

Kockelmans

A First Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology (1967)

Kockelmans, Joseph J. *A First Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology*. [Pittsburgh]: Duquesne University Press, 1967.

Intersubjectivity Info: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/#EmplntLif>

Chapter 8: Intersubjectivity

Empathy:

involves experiencing another person as a subject rather than just as an object among objects. In doing so, one can experience oneself as seen by [the Other](#), and the world in general as a shared world instead of one only available to oneself.

Among the fundamental beliefs thus uncovered by Husserl is the belief (or expectation) that a being that looks and behaves more or less like myself, i.e., displays traits more or less familiar from my own case, will generally perceive things from an *egocentric* viewpoint similar to my own ("here", "over there", "to my left", "in front of me", etc.), in the sense that I would roughly look upon things the way he does if I were in his shoes and perceived them from his perspective.

This belief allows me to ascribe intentional acts to others immediately without having to draw an inference, by analogy with my own case. So the belief in question must lie deep within the essence of my personal belief system. It forms a part of the already pre-given (and generally unreflected) intentional background, or "lifeworld", within which the concept of intersubjectivity can emerge.

Intersubjectivity:

a condition somewhere between subjectivity and objectivity, one in which a phenomenon is personally experienced (subjectively) *but by more than one* [subject](#).

Roughly, Husserl's argument goes as follows. In order for me to be able to put myself into someone else's shoes, on some level, I must assume that this world coincides with my own; although the aspects under which the other subject represents the world must be different, as they depend on his own primordial viewpoint. Therefore, I must also suppose that the objects forming my own world exist independently of my subjective perspective and the particular experiences I perform; they must, in other words, be conceived of as part of an *objective reality*.

And So, while phenomenology is primarily concerned with the systematic reflection and analysis of the structures of consciousness, it is to take place from a highly *modified* "first person" viewpoint: studying phenomena not as they appear to "my" consciousness, but to any consciousness whatsoever. Husserl believed that

phenomenology could provide a firm basis for all human knowledge, including scientific knowledge, and could establish philosophy as a rigorous science.