instance with finer details is needed before empathy can be activated in any interesting way and put to the test. For example, if I sense the frustration and sadness of this person throwing a temper tantrum where everyone else only notices his great anger, then a distinction only possible through a greater “delicacy” of my empathic function is made evident. In terms friendly to Hume, while all of us get the same idea and impressions of sensation—hear the swear words, terms of abuse, see the stamping of feet—only one of us (in this case) is aware of the person’s sadness and frustration. I receive something to which you are indifferent and unaware. My “delicacy of empathy” is more receptive than yours; and whereas you perceive the anger, I perceive anger, sadness, and frustration.

Two different scenarios are possible. But the result is the same. I may perceive a micro impression of sadness in the other’s overt behavior (and you do not). Or a micro impression of sadness emerges in me as a calm passion of reflection in my further processing of the impressions that we both receive. Obviously the latter will be more problematic, since it implies an emergent property. Hume (T 1.1.2.1; SBN 7-8; T 2.1.11.8; SBN 319-20) makes the distinction between impressions of sensation and reflection, containing the nucleus of an account of “emergent” qualities. A sensation of pleasure or pain is embedded in an impression of reflection (desire, aversion or pride and humility – direct or indirect passions), but the latter is not reducible to the former without remainder. Hume’s distinctions are able to handle either scenario.

Likewise, if I am an expert user of empathy, then it is likely that I will directly perceive sadness in the other. However, if I am not an expert, then it is likely that I will have to introspectively monitor my vicarious experience to capture a trace of sadness available to my introspective awareness for further cognitive processing and not otherwise attributable to myself. In this scenario, I have a vicarious experience of sadness, self-contempt, and frustration that I can access through introspective attention and, by means of further processing, articulate an interpretation, “That is a sad, frustrated person with self-esteem issues” whereas you just assert he is very angry.

It is a matter of empirical research the extent to which further training in introspective attentional awareness can enhance this focusing on details—this delicacy of empathy. It is likely that training and practice can improve the result, though it is equally obvious that there is a threshold beyond which training will not make a difference. Finally, there is no easy answer to someone’s deception when the human is sincerely fooling himself. There is also no easy unmasking of deception when the other is trained to employ the Stanislavsky Method of acting to cause a frown based on genuine recollections of unhappy experiences in the past. Interpretation remains an essential part of “delicacy of empathy” and the indeterminacy of translation is virtually unavoidable when the cause of the sentiment is a part of the interpretive context.

### ***Rewriting Empathy in Kant’s Communicability of Affect***

Kant famously asserted he was awakened from his “dogmatic slumbers” by studying the works of Hume. This was possible not only in theory of knowledge, but also in the more marginal areas of theory of taste and the communicability of affect (“empathy”).

In purely Kantian terms, we are open to the experience of the other because we share at the level of the transcendental aesthetic the two available forms of intuition, space and time within which objects are represented to our sensibilities. Within those two forms of intuition, I capture the expression of emotions manifested by the other individual. The extent to which this requires the general communicability of the content of intuition, sensation, as well as the assumption that our sense organs are alike, will be discussed further below. For the moment it is sufficient to assert that, within these forms, we have access to vicarious experiences of the other which becomes a paradigm experience intermediate between the self and the other, even if such is not explicitly called out in Kant.

One may object that, from a Kantian perspective, this is just so much philosophical anthropology where Kant points out:

If we are supposed to put our trust in someone, no matter how highly he comes recommended to us, we first look him in the face, especially in the eyes, so as to search out what we can expect from him.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed the subtitle of the second part of Kant's *Anthropology* is "On How to Discern Man's Inner Self from His Exterior." But what raises the discussion above the level of the anthropological is that there is an experience of the other that is pure and unadulterated by empirical experience. This is similar to how one must get beyond using a carpenter's square edge, yard stick, and level to perceive a right angle, line segment, or plane in pure geometry. We do have a pure a priori experience of the other; but it is not necessarily obvious. I know the other exists as a source of spontaneity that impacts me because, as an example of the moral law that thwarts my self-love, the other causes my pain:

For all inclination and every sensuous impulse is based on feeling, and the negative effect on feeling (through the check on the inclinations) is itself feeling.

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<sup>21</sup> I. Kant, *Anthropology* (1798/1800), tr. M.J. Gregor, Hague: Nijhoff, 1974: 161; *Anth*, AA 07: 296.

Consequently . . . the moral law . . . by thwarting all our inclinations must produce a feeling which can be called pain. Here we have the first and perhaps the only case wherein we can determine from a prior concepts the relation of a cognition [*Erkenntnis*] (here a cognition of pure practical reason) to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. . . . Thus is respect for the moral law a feeling. . . this feeling is the only one which we can know [*erkennen*] completely a priori and the necessity of which we can discern.<sup>22</sup>

In a reversal of the maxim that knowledge is limited to make room for faith, a practical implementation of a feeling of pleasure or displeasure comes to the support of our knowledge of the other person in a practical cognition. This is a surprising turn around of the attempt to know that the other is in pain. I know that the other experiences pain because he causes my pain as an example of the moral law and I can do the same to him. The pain, which turns out to be occasioned by respect, creates a clearing for the exchange of all kinds of common and uncommon feelings by blasting away the interests of the dear self.

For Kant human relations has an irreducibly moral dimension, but not in the narrow sense of judging and evaluating the other's behavior in its minute idiosyncrasies and peculiarities. Rather in the practical sense of a concept that determines experience of respect towards others, abstracting from all the contingent circumstances, the conflicts of interest and self-interests that shape and bias a person's perceptions, inclinations, and judgments. The suggestion is that every vicarious experience of the other has at its kernel a nucleus of respect for the other, a (dis)interested openness to what is going on "over

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<sup>22</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), tr. L. W. Beck, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956: 75; *KpV*, AA 05: 128f. Denn alle Neigung und jeder sinnlich Antrieb ist auf Gefühl gegründet, and die negative Wirkung aufs Gefühl (durch den Abbruch, der den Neigungen geschieht) ist selbst Gefühl. Folglich können wir a priori einsehen, dass das moralische Gesetz als Bestimmungsgrund des Willens, dadurch dass es allen unseren Neigungen Eintrag tut, ein Gefühl bewirken müsse, welches Schmerz genannt werden kann, und hier haben wir nun den ersten, vielleicht auch einzigen Fall, da wir aus Begriffen a priori das Verhältnis einer Erkenntnis (hier ist es einer reiner praktischen Vernunft) zum Gefühl der Lust oder Unlust bestimmen konnten. . . . Also ist Achtung fürs moralische Gesetz ein Gefühl. . . dieses Gefühl ist das einzige, welches wir völlig a priori erkennen, und dessen Notwendigkeit wir einsehen können.

there” that leaves the other complete and whole in the other person’s own experience in the knowledge he or she is not alone.

It is an extension of Kant’s analysis, but a plausible one that the experience of respect at the kernel of my entire contingent vicarious experiences of the other that raises the encounter with the other from an empirical to an a priori transcendental level. There is no other non-circular evidence of the a priori givenness of the other than the respect that I experience for the other person. On that I can build a whole world of interhuman experiences, granted doing so will require plunging back into the rich diversity of experiences in anthropology, based on the experience of the other in respect.

However, is there any textual evidence that Kant acknowledges the possibility of the communicability of a feeling such as a sensation of pain or a feeling of pleasure that might be used as the basis for incorporating a vicarious experience (granted that the latter term is not called out)? The universal (“allgemein”) communicability of feeling occurs again-and-again in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* as a key moment of the operation of taste (as in the reflective judging of the beautiful). Unfortunately, for my purpose, one cannot get directly from taste to the communication of a contingent feeling, sensation, emotion, or experience of charm. On the contrary, Kant’s goal is precisely to raise up the disinterested, universal, (un)purposive operation of taste while pushing down the operation of the emotions in common religious enthusiasm, popular culture, or fine arts. Kant’s approach to the emotions receives significant exposition in the *Critique of Judgment*, where emotions [*Rührungen*] and its charms [*Reize*] are subordinated to the disinterested, universal communicability of pleasure in the judgments of taste (and the sublime) where

. . . [T]he imagination in its freedom awakens the understanding and is put by it into regular play, without the aid of concepts, does the representation communicate itself, not as a thought, but as an internal feeling of a purposive state of the mind.

Taste is then the faculty of judging a priori of the communicability of feelings that are bound up with a given representation (without the mediation of a concept) (Kant, 1790/93: 138; 161).<sup>23</sup>

From the perspective of Kant and empathy, my argument is *not* that taste is required to access the awareness of other individuals. Far from it. Three steps are needed to disentangle taste from the communication of feeling and find a separate basis for vicarious experience that is completely separate from taste, though indirectly related to it. First, taste has to be disentangled from the communication of feeling and a separate ability to communicate feeling established. This happens by associating taste with common sense. Next, common sense has to be invoked independently of taste to communicate feelings. Finally, the concept of the other has to be brought back in and this done within the discussion of common sense.

First, Kant attempts to associate taste with common sense in Section 40 “Of taste as a Kind of *Sensus Communis*.” This association falls a tad short of identification since everyday talk uses the technical term “*sensus communis*” in its own vague and ambiguous way as the healthy, yet common, understanding of the everyday person in the street. In a revision to the common person’s way of speaking, Kant proposes distinguishing an aesthetic common sense from a logical one: “We may designate taste as *sensus communis aestheticus*, common understanding as *sensus communis logicus*” (Kant, 1790/93: 138ftnt.; AA 146ftnt.). Kant continues in his revision to the way people actually use the term “common sense” and elaborates on what is really the name of a problem in the philosophical tradition, common sense as the place where all five of the standard senses are integrated.<sup>24</sup> Kant proposes making taste function out of that part of

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<sup>23</sup> *Critique of Judgment* (1790/93), tr. J.H. Bernard, New York: Hafner Publishing, 1968; *KU*, AA 05. “Nur da, wo Einbildungskraft in ihrer Freiheit den Verstand erweckt, und dieser ohne Begriff die Einbildungskraft in ein regelmässiges Spiel versetzt, da teilt sich die Vorstellung, nicht als Gedanke, sondern als inneres Gefühl eines zweckmässigen Zustandes des Gemüts mit. Der Geschmack ist also das Vermögen, die Mittelbarkeit der Gefühle, welche mit gegebener Vorstellung (ohne Vermittelung eines Begriffs) verbunden sind, a priori zu beurteilen.”

<sup>24</sup> “Common sense” is the name of a problem (which will not be resolved here) at least since Aristotle for whom common sense was neither a sixth sense (there are only five) nor reducible to one of the other five senses. Aristotle, *De anima* 3.2.427a9f. See also D. Heller-Roazen, *The Inner touch: Archaeology of a Sensation*, New York: Zone Books, 2007: 44.

our common sense “that which makes universally communicable without the mediation of a concept, our feeling in a given representation” (Kant 1790/93: 138; AA 160).<sup>25</sup> A rich philosophical history is in play here with the *sensus communis* as the *sensorium* where all the five senses are integrated. Kant perhaps alludes to this in an earlier discussion (Section 30) “Of the Communicability of a Sensation” where he notes:

If sensation, as the real in perception, is related to knowledge, it is called sensation of the senses; and its specific quality may be represented as generally communicable in a uniform way, if we assume that everyone has senses like our own” (Kant, 1790/93: 133f.; AA 153).<sup>26</sup>

Kant does indeed question whether our senses are as alike as the common person believes, what with diversity in the sense of smell, sight, etc. However, this is precisely the kind of thing where training, practice, and science make a difference. One may reasonably take issue with Kant on this point as a matter of degree rather than an absolute distinction of sensibility and not be thought uncharitable or insane, arguing that our senses are built and operate similarly. In addition, Kant invokes the moral law as a common source of the feeling of satisfaction [*Wohlgefallen*] of a homogeneous pleasure for everyone based on reason and “our supersensible destination.” However, this is enough to disentangle taste from the communicability of feeling and leave a logical space within which to insert a vicarious experience that, in turn, founds empathy.

Second, the communicability of feeling to be found in common sense is implemented in two ways. On the one hand, it is implemented as reflective capability resulting in the disinterested, (un)purposive, universal, and necessary feelings known as judgments of taste. However, there is something left over in the communicability of feeling which Kant discards as charm and emotion, but which can be used to integrate vicarious experience. On the other hand, the communicability of feeling is implemented as a capability

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<sup>25</sup> “. . . was unser Gefühl an einer gegebenen Vorstellung ohne Vermittlung eines Begriffs allgemein mitteilbar macht. . . .”

<sup>26</sup> “Wenn Empfindung, als das Reale der Wahrnehmung, auf Erkenntnis bezogen wird, so heist sie Sinnenempfindung, und das Spezifische ihrer Qualität lässt sich als durchgängig auf gleiche Art mitteilbar vorstellen, wenn man annimmt, dass jedermann einen gleichen Sinn mit dem unsrigen habe . . . .”

resulting in vicarious experiences that become the basis of assertions about the mental state of other persons. In short, the *sensus communis aestheticus* provides textual warrant for the communicability of a feeling but without the addition of any specific concept. Granted that the pleasure arises from the free play of the understanding and imagination (not vice versa), to make progress in knowing others it is necessary to bring a concept back and subsume the experience under a concept—the other—not the harmonious and sensible relation of the imagination and understanding. Here the distinction *sensus communis logicus* lends support to the assertion that other minds are available as both intuition and concept, knowledge in the full sense. In particular, the *sensus communis logicus* adds back the concept of the other. Kant explicitly points out that among other functions this kind of common sense enable us “to put ourselves in thought in the place of every other” (Kant, 1790/93: 136; 158).<sup>27</sup> This enable us to link back to the logical function invoked in substituting a third-person for a first-person perspective.

Thus, even if a Kantian approach to empathy starts out being receptive to the other with an aesthetic-like attitude that is nonconceptual, we ultimately bring in the concept of the other in order to limit the free play of the imagination and understanding and determine the experience as a source of practical knowledge of the other. If our purpose is to know the other, then a judgment by means of a feeling, as in a judgment of taste, is inadequate, and the requirement must be brought back in to subject the intuitions to the rigor of conceptual determination and see if they survive the test. Thus, we have a form of experience intermediate between a first-person experience that is contingently experienced only by the person having it and a third person experience that is publicly available to multiple individuals. But limiting the aesthetic approach by bringing in a concept raises the requirement from a reflective to a determinate judgment and the latter include both theoretic and practical knowledge.

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<sup>27</sup> “...an der Stelle jedes anderen denken...” See also *KU AA 05*: 159f: “. . . Wenn er . . . aus einem allgemeinen Standpunkte (den er dadurch nur bestimmen kann, das er sich in den Standpunkt anderer versetzt) über sein eignes Urteil reflektiert”; and *KrV*: A 353: “Es ist offenbar: dass, wenn man sich ein denkend Wesen vorstellen will, man sich selbst an seine Stelle setzen, and also dem Objekte, welches man erwägen wollte, sein eigenes Subjekt unterschieben müsse...”

The obvious question at this point--now that we have identified both a concept (“the other”) and a variety of intuitions corresponding to the problem of other minds—is a transcendental deduction required to establish the objectivity of the concept of the other? Now that we have disentangled the dialectical illusion that inevitably thrusts itself upon us as we resonate between the first- and third-person points of view, regardless of incorrigibility and arguments from analogy, are we not plunged back into the abyss of “other mindedness” by the requirement to establish the objectivity of my experience of the other? Just as the debunking of dialectical illusion(s) about the simplicity of the soul in the Paralogism does not eliminate the need to demonstrate the objectivity of the categories in an analytic of the understanding; and just as the dialectical illusions about the beginning and end of time and space in the physical universe is consistent with the requirement for a priori synthetic principles of nature; does not an authentically Kantian approach to the problem of other minds necessitate a deduction of the concept of the other and indeed not as an aesthetic or moral but as a cognitive rule relevant to knowledge?

Such an undertaking at this point will not be a trivial one. However, in the interest of completeness, let’s outline an approach. This reasoning, which in outline is an example of what Kant calls a “transcendental argument” (Kant/Smith, 1781/87: 592, 624; A737/B705, A787/B815), provides a argument that answers a question of the form: Granted that we have certain experiences, such as a vicarious experience, what must be the constitution of our mental functions in order to account for the possibility of such experiences? At some point a functioning capacity for being receptive to the feelings of others must be active in order for the recognition, identification, and understanding of feelings in the other to be thinkable, conceivable, in any case.

The capacity of a universal communicability of affect (as a common sense) is what makes possible being affected by the other and, in turn, affecting the other by my own expressions. This experience, in turn, is the basis on which we are subsequently justified in undertaking an investigation of our mental capabilities to identify the basis for vicarious experience. Taking as a clue maxims of common human understanding that do

not really belong to a Critique of Taste, we looked for support, related to but detachable, from Kant's interpretation of taste in the richly ambiguous faculty of a common sense. This enabled Kant to link up with a missing provided by the communication of feeling, a paradigm example of which was a vicarious feeling. When this experience is added, by mere observation of my experiences, to the experience of my already coherent, unified consciousness, then the objectivity of the other is established. What was missing was a form of receptivity adapted to experiencing the other as the other experiences himself, building a bridge between the first-person and the third-person perspective. For without a *sensus communis*, the communication of feeling would not occur at all. But *sensus communis* also provides an explicit textual reference from Kant that explicitly brings in the concept of the other. This enables the nonconceptual *sensus communis aestheticus* to be determined by a concept from the *sensus communis logicus*. Thus, vicarious experience and the concept of the other dance together each other in the direction of objectivity. Less metaphorically expressed, just as the synthetic unity of apperception, the "I think" that accompanies all of my intuitions, is the fulcrum on which the lever of the transcendental analytic is able to derive the objectivity of the categories of the understanding, so too there is a shared manifold of experience identified in vicarious experience that is the foundation of our experience of the other person. It is an extension of Kant's analysis, but one made in the spirit of his work, to propose that the representation "the other" must be able to accompany every relevant attribution of mental activity to the other. Vicarious experience is that on the ground of which being affected by the feelings of others is constituted as a realm of accessible experiences in the first place. Paraphrasing Kant, vicarious experience first makes possible its ground of proof, the other, especially as revealed in this same vicarious experience, and must always be presupposed by the other as the source of the latter's objectivity.

The analysis of vicarious experience unpacks in a significant and amplifying way an important aspect of our shared human nature, our capacity for what Hume variously called sympathy, delicacy of sympathy and taste, Kant called the communicability of feeling *via a sensus communis*, and modern phenomenologists describe as empathy. Even if vicarious feelings are not an ontological bridge between first-person and third-person

perspectives, they are at least an experiential thread knitting together our shared joys and suffering. Thus, from the Kantian perspective, the proud name of proof of other minds gives way to a modest analysis of human interrelations. This answers the skeptic by providing reasons why we are justified in ignoring him and his dialectical illusion. But like all cases of dialectical illusion, the job has to be done repeatedly since the illusion persists (and returns) in spite of its resolution. We don't really get over it, though it is put in its place and becomes an idle wheel that does not move any other part of the mechanism of human interrelations.

### ***Rewriting Empathy Through the Appreciation of Beauty in Lipps***

A further development of this theme of the interrelation of empathy and aesthetic experience is available in the philosopher Theodor Lipps, who is the author most responsible for popularizing the term “empathy” in both English and German. He monopolized the term “*Einfühlung*” so that any German intellectual writing from 1903 to 1927<sup>28</sup> set off an immediate association with Lipps’ “psychology of beauty and art”<sup>29</sup> by using the term. Even in his own heyday, Lipps was probably more often mentioned and criticized than read seriously. Nevertheless, any account of the vicissitudes of empathy cannot afford to ignore Lipps.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The choice of the date 1927 is dictated by its being the point at which Heidegger called for a “hermeneutic of empathy” on the basis of human interrelations, thus detaching empathy from both aesthetic and psychological processes. This unwritten Chapter of *Being and Time* is engaged in a separate work by the author of this submission and deleted to preserve anonymity.

<sup>29</sup> This is the subtitle of T. Lipps. (1903). *Asthetik*. Hamburg: Leopold Voss, 1903.

<sup>30</sup> T. Lipps, (1903). *Asthetik*. Hamburg: Leopold Voss, 1903. “Inner imitation” was definitely “in the air” at the time, see Karl Groos. (1892). *Einleitung in die Aesthetik*, Geissen: J. Ricker’sche Buchhandlung, 1892: 170. *The Play of Man* (1898), trans. E. Baldwin, New York: Appleton, 1901: 326. Inner imitation is the function whereby postural sensation, muscular innervations, visual and respiratory processes are embodied. Physiology becomes a symbol of the aesthetic. Further, inner imitation is the function in which these processes are attributed to the inanimate.

While introspection was banished from the realm of science, it has continued to be developed in limited form as a disciplined method in aesthetics. With the discovery of mirror neurons,<sup>31</sup> this most famous—one might say infamous—proponent of inner imitation as the basis for empathy, Lipps, is enjoying a certain degree of *ex post facto* validation. My interest in Lipps is not so much in the details of his philosophy of beauty as that he is personally a witness to the intersection of empathy, aesthetics, and introspection.

Whether due to his extensive artistic study or natural talent, was Lipps introspectively aware of something to which other researchers have been less sensitive? If one watches a man balancing on a high wire above the ground, one gets a sense of leaning back and forth, left or right, in resonance with what the acrobat is doing. This feedback from viewing motion is further analyzable at the threshold of awareness. The suggestion is the kinesthetic feeling is the echo or symbolic projection on a map of the body of the neural activity near the threshold of awareness, so that training might enhance access to the fine-grained details, that are activated by viewing the acrobat. One suggestion is that mirror neurons have instantiated what Lipps presciently envisioned in 1903 in the face of significant skepticism, we might add.

The suggestion is that Lipps had the equivalent of “perfect pitch” for what he called *Einfühlung* (i.e., empathy as inner imitation) but then proceeded to build this genuine,

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<sup>31</sup> V. Gallese, “The shared manifold hypothesis: embodied simulation and its role in empathy and social cognition,” in *Empathy and Mental Illness*, eds. T. Farrow and P. Woodruff, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007: 452f. <sup>31</sup> P. L. Jackson, A. N. Meltzoff, and J. Decety, “How do we perceive the pain of others? A window into the neural processes involved in empathy.” *Neuroimage* 24 (2005): 771-779. See also J. Decety & P.L. Jackson, “The functional architecture of human empathy” in *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews*, Vol 3, No. 2, June 2004: 71-100.

initial insight into a wrong-headed theory of projective empathy. Of course, this approach was a function of his commitment to explaining how aesthetic perception generates the experience of beauty. Slender phenomenal traces of inner imitation might be identified and reidentified with training such that they can become the basis for a fine distinctions of empathy, where “fine distinctions” refers to the ability to make fine-grained discriminations of vicarious feelings and affects rather like the perception of fine-grained musical tones or ambiguous musical chromatics.

Once again this goes a long way to clarifying what has been dimly recognized but not well articulated about the relationship between aesthetic appreciation and human empathy; and this is a part of the philosophical significance of empathy in the modern sense of the word. The cultivation of an appreciation of beauty--whether as music, painting, or performance—enhances an individual’s empathy in all areas.

Lipps’ *Asthetik* and the *Leitfaden der Psychologie*,<sup>32</sup> which is generalized from the former, present the elaboration of an aesthetic attitude that is designed to replace taste with empathy in appreciating the expression of life presented by beauty.

First, Lipps argues that the exercise of our natural powers is pleasureable. This is an allusion to Aristotle’s view that enjoyment is not merely a function of compensating for deficiencies but that pleasure arises when we exercise our faculties.<sup>33</sup> Relying on this idea, Lipps places empathy at the foundation of aesthetic pleasure:

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<sup>32</sup> T. Lipps, *Leitfaden der Psychologie* (1909). Leipzig: Wihlem Engleman Verlag, 1909.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII, 11-14; X, 1-5.

Only in so far as this empathy exists are forms beautiful. Their beauty is this ideal freedom with which I express life [*Sichausleben*] in them. Conversely, form is ugly when I am unable to do this, when I feel unfree inwardly, inhibited, subjected to constraint with regard to form, or in regard to its contemplation (Lipps 1903: 247).

The “ideal freedom” mentioned suggests what Kant called the furtherance of “the feeling of life.”<sup>34</sup> The goal of empathy is the transference of my life into a form apart from me:

In full, positive empathy only one individual ego exists for me; namely this empathized or objectified own ego, which is projected into an external object (Lipps 1909: 194).

After reading this text we can understand why Max Scheler writes exclusively of Lipps’ theory of “projective empathy.”<sup>35</sup> Lipps does not hesitate to flirt with solipsism, indeed he embraces it, and says, “We must thus weave the other from the traits of our own personality” (Lipps 1903a: 192).

Second, the projective activity of empathy is complemented by receptivity, the contemplation of form:

In empathy, therefore, I am not the real ego [*ich*] but am inwardly liberated from the latter, i.e., I am liberated from everything which I am apart from the contemplation of form. I am only this ideal, this contemplating ego (Lipps 1903: 247).

In empathy, the ego attains the perspective of a disinterested, ideal observer, an empirically uninvolved contemplator of form. The ego becomes a detached contemplator of form. The winning of the aesthetic attitude is built on a mechanism in which the receptivity of contemplation is fulfilled by participation in the aesthetic spectacle.

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<sup>34</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (1790), trans. J. H. Bernard, New York: Hafner Publishing, 1968: 38

<sup>35</sup> M. Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy* (1913/22). P. Heath, Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973: 8, 9, 14, 45-4, 241.

Third, as regards the psychological mechanism of empathy, Lipps writes that “empathy is nothing other than the inner aspect of imitation” (Lipps 1903: 120). Lipps elaborates on the idea of inner imitation available in Karl Groos. For Groos the play of children is characterized by external imitation, while aesthetic participation (*Miterleben*) is the adult counter-part of inner imitation (Groos 1892: 170; 1898: 326). Lipps gives the example of contemplating an acrobat. This is aesthetically relevant to Lipps, for whom the human form is most beautiful:

In inner imitation there is no separation between the acrobat up above and me down below. On the contrary, I identify myself with him. I feel myself in him and in his place. . . .

In such inner imitation I discharge—not the motions which the acrobat discharges—rather I discharge immediately, or inwardly, or in thought, the motions of the acrobat. I discharge the motions in so far as this discharge of motion is not an external but an inner act in the acrobat himself (Lipps 1903: 121-2).

In order to make the connection between the visual aspect of the acrobat’s performance and the viewer’s kinesthetic feeling of soaring, tumbling, etc. Lipps posits “an original innate association between the visual image and the kinesthetic image” (Lipps 1903: 116) that he declares to be “primitive” and “not further explainable” (Lipps 1903: 118). Today mirror neurons are a further analysis at the level of computational biology of what Lipps was experiencing in watching the acrobat.

This brings Lipps to the subject-matter towards which empathy is oriented, expressive movement:

Empathy is the condition of enjoying the inner attitude of an other as this attitude lies in the perceptible expressive movement (Lipps 1903: 111).

Empathy is needed to perceive the “lived” aspect of expressive movements. Aesthetic perception intersects explicitly with human interrelations as Lipps considers expression:

The “other” is one’s own personality, a modified own ego, which is represented and modified according to the external appearance and the perceptible expressions of life. The man besides me, of which I am conscious, is a duplicate and at the same time a modification of my self.

The first material and occasion for the construction of the foreign personality is offered by his expression of life, the audible and visible, the sounds and physiognomy or gesture, in short, the expressive movements (Lipps 1903: 106).

Although this is not exactly an analogical *inference*, there is warrant for speaking of analogical *construction* here. But by resting the enormous weight of all our understanding of the *alter ego* on a use of analogy embedded within empathy, Lipps anticipates making empathy the foundation of intersubjectivity, but in a privative, projective mode. From a completely different perspective—that of the aesthetic empathy—Lipps arrives at a position similar to that which confronted Husserl a few years later, the dilemma of solipsism.

The author most responsible for giving the term “empathy” currency in the English language is a student of Lipps, Violet Paget, who is best known under the pseudonym of Vernon Lee.<sup>36</sup> She attributes the translation of “*Einfühlung*” as “empathy” to Edward B. Titchner (1909: 2),<sup>37</sup> who probably first encountered the term in Wilhelm Wundt’s criticisms of Lipps, and she writes:

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<sup>36</sup> I am grateful to Professor Richard P. McKeon for calling my attention to the work of Vernon Lee.

<sup>37</sup> In discussing Darwin’s instinct for evaluating the observations of other scientists Titchener writes: “Such instinctive or, better, empathetic judgment of the observations of others would, of course, be impossible to man who had not schooled himself in observing, and Darwin was in fact an excellent and persistent observer.” Quoted in E. B. Titchner. (1929). *Systematic Psychology: Prolegomena*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1972: 52. The suggestion of translating “*Einfühlung*” as “empathy” can be found in E. B. Titchner. (1909). *Lectures on the Experimental Psychology of the Thought-Processes*. New York: Macmillan, 1909: 2.

. . . Let me remind the readers of my other studies on Professor Lipps, and let me explain to those who are unfamiliar with them, what is hidden beneath this very German and seemingly fantastic formula: *Einfühlung*, or, as Professor Titchner has translated it, Empathy. This word [is] made up of *fühlen*, to feel and *ein* (*herein, hinein*), in, into conjugated (*sich einfühlen*) with the pronoun denoting the reflective mode. . . .(Lee 1912: 45-46)<sup>38</sup>

If the meaning of *einfühlen* were feeling-at-one, then the concept would more properly be conveyed as *einsfühlen*—where the prefix is one (*eins*). Note the crucial difference of the letter “s,” which is the difference between the number “one” and the motion “into.” And this latter term does actually occur in the writings of Max Scheler,<sup>39</sup> where it is often translated as “identification.” So I think that Lee is correct in suggesting that “*ein*” is a contraction of “*hinein*” or “*herein*,” which has the force of motion into or out from. “Feeling one’s way into...” is different from “feeling-at-one.” The former is active, while the latter is compatible with openness, receptivity, even passivity.

The problem of how to translate “*einfühlen*” is a difficult one. But it is quite possible that Titchener coined the term “empathy” rather than rely on a word already in use because, on the one hand, of its resemblance to “sympathy” and, on the other hand, due to its relative freedom from the connotations which accrue to the word that has been in use since the time of Hume.

A more serious difficulty is the way that Lipps and his students monopolized the use of the concept itself. The existing associations of “*sich einfühlen*” or “empathy” with the psychology of beauty made it effectively impossible for either phenomenologists or psychoanalysts of his time to feel at ease with the application of the concept to receptivity or understanding in interhuman relations.

### ***Rewriting Empathy in Freud’s Account of the Self***

Considered historically, the connection between the writings of Lipps and Freud is a direct one. Scholarly documentation is available that seven books authored by Lipps were

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<sup>38</sup> Vernon Lee. (1912). *Beauty and Ugliness and Other Studies in Psychological Aesthetics*. New York: John Lane: 45-46.

<sup>39</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, pp. 18f.

in the Freud library.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, he footnotes Lipps' *Komik und Humor* (1898) in his *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905).<sup>41</sup> So there is warrant for believing that Freud first encountered the term "empathy" in the context of thinking about humor rather than the clinical practice of psychoanalysis.

Once again a connection exists here that has been dimly recognized but not well articulated about the relationship between humor and human empathy. All of these trajectories interact, converge and sometimes diverge, and this is a part of the philosophical significance of empathy in the modern sense of the word. The cultivation of an appreciation of humor--whether as jokes, slap stick, comedy, wit—enhances an individual's empathy. Empathy in turn gets driven back behind humor as a component of the ontological constitution of our being with other human beings in letting go of our inhibitions, albeit in a controlled way, in shared laughter and fun. Here it is not so much the perception of fine details that are distinguished by taste or moral sentiments in ethics as the transformations of affect by mechanisms such as condensation and displacement of meanings and related metaphorical operations on words and situations.

In the following text "*Sichhineinversetzen*"—"put ourselves into"—is used synonymously with the translation of "*Einführung* ." Freud writes:

. . . We take the producing person's psychical state into consideration, put ourselves into and try to understand it by comparing it with our own. It is these processes of empathy and comparison that result in that expenditure which we discharge by laughing.<sup>42</sup>

Freud's first approach to humor is that of the so-called "economic" standpoint, i.e., the tendency of the psychic apparatus to keep tension at as low a level as possible. In this economic description of laughter, it is the discharge of strained tension. But what generates the increase in tension in the first place? Empathy and comparison, which, so to

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<sup>40</sup> H. Trosman and R. Simmons (1972). "The Freud Library," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 21 (1973): 646-87. Cited in Ernest S. Wolf. (1976). "The Role of Empathy in the Work of Psychoanalysis," unpublished paper. I wish to gratefully acknowledge the assistance the composition of this section has received from Dr. Wolf's paper.

<sup>41</sup> S. Freud, *The Standard Edition of Freud's Works*, trans. under the supervision of James Strachey, 24 volumes (London: Hogard Press, 1955-64). Vol. 8: *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*: 9.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

speak, go against the psychic gradient, and result in the build up of tension. Elaborating on what Freud explicitly says, by empathy the listener identifies with the joke's producer, while by comparison the listener differentiates himself from him. This entails a potential expenditure of energy, which is released in laughter. The point at which the laughter "erupts" is signaled by the disappointment of an expectation or, alternatively, the sudden revelation of an implicit intention.<sup>43</sup> Economically speaking, the communication entailed by empathy culminates in a catharsis.

The application of empathy in the work of the novelist is mentioned by Freud in "Delusion and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*" (1907): "(Jensen) wishes to bring the hero closer to us so as to make 'empathy' easier."<sup>44</sup>

But Freud also touches base with the function of empathy in education, in psychoanalytic technique, as well as in interhuman understanding as the following three texts, drawn from diverse sources, indicate.

Only someone who can feel his way into the minds of children can be capable of educating them (1913: 189).

It is certainly possible to forfeit this first success [in therapy] if one takes up any standpoint other than one of empathy such as moralizing (1913: 150).

We are faced by the process which psychology calls empathy, which plays the largest part in our understanding of what is ego-alien [*Ichfremde*] in other people (1921: 108).<sup>45</sup>

The first text should serve as evidence that it was by no means Freud's intention to restrict empathy to the situation of psychoanalysis. Freud never treated children directly, though he acknowledged the great importance of the adult's relationship with himself as

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<sup>43</sup> In *Surprise and the Psychoanalyst* (1937) Theodor Reik characterized empathy as a readiness for surprise. Roy Shafter ("Generative Empathy") uses Reik.

<sup>44</sup> S.E. 9: 45.

<sup>45</sup> S. Freud. (1913). "Claims of psychoanalysis to scientific interest," *Standard Edition* 13; S. Freud. (1913). "Further recommendations in the technique of psychoanalysis: On beginning the treatment," tr. J. Riviere in *Therapy and Technique*, intr. P. Rieff. New York: Crowell-Collier, 1964: 135-156; S. Freud. (1921). "Group psychology," tr. James Strachey, *Standard Edition* 18. I am grateful to Dr. Ernie Wolf for pointing out that Strachey's translation is inaccurate in rendering "*Einfühlend*" as "sympathetic understanding" instead of "empathy."

a child. Very likely the educator's ability to feel as a child feels depends to a large extent on his own relation to his childhood experiences (Olden 1956).<sup>46</sup>

The second text makes two points. First, empathy (although not restricted to psychoanalysis) is overwhelmingly important to its success. If the therapist takes up any standpoint other than one of empathy, then "it is certainly possible to forfeit this first success." Although empathy is used only once in this passage, it can be profitably read as an implicit contribution to the theory of the clinical application of empathy. Second, empathy is distinguished from "moralizing." This is a casual reference but a potentially revealing one. By "moralizing" I understand Freud to mean the use of "approval" or "blame" as means of influencing the course of treatment. But the exclusion of this kind of "moral taste" (Hume 1739: 581)<sup>47</sup> of the ethics of sympathy, does not completely rule out the possibility that empathy is consistent with recognition of the humanity of the other person. In this sense, empathy implies a respect for the autonomy of the other which is inconsistent with any attempts to manipulate him by means of approbation and punishment. It is important to keep open a kind of space for the ethical implications of empathy without indulging in "moralizing" in the crude sense.

In the third text cited above, Freud explicitly connects empathy with understanding other people. (His use of "ego-alien" is ambiguous, but I understand it to refer to one's own ego, thus, indicating that the other person is alien to one's own ego.) This remark on empathy is embedded in a significant place in a chapter devoted to the phenomena and mechanism of identification. He begins by saying, "Another suspicion may tell us that we are from having exhausted the problem of identification, and that we are faced with the process which psychology calls 'empathy' ..."

Freud briefly distinguishes three kinds of identification. Identification as (a) the original form of an emotional tie with an object; (b) substitution for a lost object by means of

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<sup>46</sup> For a detailed discussion on adult empathy with children see Christine Olden. (1956). "On empathy with children," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 8 (1956: 111-26).

<sup>47</sup> David Hume. (1739). *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973: 581 ("moral taste"). (Hume mentions this only parenthetically, but it is a revealing reference nonetheless.)

introjection along a regressive pathway; (c) the perception of a common quality shared with some other person who is not the object of the sexual instinct (1921: 107-8).<sup>48</sup> It is important to note that this text is unique in its exception to Freud's characteristic talk about the economics of libido. Instead we have "emotional ties" between (personal) objects. The situation is an interhuman one, not the energetics of forces (which tends to be solipsistic). The question of the introjection of the lost object (i.e., mourning), and its establishment as the ego ideal, raises the problem of the structure of the self. In mourning, "the shadow of the object has fallen on the ego." This "shadow" raises the problem of how a model of another person can be represented in one's self system.

The title of Freud's "On Narcissism" (1914) presents us with a symbol of the self, greater than the individual ego. Ultimately, the formation of the ego ideal is the substitution of the goal of future perfection for the lost narcissism of childhood, when the person was his own ideal. So the initial formation of the ego ideal is a different process than that of mourning, for the first involves an idealization of one's own self while the second idealizes the other.

But what has this discussion of the dynamics of identification and differentiation of the self have to do with empathy? Empathy reverses this process of setting up a model of the *lost* object (whether the object is one's own childhood grandiosity or the withdrawal of some other loved person). In the case of empathy, a representation of the other is built, not just to remember the other, but to *find* him, and to reestablish contact with something that is available but presently inaccessible. Empathy involves an identification in the interest of understanding the other person who is "lost" in the confusion of uncertainty and self-doubt (neurosis). The kind of identification entailed here is described by Freud above under (c): ". . . a common quality shared with some other person who is not the object of the sexual drive." Freud explicitly designates this as a "partial identification" (1921: 107-8).<sup>49</sup> Rather than regression to identification as in the work of mourning or a pre-Oedipal emotional tie to the mother, the task of empathy is to build a coherent self

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<sup>48</sup> Freud. (1921). "Group psychology," tr. James Strachey, *Standard Edition* 18: 107-8.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

and integrated identity in the work of lost and found. It turns out that Freud has more to contribute to an account of empathy than one might at first think.

However, the question remains why a definition of empathy is lacking when other terms like “transference,” “regression,” “repression,” were the subjects of entire papers. First, as already indicated, “*Einführung*” was monopolized by Lipps’ psychology of beauty, and could not be cited without arousing associations to this latter. This is something that Freud could not afford to do if he wanted to maintain the autonomy of psychoanalysis. But a second, more essential reason is available in the way that Freud explicitly defined introspection. Introspection is defined in terms of the self-observation of the conscience (superego), that is, as a form of self-criticism and censorship. Freud notes the continuum between the pathological state of paranoia and the more adaptive function of philosophy.<sup>50</sup>

. . . The self-criticism of conscience is identical with, and based upon, self-observation. That activity of mind which took over the function of conscience has also enlisted itself in the service of introspection, which furnishes philosophy with the material for its intellectual operations. This must have something to do with the characteristic tendency of paranoiacs to form speculative systems.

It will certainly be of importance to us if we can see in other fields evidence of the activity of this critically watching faculty, which becomes heightened into conscience and philosophic introspection (Freud 1914: 76-77).<sup>51</sup>

This definition of introspection as critical self-observation is far from the kind of introspection actually practiced by both the analyst and analysand. The latter’s free associations cannot be generated so long as the conscience is actively censoring one’s thoughts and discourse. In this sense, Gilbert Ryle’s notion of “unstudied talk” is an obvious reconstruction of free association as a means of introspective disclosure without the inspection of selective criticism.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, the analyst does not deliberately concentrate his attention or listen for anything specific in the analysand’s free

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<sup>50</sup> Freud typically finds a model taken from everyday life for various pathological phenomena. E.g., mourning (normal) and melancholy (depression); dreams (normal) and hallucinatory psychosis (a kind of waking dream); religious ritual and obsessional ritual; love and hypnosis: all presents parallels of this kind.

<sup>51</sup> S. Freud. (1914). “On Narcissism” in *General Psychological Theory*, ed. P. Rieff. New York: Collier Books, 1963: 76-77.

<sup>52</sup> G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (1949) (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949), p. 181.

associations. He maintains an attitude of evenly-hovering attention, in which his tendency to “moralize”—approve or blame—is bracketed. In this way, introspection on the part of the analyst can disclose vicarious feelings as well as memories analogous to those told by the analysand. In both cases, we have a kind of introspection without inspection (to coin a phrase), which conditions the arousal of empathic receptivity towards the latent content of the analysand’s unstudied associations.

In so far as empathy is a kind of vicarious introspection Freud’s ambivalence towards the latter conditions any account of the former. Having a limited conception of the uses of introspection in philosophy prejudiced the possibility of introducing empathy explicitly as a means of being receptive towards the introspective accounts of the analysand as well as the analyst’s own vicarious feelings that has been thus aroused. This provides the basis for engaging the possibility of rehabilitating introspection without inspection on the basis of an account of empathic receptivity.

The central role that the psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut will find for empathy in the practice of psychoanalysis as well as in its constitution as a science will be engaged directly in the Chapters on Empathy and the Self and The Validation of Empathy.

### ***Rewriting the Distinction between Shared and Vicarious Feeling in Scheler***

The argument of this section aims to bring the distinction between “vicarious” and “shared” experiences into sharper focus. I intend to show that this distinction is available

in the vocabulary of Scheler's *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (1922)<sup>53</sup> and that our study of empathic receptivity can profit from the nuances of the German idiom.

At first reading one is left with the impression that Scheler's contribution to any theory of empathy is bound to be a negative one. However, this is not the case. As noted, the first edition of Scheler's work was written at a time when the word "*Empfindung*" ("empathy") could not be mentioned without evoking echoes of Theodor Lipps' "psychology of beauty and art." So the reading of Scheler on empathy must be guided by Edith Stein's insight that Scheler's polemic against empathy is not directed against what we call empathy.<sup>54</sup>

Scheler's point of entry to the problem of the various "sympathetic functions," as he calls them generically, is through the modes of givenness of other persons. He is seeking a middle way to grasp the character of our acceptance and understanding of others:

It only needs to be emphasized that this acceptance and understanding does not come about as the conclusion to an "argument from analogy," nor by any projective "empathy" or "mimetic impulse" (Lipps) (Scheler 1913/22: 9).<sup>55</sup>

Scheler's answer to both is to turn to the study of the relation between the community and the individual. Community is the context of "the primitive givenness of the other" (Scheler 1913/22: 31).<sup>56</sup> Note that by "givenness" the phenomenologist understands what we have been discussing under "receptivity," thus, employing a more Kantian idiom. However, in spite of the above quote, Scheler does not rule out the use of analogy altogether. He limits the use of analogy in the following way. He points out that we only make use of analogy when we already take the existence of the other for granted, but are in doubt as to the intention of some otherwise anomalous expression of the other (Scheler

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<sup>53</sup> This is the second edition (1922), which I shall amend against the German in citing from it. The first edition (1913) was entitled *Zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Sympathiegefühle*. Max Scheler. (1913). *Zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Sympathiegefühle* in Scheler's *Späte Schriften in Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Maria Scheler and Manfred Frings. Vol. 9, Bern: Francke Verlag 1976. Max Scheler. (1913/22). *The Nature of Sympathy*, tr. Peter Heath. Hamden: CN: Archon Books, 1970.

<sup>54</sup> Edith Stein. (1917). *On the Problem Empathy*, trans. W. Stein. Hague: Nijhoff, 1964: 27. In the second edition, Scheler frequently refers to Stein's text.

<sup>55</sup> Scheler 1913/22: 9.

<sup>56</sup> Scheler 1913/22: 31.

1913/22: 240).<sup>57</sup> Contra Lipps (whose theory is more properly concerned with imitation than empathy) Scheler argues that the “mimetic impulse” can only account for the behavior of herds and crowds. Scheler’s German word is *Gefühlsansteckung*, which corresponds quite closely to the English “emotional infection.” The German suggests the specific nuances either of sticking someone with pins or setting on fire (with feeling).<sup>58</sup> Scheler wants to preserve a distinction between the communication of feeling in this latter case type, on the one hand, and vicarious and shared feelings, on the other.

These distinctions are available in everyday English talk, where, loosely speaking, vicarious and shared feelings constitute subgroups of “infectious” feelings. Now we must not make mistake of assuming that Scheler’s German is an example of colloquial speech. It is not. Still, the way German is able to form technical terms from indigenous roots can be quite revealing if handled with care. With this warning in mind, we lay out the distinctions.

The difference between “vicarious” and “shared” feeling is preserved in Scheler’s writings as that between “*Nachgefühl*” and “*Mitgefühl*.”<sup>59</sup> Scheler’s translator, Heath, translates the first of these [“*Nachgefühl*”] in three ways. Two times he writes of “visualized feelings”; but usually he writes of “reproduced feelings” or “vicarious feelings.” He translates the second [“*Mitgefühl*”] once as “to share the feelings”; but usually he writes of either “fellow-feeling,” “companionate feeling,” or “sympathy.” As a noun “*Nachfühlen*” has the definite connotation of an “after-feeling” analogous to an “after-image.” The former occurs as a verb “*nachfühlen*” and a derived noun “*Nachfühlen*.” “*Mitgefühl*” is easily intensified by the stronger form of “*Miteinanderfühlen*.” Thus the distinction between the experience of vicarious feeling and that of sharing someone’s feelings is encapsulated for the German speaker as the

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<sup>57</sup> Scheler 1913/22: 240.

<sup>58</sup> “. . . ein Zigarette anstecken,” “to light a cigarette.”

<sup>59</sup> Heath translates the first in three ways. Two times he writes of “visualized feelings”; but usually he writes of “reproduced feelings” or “vicarious feelings.” He translates the second (“*Mitgefühl*”) once as “to share the feelings”; but usually he writes of either “fellow-feeling,” “companionate feeling,” or “sympathy.” As a noun “*Nachfühlen*” has the definite connotation of an “after-feeling” analogous to an “after-image.” Wilhelm Dilthey used the term “*Nachbildung*,” which literally means “after-image” (“*Nachbild*”), but is more correctly translated as simply “reproduction.”

distinction in prefix: “*Nach-*” or “*Mit-*.”<sup>60</sup> According to this author’s sense of the language, in both German and English as used today vicarious feelings are weaker than shared feelings. It is worth speculating that in English the metaphor pervading or underlying much of our talk is that of “infection,” while in German there is a closer association with a visual metaphor, namely, that of an “after-image.” English preserves this latter nuance too, though it is more attenuated.

Now let’s see how this distinction actually works out in a translation from Scheler:

It is perfectly meaningful to say: “I can feel for you vicariously, but I have no pity for you.” Such “vicarious feeling” remains within the cognitive sphere, and is not a morally relevant act. The historian of motives, the novelist, the exponent of the dramatic arts, must all possess in high degree the gift of vicarious feeling. But there is not the slightest need for them to share the feelings of their subjects and personages (1913/22: 9).<sup>61</sup>

According to Scheler, he is drawing a distinction between the theoretic use of vicarious feeling and the practical (“morally relevant”) use of shared- or fellow-feeling.<sup>62</sup> One may well note that the psychotherapist is more like “the historian of motives, the novelist, the exponent of the dramatic arts”—though it is a valid question whether these should all be casually grouped together. Still, the implication is that none of these share the feelings of the people with whom they are concerned in the strong sense of going through the same experience together. The connection between “pity” (“*Mitleid*”) and “share the feelings” (“*Mitgefühl*”) groups them together as “morally relevant acts.” Although pity is *not* the affective basis of ethics for Scheler—for that we must look to love—nevertheless shared feeling discloses an involvement with the other that is not present in vicarious feeling. The person who is empathically receptive is the one who says, “I can feel for you vicariously, but I have no pity for you.”

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<sup>60</sup> It is difficult to read this distinction back into English. If we only consider the root meanings, the result is that “vicarious” (to be a representative, substitute, [vicar]) is actually stronger than “share” (to shear, cut, [ploughshare]).

<sup>61</sup> Scheler 1913/22: 9.

<sup>62</sup> Although Scheler criticizes Kant for “formalism in ethics,” he relies on Kant’s distinction between theoretic-cognitive and practico-moral applications of the understanding. It is questionable whether Scheler’s reproach is justified in light of the importance of the moral feeling of respect in Kant’s account of how reason can be practical.

Scheler sharply contrasts vicarious feeling and shared feeling. Then he proceeds to embed the former in the latter. He carries his argument that *Nachfühlen* and *Mitgefühl* cannot be identified to the point of inconsistency. After having written that “vicarious feeling” is a cognitive act, he introduces a qualification. It is one way among many possible ways of know what the other is feeling. I know what the other is feeling because I feel it too (*not* because I ask him or he tells me or I infer his feeling from his behavior). Scheler writes:

Vicarious feeling and life must therefore be sharply distinguished from shared feeling. It is indeed a case of feeling the other’s feeling, not just know it, nor judging that the other has it; but it is not the same as going through the experience itself.<sup>63</sup>

The following interpretation is involved:

vicarious feeling / shared feeling = feeling the other’s feeling / going through the experience itself.

There is no way for the novelist or historian to share the feelings of the people about whom he is writing. In the case of Tolstoy, who presents an intermediate case of the novelist-historian, he would have had to live during the Napoleonic Wars to go through the experience of the Battle of Borodino about which he writes in *War and Peace*. He does not share the experience of the participants in this battle, though he both employs and conveys a sense of the confusion, chaos, heroism, and fear that unfolded at the front line. The latter sense is a vicarious one.

Vicarious feeling requires further analysis. Vicarious feeling leads one to experience the various aspects of the situation in a more disinterested way than sharing the feelings would. Vicarious feeling does not affect my actions directly. There is a reproduction of feeling, a copying of feeling, which, while of cognitive significance, does not gear-in with the will, does not influence me to act, get involved, participate. On the other hand, in shared feeling I recognize that the situation requires something more than mere receptivity. I participate, become involved.

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<sup>63</sup> Scheler 13/22: “Vicarious feeling and life” translates *Nachfühlen und Nachleben*.

This is as close as I can come to reconstructing the meaning of Scheler's use of the distinction in question. It is presently impossible to say what a validation of the accuracy of one's vicarious feeling would be, for Scheler is dealing with the use of vicarious feeling independent of the presence of real life people. This is very suggestive of the role that vicarious feeling can play in the productive imagination, but it is fulfilled in fantasy, not reality.

After having sharply contrasted vicarious and shared feelings, Scheler proceeds to connect them in a relation of dependence. Vicarious feeling is a more primitive phenomenon than shared feeling, and is embedded within it. The context is once again a rejection of Lipps' views:

. . . Neither "projective empathy" nor "imitation" is necessary in order to explain the primary components of shared feeling, namely, understanding and vicarious feeling and [vicarious] life (1913/22: 12).<sup>64</sup>

Unfortunately, the introduction of "understanding" at this point is rather careless on Scheler's part. "Understanding" does not constitute the difference between "*Nachfühlen*," "*Mitgefühl*" (as the next text will show). In fact, "understanding" is used as a synonym of "vicarious feeling" in the following text. What does make the difference between "vicarious and shared feeling" is the introduction of intentionality in the latter. Scheler writes:

All shared feeling includes the intention of the feeling of joy or misery in the other person's experience. . . . Here A's misery is first presented as A's in an act of understanding or vicarious feeling experienced as such, and it is to this material that B's primary commiseration is directed. That is, my commiseration and his misery are phenomenologically two different facts. . . (1913/22: 13)<sup>65</sup>

The introduction of intentionality is as much a challenge as a solution to or explanation of the dynamics around vicarious experience. Feeling the other's misery vicariously is contrasted with sharing the other's misery, commiserating with the other. In the one case,

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<sup>64</sup> 1913/22: 12 Interesting enough, "imitation" is "Nachahmung" ("ahmen" means "to measure," usually an amount of liquid), while once again "shared feeling" translates "*Mitgefühl*" and "vicarious feeling and life" renders "*Nachfühlen und Nachleben*."

<sup>65</sup> 1913/22: 13. "Misery" translates "*Leid*" and "commiseration" renders "*Mitleid*" (which also means "pity").

the other's misery has as its intentional object some loss or disappointment, and this misery is reproduced vicariously in B with the loss implicit in the feeling. In the other case, when B shares the other's misery, the object of B's intention is the vicarious feeling that B has of A's misery. My objection to this account is that it tries to avoid the question of whether B's vicarious feeling involves an intentional reference to A's misery. As it stands, the text suggests that it does not. But surely vicarious feeling is of something. Scheler's problem is that he seems to forget the thesis with which he began—namely, that shared feeling has as its object a value (the worth of the other), while vicarious feeling is a more theoretically relevant mode of givenness (whether the object is given in reality or in fantasy). However in spite of these difficulties, this much is clear. The relation of dependence between shared feeling and vicarious feeling occurs as follows. A's feeling must be vicariously given to B before A's feeling can become the object of B's shared feeling. B must be receptive to A's feeling before A and B can share A's feeling. Vicarious feeling provides the foundation for shared feeling. In this respect, vicarious feeling once again comes closer to our own concept of empathic receptivity than does shared feeling.

In addition to the concepts of vicarious and shared feelings, the most important of Scheler's topics is his "perceptual theory of the alter ego." (1913/22: 220).<sup>66</sup> This kind of interhuman perception is limited to the way men are given to one another in communal life. He poses the bold question:

Is it possible to have internal perception of the ego and inner life of another person? (1913/22: 248)<sup>67</sup>

Scheler maintains that a negative answer is necessary unless one distinguishes between "inner sense" and "internal perception." "Inner sense" is the focus of introspection; but "internal perception" is indifferent in this respect:

Internal perception represents a polarity among acts, such acts being capable of referring both to ourselves *and* to others. This polarity is intrinsically capable of embracing the inner life of others as well as my own. . . (1913/22: 248-9).<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> 1913/22: 220. "... *Wahrnehmungstheorie des fremden Ich*. . . ."

<sup>67</sup> 1913/22: 248

That is, “internal perception” and “introspection,” according to Scheler, are *not* synonymous. The former embraces the dichotomy between ego and alter ego, and may validly apply to either pole.

This is a very tempting thesis. It seems to urge us to compare “*Fremdwahrnehmung*” to “empathy.” Scheler’s theory of the perception of the alter ego is rich with paradoxes. In addition to the unclarified assertion that the community is a component of the individual (1913/22: 230)<sup>69</sup> (as well as the plausible vice versa); and the corollary that the individual lives more in others than in himself (1913/22: 247);<sup>70</sup> we are asked to contemplate the prospect of direct perception of the *alter ego*. Although Scheler initially contrasts “inner perception” with “introspection,” he carefully conceals the possibility of introspecting the inner life of the *alter ego* through “inner perception . . . embracing the inner life of others.” This amounts to introspecting the other’s sensations, not vicariously, but perceptually. This claim is too great to survive the comparison with experience. We do not have access to the inner life of others in as strong a sense as that represented by *Fremdwahrnehmung*, which comes quite close to being a form of mental telepathy.<sup>71</sup> Although Scheler’s thesis is highly suggestive and imaginative, the adoption of the theory of *Fremdwahrnehmung* does not contribute to our account of empathic receptivity.

At this point, the conversation returns to where it began at the beginning of this work. Both Heidegger (who dedicated his first book on Kant to Scheler) and Husserl are having a conversation with Scheler in many of their writings on empathy. An entire chapter is separately devoted to Heidegger’s “special hermeneutic of empathy.” Let us now turn to Husserl’s contribution.

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<sup>68</sup> 1913/22: 248-49.

<sup>69</sup> 1913/22: 230

<sup>70</sup> 1913/22: 247.

<sup>71</sup> In a sense, this mode of perception is a necessary corollary of Scheler’s early view that each person has “a sphere of absolute privacy, which can never be given to us” (1913/22: 10). That is, “inner perception” is not a mode of givenness, but rather a kind of *wesenschau* or intellectual intuition relating to other persons.

## Radicalization of the Other in Husserl's Fifth Cartesian Meditation

Because the “other” is missing at the level of the intentional act of empathy in Husserl's use of the term, he relies on the distinction between original and non original experience. This is useful as far as it goes; but it does not go far enough. For example, a vicarious feeling in my original sphere is originally my experience, but non originally the other is the source of my vicarious experience, where “source” means “cause.” The issue is that the act of empathy is missing altogether from this account as part of the foundation – in spite of being called out explicitly by name. This leaves Husserl – and us - back in a Cartesian impasse. As is typical with Husserl, we must radicalize and intensify the dilemma prior to finding our way out of it.

In Husserl's published works, in no case is empathy a primitive function at the foundation of the sense “the other.” In his published works, it is only after the reproach that phenomenology entails solipsism has been answered that empathy is reintroduced. Husserl calls his constitutional analysis of intersubjectivity a “transcendental aesthetics” in the Kantian sense. This is the foundation for “empathy”:

The theory of experiencing someone else, the theory of so-called “empathy,” belongs in the first story above our “transcendental aesthetics” (Husserl 1929/31: 146).

It is amazing that Husserl “gets it” that empathy is about experiencing someone else – the other – and that the accusation of solipsism amounts to the loss of the other – but that he does not see empathy as a way of recovering and accessing the other. This is the passage where Husserl interprets his own Kantian “Copernican revolution”—i.e., phenomenological reduction—as the way of transforming psychology into transcendental phenomenology. The fifth *Meditation* is a transcendental aesthetics in which “otherness” is extended to the whole world before objectivity is constituted. While this amounts to a self-interpretation on the part of Husserl in a Kantian idiom, it also marks the point at which constitutional analysis intersects with empathy.

Husserl's issue is how can a description of the givenness of the other—the way the other announces itself as an individual—be reconciled with the equally fundamental task of showing how the sense “we” can be constituted within the limits of “I,” how the sense “other” survives my attempts to exclude it and emerges within the sphere of the world belonging to the owned ego (Husserl 1929/31: 98f., 100) This issue marks the point at which receptivity is transformed into interpretation. The task of constitution, of making sense out of phenomena, is what accounts for the ironic Leibnizian turn that the meditations inspired by Descartes take towards the constitution of “the community of monads” (Husserl 1929/31: 120).

### The Explosion of Intersubjectivity in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation

Thus, Husserl's sense that analogy is inadequate to capture the other in the full rich sense of his original experience, even if analogy is interpreted as empathizing appresentation (not analogical inference) leads to the most problematic of Husserl's published statements:

*. . . Ego and alter ego are always and necessarily given in an original 'pairing' . . . On a more precise analysis we find essentially present here an intentional overreaching, coming about genetically . . . as soon as the data that undergo pairing have become prominent and simultaneously intended; we find, more particularly, a living mutual awakening and an overlaying of each with the objective sense of the other. . . . As the result of this overlaying, there takes place in the paired data a mutual transfer of sense . . . (Husserl 1929/31: 112, 113).*

This is one of the most enigmatic statements in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation. Paradoxically, as soon as I succeed in constituting the meaning “other” as an independent center of intentionality, the other escapes from me and arrogantly proceeds to make me dependent on the activity of his own intentionality for my own meaning. But in another way, this is the insight of the Fifth Meditation: I am *not* capable of unfolding the meaning of intersubjectivity solely from within the limits of my ownness. I require the other for whom I am an object, for whom I am another, in order to achieve intersubjectivity.

Husserl brings various operations to the constitution of intersubjectivity. The first of these is “as if I were there” (Husserl 1929/31: 119; see also Husserliana XIV: 503; XV: 435 “*wie wenn ich dort wäre*”). My location is called the zero point or zero orientation. Space is a system of places in which I can displace myself. The reversal of my location with that of the other does indeed give me a view of what the world looks like from over there. According to Husserl displacing oneself in space does not solve the problem, at least not at this level. In his *Nachlass* (posthumous writings) Husserl states that every mirroring access [*Spiegelauffassung*] has empathy as its foundation (Husserliana XIV: 508). The problem of the turning of an external body as mirrored by the kinesthetic experience of the turning of my own body leads to an impasse (XIV: 557). My kinesthetic interoception can indeed become the basis for my own self-reflection; but the other is not kinesthetically accessible to me.

This is admittedly an interpretation. But Husserl is already reaching in this direction in order to make the constitution of intersubjectivity intelligible by proposing “an intentional overreaching.” The ego and alter ego emerge simultaneously in “a living mutual awakening” where an overlying of intentional layers is the foundation for “the objective sense of the other.” It remains a serious question whether the necessity of a “mutual transfer of sense” between the paired egos does not explode the very structure of the entire fifth *Meditation*, which explicitly promised to show how the “sense of every existent is in and arises from my own intentional life” (Husserl 1929/31: 91).

It is an additional issue that the transcendental ego can never get behind the spontaneous “sense giving” of the other, who is constituting me even as I constitute the other individual. Indeed if I were to succeed in completely constituting the other, the result would be absurd, since I would have succeeded in creating a solipsistic world in which I was the only center of spontaneity, meaning giving (*Sinngebung*). The other is given but not his perspective on things in so far as its synthetic unification is a function of his original experience (Husserliana XV: 12). The other ego’s sphere of ownness is by definition not originally given to me. The irreducible otherness of the other, the what it’s like to be the other as other, and the way his perspective is given in his sphere of

ownness, are not directly experienced by me. Therefore, if it were given to me, then it would become a moment of myself and the other would no longer be other (XV: 12). Is there then no form of experience weaker than original, direct perception in the sphere of ownness, yet stronger than analogizing appresentation? Not in the published works.

### Empathic Intentionality Aims at Communalization

However, in his unpublished writing Husserl is moving towards the position that empathy is the foundation for intersubjectivity (“community of monads”) because empathy intends the other, not just in the sense of an individual intentionality, but rather in the sense of a community (*Gemeinschaft*). When the empathic intention has as its target (noematic content) the community, then it includes the intentionality of both the psyche (“ego”) and the other. The distinction emerges simultaneously as light dawns gradually over the whole. This is a powerful maneuver. In the *Nachlass*, Husserl proposes an answer:

They [psyches] are also essentially, actually or potentially in *community*, in actual and potential connection, in commerce.... Psyches are not only for themselves, but they access one another [*geht...an*].....

The original form of this *access* is *empathy* [*Der Urmodus des Angehens ist die Einfühlung*]. In self-perception, in the original being present to myself, is the original presentational ego in my own life. The aspect of life of empathy belongs to this original being present to myself [*dazu*]. Through it [empathy] I relate to a second ego and its life; through it, the other ego is there for me immediately as other and interacts with me...living with, perceiving with, believing with, judging with—agreeing, denying, doubting, being joyful with, fearing with, etc. All the modes of this “with” are modes of an original forming of a community (“communalization”), in which I *live* primordially and originally and simultaneously *with* the other life that is co-existing with me empathically, a unity of life that is produced and an I-thou-oneness of the ego pole through the medium of empathy [*durch das Medium der Einfühlung* ] (XV: 342).<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Sie sind auch, und wesensmässig, in aktueller oder potentieller **Gemeinschaft**, in aktuellem und potentiellern Konnex, wovon das Kommerzium....Der Urmodus des **Angehens** ist die **Einfühlung**. In der Selbstwahrnehmung, im original für mich selbst Gegenwärtigsein, ist das original Gegenwärtige Ich in meinem eigenen Leben. Dazu gehört auch das Lebensmoment der Einfühlung ....mitlebe, mitwahrnehmend, mitgläubend, miturteilend—zustimmend, ablehnend, zweifelnd, mich mitfreuend, mitfürchtend usw. Alle Modi dieses Mit sind Modi einer Urvergemeinschaftung, in der ich in meinem (primordialen, uroriginalen) Leben lebend zugleich doch **mitlebe** mit dem für mich einfühlungsmässig mitdaseienden anderen Leben, eine Lebenseinheit also hergestellt <ist> und eine Ich-Du-Einigheit der Ichpole durch das Medium der Einfühlung hindurch*

Through empathy, diverse forms of being *with* others occur—some cognitive, some affective. These are modes of forming a community or communalization--  
*Vergemeinschaftende*. An entire field of quasi-perceptions (XV: 360 “*quasi-Wahrnehmungsfeld*”) opens up here. In German “*quasi*” means *gewissermassen, gleichsam*—“to a certain extent,” “as it were,” “in a way.” It does *not* literally mean “as if,” which would be “*als ob*.” Still, it comes close. In living empathically with the other, we live through an “as it were life” and “as it were reflection,” in which the subjectivity of the other is explicitly investigated (XV: 427; see also 434, 462, 464, 476; e.g., *quasi-Leben*). In English, one way of expressing such a dimension of experience is as a “vicarious perception.”

Arguably this matter is a work in progress on the part of Husserl. All the modes of “living with” are forms of an original community, an I-thou oneness through the medium of empathy. Since the empathizing individual cannot intend the humanness of the communalization of the other without having it for himself, the so-called original empathic intention aims at the community, not directly at the other. The empathizing individual then gets his own humanness simultaneously with constellating it in the other in communality.