

Others

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## Introductory Reflection on Others-as-Encountered

1. It is unfortunate that the encountering of Others is called *Einfühlung* (“empathy”) by Edmund Husserl and most of his followers and commentators. This is unfortunate in at least two ways. On the one hand, the intention was to name the whole of the intentiveness to Others, but often the word “empathy” fosters a tendency to focus on the affective component within the whole, i.e., empathizing, to the disregard of the other positional and experiential components involved in it and, on the other hand, since there is an affective species of encountering, at best wide and narrow significations of “empathy” need to be expressed and clarity is then not maximized. Both problems are solved if “encountering Others” or “Other encountering” is used to express the general signification and species are then recognized according to whether perceiving, recollecting, expecting, believing, valuing, willing, etc., predominate among the components within in it.

2. Accordingly, the “experiential encountering,” “cognitive encountering,” “valuational encountering” (including “empathizing”), and “volitional encountering” of Others can be clearly recognized. “Encountering” has also the advantage of inviting interest in what is encountered and even in how it is encountered and then Others-as-intended-to can be recognized to have manners of givenness, existence, value, and use, but for these characteristics to be recognized, reflective analysis of the thing-as-encountered is necessary.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> If one has read Lester Embree, *Reflective Analysis: A First Introduction into Phenomenological Investigation* (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2006), it will be obvious that the present investigation is a specification of the general account presented there.

3. “Others” here are animals, human and non-human, which implies that dogs, for example, are Others too. “Others,” furthermore, covers groups as well as individuals, which then need on occasion to be to be distinguished. Although his emphasis on interpretation with ideal types or constructs will hardly be alluded to, Alfred Schutz will be followed here with respect to how Others occur in one or another of four regions. Thus, if they are alive at the same time with a Self and directly encountered by her, then Others are “consociates,” if they are alive at the same time but only indirectly encountered, they are “contemporaries,” if they have died, they are “predecessors,” and if they are not yet born, they are “successors,” types of indirect encountering being nevertheless possible in these last two respects.

Perhaps a chart will help frame the account offered here:

|                | Willing | Valuing | Believing | Experiencing |
|----------------|---------|---------|-----------|--------------|
| Successors     |         |         |           |              |
| Predecessors   |         |         |           |              |
| Contemporaries |         |         |           |              |
| Consociates    |         |         |           |              |

4. Others-as-encountered are original in the region of consociates and in other regions derivative. This holds not only for concepts but also pre-predicatively, i.e., if one had never encountered a consociate, one could never encounter a contemporary, predecessor, or successor. Individual Selves for themselves aside, consociates alone are directly encountered and indeed fundamentally experienced perceptually. Direct encountering of Others will be focused on here first, including how they are posited, i.e., believed, valued, and

willed. After that, Others-as-encountered in the other three regions will be considered.

5. Others-as-encountered are by virtue of their values and uses cultural objects and more complex than inanimate cultural objects. They are also extremely familiar. The attempt below is to describe them in general and only somewhat specifically, but this account is only the beginning of analysis of the matters involved and hence merely introductory.

#### ENCOUNTERING CONSOCIATES

6. Other encountering includes components of experiencing as well as positings of various sorts. On the level of experiencing, when something not obviously alive, e.g., a rock, and is visually perceived, the side or aspect facing the perceiver's body can be said to be "presented" and the other aspects, including the inside, can be said to be "appresented." (Some speak of "perception" and "apperception" instead of "presentation" and "appresentation" in this connection, but it seems better to be able to distinguish "presentation" and "appresentation" within perception, recollection, and expectation and also to avoid the historically burdened expression "appresentation.") If one moves around (or rotates) the rock or breaks it open, previously appresented aspects become presented and the previously presented aspect, which may then also be recollected, becomes appresented. With Others, however, when their bodies are themselves presented, their minds are appresented, the crucial difference from inanimate things being that one cannot make the appresented other mind presented. One's own mental processes and one's self can only be presented to oneself. (Whether one's own body can sometimes appresent one's mind to oneself is an interesting question not pursued here.)

7. How the bodies of Others come genetically to have minds appresented with them for a Self is a complicated and fascinating story that also need not be pursued on this occasion, the point here being that they are always already found to be appresented in this way when one begins to reflect. While some investigators not unreasonably consider an Other as well as a Self to be minds only, it is better to recognize them as forming parts of unities of the mental and the somatic. “Somatic” is better than “physical” because the bodies of animals are complex and dynamic far beyond how rocks are. At least human minds include not only streams of mental life and but also egos or, better, “I”s and are thus different from the spatio-temporal bodies they are united with (sometimes “Other” and “Self” will refer equivocally but not unintelligibly to the other or own I).

8. What is appresented as in the mind of an individual Other depends in part on what is presented (and appresented) in the body of the Other (the other body or soma has appresented but presentable aspects) and in part what the Self encountering her has learned in general, specifically, and in particular, for an Other is also a cultural object with values and uses that have been established in individual habit and collective tradition. A city dweller is likely less familiar with farm animals than a farmer, including how to handle them and how to recognize their states of health.

9. Most generally, there are—in wide significations—believing, valuing, and willing as well as perceiving, recollecting, and expecting in what is appresented in the mind of an Other whom a Self encounters. There is enormous variety to what appresents what here, with great influence of habit and tradition, e.g., in broad terms, the manifestations pertaining to the class, ethnicity, gender, and generation of the encountering Self as well as of the Other encountered, and there is also considerable possibility for error and deception. But, in addition to language, if it is involved, the “somatic manifestations,” as they can be called, are most generally

found in the posture, gait, gesture, and visage of the Other, and for humans there is also attire and equipment, e.g., uniforms and stethoscopes. Blushing and blanching may be difficult to believe under the control of the other I, but smiling like language can be false, as can also be scowling. And, again, while we normally proceed blithely in our encounterings of consociates, vast amounts of detail can be reflectively observed, analyzed, and described and, again, deception and error are often possible.

10. Where positing, i.e., believing, valuing, and willing in wide significations, is concerned, a canine consociate for a Self familiar with dogs can be believed friendly on the basis of the perceiving of a soft posture and smooth movements as well as the wagging of her tail or, alternatively, she can be believed hostile on the basis of the rigid posture, hair standing up on her back, etc. While these somatic aspects are visible, there are also friendly sounds or, alternatively, growling. And expectings of different possible future behavior in the Other are closely connected with the perceiving of these manifestations. Equivalent manifestations and also speech are of course encountered in humans as well.

11. Believing and things-as-believed-in have modalities. A canine consociate who remains lying down and simply watching the Self approach may reasonably be believed neither hostile nor friendly (and one may then be neutral toward her). Believing can also be firm or shaky. With tail wagging or growling perceived, there is normally certainty or firmness to the believing in the friendliness or hostility of the consociate. When she merely watches the Self approach, probably there will be no behavior forthcoming that will need to be reacted to in one way or another, but it is difficult to be sure in advance about what will happen when one gets close.

12. If enough has now been said preliminarily to show the places of expectational as well as perceptual experiencing of somatic manifestations in a

consociate and what can reasonably be believed in about the other mind on that basis, affectivity can now be turned to. As a rule, when the consociate is believed friendly, she is liked, which is alternatively to say that she has positive value for the Self. The opposite occurs when she is believed hostile. And there is firmness and shakiness for valuing that is analogous to the certainty and probability in believing. If one has met and played with the particular dog on previous occasions, her friendly behavior is surely liked on the basis of one's recollecting as well as perceiving, but if she is an Other with whom one is not previously acquainted and her behavior is perceived as neither especially friendly nor hostile, the feeling towards her is at least not so sure and may be indifferent.

13. How the consociate is valued as well as believed in and perceived visually and auditorially can be made clearer by reflecting on the Other-as-encountered, but the manners of givenness, belief characters, values, and, for that matter, the uses often begin to distinguish themselves before deliberate reflective observation is undertaken, although such reflection is needed for accurate description. One may not like the dog for her tendency to aggressive behavior as such, i.e., intrinsically, but one can positively value her as a watch dog or how she is protective of her master's children, i.e., value her capacity for focused violence extrinsically.

14. In the third place, willing like believing and valuing actually goes on always to preserve or change the situation as a whole or in part, but what is perhaps most interesting here is how there are "volitional dispositions." If the dog is encountered as friendly, one is disposed to approach, make sympathetic friendly noises and movements oneself, and perhaps scratch her behind the ears or rub her stomach when she lies down on her back. But if she is encountered as hostile and dangerous, perhaps baring her teeth and crouching crouching ready to spring, one is (or ought to be) disposed to rear up oneself, spread one's arms, yell, and charge

forward (turning and running is not advisable, but brandishing a weapon, which might be a chair, for example, is). Analogous to the intrinsic and extrinsic values, a directly encountered Other can have are her uses, i.e., as a means to the ends of home defense or child protection.

15. In sum, a consociate is directly encountered perceptually, expectationally, and recollectively in wide significations, her mind is appresented on the basis of the presentive experiencing of her somatic manifestations in posture, gait, gesture, and visage and, for humans, verbal expressions, and then the somatopsychic unity is believed in, valued, and willed in various ways according to such things as class, ethnicity, gender, and generation of the Self as well as of the Other. These things are extremely complicated and many aspects are subtle (and this is still not to consider collective Others, e.g., a sports team), but perhaps the general headings under which further analysis can be pursued have now been initially clarified sufficiently. All of these things can be and are conceptually formed in commonsense if not additionally in cultural-scientific thinking, but the emphasis here is on the prepredicative foundations for such thinking.

#### INDIRECT ENCOUNTERING OF OTHERS

16. There seems a tendency among some thinkers to consider Others solely as consociates, which is rather dubious because the overwhelming majority of Others, human and non-human, with whom we live are obviously not directly encountered, while consociates are directly encountered. But perhaps this tendency is due to a tacit recognition of how the encountering of Others other than consociates is derived from encountering them as consociates. Others other than consociates are fundamentally encountered indirectly. There may be a tendency also to emphasize linguistic experiencing, such as when one communicates by letter with a friend far away, but there are also indications and depictions on the

basis of which there is experiencing of Others of this sort. And, already in the encountering of consociates there can be products that indicate the Other as producer and/or user, e.g., the briefcase that the consociate carried in and set down indicating an interest is more than simply saying hello, but products, e.g., texts, seem to play a larger role for contemporaries and predecessors than in encountering consociates.

17. A “contemporary” is alive at the same time as a Self but indirectly encountered on the basis of the experiencing of indications, depictions, and/or linguistic expressions. As mentioned, one can indirectly encounter a contemporary by reading a letter or even in writing one to her. Here reflection shows her not perceptually but at best fictively given and often merely intended to blindly. As a contemporary colleague comes to visit, she becomes a consociate as her body comes into one’s direct hearing and seeing, and, perhaps, also with a handshake or a kiss, which is tactual encountering. Until a letter comes back, one cannot be sure the consociate actually exists or, more precisely, existed when she wrote it.

18. If one watches on television a political demonstration or a sports event taking place somewhere on the other side of the planet, there is a pictorial as well as linguistic experiencing of a group or groups of contemporaries unless there is reason to believe that it is actually an historical film of Others who are now dead that one is watching. Interestingly, others who are alive may play the roles of predecessors in fictional or subtly deceptive pictorial ways. Depictions of actual future events as such are impossible, but a blueprint of a building under construction resembles the expected but still at least partially incomplete building and this can include the expected tenants in a blind or a fictive way.

19. Indicational experiencing of contemporaries is perhaps the most subtle and interesting. As one approaches the house of a friend, his car in the driveway indicates that he is home but the car is not a depiction resembling him. Then again,



the erosion of a mountainside attributable to excessive grazing of sheep and goats indicates farmers and their herbivores over the centuries, whether or not there are also some of currently encountered there. Archaeology brings many indications of historic as well as prehistoric predecessors. (It is nowise necessary for one to believe she descends from a predecessor for the predecessor to be a predecessor.)

20. The other human is normally believed in when there is indirect or representational experiencing of her in one or more of the three ways distinguished. As intimated, the Self can be receptive while encountering through depictions and/or indications, i.e., in understanding already on the prepredicative level, but also encountered in attempts at influencing and in recourse to words, e.g., when a colleague is invited to an event or asked to send one of her written products, which products will then at least indicate but may also signify her. The willing that predominates in attempts at influencing consociates is motivated by valuing of the results that are sought. And as with intrinsic and extrinsic values, some contemporaries can be means for a Self to ends of effects in other consociates. Encountering Others always includes believing, valuing, and willing as well as experiencing in wide significations and, correlatively existence, value, and use as well as givenness.

21. In contrast with consociates and contemporaries, predecessors are dead. Before we sketch how they can nevertheless be encountered indirectly on the basis of the experiencing of indications, depictions, and/or words, two somewhat intermediate situations deserves reference. Like there can be aspects appresented after being presented when succeeded by other aspects becoming presented, the encountering of an Other can be recollected after occurring in the now, e.g., after a telephone call. Then again, what was a contemporary can die and become a predecessor who is then recollected as also previously perceived and this contrasts

with predecessors who have not been previously contemporaries for the Self who now nevertheless encounters them as predecessors.

22. For a case of indirect experiencing of predecessors on the basis of indications, suppose one looks at a graveyard. The many tombstones represent but do not resemble those who are buried beneath them and, hence, they are indications. Unless there is reason to believe that the deceased were interconnected in life, e.g., brothers named together on one headstone, however, a group in the narrow signification is not indicated, while merely many individuals are nevertheless indicated. A statue or painting of a dead person or persons is a pictorial representation. And of course one can speak, write, read, or hear about individuals and groups who are now deceased. Speaking and writing involve blind or fictive if not sometimes recollectional experiencing.

23. As well as attempt to understand them, one can attempt volitionally to influence contemporaries as well as consociates, but with respect to predecessors, one can attempt to understand them on the basis of indications, depictions, and linguistic expressions, but one plainly cannot influence them. In contrast, once they are dead, they cannot understand us, but their actions, such as writing a will or building a building, can nevertheless influence us. And in contrast with that as well, there can be not only unilateral but also reciprocal understanding and/or influencing of contemporaries, as again the exchanging of letters illustrates.

24. How successors can be pictorially experienced has been exemplified with the case of the blueprint above where tenants of the building being constructed are concerned. How the unborn will be influenced in their movements can be recognized in the building of a bridge designed to last a century. Others not resembling bridges and bridges not being texts, this is a matter of indications. But plainly one can also refer in speech or writing to future generations.

25. While predecessors can influence but definitely not understand living Selves, successors can be influenced, but how can they be believed in by such Selves? Successors can not only be believed possible but even likely or unlikely depending on circumstances, but not certain. And, once again, however successors individually or collectively are believed in, they can be valued, disvalued, or intended to apathetically in firm or shaky ways, willed analogously, and have extrinsic and intrinsic positional characteristics of all sorts as well.

26. And to repeat, what is offered here is an outline or framework that needs to be specified extensively. To begin with, by what manifestations can it be appresented that an Other is listening to one as one speaks? Then again, how are fatigue, eagerness, boredom, interest, etc., manifested?