

7 Overcoming Disagreement – Adam Smith and Edmund Husserl on Strategies of Justifying Descriptive and Evaluative Judgments

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I. Introduction

Commonsensically speaking, we make truth claims for both our descriptive and our moral judgments. But the metaphysical implications of truth claims for moral judgments are a mystery. When we make such claims, our concern is more pragmatic than metaphysical: Living in the company of people with whom we share neither a view of the world nor an understanding of what is allowed and forbidden to do is challenging, if not impossible. Without such agreement, other people's behavior would just be entirely unreliable and unpredictable. Thus, not only in matters of descriptive knowledge but also in moral matters, we cannot leave disagreements unsettled, we want and need to overcome them. There are many ways for overcoming disagreements. A shared interest in getting matters right (which can be more or less conscious or explicit), an interest in understanding how the world really is and what morality really consists in, is only one of them, even though it may be the most promising in terms of achieving stable results. It is also the most egalitarian, since the exercise of coercion or force to make opponents stop raising questions and objections is contrary to the idea that, as subjects of descriptive knowledge and moral rights and duties, we are all the same.

Philosophers however have questioned whether moral judgments can be true in the same way that descriptive judgments are. Descriptive judgments are true or false in virtue of the facts in the world. But whether there are facts for making moral judgments true or false is a matter of controversy. Could it be the case that our moral judgments express nothing but historically and culturally contingent conventions

about right and wrong that have hardly any foundation in the way the natural world factually is? And, if so, are our claims for universal truth or rightness of our moral judgments nothing but an expression of cultural hubris, the idea that we are right and that anyone who disagrees with us is just wrong?

One way to meet these challenges is to look at our processes of communication and at the strategies we use for reaching agreement in cases of controversy – those strategies in particular that are intrinsically egalitarian and refrain from the exercise of any force or coercion. What evidence can we rely on for making descriptive and moral claims? Can this evidence be shared? And what stands in the way of our reaching an agreement on either descriptive or moral matters? What are the sources of error that we should try to avoid or eliminate? Both Adam Smith and Edmund Husserl have tried to answer these questions, Husserl with a particular focus on descriptive judgments and Smith with an almost exclusive focus on moral judgments. Even though Husserl developed an ethical theory himself, especially in his *Lectures*,¹ the main focus of his interest was on epistemology. What I am interested in, in this chapter, is not in the first place Husserl's own ethics but Husserl's phenomenology of cognitive intersubjectivity and objectivity in so far as it provides a fruitful background against which one can develop a phenomenological reading of Adam Smith's theory of moral judgment.

Historically speaking, Adam Smith comes first, but I shall take my starting point from Husserl's posthumously published papers *On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* (*Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, written over a period of 30 years, namely between 1905 and 1935).² I shall focus on how, according to Husserl, people can reach

¹ See in particular Hua XXVIII and XXXVII.

² These papers fill volumes XIII, XIV and XV of the *Husserliana*. In my decision to focus on this part of Husserl's writings for the present study I followed the advice of Dagfinn Føllesdal. I am aware that this limitation of my reading of Husserl leaves out parts of his writings which are relevant for the topic. There are no translations of Husserl's writings on the *Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* into English. All translations from these texts in this chapter are my own. I used Dorion Cairns' (1973) *Guide for Translating Husserl*. This said, I would like to thank Michael Morreau who, while visiting the *Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature* here in Oslo, was so kind as to help me with some of the most difficult passages. Further thanks

objective knowledge and agree on the truth of descriptive judgments, even though they have nothing to rely on, as a source of information about the way the world is, other than perceptual states of individual perceivers. Husserl's basic claim reads as follows:

Characteristically, the world not only presents itself systematically thus and so within my original constitutive system, depending on the corporal conditions, but presents itself to all others in other ways as well, and is the unity of all such actual and possible presentations. (Hua XIV, p.122)

Zur Welt gehört, dass sie sich nicht nur in meinem ursprünglichen konstitutiven System so und so systematisch darstellt, mit Beziehung auf die leiblichen Bedingungen, sondern sich für jedermann auch in anderen Weisen darstellt, und sie ist Einheit aller solchen wirklichen und möglichen Darstellungen.

According to Husserl, people can rely on analogous strategies for justifying both their descriptive and their evaluative and, in particular, their moral judgments. But in the papers *On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* he does not go into any details as far as moral judgments and their justification are concerned. What would a strategy of justifying moral judgments look like which was analogous to the strategy Husserl suggests for descriptive judgments? And how far does this analogy reach? My claim is that answers to these questions can be found in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, first published in 1759.

At first sight, this claim may seem far fetched. Not only does Husserl make no claim to a Smithian heritage. Smith himself explicitly denies that moral judgments can be justified in a way similar to that in which we justify descriptive judgments. According to him, the justification of moral judgments faces a challenge for which there is no counterpart on the side of descriptive knowledge:

... the various appearances which the great machine of the universe is perpetually exhibiting, with the secret wheels and springs which produce them; all the general subjects of science and taste, are what we and our companion regard as having no peculiar relation to either of us. We both look at them from the same point of view, and we have no occasion for sympathy, or for that imaginary change of situations from which it arises, in order to produce,

are due to Maria A. Carrasco and Mariano Crespo, the former a Smith scholar and the latter a Husserl scholar, for their very helpful comments to an earlier version of this paper. All remaining errors, linguistic and other, are of course mine.

with regard to these, the most perfect harmony of sentiments and affections.
(TMS I.i.4.2, p. 19)³

Had Smith had the opportunity of reading Husserl's papers *On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity*, he might have revised this claim. Or rather, he might have modified it. He might have admitted that there are certain analogies between the strategies of justification on which we rely for both our descriptive and moral judgments. But then he would have insisted that there still are particular challenges to be met in the moral realm. Since moral matters concern our individual interests, having a "peculiar relation either to ourselves or to the person whose sentiments we judge of" (TMS I.i.4.2, p. 19), there is more that stands in the way of reaching an agreement on moral matters than the plurality of points of view in space and time occupied by different perceivers equally provided with well functioning perceptual systems and data processing minds. How can this additional challenge be met? The aim of my project of looking at Smith's theory of moral judgment against a background of Husserl's phenomenology of intersubjectivity is to throw light on the analogies and differences between the strategies we rely on for justifying claims to truth or rightness made by both descriptive and moral judgments. In the following part, focusing on Husserl, I shall only make a few references to Smith; thus, I have to ask readers mainly interested in ethical questions for some patience.

II. Husserl's phenomenological epistemology

a. The phenomenological method

We commonsensically believe that the world is in space and time, that it contains various objects including our own bodies, the bodies of other living people and the bodies of non-human animals, that people and higher developed animals have minds and perceive objects in the world

³ In this passage, Smith also mentions aesthetic judgments and claims that, epistemically speaking, they can be treated just as descriptive, scientific judgments. He seems to imply a position of aesthetic realism according to which things are beautiful (or not) in very much the same sense in which they are red or square (or not). In the following, I shall leave the specific matter of aesthetic judgments aside and focus on descriptive and moral judgments exclusively.

and respond emotionally to them. People live in this world over limited periods of time. Other objects exist on a more or less permanent basis. A material object has a certain stability of existence; it does not constantly go in and out of existence. Nor do material objects undergo spontaneous, uncaused changes. Furthermore, individual people conceive of other people as being similar to them: We assume that others to a large extent share our physical needs, perceptual capacities, and emotional dispositions.⁴ Non human animals may be more or less similar to us, but they are not quite as similar to us as other humans are⁵

Our perceptual and emotional sentiments play a key role in our acquisition of knowledge of the world. After all, we have no other sources of information on which to rely for this purpose:

The phenomena are phenomena of actual things, of things considered actual by me, and have their relationship to my experiencing organism, which is situated in actual space, and thus I soon acquire empirical connections, by which the manifold of the subjective relates to my human organism as a part of the natural world and again stands through this organism in a regular experiential relationship to those things, to which these phenomena “refer”. Pure phenomena we arrive at only through phenomenological reduction. (Hua XIII, p. 433-434)⁶

Die Phänomene sind Phänomene von wirklichen, von mir als wirklich gemeinten Dingen und haben ihre Beziehung zu meinem erfahrenen Leib, der in den wirklichen Raum eingeordnet ist, und so komme ich alsbald in empirische Zusammenhänge, wonach das mannigfaltige Subjektive Zuordnung hat zu meinem Leib als Ding in der Natur und durch Vermittlung des Leibes wieder eine geregelte Erfahrungsbeziehung zu den Dingen, auf die sich diese Phänomene “beziehen”. Reine Phänomene gewinnen wir erst durch phänomenologische Reduktion.

⁴ On Husserl’s account of the commonsensical attitude see also Luft (1998) and Mulligan (1995), p. 169.

⁵ For Husserl’s account of animals and their way of experiencing the world see for example Hua XIV, pp. 125-136. For Husserl’s account of the commonsensical world view and its implicitly realistic assumptions see Hua XV, p. 289: “The world exists all the time, a universe of being there, being there for me, and first of all being there perceptually.” [“Immerzu ist die Welt da, ein Universum des Da, für mich da, und zunächst wahrnehmungsmässig da.”] See also Hua XIII, pp. 113-114, 426, 434, 450 and Hua XV, pp. 22, 133-134, 533.

⁶ See also Hua XIV, p. 129.

With his phenomenology, Husserl attempts to provide a rational reconstruction of the process which allows us to acquire objective knowledge of the world from perceptual and emotional information about it. The aim of this rational reconstruction is to justify our present world view and its claims to objectivity: Can we rightly claim objectivity for our judgments about this world and all the objects and people and non-human animals in it? And, if so, with which degree of certainty? For Husserl, in order to solve “the problem of the objectivity of knowledge” [“das Problem der Objektivität der Erkenntnis”], we have to answer the following question:

How can a human being as a subject of knowledge in the immanence of his knowledge transcend himself, how can he ever be aware of any transcendent existence? (Hua XV, p. 553)

Wie kann der erkennende Mensch in seiner Erkenntnisimmanenz sich selbst transzendieren, eines transzendenten Seins je innewerden?

Husserl develops the method of “phenomenological reduction” which allows us to explore the relationship between the world and our experience of it.⁷ Our perceptual states and their content as it is here and now play a crucial part. Perceptual states are “intentional” states, they represent something as something.⁸ We can, for example, see something as a ball and as being red. But it is not this perceptual experience and its content alone on which we rely when we conceptualize what we have in our visual field, project this content onto the world, and say: ‘This is a red ball.’ After all, our perceptual experience could mislead us; it could turn out that what we believe to be a red ball really is just a red spotlight on the ground which remains in the same place even if we step on it or try to kick it away. Thus, before we attempt such a projection, we – automatically and often unconsciously – inquire whether the projection on to the world which our actual perceptual experience motivates us to make fits with our overall view of the world as it presently is. Since we have no other access to the world than through our perceptual and emotional

⁷ On Husserl’s “phenomenological reduction” see Bernet, Kern, Marbach (1996), pp. 56-74.

⁸ For Husserl, the intentional nature of our mental states is part of a human beings’ “primitive equipment with psycho-physical conditionality” [“Urbestand an psychophysischer Konditionalität”] (Hua XIII, p. 363).

experience of it, the only material on which we can rely for this inquiry is the material provided by our previous experiences as we remember them and our future experiences as we anticipate them hypothetically – or by other peoples' experiences indirectly (if at all) accessible to us. If what I see in my visual field really relates to a ball in the outside world, then I should be able to kick it away, and other people should be able to kick it back to me. If it is just a red spotlight, my attempt at kicking it will not meet with any physical resistance. But should it turn out to be a ball-shaped piece of hot iron, I can hit it and if I do so I will burn my foot.

It is in particular for his reconstruction of the emergence of our world view from the manifold of our and other peoples' perceptual states that Husserl follows the model of Copernicus: The way objects visually appear to us systematically varies with the point of view in space and time from which we look at them. Once we understand the content of our perceptual experiences as being determined not only by the objects we actually perceive but also by the point of view from which we perceive them we can, when we perceive a particular object, try to recollect what it looked like when we perceived it before from other angles and to anticipate what it will look like from other points of view and then make assumptions about its actual or objective shape and color. These assumptions can then be tested by actually looking at the object in question from other points of view. Whenever we find our expectations confirmed, we can conclude that there is an object there with certain perceptible properties, an object which fits into the world as we commonsensically and scientifically conceive of it. Accordingly, we are justified in claiming that there is such an object there which satisfies our description. A person, in order to acquire objective knowledge, has imaginatively to move back and forth between past and present, as well as between present and imagined future perceptual experiences; she also has to move in space – really or imaginatively – in order to look at the object to be known from different points of view.⁹ Furthermore, she has to communicate with other people who perceive the same objects in the same world from their respective points of view and try to achieve objective

⁹ See for example Hua XIII, pp. 116, 317-319.

knowledge of them in the same way as she does. In order to ensure that it is one and the same world that we all perceive and have knowledge of, we have to agree on which judgments about this world are objectively true. Bringing forth such an agreement is, however, not a matter of a majority vote. Whether or not our judgments about the objects in the world are true depends on processes of respectful intra-subjective and inter-subjective communication, adaptation and the constitution of coherent systems of belief, both descriptive and normative.

b. The Role of “Empathy”

That there are other people in the world and that these people are typically and to a large extent similar to one another is not only part of our commonsensical view of the world. According to Husserl, it is “a basic fact of our consciousness” [“eine Grundtatsache des Bewusstseins”].¹⁰ The “similarity” [“Ähnlichkeit”] is a condition for our having access to another person’s past, present, and future perceptual states and can for this reason not be induced from interactive experience.¹¹ However, our access to the perceptual states of another person can never be direct; we have to rely on what Husserl calls “empathy” [“Einfühlung”].¹²

Every I finds in its surroundings ... things which it sees as bodies, but sharply distinguishes them from its “own” body; it sees them as foreign bodies of

¹⁰ Hua XIII, p. 345. See also Hua XIV, p. 257, “... the stranger’s I is like myself.” [“... das fremde Ich ist meinesgleichen.”] and Hua XV, p. 527, ““normally” we are all embodied in the same way” [““normalerweise” haben wir alle gleiche Leiblichkeit”].

¹¹ See Hua XIII, pp. 49, 55, 57.

¹² “Empathy” is the standard translation for Husserl’s notion of “Einfühlung”. Steinbock suggests another translation, namely “intropathy”, which might in the present context be less misleading since it would prevent overlooking the difference between Husserlian “Einfühlung” and a particular aspect of Smithian “sympathy” which could be described as “empathy” (see Steinbock (1995), p. 209, and below, footnote 93; see also Lindgren (1973), pp. 21-22 and Fleischacker (2012, in this volume), pp. 273-311, and Brown (2012, in this volume), pp. 243-272. Nevertheless, I follow the standard translation of Husserl’s “Einfühlung” as “empathy”. This translation, misleading as it may be at present, is however historically correct, since ‘empathy’ entered the English language as the translation of the German ‘Einfühlung’. (See on the conceptual history of ‘empathy’ Brown (2012, in this volume, p. 252, footnote 14.)

such a sort, that to each such body again an I, but another one, a foreign I belongs (it sees those bodies as bearers of I-subjects, but it does not “see” the foreign I’s in the sense in which it sees itself, finds itself experiencing. It establishes them by means of “empathy”, also foreign experience, foreign character traits are “found”; but they are not in the same sense given, had in the same way as our own) ... (Hua XIII, p. 115)

Jedes Ich findet in seiner Umgebung ... Dinge, die es als Leiber ansieht, aber scharf dem “eigenen” Leib gegenüberstellt als *fremde Leiber* derart, dass zu jedem solchen Leib wieder ein Ich, aber ein anderes, fremdes Ich gehört (es sieht die Leiber als “Träger” von Ichsubjekten, es “sieht” aber nicht die fremden Ich in dem Sinn, wie es sich selbst sieht, erfahrend vorfindet. Es setzt sie in der Weise der “Einfühlung”, also auch fremdes Erleben, fremde Charakteranlagen werden “vorgefunden”; sie sind aber nicht in dem Sinne gegebene, gehabte wie eigene) ...

As the editor informs us in a footnote to this passage, Husserl later describes an act of “empathy” [“Einfühlung”] as “the perception of a different other, a stranger” [“Fremdwahrnehmung”] and as “the experience of a different other, a stranger” [“Fremderfahrung”]. Furthermore, Husserl explains the otherness of the respective other, the object of our empathy, in terms of this person’s occupying a point in space and time different from the one we occupy ourselves:

All I’s conceive of themselves as relative centrepieces of one and the same spatiotemporal world, which in its indefinite infinity forms the total surroundings of every I. For every I the respective other I’s are not centrepieces, but rather peripheral points, having as indicated by their bodies a different spatial position and temporal position in the one and only common space and in the one and only worldtime. (Hua XIII, p. 116)

Alle Ich fassen sich als relative Mittelpunkte der einen und selben raumzeitlichen Welt, die in ihrer unbestimmten Unendlichkeit die Gesamtumgebung jedes Ich ist. Für jedes Ich sind die anderen Ich nicht Mittelpunkte, sondern Umgebungspunkte, sie haben nach Massgabe ihrer Leiber eine verschiedene räumliche Stellung und zeitliche Stellung in dem einen und selben Allraum bzw. in der einen und selben Weltzeit.

The standpoint of an individual in space and time is like the “origin of the co-ordinate system” [“Nullpunkt des Koordinatensystems”]: Individuals differ from each other because they occupy different standpoints in

space and time as the origins of their respective co-ordinate systems.¹³ The awareness of there being other persons at other places in space and time is a precondition for our understanding our own standpoint as relative, as only one among many others which are different but equally relative:

Each I finds itself to be the centrepiece, as it were the origin of the coordinate system from which it ... observes, orders and understands all things in the world. Each conceives of this centrepiece though as something relative, for example it changes the position of its body in the space, and while it continuously says “here”, it knows that each successive “here” is a spatially different one. (Hua XIII, p. 116)¹⁴

Jedes Ich findet sich als Mittelpunkt, sozusagen als Nullpunkt des Koordinatensystems vor, von dem aus es alle Dinge der Welt ... betrachtet und ordnet und erkennt. Jedes fasst aber diesen Mittelpunkt als etwas Relatives, es ändert z.B. leiblich seinen Ort im Raum, und während es immerfort “hier” sagt, weiss es, dass das “Hier” ein jeweilig örtlich anderes ist.

In order to gain empathic access to the perceptual states of another person, we imaginatively place ourselves at the standpoint of this person, we imaginatively move the origin of our coordinate system from where it presently is to the origin of the coordinate system of this other person and imagine how the world looks from that point of view, how it looks to this person.¹⁵ By imagining how the world looks to this person whom we assume to be a perceiver like us, we can empathically represent the perceptual states this person has from his or her particular point of view. But this access is not direct; it is based on a reconstruction:

It is in the nature of empathy that I attribute to the Other the same phenomenal system that is freely available to me myself. ... The Other’s experiences are not my experiences, but in his experiences there are the same appearances that also belong to my phenomenal system, and in them the same things ap-

¹³ Hua XIII, p. 116.

¹⁴ As we shall see, Smith makes a similar claim, and he stresses much more than Husserl does the psychological and sociological fact that the awareness of the relativity of one’s standpoint or point of view is a matter of learning. See on Smith’s account of moral learning Carrasco (2004) and Fricke (2011).

¹⁵ See also Hua XIII, pp. 53-55, 117-118, 277.

pear; each of us has free access to the same things and to the same appearances. (Hua XIV, p. 254)¹⁶

Im Sinn der Einfühlung liegt es, dass ich dem Anderen dasselbe Erscheinungssystem einlege, das ich selbst in freier Verfügung habe. ... Die Erfahrungen des Anderen sind nicht meine Erfahrungen, aber in seinen Erfahrungen hat der Andere dieselben Erscheinungen, die auch meinem Erscheinungssystem angehören, und in ihnen dieselben Dinge erscheinend; jeder von uns hat zu denselben Dingen und zu denselben Erscheinungen Zugang in seiner Freiheit.

Empathy in Husserl's sense of the term has nothing to do with a quasi mechanically induced awareness of the emotional states of other persons; it is not a case of emotional contagion. It is "a particular kind of empirical experience" ["eine besondere Form der empirischen Erfahrung"].¹⁷ This particular kind of experience is, however, not visual or auditive in kind. It depends on a more or less conscious, imaginary change of the standpoint in space and time, undertaken in order to imagine what the world looks like from that standpoint.¹⁸ Another person who actually occupies this standpoint has perceptual experiences that correspond to the perceptual experiences we imagine. This correspondence allows us to ascribe the perceptual experiences we imagine to this other person. Underlying this ascription is the assumption that, as a person provided with perceptual systems and a brain that can properly process perceptual data, the other person is relatively similar to us. In addition to such processes of empathy, we have indirect access to other persons' perceptual states by verbally communicating with them. Every healthy person can make judgments about objects in the world on the basis of her perceptual experience and can communicate these judgments: We are constantly involved in processes of communication, exchanging our judgments with those of others.¹⁹

¹⁶ See also Hua XIV, pp. 258-259 and Hua XV, pp. 240 and 655.

¹⁷ Hua XIII, p. 187.

¹⁸ See Hua XIV, p. 186: "... the "act of putting oneself in the shoes of the other", which belongs to every act of empathy; *an act of empathy is itself an act of putting oneself in the shoes of the other.*" ["... das "Hineinversetzen", das aber zu jeder Einfühlung gehört; *sie selbst ist Hineinversetzen.*"] (My italics.)

¹⁹ See Hua XIII, p. 118: "Everyone makes his own experiences in relation to the things which appear to him sometimes thus and sometimes so, and he judges these

The need to rely on empathy, however, is not exclusively characteristic of our access to the perceptual states of other people. According to Husserl, access to our own past and future perceptions (to our memories and anticipations) also depends on empathy. Thus, we have to distinguish between self-empathy and other-empathy – as I suggest labeling these different functions of empathy. In order to empathically access our own past perceptual states, in order to remember them, we have notionally to move our present point of view back to the one we occupied in the past, the one from which we made the perceptual experience which we now want to remember. And we then have to imagine how the world looked to us when we actually occupied that point in (past) time and space. In acts of self-empathy, we represent previous and anticipate future perceptions as *our own*, as part of our previous and expected future “stream of consciousness” [“Erlebnisstrom”],²⁰ as part of what constitutes the unity of ourselves as individual persons over time. Therefore, acts of self-empathy always have a self-referring or reflexive dimension. In acts of other-empathy, however, we represent perceptions of other people as *theirs*. The perceptions of other people are not part of the stream of consciousness of the person who empathically represents these perceptions; only this person’s empathic representations of these perceptions belong to her or his stream of consciousness as constitutive parts of this person’s personal unity.²¹

Even though empathy allows us to reconstruct what kind of perceptual states other people are in while occupying a particular point in time and space different from our own, we have to be aware of the inevitable limitations imposed on our understanding of other people; and similar limitations exist for our self-understanding in so far as it depends on empathy:

things on the basis of these experiences and exchanges these judgments with Others in communication.” [“Jeder macht in Beziehung auf die Dinge, die ihm bald so, bald so erscheinen, seine Erfahrungen und urteilt auf Grund dieser Erfahrungen und tauscht diese Urteile in der Wechselverständigung mit Anderen aus.”]

²⁰ Hua XIII, p. 317; see also Hua XIII, p. 319.

²¹ See in particular Hua XIII, p. 277. See also Hua XIII, pp. 189, 319-320, 339-346, 400-408, 457-458.

There is in principle no perfect knowledge of the Other ... After all, I cannot even reveal my own [historicity], recreate through memory my own transcendental constitution ... even natural memory is not a matter of mere arbitrariness. (Hua XV, pp. 631-632)

Eine vollkommene Kenntnis des Anderen gibt es prinzipiell nicht ... Ich kann ja nicht einmal meine eigene [Historizität] enthüllen, meine eigene transzendente Konstitution erinnerungsmässig wiederherstellen ... schon die natürliche Erinnerung ist nicht eine Sache blosser Willkür.

In order to appreciate the role of empathy within Husserl's phenomenology in full, one has to remember that the phenomenological reduction takes us from the manifold of our commonsensical view of the world to the content of our perceptual state here and now. It is only to this content that a subject of perception and experience has direct access. A single perceptual experience as we have it here and now does not provide us with enough evidence for making any judgments about the world, nor does it provide evidence for objective judgments in particular. Suppose Copernicus had looked at the starry sky only once, from one point of view in space and time! Would that have provided him with enough evidence on which to rely for developing his cosmology?

The problem with the content of such a singular perceptual experience is not only that it would be too thin, that we need more information before we can attempt making any judgment. The experience could be misleading: What we take to be perception proper, triggered by an external object, might turn out to be caused by our own minds, in a dream or in a state of hallucination. But not only that: Even an experience of veridical perception, taken by itself, would not allow us to figure out which elements of the perceptual content can be explained in terms of the perceived object, its visible properties and its position in space, and which can only be explained with reference to the standpoint of the perceiving subject or the particular conditions under which this subject perceives the object in question. In order to understand the particular content of a perceptual experience and its objective and subjective elements, and in order to make judgments about the way the world is which can rightly claim to be objective, we need a much broader evidential basis than a single perceptual experience can provide.

This is why we have to rely on empathy. Empathy allows us to broaden the evidential basis on which to base our view of the world. It is through empathy that we have access to a manifold of perceptual data, including both data we collected ourselves in the past, ‘data’ we expect to collect, and data that have been and presently are collected by other persons. All these data have the status of “aspects” of objects in the world, and we have to base our knowledge of objects of experience on the manifold of these aspects. Accordingly, Husserl describes “objects of our empirical knowledge” as “unities of manifolds of aspects” [“Sinnendinge als Einheiten von Aspektmannigfaltigkeiten”]²² or as a “system of perceptibilities” [ein “System von Erfahrbarkeiten”].²³ The manifold of these aspects is not at the exclusive disposal of a singular person; it is “the common property of all subjects, so to say” [“gewissermassen Gemeingut aller Subjekte”].²⁴

c. You and I and the Conditions of Empathy

The I as an embodied subject is an object of knowledge, very much as other organisms and non-living things are objects of knowledge. Therefore, self-knowledge is not a solipsistic undertaking. Our knowledge of our own bodies as things in space depends on the experience of and interaction with other people:

My body in its physical truth is the unity of possible perceptions which every other could have of my body. (Hua XIV, p. 64)

Mein Leib in seiner physischen Wahrheit ist die Einheit möglicher Wahrnehmungen, die jeder andere von meinem Leib haben könnte.

Self-perception, in so far as it is objective perception, is not more primary than the perception of a stranger. (Hua XIV, p. 290)

Als objektive Wahrnehmung ist die Selbstwahrnehmung nicht mehr originär als die Fremdwahrnehmung.

²² Hua XIII, p. 337

²³ Hua XIII, p. 45

²⁴ Hua XIII, p. 377. See also Hua XV, p. 33

Every human being conceives of his body as also a corporal thing, to the extent that he conceives of it as a corporal thing that can be conceived as such by everyone else. (Hua XIV, p. 414)²⁵

Jeder Mensch fasst nun seinen Leib zugleich als körperliches Ding auf, sofern er ihn als von jedem Anderen als körperliches Ding auffassbaren auffasst.

The same holds for our knowledge of ourselves as creatures with minds. Self-knowledge is not just introspection of a solipsistic subject, explicable in terms of an I addressing itself from the first-person point of view. Rather, self-knowledge, knowledge of oneself as a self, has to be both first-personal and second-personal and therefore depends on interaction with other people whom we address as you's. It is only by perceiving others as similar to us that we can become aware of ourselves as similar to those others. We can then make ourselves the objects of our perception.²⁶ But we have to ascribe at the same time the property of being a self to the respective other, because we perceive and address him or her as similar to us.²⁷ Husserl speaks of this move in terms of a "doubling of the I" ["Verdopplung des Ich"] by which we become aware of the possibility of there being more than one I in the world, of "the possibility of two subjects with two bodies" ["die Möglichkeit zweier Subjekte mit zwei Körpern"].²⁸ This doubling of the I is a precondition both for other-empathy and for self-consciousness. Furthermore, it reveals that self-consciousness involves an act of self-empathy: I cannot other-empathically ascribe perceptual states of a certain kind to another person unless I recognize this person as a conscious self similar to myself; and I cannot recognize myself as a self unless I recognize the other person as a similar self, as a self, however, which is distinct from my own self.

In order to recognize myself as a self, distinct from another self, I have to look at myself not only from a first-person point of view, but al-

²⁵ See also Hua XV, p. 39.

²⁶ It seems to me that the passages from Husserl's work on the *Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* I quote here speak in favor of Ronald McIntyre's account of the intrinsically intersubjective nature of Husserl's account of self-knowledge. See McIntyre (2012, in this volume), pp. 66-67, footnote 6.

²⁷ See Hua XIV, p. 257: "The foreign I is similar to me." ["Das fremde Ich ist meinesgleichen."] See also Hua XIV, p. 400.

²⁸ Hua XIII, p. 268.

so from a second-person point of view, I have to look at myself not only as a ‘she’ but also as a ‘you’.²⁹ Thus, I have to look at myself not only from the point of view of the respective other as an Other; I also have to recognize this Other as being similar to me, as someone who requests my recognition of him as a self – as similar to me. It is only from the other’s point of view that I can represent the other’s perceptual experience of myself as a self and understand it as a perception of the same self that I am here and now, the self to which I have direct access from a first-person point of view. Other selves can represent this self which is my self in acts of other-empathy; but in order to do so, they have to take a second-person point of view, addressing me as a ‘you’, as a self, as someone similar to them.³⁰ Husserl himself anticipates the suspicion that the idea of a self as both one and more than one, namely two (the subject and object of self-consciousness), does at first sight seem to be inconsistent. But he insists that there is indeed no inconsistency:

This inconsistent idea becomes consistent, when I understand this very doubling as doubling. I cannot be at the same moment both here and there. But it is possible that what is here and there is similar. (Hua XIII, p. 268)

Diese widerspruchsvolle Vorstellung wird einstimmig, wenn ich eben die Verdoppelung als Verdoppelung nehme. Ich kann nicht zugleich hier und dort sein. Aber hier und dort kann ein Gleiches sein.³¹

Thus, the constitution of myself as an I, as a self, in contrast to another self and another I, depends on taking a second-person point of view toward this other, not only a third-person point of view: Rather than just perceiving the other as I perceive any inanimate object in the world, I address the other as a ‘you’ and invite and expect this other to do the same with me:

²⁹ See on the nature and importance of the second-person standpoint Darwall (2006), and on its particular function in the constitution of self-awareness and self-conscience also Carrasco (under review).

³⁰ See Hua XIII, p. 269: “Thereby the foreign I has been posited as being over there, an analogon to the I” [“Damit ist das fremde Ich als Analogon des Ich im Dort gesetzt”]

³¹ In his account of moral self-conscience, Smith anticipates this point, making explicit the need of a person who is his own moral judge to notionally “divide . . . into two persons” (see TMS III.1.6, p. 113). See on Smith’s account of moral conscience Fricke (forthcoming).

And the I can only constitute itself in contrast to a You, which is an I for itself and in contrast to a You, which it posits itself, finds itself as an I. (Hua XIII, p. 247)³²

Und das Ich konstituiert sich erst im Kontrast zum Du, das für sich selbst Ich ist und im Kontrast zu einem Du, das es selbst setzt, sich als Ich findet.

Accordingly, Husserl describes humans as being “inseparable ... for each other” [“untrennbares Füreinandersein”] and continues in the following terms:

... neither am I for myself, in the way I am, separable from the Other, nor is the Other separable from me. Each is for himself and yet for the Other. ... It is no powerless mirror image, but, if we call an *ego* something absolutely actual, then it belongs to something actual such that its being is inseparable from every other's being and intentionally encompasses it ... (Hua XV, p. 191)³³

... weder ich bin für mich, und so wie ich bin, trennbar vom Anderen, noch ist er es von mir. Jeder ist für sich und ist doch für den Anderen. ... Es ist nicht kraftlose Spiegelung, sondern, wenn wir ein *ego* ein absolut Reales nennen, so gehört es zu einem solchen Realen, dass sein Sein untrennbar ist von jedes anderen Sein und jedes jedes andere intentional umgreift ...

Intersubjective communication depends on empathy, and any act of empathy takes the second-person point of view, expecting to find the respective other (or our previous or future selves), the you, to be intrinsically similar to the I, the individual person I am here and now. Of course, no single person ever communicates with all others, not even with all those who are her or his contemporaries. The social worlds of humans are relatively small; how small they actually are depends on whether one defines them in terms of the “home of the family” [“Heim der Familie”], or of the “home town” [“Heimatort”], or of the “home country”

³² See also Hua XV, p. 497. Husserl is anticipating claims about the I – You relationship that have more recently been put forward again by Stephen Darwall. It is through the work of Stephen Darwall that these claims have, in recent years, attracted some wider attention. As we shall see, it is not only Husserl who was anticipating Darwall; Adam Smith did so as well. But whereas Darwall does himself claim a Smithian heritage, he leaves Husserl unmentioned. See Darwall (2006), parts I and II.

³³ See also Hua XIII, p. 247 and Hua XV, pp. 497-498.

[“Heimatland”].³⁴ And some peoples’ circles of intersubjective communication include people from different countries. But we can and naturally do address all people as a you, as selves as we are ourselves, in virtue of the basic assumption of similarity of all human beings.

Actual communication is a necessary condition for the establishment of an “I – You – connection” [“Ich – Du – Konnex”], a connection that requires mutual empathy (which can only be mutual other-empathy).³⁵ But such mutual empathy is not sufficient for establishing communication. Communication further depends on acts of ‘communication of the self’ which alone can constitute the community of communicating persons:

... the specific act of communication (of communicating oneself) which, as the act of creating a community, is called in Latin *communicatio*. (Hua XV, pp. 472-473)

... der spezifische Akt der Mitteilung (des Sich-mitteilens), der als Gemeinschaft schaffender lateinisch geradezu *communicatio* heisst.

The communicating person addresses the other I as a ‘you’, where the ‘you’ is the other I – not merely a ‘he’ or ‘she’. And by addressing the other in this second-personal way, the I invites the respective other to do the same, implying that, as I’s, he and the other are similar (but certainly not numerically identical).³⁶ Any communication between individuals and, in particular, any state of mutual understanding, depends on these persons accepting this invitation and responding accordingly. Successful communication presupposes mutual empathy, the self-conception of each partner of communication as an I in relation to another I as a ‘you’, and mutual recognition as subjects of experience equally equipped with empathy, perceptual systems and brains to process perceptual data. Objective knowledge is knowledge shared by people who recognize each other as selves.³⁷

³⁴ See Hua XV, p. 133.

³⁵ Hua XV, p. 472.

³⁶ Hua XV, p. 473. See also Hua XV, p. 476.

³⁷ Given that communication is one of the natural phenomena which are shaped by evolution, these Husserlian conditions for successful communication seem to be too demanding. But one has to keep in mind that Husserl, with his phenomenological analysis of the conditions of objective knowledge, does not aim at reconstructing an

No single I can claim to have a special role to play in the constitution of knowledge of a common world. As an ‘I’, every individual person is always related to others, to other individual ‘Non-I’s’, who are themselves I’s relating to all others as ‘Non-I’s’. All I’s and all respective other Non-I’s or Yous have the same epistemic authority and hold each other accountable:

... every personal I “comprehends” in its intentionality and in its capacities and through its phenomenal world every other I and its phenomenal world, and in the intermingling communalization every I finds the Other as an I distinct from itself and as another I with other intentionalities and capacities, but intentional in itself and “directed” to the same world ... (Hua XV, p. 366)

... jedes personale Ich “umspannt” in seiner Intentionalität und seinen Vermögen und durch sein Weltphänomen jedes andere Ich und sein Weltphänomen, und in der Vergemeinschaftung des Ineinander findet jedes den Anderen als Ich geschieden von sich und als anderes Ich mit anderen Intentionalitäten und Vermögen, aber intentional in sich und „bezogen“ auf dieselbe Welt ...

The accountability in question is epistemic in kind, it is the accountability of an informant, a reliable subject of knowledge of the way the world is.³⁸

d. The Method of Reflective Equilibrium

Constituting an intersubjectively sharable view of the world and of the objects in this world with their properties from a manifold of aspects, a view furthermore which can rightly claim to be “objective”, that is true of the world at least to a sufficiently high degree is, according to Husserl, a collective enterprise. As Dagfinn Føllesdal has pointed out, Husserl’s method to justify the objectivity of judgments of common and scientific

evolutionary process. Husserl’s neglect of evolutionary processes as well as processes of individual and social learning distinguishes his phenomenological analysis from Smith’s analysis of the conditions of understanding what real moral propriety consists in. Smith tries to provide an analysis which is historically, psychologically and sociologically well informed and realistic.

³⁸ On the topics of accountability and its relation to authority see Darwall (2006), pp. 65-118.

knowledge is holistic in kind; it is not foundational.³⁹ No singular perceptual experience either past or present is considered as authentic and reliable beyond doubt. Therefore, no singular perceptual experience can play a foundational epistemic role. Before we consider any particular perceptual experience as a reliable source of information, as evidence for an object in the world having certain perceptual properties, we have to test whether it can be made consistent with the view of the world which we share with the people around us. Reliable evidence has to be accessible to others. And whenever we experience something that seems to be inconsistent with our shared view of the world, we try to explain it in terms of some kind of deficiency on the side of the other perceiver:

... in general everyone assumes an appropriate correspondence between the appearances of things to him and to Others and sees discrepancies as exceptions due to illness and such like. (Hua XIII, p. 117-118)⁴⁰

... im allgemeinen nimmt jeder eine ungefähre Korrespondenz seiner Erscheinungen mit denen Anderer an und findet Abweichungen unter dem Titel Krankheit und dergleichen als Ausnahme vor.

Føllesdal has described the intersubjective constitution and revision of a shared view of the world as Husserl reconstructs it in terms of the application of a method of “reflective equilibrium”. This method has a twofold function, namely that of building up consensus and of justifying this consensus at the same time. Indeed, the interactive and world-constitutional process of communication between selves as Husserl reconstructs it has the same twofold function.⁴¹

The notion of “reflective equilibrium” was introduced by John Rawls.⁴² Rawls uses it in a framework that is predetermined by certain “principles of justice”. These principles define just political institutions for a national state. According to Rawls, it is within this framework that members of a society apply the method of reflective equilibrium to define the standards of fairness on which to rely in their judgments about right and wrong actions and institutions. It is certainly very plausible to

³⁹ See Føllesdal (1988). See on this topic also McIntyre (2012, in this volume), p. 80-81.

⁴⁰ See on this topic also below, pp. 205-208.

⁴¹ Føllesdal (1988), p. 116ff.

⁴² Rawls (1973), pp. 48 and others.

conceive of the constitution of an objective, shared view of the world as reconstructed by Husserl in terms of a method of “reflective equilibrium”. However, one should not overlook that there is in Husserl’s reconstruction of this worldview no counterpart to Rawl’s “principles of justice”. Furthermore, Husserl does not restrict the “validity” [“Geltung”] of this worldview to a limited number of people, such as the citizens of a national state. He makes it explicit that our view of the world has grown over time and that all our predecessors have made their contribution to its constitution.⁴³ Participation in the collective constitution of a view of the world is unlimited, both in temporal and in geographical terms. Any restriction of people who are allowed to participate in this process would be incompatible with the basic assumption according to which all people are similar to each other: The “apperception of the Other as being my equal” [“meinesgleichen”] has no limits.⁴⁴ Standards of objectivity of judgments do indeed have to make claims to universality. It does not make sense to claim objectivity of a judgment for a restricted number of people:

... what makes up the intersubjective character of the objective sciences, of the natural sciences? A piece of knowledge is intersubjective, if it is accessible in principally the same way to any number of subjects who have knowledge of the same. (Hua XIII, p. 217)⁴⁵

... was macht den intersubjektiven Charakter der objektiven Wissenschaften, der Naturwissenschaften, aus? Intersubjektiv ist eine Erkenntnis, die prinzipiell in gleicher Weise, dasselbe erkennend, vielen und beliebig vielen Subjekten zugänglich ist.

Within the present project of providing the background for a phenomenological reading of Adam Smith’s theory of moral judgment and of the

⁴³ See Hua XIII, p. 218: “The conditions for the possibility of identifying experiences of different individuals have to be fulfilled and thereby the principal conditions for the possibility of mutual understanding. Ideally, the experiences of people from a hundred thousand years ago have the same intersubjective validity” [“Die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Identifikation von Erfahrungen verschiedener Individuen müssen erfüllt sein und damit die prinzipiellen Bedingungen der Möglichkeit wechselseitigen Verständnisses. Ideal betrachtet haben die Erfahrungen von Menschen vor hunderttausenden Jahren intersubjektive Geltung”]

⁴⁴ See Hua XV, p. 135.

⁴⁵ See also Hua XIV, p. 216.

‘sympathetic process’⁴⁶ in particular, there are two elements of Husserl’s reconstruction of the intersubjective constitution of a shared view of the world that deserve particular attention, namely his theory of “sympathy” and his theory of “normality”.

e. Husserl’s Theory of “Sympathy” [“Sympathie”, “Mitfühlen”] and “Antipathy” [“Antipathie”]: Approval or Disapproval of the Empathically Re-presented Perceptual or Emotional Experience

In the framework of the overall topic of this chapter, Husserl’s theory of sympathy and antipathy is of particular interest.⁴⁷ However, one should be aware that this topic does not come up often in the papers *On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity*. In *Husserliana XIV*, there is one short text dedicated to the topic which, according to the editor, dates from the summer of 1920. And in *Husserliana XV*, there are a few short passages where Husserl mentions the topic. Apparently, it was not of central concern to him.

The text on sympathy in *Husserliana XIV* (Beilage XXIV, pp. 185-191) opens with the claim that Hume’s theory of sympathy is erroneous.⁴⁸ With respect to the project of providing a phenomenological reading of Adam Smith’s theory of the sympathetic process and of his theory of “sympathy” in particular, this claim is not discouraging since Hume’s and Smith’s theories of sympathy are not the same.⁴⁹ Husserl introduces the notion of “sympathy” for describing an appreciative act of

⁴⁶ The notion is not Smith’s; I am not sure who actually coined it. Carrasco uses the notion of a “sympathetic exchange” which comes close; see Carrasco (2004), p. 101. In the same paper, Carrasco already suggests a “phenomenological” reading of Adam Smith’s moral theory (see p. 94); but rather than to any phenomenologist philosopher, she relates Adam Smith’s moral theory to Aristotelian ethical thought and attributes to him an “ethics of practical reasoning” (p. 94).

⁴⁷ For “sympathy”, Husserl uses both the Greek “Sympathie” and the German “Mitfühlen” (see Hua XIV, pp. 185-191, Hua XV, pp. 509, 513) and later also the notion of “adoption” [“Übernahme”] (see Hua XV, p. 487).

⁴⁸ Hua XIV, p. 185: “The Humean theory of sympathy is of course false.” [“Die Humesche Theorie der Sympathie ist natürlich falsch.”] See on Husserl’s criticism of Hume’s account of sympathy also Kern (2012, in this volume), p. 147.

⁴⁹ See Darwall (2005), Carrasco (under review) and Fleischacker (2012, in this volume).

second-order “empathy”, an act of empathy which has a first-order act of empathy as its object and approves of it. According to Husserl, evaluative second-order empathy is typically involved in acts of remembering:

One must see that sympathy, as compassion with empathic feeling (actual pain or pleasure) is of a kind with acts of compassion in the reproductive act of consciousness. I can also “sympathize” with my own past. One could say: Normal memory is itself something like sympathy; the memory, things were such and so, is a reproductively modified perception. In this we have not only a merely imagined modification, a mere reproduction of the doxa, but also and simultaneously an actual doxa. The reproductively modified doxa is not simply “revived”; that is apparent from the possibility of misremembering. I believed and I still believe, or I do not now believe. Normal memory involves shared belief. One could say that this is the sympathy of believing. (Hua XIV, p. 185)

Man muss sehen, dass die Sympathie als Mitfühlen mit dem eingefühlten Fühlen (aktuelles Mitleid, Mitfreude) wesensverwandt ist mit dem Mitfühlen im reproduktiven Bewusstseinsakt. Ich kann auch mit der eigenen Vergangenheit „sympathisieren“. Man könnte sagen: Normale Erinnerung ist selbst so etwas wie Sympathie; die Erinnerung, es war so etc., ist eine reproduktiv modifizierte Wahrnehmung. Wir haben dabei nicht nur eine bloße Phantasiemodifikation, eine bloße Reproduktion der Doxa, sondern zugleich eine *aktuelle* Doxa. Die reproduktiv modifizierte Doxa ist nicht bloss die „wiederaufgelebte“; das zeigt sich in der eventuellen Erinnerungstäuschung. Ich glaubte und glaube noch, oder ich glaube jetzt nicht. In der normalen Erinnerung liegt der *Mitglaube*. Man könnte sagen, dass ist die Glaubenssympathie.

According to Husserl, acts of “empathy” [“Einfühlen”] which allow access to our previous perceptual states and the beliefs about the perceived objects to which they gave rise are inevitably made objects of evaluation. Any empathically re-presented perceptual states and the corresponding past beliefs are subject to reconsideration.⁵⁰ We cannot, of course, change past experiences or the attitudes we had to them when they were actual. But we can revise our epistemic or emotional attitude to the content of this experience: Past belief based on past perceptual experience is compatible with present disbelief based on the memory of the past perceptual experience and the corresponding past belief. Husserl’s claim is

⁵⁰ Husserl uses both the German term “Vergegenwärtigung” and the Latin term “Appräsentation” for our empathically re-actualizing and pre-actualizing past and future perceptual experiences. See for example Hua XIII, pp. 52, 375-376.

that, when we take the attitude of remembering something, we inevitably ask ourselves whether the beliefs we previously formed in response to what we then experienced and which were then compatible with the view of the world we then had are still compatible with the view of the world we presently have. If the past beliefs and underlying perceptual states we empathically re-present are still compatible with our present view of the world, the acts of self-empathically re-presenting them will, when made objects of second-order empathy, give rise to “sympathy”. Otherwise, they will give rise to “antipathy”.⁵¹

Ordinary memory considered as a reliable source of information is second-order self-empathy with past perceptions and the corresponding beliefs which, when made objects of second-order empathy, will give rise to sympathy. Sympathy is a kind of positive or approving act of second-order empathy, the objects of which are acts of first-order empathy. Everyone who remembers past perceptions and beliefs inevitably asks himself or herself: Can I now approve of my former approval of this perceptual experience as reliable? If a person can answer this question in the positive, she will sympathize with her former approval of this experience, and this sympathy is a condition for re-endorsing the former experience as a reliable source of information; memory of experience as reliable information is more than pure self-empathy of past perceptions, it includes a second-order sympathetic act the object of which is a first-order act of self-empathy.⁵²

As for an example, I can remember entering a shop which, at first sight, seemed to me to be quite spacious. When trying to walk into the back of the shop, I realize that there is a large mirror covering the back wall which creates the optical illusion of the shop being much larger than it actually is. I then become a regular client. And every time I enter the shop I remember how large I first thought it was. But now I have evidence to the contrary. Thus, my memory of my first visual impression of the shop and the corresponding belief about its size takes the shape of second-order antipathy. I remember my previous belief but it is not any

⁵¹ For Husserl’s use of the term “antipathy” [“Antipathie”] see Hua XIV, p. 186 and Hua XV, p. 509.

⁵² On Husserl’s account of “sympathy” in his *Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* see also Kern (2012, in this volume), p.154ff .

more compatible with my actual view of the world and of this shop in particular. In a basically similar way, I can remember my first encounter with a new colleague whom I found at the time not particularly charming. But, since this first encounter, I may have changed my mind about her. I may have got to know her better. Thus, I can empathically represent my first encounter with her, but this act of self-empathy will then become an object of antipathy: The impression I then had does not fit any more into my actual view of the world and of my present trust in the reliability and charm of this colleague in particular.

Husserl himself makes explicit that what he says about the role of sympathy and antipathy in acts of remembering past perceptions and beliefs as trustworthy or not applies to the memory of other kinds of mental states and their underlying perceptual or emotional experiences as well: Any attitude of past “liking” [“Gefallen”], “desiring” [“Begehren”] or “willing” [“Wollen”] is subject to further revision, and even “past actions” [“das vergangene Handeln”] can, after having been re-presented empathically, be objects of second-order sympathy or antipathy. Memory is never neutral, it always takes the shape of sympathy or antipathy:

In remembering earlier judgments, I also evaluate and will, and have in this, as present I, actual opinions. ... there is a collaboration, a community in observing, thinking, feeling, making up one's mind. (Hua XIV, p. 188)

In der Erinnerung an Vergangenes urteile, werte und will ich mit und habe darin als aktuelles Ich wirkliche Stellungnahme. ... es liegt darin ein *Mittun*, Mitleben im Wahrnehmen, Denken, Fühlen, Sich-entscheiden.

It is, however, not only self-empathically re-presented previous perceptual and emotional states and the various attitudes to them that are subject to present re-evaluation and give rise to second-order sympathy or antipathy. The same applies to the perceptual states and attitudes of other people which we re-present in acts of other-empathy:

In the same way I sympathize with Others; after all, empathy is a modification of memory. (Hua XIV, p. 185)

Ebenso sympathisiere ich mit Anderen, wie ja die Einfühlung eine Erinnerungsmodifikation ist.

With respect to the Other I try the following approach: Empathy is something like remembering-oneself-into-the-Other; and, accordingly, there would be an act of sympathy, just as in memory in the ordinary sense of the term. (Hua XIV, p. 186)

Hinsichtlich des Anderen versuche ich den Ansatz: Das Einfühlen ist so etwas wie Sich-in-den-Anderen-hineinerinnern, und demgemäss fände ein Sympathisieren statt ganz so wie in der Erinnerung im gewöhnlichen Sinn.

If our empathy with the perceptual and emotional states and corresponding epistemic or evaluative attitudes of another person can be an object of second-order sympathy, if we can ourselves endorse the attitude the respective other has to his perceptual states, then the other and we stand on “common ground”:

But it is essential to the state of empathy that, while I posit the Other in accordance with the evidence as seeing and feeling etc. thus and so, I myself, while bringing about those presentiating acts of “I perceive”, “I value”, am in coincidence with the other I, and, as present, I have a jointly given basis. ... From his point of view he sees these and those facets, from that point of view I would see the same ones. This provides the common “basis”, namely for the act-life of the Other and for me. (Hua XIV, p. 188)

Aber es liegt doch im Wesen der Einfühlungslage, dass, während ich den Anderen setze gemäß den Anzeigen als so und so wahrnehmend, fühlend etc., ich selbst, indem ich vergegenwärtigend jenes „ich nehme wahr“, „ich wertere“ vollziehe, eben in Deckung mit dem anderen Ich bin und als aktuelles Ich einen gemeinsam gegebenen Boden habe. ...

... Er sieht von dort aus und hat die und die Aspekte, ich würde von dort aus eben dieselben haben. Das gibt den gemeinsamen „Boden“, nämlich für das Aktleben des Anderen und für mich.

Thus, in acts of other-empathy, if the empathic act can be an object of sympathy, we are in agreement with the other person: We do not only reconstruct how he sees the world from his point of view by imaginatively taking it ourselves, we implicitly approve of the other’s attitude to what he sees. Such approval is a precondition for our jointly constituting a common world. Sympathy (or antipathy) represents the normative dimension of our holding each other accountable as reliable informants about the way the world is. But no one can ever achieve the status of a reliable informant forever. By holding each other epistemically accountable in acts of second-order sympathy or antipathy, we constantly sub-

ject each other to the test of mutual sympathy. As we shall see, Husserl's analysis of sympathy and antipathy as second-order acts of empathy which have as their objects first-order acts of empathy has a predecessor in Adam Smith's theory of both first-order and second-order sympathy.

In the passage on sympathy and antipathy, Husserl does not talk exclusively about epistemic attitudes to our perceptual states and their propositional content, such as the attitude of belief. States of belief are not the only possible objects of self-empathy or other-empathy. He explicitly addresses those acts of empathy (and in particular those acts of other-empathy) the objects of which are evaluative attitudes, attitudes which can take the shape of feeling or any other kind of evaluation. In cases where we empathically re-present another person's state of pleasure or sadness and the perceptual content to which the other responds by having these emotions and in which we make these states objects of second-order sympathy or antipathy, our sympathy (or antipathy) is not a matter of epistemic second-order re-presentation exclusively: When representing another's sadness, we do not simply think or believe that the other is sad because for example of the loss of a parent. Rather, our sympathy takes itself the shape of an emotion: We share the other's sadness, we suffer with the other. The same holds for sympathy with the pleasure of another:

I share the pleasure of the Other, that does not mean that I would be glad if I were the Other or if I imaginatively put myself in his shoes (nor would I, in the opposite case, act completely differently, sadly), rather I really am glad. (Hua XIV, p. 187-188)⁵³

Ich habe Mitfreude mit dem Anderen, das ist nicht, ich würde mich freuen, wenn ich der Andere wäre oder wenn ich mich an seine Stelle versetzt denke (und nicht würde ich, wie es der Gegenfall ist, ganz anders mich verhalten, trauern), sondern ich freue mich wirklich.

But emotional sympathetic second-order empathy is not emotional contagion. Sympathy takes the form of "joining in" ["Mittun"], "community in perception" ["Mitleben im Wahrnehmen"] and analogously for cases of "thinking" ["Denken"], "feeling" ["Fühlen"] and "making up one's

⁵³ See on this topic also Kern (2012, this volume), pp. 154ff. and John Drummond (2012, in this volume), pp. 126-134.

mind” [“Sich-entscheiden”].⁵⁴ According to Husserl, we have to understand acts of sympathy with other persons’ emotions in analogy to acts of sympathy with their judgments: When we imaginatively put ourselves into the position of another and empathically re-present his perceptual states and corresponding beliefs, and when these acts of re-presentation are then objects of second-order sympathy, we endorse these beliefs ourselves. This means that we consider the other as a reliable informant about the way the world is. Analogously, when we empathically re-present the perceptual states and emotional responses to these states of another, and when these acts of re-presentation are then objects of second-order sympathy, we endorse his emotional responses, and this endorsement takes the shape of an emotion of the same kind as the endorsed one. The point is not only that the other’s pleasure is my pleasure and the other’s pain is my pain. Sympathetically re-presenting another’s mental states implies some kind of identification with the other: Not only do the other and I stand on “common ground”, we “overlap”.⁵⁵ However, Husserl restricts the cases where acts of sympathy with another’s emotional or evaluative states take the form of these very emotions and evaluations to those where the objects of these emotions or evaluations are such that they can be evaluated objectively. There are many things to which we respond emotionally or which we evaluate where these responses cannot be shared by others because they reveal a particular personal concern or a particular taste:

Similar as in judging something it is in valuing something that allows for being objectively valued and that has been valued thus. But there is also what is of value just for me, what is not without further ado of value for the Other, something pleasant, happy for me, which it is not for the Other ...

The sadness at the loss of the mother is not the same for the Other ... If I, on the basis of empathy with the sadness of the Other at the death of his mother, myself find it sad that she is dead, this sadness of mine is intentionally and essentially related to the sadness of the Other, and I participate in it, that is to say, I am sad that he is sad and that he has suffered this loss, and this is why I too am sad about the death of his mother. (Hua XIV, p. 190)

⁵⁴ Hua XIV, p. 188. In that context, Husserl uses the notion of “Deckung”.

⁵⁵ See also Hua XV, p. 513.

Ähnlich wie im Urteilen steht es im Werten eines objektiven Wertbaren und Gewerteten. Aber es gibt auch ein für mich Wert, was nicht ohne weiteres für den Anderen wert ist, ein mir Angenehm, Erfreulich, was es für den Anderen nicht ist. ...

Die Trauer über den Tod der Mutter ist nicht für den Anderen dasselbe ... Wenn ich auf Grund der Einfühlung in die Trauer des Anderen über den Tod seiner Mutter es nun selbst traurig finde, dass sie tot sei, so hat diese meine Trauer die intentionale und wesentliche Beziehung auf das Trauern des Anderen, und ich nehme daran teil, das sagt, ich bin traurig, dass er trauert und dass er den Verlust erlitten hat, und darum trauere ich auch über den Tod seiner Mutter.

Which objects are possible objects of objective evaluation and emotional response and which are not is, however, not naturally determined. Objective evaluation and objective emotional responses have to be intersubjectively constituted, just as objective descriptions of the world have to be.

The case of empathically re-presenting another's volition and making it an object of sympathy is different from sympathetically endorsing another's objective emotional and evaluative responses:

Things cannot be exactly the same with volition. I cannot turn the choice of the Other into my own choice, no matter how far I want to go along with it in empathy. Granted, what he takes as his goal, that same can be my goal as well, and similarly the empathized "that should be" and "I want to do it" can become at the same time my own. But once he has got what he wants, that will in most cases exclude my getting a hold of it, and that gives rise to a discord about who gets what that has nothing to do with any disapproval. (Hua XIV, p. 190)

Ganz ähnlich kann es sich nicht verhalten im Willen. Den Entschluss des Anderen kann ich nicht in einen eigenen verwandeln, wie sehr ich in der Einfühlung mitmachen mag. Zwar, was ihm als praktisch gewollt vor Augen steht, dasselbe kann nun auch mir so vor Augen stehen, und in ähnlicher Umwendung kann aus dem eingefühlten ein für mich aktuelles „das soll sein“ und „ich will es tun“ werden. Aber hat er zugegriffen, so schliesst das ja im allgemeinen mein Zugreifen aus, und das gibt eine eigentümliche Unstimmigkeit, die nichts mit einer Missbilligung zu tun hat.

What Husserl here has in mind is the case where two persons want the same and are aware of each other as wanting the same, while the object of their desire is such that only one can have it. Kant expresses such a

conflictuous harmony of wishes in a wonderfully ironic verse, referring to the examples of “a married couple bent on going to ruin” and “the pledge of King Francis I to the Emperor Charles V”:

O marvelous harmony,
what she wants he wants too. (Mary Gregor’s translation, AA V: 28)

O wunderbare Harmonie.
was er will, will auch sie.

f. Constituting Standards of Normality

Every perceiver can misinterpret the perceptual data he or she has at his or her disposal and make erroneous judgments about the way the world is. But misinterpretation of data is not the only possible source of error. The data themselves can already be misleading. It is an important part of Husserl’s phenomenological reconstruction of the intra- and inter-subjective constitution of a coherent, rich, differentiated and shareable view of the world which can rightly claim to be objective to identify the most reliable kinds of perceptual data. According to Husserl, those perceptual data are most reliable which are collected by *normal* perceivers under *normal* perceptual conditions.

In the context of a joint phenomenological reading of Husserl and Smith, Husserl’s notion of *normality* deserves a prominent place. This is because, in order to identify *normal perceivers* and external perceptual conditions which are *normal for them*, we have to focus on ourselves and the people around us as the subjects of perception, belief and knowledge and the way our perceptual systems function – rather than only on the respective points in space and time we occupy. According to Husserl – and this is the point that Smith may have overlooked in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* – even scientific knowledge of the world cannot ignore the nature and embodiment of the human subjects of this knowledge:

It is clear that the descriptive sciences refer to a certain normality, thus, that they do not develop an objectivity in itself. (Hua XIII, p. 384)

Klar ist, dass die deskriptiven Wissenschaften auf eine gewisse Normalität bezogen sind, dass sie also keine Objektivität an sich herausarbeiten.

Ideally objective scientific knowledge aims at transcending the natural limitations of human perception and capacities of processing data; but this challenge can only be met if the impact of these limitations on our perception of the world and formation of belief has been properly understood and reduced to an unavoidable minimum. Furthermore, scientific knowledge depends on evidence, and the relevant evidence has to be accessible to human beings as they naturally are, or at least to all those considered as normal. The “view from nowhere” cannot and should not be the aim of scientific research.⁵⁶

Humans are not the only animals in the world whose bodies include perceptual systems and a brain for processing perceptual data and then directing the adaptation of the whole organism to its environment. The identification of standards of normality for perception and perceptual circumstances has to be informed by what the perceptual systems of organisms of a certain species naturally are. And since different animal species are provided with different perceptual systems, standards of normality are species specific.⁵⁷ The difference between humans and other animals as far as their perceptual systems are concerned is a matter of degree. Husserl thinks that we can imaginatively take the point of view of a “higher animal” [von “einem höheren Tier”]; but there are limits to our empathic access to the perceptual states even of higher animals since these are not quite as similar to us as other human beings are.⁵⁸ Husserl does not spend much time speculating about how to determine standards of normality for non-human animals. Only in the framework of an explicitly epistemic concern for an objective and sharable view of the world and the awareness of the subjective nature of perception does the determination of standards of normality become an issue. And there is the question whether and to what extent any non-human animals share the human concern for objectively understanding the world.⁵⁹

Above, I quoted from passages where Husserl explains the other-

⁵⁶ This well known metaphor was coined by Thomas Nagel (1986).

⁵⁷ See for example Hua XIV, p. 123, and Steinbock (1995), p. 164.

⁵⁸ See Hua XIV, p. 117.

⁵⁹ See for example Hua XIX, pp. 113-114 where Husserl raises the question whether I would have an “experience of nature” in the full sense of the term, “if I were a jelly fish” [“Wäre ich eine Qualle, hätte ich schon eine Naturerfahrung?”]. He leaves the question open.

ness of perceivers whom we address as a ‘you’ in acts of other-empathy in terms of the different points in space and time which they occupy and from which they look at the world.⁶⁰ These passages seem to imply that the only phenomenologically relevant difference between subjects of perception is their position in space and time. But phenomenology has to take more differences between people into account. Only ideally normal persons, who interact exclusively with ideally normal others and who never perceive anything under other than ideally normal perceptual conditions, will differ in nothing but the point in space and time they occupy. Of course, no individual person can ever claim to be ideally normal in this sense:

Whenever two bodies switch their objective positions in space, the appearances of the things that the corresponding I’s experience will change continuously, and they will do so in such a way that these appearances will, in an ideal case, after the switching of the positions of the bodies, also have switched. What we have here is a certain ideal possibility under the title of a, but merely ideal, normality; accordingly, of any two ideally normal individuals, who switch places or imagine their places switched and bodily are in an ideally normal position, each will find exactly the same appearances of things in his consciousness as previously were realized in the consciousness of the other. If I and an Other have “normal” eyes, then we see the same, when the same unchanged things present themselves to us at the same objective point in space which we can occupy one after the other. And to each one of us things would always have had the same appearance, had he seen them from the same position as the Other, and had, furthermore, not only all spatial relations of the position of the eyes been the same, but had also the eyes and the whole body been in the same “normal condition”. These are ideal ways of speaking. (Hua XIII, p. 117)

Wenn ein Leib seine objektive Raumstelle mit einem anderen vertauscht, so ändern sich kontinuierlich die Erscheinungen, die die zugehörigen Ich von ihren erfahrenen Dingen haben, und zwar so, dass die Erscheinungen sich nach der Vertauschung der Leibesstellen in einem idealen Fall vertauscht haben. Es herrscht hier eine gewisse ideale Möglichkeit unter dem Titel einer, aber nur idealen, *Normalität*, wonach von zwei normalen Individuen, im Fall sie ihre Orte vertauschen oder vertauscht denken und leiblich in einem ideal-normalen Zustand sind, jedes genau dieselben Erscheinungen in seinem Bewusstsein findet, die früher im Bewusstsein des anderen realisiert gewesen waren. Haben

⁶⁰ See above, pp. 179-180.

ich und ein Anderer „normale“ Augen, so sehen wir dasselbe, wenn dieselben unveränderten Dinge sich uns an derselben objektiven Raumstelle darbieten, die wir nacheinander einnehmen können. Und jeder von uns würde immer dieselben Erscheinungen gehabt haben, wenn er an derselben Stelle wie der Andere gesehen hätte, und weiter, wenn nicht nur alle räumlichen Beziehungen der Augenstellung dieselben wären, sondern auch die Augen und der ganze Leib in gleicher „normaler Verfassung“ wären. Das sind ideale Reden.

As Husserl makes explicit in this passage, the ideally normal subject who enjoys ideally normal conditions of experience can make judgments to which every other ideally normal subject would always agree. Such a subject would still not need to take a “view from nowhere”.⁶¹ The ideally normal person would still be a human being in space and time, having to deal with all the perceptual limitations explicable in terms of the temporal and spatial constraints of perspective and in terms of what normal humans with their perceptual systems have access to. But nothing beyond these constraints would affect the content of such a person’s experience, there would be no malfunctioning of perceptual systems or of the brain processing perceptual data, nor any prejudices nor deficiencies in the exercise of memory and anticipation. But real human beings are not like that, they can never completely annihilate the impact of such abnormal factors on the content of their perceptual states and the way they interpret it:

Every normal subject occasionally suffers from abnormal deviations from its normal experience and has thus abnormal data. ... The same intersubjectively. (Hua XV, p. 155)⁶²

⁶¹ See also Hua XIII, p. 364: “What then is “normal experience” other than that which is correct, which merges harmoniously into the coherent whole, experience which sustains the identity of the experienced thingishness?” [“Was ist denn “normale Erfahrung” anderes als die rechtmässige, die einstimmig in den Zusammenhang sich einfügende, die Identität der erfahrenen Dinglichkeit durchhaltende Erfahrung?”] This passage confirms Dagfinn Føllesdal’s view that Husserl’s phenomenological account of our perceptual experience and objective knowledge is essentially holistic.

⁶² In my translation of Husserl’s notions of ‘anomal’ and ‘Anomalie’ as ‘abnormal’ and as ‘abnormality’ (as in the passages quoted here), I follow Anthony Steinbock. Steinbock reminds us of the etymologies of ‘normal’, ‘abnormal’ and ‘anomal’: Whereas ‘normal’ and its opposite ‘abnormal’ derive from Greek ‘nomos’ and Latin ‘norma’, ‘anomal’ derives from Greek ‘anomalos’. ‘Abnormal’ clearly bears a

Jedes normale Subjekt hat selbst gelegentlich anomale Abweichungen von seiner normalen Erfahrung und so anomal Gegebenes. ... Ebenso intersubjektiv.

There are abnormalities of memory, abnormalities of intelligence, of evaluative behavior, of volition, of emotional life, of instinctive drives and needs ... (Hua XV, p. 159)

Es gibt Anomalien des Gedächtnisses, Anomalien der Intelligenz, des wertenden Verhaltens, des Willens, des Gefühlslebens, der instinktiven Triebe und Bedürfnisse ...

According to Husserl, identifying normally functioning human perceptual systems and perceptual conditions normal for human perceivers can only be a collective enterprise, and the phenomenologist has to reconstruct it as such: The phenomenologist who addresses the question how standards of normality are constituted has to “pass from the solipsistic subject to the communicating subject”; [er muss “vom solipsistischen Subjekt übergehen zum kommunizierenden Subjekt”].⁶³ How does Husserl reconstruct the process of constituting the standards of normality? The main question to ask is ‘Who is normal?’. And the spontaneous and unreflected answer to this question is: ‘I am.’

I, with my entire habitual structure and the world which is already valid for me, and already intersubjectively valid for me, function ... through my being in the form of being-for-myself and being-in-connection-with-Others, as grounder of the apperception of the Other as being similar to me. (Hua XV, p. 135)⁶⁴

Ich, mit meiner gesamten habituellen Struktur und der mir schon geltenden Welt, und mir als schon intersubjektiv geltenden, fungiere ... vermöge meines Seins in der Form des Für-mich-selbst-seins und In-Konnex-mit-

negative connotation, ‘anomal’ is a descriptive term and does not imply the negation of the ‘normal’. See Steinbock (1995), p. 132. See also below, p. 211.

⁶³ Hua XIII, p. 371.

⁶⁴ In the directly following passage Husserl makes explicit that the standards I implicitly impose by understanding the Other as being similar to me include my “habitual and present interests” [meine “habituellen und aktuellen Interessen”], “my instinctive needs and instinctive satisfactions”, [meine “Instinktbedürfnisse und Instinktbefriedigungen”], “my other needs” [meine “sonstigen Bedürfnisse”], my “concerns” [meine “Sorgen”], and my “efforts” [meine “Mühen”] (see Hua XV, p. 136).

Anderen-seins als urstiftend für die Apperzeption des Anderen als meinesgleichen.

Given that it is “a basic fact of our consciousness”⁶⁵ to assume that other people are similar to us, we are naturally inclined to set the standards of normality ourselves. This is not presumptive. Rather, it is an expression of our natural disposition to see other people as our equals and to respect them accordingly. Guided by the similarity assumption, we anticipate when we imaginatively take the standpoint of another person in order to look at something from this person’s point of view, to find perceptual experiences that are consistent with our own and thereby find confirmed what we anticipated on the basis of what we perceived ourselves:

But in general everyone assumes an approximate correspondence between the appearances of things to him and to Others and sees discrepancies as exceptions due to illness and such like.

And on all this the I’s agree or, lets say, the people. Everyone makes his own experiences of the things which appear to him thus and so, and he exchanges these judgments in communication with Others. If he does not have a reason for questioning the appearances, if he is turned in an attitude of experiencing to an object, he does not make a judgment about the appearances, but about the objects; if he describes a thing, this thing is one and the same to him, something that remains unchanged, which has constant properties, and he verbally refers to it as such, even though he constantly has changing appearances while he is moving his head and eyes and his whole body in space, at one moment an appearance from the distance, at the next an appearance from nearby, at one moment an appearance from the front, at the next from the back and so forth. (Hua XIII, p. 117-118)

Aber im allgemeinen nimmt jeder eine ungefähre Korrespondenz seiner Erscheinungen mit denen Anderer an und findet Abweichungen unter dem Titel Krankheit und dergleichen als Ausnahme vor und jedenfalls als Möglichkeit vor.

Und über all das verständigen sich die Ich oder, sagen wir, die Menschen untereinander. Jeder macht in Beziehung auf die Dinge, die ihm bald so, bald so erscheinen, seine Erfahrungen und tauscht diese Urteile in der Wechselverständigung mit Anderen aus. Wenn er keinen Anlass hat, auf die Erscheinungen zu reflektieren, wenn er *geradehin* erfahrend dem Gegenstand zugewendet ist, so urteilt er dabei nicht über Erscheinungen, sondern über die Dinge; beschreibt er ein Ding, so ist das Ding ihm das eine und selbe, etwa das un-

⁶⁵ See above, footnote 10, p. 178.

veränderte mit unveränderlichen Qualitäten begabte, und als das sagt er es aus, während er doch Kopf und Auge und den ganzen Leib im Raum bewegend immerfort andere Erscheinungen hat, bald eine Fernerscheinung, bald eine Naherscheinung, bald die Vornerscheinung, bald die Hinterscheinung usw.

As long as we find our anticipation of consistency between our own perceptual experiences and those of the other person confirmed, we have no reason to revise our silent assumption that we are indeed normal perceivers; we feel confirmed in trusting that we are as normal as the respective other. We agree in our judgments about the way the objects of our perceptions are and thus have reason to believe that these judgments are objectively true. It is only in cases where we find our expectation of consistency disappointed that we have to ask: ‘Who of the two of us is normal? Is it myself or him?’ And in order to answer this question, we have to communicate with the respective other and try to compare our own assumptions about what the things in the world are like with the present experiences, memories and expectations of the other. The definition of standards for normal perception is, of course, not just a matter to be settled between two people. It is a matter of all people:

...“normally” we *all* have [the] same corporal nature ...
(Hua XV, p. 527, my italics)

...“normalerweise” haben wir *alle* gleiche Leiblichkeit ...

People are normally provided with the same kinds of bodies, including the same perceptual systems and brain capacities for processing perceptual data. But this should not lead to misunderstanding standards of normality as naturally determined.⁶⁶ Husserl does claim that we can conceive of “a population of color blind people ..., in which the children constitute the visible “colorless” world as normal for them”. [“Ein Volk von Farbenblinden ist denkbar, in dem die Kinder die farbenblind sichtige Welt als normale sich konstituieren.”]⁶⁷ But he does not mean to imply that normality for the members of a community is merely a matter of what the majority of them happens to be like, how their perceptual systems presently function.

⁶⁶ See on this point Steinbock (1995), p. 144.

⁶⁷ Hua XIV, p. 133.

In our distinction between normal and abnormal perceivers and perceptual conditions we are committed to our epistemic goal of understanding the world as far as possible not only as coherent, but also in its phenomenal richness and differentiation.⁶⁸ Distinctions of color to which only a few people have perceptual access cannot for this reason be ignored. Colorblind people can adhere to a colorless view of the world as objective only as long as this view of the world has not been challenged by anybody who can presently see colors and distinguish between them. But as soon as such a person challenges their view of the normal world and provides evidence for his view, they will have to revise their worldview and endorse a revised standard of normality, accepting that their colorless way of seeing the world is not optimal:

For anyone who is colorblind the one who sees colors normally provides the norm ... (Hua XIV, p. 132)

Für den Farbenblinden ist der normal Farben Sehende die Norm ...

Husserl's understanding of the standards of normality is not relativistic.⁶⁹ Rather, it is pluralistic: There may be different standards of normality constituted within different communities. But all these standards are committed to the same *optimum*: Whoever counts as a normal perceiver has to be considered as best equipped for the purpose of perceiving and objectively knowing the world in all its richness and differentiation.⁷⁰ The respective richness and differentiation is to be found in the world. And where groups of people adhering to different and mutually incompatible standards of normality meet, there is the question whose standards are better, or more truthful.⁷¹ In any such case, a great deal of other-empathy and communication is needed before people can eventually agree on a view of the world they all can share.⁷² What motivates

⁶⁸ See for example Hua XIV, p. 70 and Steinbock (1995), pp. 139 and 202.

⁶⁹ For Husserl's rejection of relativism see for example Hua XIII, p. 369 and Hua XIV, pp. 133-136.

⁷⁰ See Hua XIV, pp. 121, 128 and Steinbock (1995), pp. 139-141. See also Steinbock (1995a). On Husserl's notion of optimal normality see also Wehrle (2010) and Mulligan (1995), pp. 204-206.

⁷¹ Husserl speaks of "steps of normality" ["Stufen der Normalität"] (H XV, p. 210).

⁷² See Hua XIV, p. 134.

this communication is the shared belief in the uniqueness of the actual world:

There can be only one world, only one time, only one space with one nature and one manifold of animal organisms. (Hua XIV, p. 102)⁷³

Es kann nur eine Welt geben, nur eine Zeit, nur einen Raum mit einer Natur und einer Mannigfaltigkeit animalischer Wesen.

Every human being shares with all other human beings the possibility of an “infinite world of experience” [die “Möglichkeit einer unendlichen Erfahrungswelt”].⁷⁴ There is “an open plurality of others” [eine “offene Vielheit von Anderen”].⁷⁵ Accordingly, the past, present and future perceptual states of all people provide the data for constituting the one world in which all people live. Husserl speaks of “the constant process of a progressing world constitution” [“der beständige Prozess einer fortschreitenden Weltkonstitution”],⁷⁶ underlining that this constitution is an ongoing task in which all human beings are invited to participate:

Indeed, the world itself is determinate, but it is openly indeterminate nevertheless, and every human being entering into my experience is not only some being in the world, but it is there with me as a transcendental I, not only as finding itself there as a corporal I in its primordial world, but as an Other, whose experiences are valid for me as well, thus as someone who shares a unity of experience with me, and vice versa also as an Other, who knows himself to be in agreement with me. Everything worldly has been constituted intersubjectively. (Hua XV, pp. 44-45)

Die Welt ist ja selbst eine bestimmte und doch offen unbestimmte, und jeder evtl. in meine Erfahrung tretende Mensch ist nicht nur Daseinedes der Welt, sondern mit da als transzendentes Ich, als nicht nur sich als leibliches Ich in seiner primordinalen Welt vorfindend, sondern als Anderer, dessen Erfahrungen für mich mitgelten, also als mit mir in eins Erfahrender, und umgekehrt als Anderer, der sich ebenso mit mir einig weiss. Alles Weltliche ist intersubjektiv konstituiert.

Standards of normality typically aim at universality: Any such standards are taken to be universal. But since universality is an ideal that may never be reached by humans, any particular judgment for which we claim

⁷³ See also Hua VIII, p. 384 and Hua XIV, p. 135.

⁷⁴ Hua XV, p. 196; see also Hua XV, pp. 214-215.

⁷⁵ Hua XV, p. 44.

⁷⁶ Hua XV, p. 209.

universality can be subject to revision. Our universality claims do not make us immune to error. In Husserl's account of the conditions for objective knowledge as based on data collected by normal people under normal perceptual conditions, there is room for a plurality of standards of normality. However, normatively speaking, he is a universalist: What counts as objective knowledge must in principle be accessible for all people and compatible with the world view of all people, and that is compatible with its being subject to revision at any time.⁷⁷

Any standard of normality of perceivers or perceptual conditions implies a distinction between what is normal and what is abnormal: "Everything normal has its horizon of abnormalities." ["Alles Normale ... hat seinen Horizont möglicher Anomalitäten."]⁷⁸ Since the normal is committed to the optimal, standards of normality have a normative function: They set standards for optimal perceivers and perceptual conditions in the light of which whoever and whatever is abnormal is sub-optimal.⁷⁹ And it is the commitment to optimality that makes the normal the typical and familiar for the members of a community: "... a human being lives within the norm ..." ["... der Mensch lebt in der Norm ..."].⁸⁰ Steinbock puts this point in the following terms: "Something is not normal because it is frequent; it is frequent because it is normal".⁸¹

Before we conclude that some people are just not normal, we try to exclude any external factors that might cause an intersubjective inconsistency of perceptual experiences. After all, such a conclusion is not in accordance with the "basic fact of our consciousness"⁸² which makes us assume that all people are similar to each other. Husserl's own examples for people who are not normal and therefore not to be seen as reliable informants include colorblind people, children, mentally handicapped people and people who suffer from an illness that affects their perceptual

⁷⁷ See also Hua XV, p. 391.

⁷⁸ Hua XIV, p. 120.

⁷⁹ See Hua XIV, p. 131.

⁸⁰ Hua XV, p. 143.

⁸¹ Steinbock (1995), p. 164.

⁸² See above, footnote 10, p. 178.

and mental capacities.⁸³

Normal conditions for visual perception for human beings include, for example, direct visual access to the objects to be perceived under either daylight or light which is sufficiently similar to daylight, perception of these objects from a proper distance (what counts as a proper distance depends on the size of the object and on the capacity of the respective perceptual system) as well as the possibility of seeing the object from more than one angle. That we consider daylight as a normal condition for visual perception and a certain distance as proper for seeing an object of a certain size is conditional on the kinds of eyes and brains the best human perceivers have, on the particular design of their eyes and brains.⁸⁴ Owls are better equipped than normal human beings for seeing under poor lighting conditions and falcons are better equipped for seeing small things from a great distance. For adapting to their level of perceptual richness and differentiation under conditions normal for them humans have to use perceptual tools like infra red cameras or telescopes. But “no one, no animal species can claim a priori to be within its system of experience in possession of optimal experience in which all properties of things are represented”. [“A priori kann niemand, keine Spezies sagen, sie habe in ihrem Erfahrungssystem die optimale Erfahrung, in der alle Dingeigenschaften sich darstellen.”]⁸⁵ Accordingly, any standard of normality allows not only for negative deviation (the abnormal), but also for positive deviation (the “anomal”, as Steinbock suggests to call it). As for an example, a person who can perceive colors is anomal among colorblind members of a community whose standards of normal perception have not yet been optimized.⁸⁶ If a perceiver makes a claim for a positive deviation from the generally accepted standards of normality and if he can provide evidence for his claim that is generally accessible, he successfully challenges the accepted standards and motivates their revision.

⁸³ Hua XV, p. 141.

⁸⁴ Husserl speaks of the “psychophysical dependency of perceptual appearances from the respective body”, [“psychophysische Abhängigkeit der Wahrnehmungserscheinungen von der Leiblichkeit”] (Hua XIII, p. 369).

⁸⁵ Hua XIV, p. 135.

⁸⁶ See on this topic Steinbock (1995), pp. 132, 140, 145.

The process of constituting the standards of normality as Husserl conceives of it is intrinsically conservative. People who are generally recognized as normal perceivers share a certain view of the world, and they try to interpret every new experience as a confirmation of this view of the world (including the assumption of their normality). Still, normal perceivers can agree to account for certain findings which cannot be made coherent with their current view of the world: They can see a need to revise this view instead of either trying to explain these findings in terms of abnormal perceptual conditions or trying to ignore them. They will agree on revising the present standard of normality if the respective evidence becomes overwhelming.

Any standards of normality which enjoy present authority have been constituted by a particular group of people living under historically and geographically specified conditions. They bear the traits of the particular “horizon” [“Horizont”] of these people, a horizon of shared experience, shaped by the tradition and present state of the culture and environment in which they live, by their “Lebenswelt” [“life world”]:

Everybody is a normal human being who concretely refers to himself by using the word “everyone”, who belongs to an open human community of people who share the same historical life-world, determined by the same formal structure which is common to all, even though not explicitly. The normal being is normal within and through the normal community. (Hua XV, p. 142)⁸⁷

Als Mensch *normal* ist, wer mit dem Wort „jedermann“ sich konkret versteht, wer einer offenen Menschengemeinschaft von Mitmenschen angehört, die dieselbe historische Lebenswelt haben, bestimmt durch dieselbe, allen vertraute, aber nicht ausgelegte Formstruktur. Der Normale ist normal in und vermöge der normalen Gemeinschaft.

But the historicity and contingency of any present standards of normality do not stand in the way of making claims of universality and objectivity for the judgments made in accordance with these standards. The universality and objectivity claims are justified as long as no present group of people sharing a standard of normality explicitly excludes somebody from participating in the constitution and further shaping of this standard.

⁸⁷ For Husserl’s use of the notion of “horizon” see Hua XV, pp. 19-20, for his use of the notion of “Lebenswelt” see Hua XV, p. 141; see also in this context Hua XV, pp. 136, 142-147.

And the acknowledgement of a pluralism of normality standards reminds us of the fact that no standards of normality people endorse at any present moment in time will ever be ideal, however justified their claim to universality and objectivity may be. None of the claims to universality made at a present time can ever be ideal.

g. Objectivity and Equality

At first sight, Husserl's account of normality and his distinction between normal and abnormal people may sound frighteningly discriminatory, especially in the ears of people who are likely to be considered abnormal: the blind, the deaf, those who have lost the normal capacity of smell and taste and touch, the mentally handicapped and, more generally speaking, people who are seen as abnormal. The distinction evokes practices of racism, phenomena of social exclusion, disrespect, even crimes against humanity. Telling someone that he is not normal, that he is abnormal, is, in many contexts, an expression of despise. But none of these intuitive responses to the distinction between normal and abnormal people is in any way justified. Husserl's account of normality is not supposed to provide any reasons for social discrimination. The standards of normality as Husserl conceives of them refer first and foremost to an epistemic optimum the conception of which is informed by what qualifies a human being to be considered as a reliable source of perceptual evidence. These standards are supposed to be immune to distinctions of race or gender, as well as to any social or economic distinctions. Their constitution is committed to epistemic egalitarianism. Through processes of empathy, people try to understand each others' way of perceptually experiencing the world. The constitution of standards of normality is a collective enterprise from which nobody is excluded. This procedure is compatible with an outcome according to which only a few people are considered as normal perceivers.

Still, one might object that it would be very naïve to believe that any process of communication between people which aims more or less explicitly at the definition of standards of normality in Husserl's sense of the term could ever be kept free from the impact of the social power of certain individuals or classes of people. The history of civilization and

the history of class discrimination in particular provide ample evidence for the contrary. However, as far as knowledge of the factual world is concerned, social power cannot, in the long run, overrule factual evidence. The history of astronomy represents an excellent example: The death of Nicolaus Copernicus did not prevent the heliocentric view of the cosmos from becoming the generally accepted view in cosmology.

The concern that the definition of standards of normality might be subject to contingent factors, arbitrary choices, and the preferences of powerful social classes in particular is certainly well justified. But one should not overlook what Husserl tries to achieve with his phenomenological epistemology. He tries to provide an account of the way in which knowledge acquired by human beings can rightly claim to be objective or true. This project is normative in kind, its aim is epistemic justification. Even though not blind to social practices of discrimination, its aim is not to provide a sociological account of how standards of normality which people endorse at present have come into being and in what respects their particular shape bears the impact of contingent factors.

In order to understand Husserl's epistemic project as normative, one has to bear in mind his claim that all people are originally the same, they are the same potential subjects of perception and knowledge. It is through processes of socialization within a particular social group that they become different from each other:

Every empirical I starts as a primitive I, thus every I as completely the same as every other, with the exception of the hyle given to it and the way this hyle is distributed in immanent time. Afterwards, every primitive I develops in its own specific way, different from every other. (Hua XIII, p. 407)

Jedes empirische Ich fängt als Ur-Ich an, also jedes völlig identisch bis auf die ihm vorgegebene Hyle und die Art ihrer Verteilung in der immanenten Zeit. Danach entwickelt sich jedes Ur-Ich anders als jedes andere.

This primitive sameness of all I's underlies the basic assumption of all people being naturally similar. It means that there are no naturally given reasons for excluding anyone from participating in the interactive process of defining the standards of normality. Furthermore, normality and abnormality with respect to perceptual and intellectual powers can come in degrees. People who are abnormal in one respect can, at least to some extent, participate in the process of constituting standards of normality.

And even after standards of normality have been constituted, not all those then considered as abnormal in one respect or another will be excluded from being reliable sources of information. After all, blind people may hear normally and deaf people may see normally. And sometimes it needs a child in all its innocence and ignorance of social power structures to see that the emperor is actually naked. Most people have access to perceptual data of some kind. But they cannot be subjects of objective knowledge unless they endorse the collectively constituted standards of normality and the corresponding commitment to optimality. A slope is objectively more or less slippery even for someone who is not himself capable of walking down it.

Any constitution of standards of normality through an interactive process is justified in virtue of respecting the basic sameness of all people, of letting all people participate. This basic sameness of all people is all inclusive; it should not be misunderstood as the sameness of all those people who are normal in every respect, who do not suffer from a deficiency of any of their perceptual systems and who can properly process the respective data. In every real society, people considered normal, the most reliable sources of perceptual information about the objects' perceptual properties, live in "community with people who are abnormal" [in "Gemeinschaft mit Anomalen"],⁸⁸ and the normality of the former does not provide them with any reason for discriminating the latter.

h. The Epistemic and the Ethical

As I mentioned above, Husserl claims in his papers *On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* that the challenges one has to meet for justifying claims of objectivity in the realm of common and scientific descriptive judgments on the one hand and on the other in the realm of evaluative and in particular moral judgments are similar. This is consistent with admitting that there may be additional challenges to be met in the constitution of ethical knowledge. How can "evaluative objects" ["Wertobjekt[e]"] be known?⁸⁹ Husserl seems to imply that the justification of judgments about evaluative object depends on processes of empathy and

⁸⁸ Hua XV, p. 19. See also Hua XV, p. 499.

⁸⁹ Hua XV, p. 405. See also Hua XIII, p. 427.

communication and the constitution of standards of normality similar to those on which we rely in order to justify descriptive judgments:

... we also co-constitute the world of values and the practical world, which is there for all of us; we are eventually together, for one another, acting together for achieving the same ends, on the sense of which we agree ... (Hua XV, p. 162)

... wir sind auch Mitträger der Wertewelt und praktischen Welt, die für uns alle da ist; wir sind eventuell zusammen, füreinander, miteinander handelnd an denselben Zwecken, in deren Sinn wir übereinstimmen ...

Every human being and even the whole of humanity is constantly on the move – craving for a world of values for him, for a world of values for all, a world which could provide possibilities of happiness for all at the same time, for everyone the face of a world of values, which everyone could enjoy. (Hua XV, p. 406)⁹⁰

Der Mensch und dann die Menschheit ist in unaufhörlicher Bewegung – im Streben nach einer Werte-Welt für ihn, einer Werte-Welt für alle, die allen zugleich Möglichkeiten der Glückseligkeit geben könnte, für jedermann das Gesicht einer Werte-Welt, für ihn geniessbar.

Humanity is not only the community of all people who make descriptive judgments about objects belonging to one and the same world. It is also the community of all people united in the desire to survive and live peacefully within communities. And as in the case of standards of epistemic normativity in common knowledge and the natural sciences, the constitution of proper social norms and of ethical norms in particular takes its starting points within limited communities and then proceeds to a stepwise unification of particular systems of norms, the ultimate and ideal goal of which being a system of norms that is universal:

The development of transcendental intersubjectivity as a community of personalities is thus the process of constantly constituting new steps of systems of norms such that every successive step is higher than the former and more unified. (Hua XV, p. 421)

Die Entwicklung der transzendentalen Intersubjektivität als Gemeinschaft von Personalitäten ist also eine Entwicklung in der Ausbildung immer neuer und immer höheren Stufen sich vereinheitlichender Normsysteme.

⁹⁰ See also Hua XV, p. 405.

Humanity – a more or less unified manifold of relative or particular humanities, which themselves consist of particular humanities, – is as such a community shaped for the purpose of self-preservation, and self-preservation includes self-responsibility and the autonomous endorsement of norms; every form and step of unification has its own unified responsibility, such that the self-responsibilities are themselves unified in the communities. (Hua XV, p.421)

Die Menschheit – eine mehr oder minder vergemeinschaftete Mannigfaltigkeit von relativen oder Sondermenschheiten, die selbst wieder aus Sondermenschheiten gebaut sind, – ist als solche eine Vergemeinschaftung der Selbsterhaltung, und zur Selbsterhaltung gehört Selbstverantwortung und Selbstnormierung, zur Vergemeinschaftung jeder Form und Stufe vergemeinschaftete Verantwortung, wobei die Selbstverantwortungen selbst vergemeinschaftete sind in den Gemeinschaftlichkeiten.

Husserl wrote this down on November 22nd, 1931. And he then continued:

This still requires careful analysis, there are complications. (Hua XV, p. 421)

Das erfordert noch sorgsame Auslegungen, es gibt da Verwicklungen.

It is evident from this passage that Husserl considered the phenomenological analysis of the way people interact in order to constitute social norms as something that remained to be developed in detail. What we find in his papers *On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* is nothing but a minimal sketch of what this analysis might look like.

One assumption is quite clear: The data on which we rely for making evaluative and in particular moral judgments are not only perceptual but include emotional responses to what is being perceived and considered as being in the world:

Everything that already exists has an impact on the emotions, all that exists is apperceived in an evaluative way, and for this reason it triggers attitudes of desire which may be satisfied or not; it also motivates action, aiming at the preservation of values, at making them available, at forming higher values from lower ones etc. (Hua XV, pp. 404-405)

Alles, was schon ist, berührt das Gefühl, alles Seiende wird in Wertapperzeptionen apperzipiert und weckt damit begehrende Stellungnahmen, unerfüllte oder erfüllte; in eins damit geweckt Handlungen, darauf gerichtet, Werte zu erhalten, bereitzustellen, höhere Werte zu gestalten aus niederen Werten etc.

In a footnote to this passage Husserl underlines that not all values are hedonistic in kind.

One question that deserves particular attention is the question concerning the optimality constraints for the constitution of standards of normality in the moral realm. In the passages I quoted, Husserl underlines the importance of normative coherence and unity within communities. However, in the moral realm, what counts as optimal is not as easily agreed upon as in the realm of descriptive knowledge where the world in its complexity sets the standards. Epistemic complexity is to be discovered, but it is an open question whether there is anything in the world to be discovered that is morally relevant.⁹¹

Husserl did not live to develop a phenomenological account of objective values, the objects of justified evaluative and moral judgments.⁹² But looking at Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* will allow us to inquire whether and to what extent moral judgments and their claim to be true can be justified in a way analogous to Husserl's suggestion of how to justify the truth claims of descriptive judgments. In the second part of this essay I shall try to provide a phenomenological reading of Smith's moral theory – following the lines of Husserl's phenomenology of the objectivity of descriptive judgments.

III. Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Propriety

a. The challenge of justifying moral judgments

Smith might have agreed with the basic line of argument of Husserl's phenomenological epistemology without giving up his claim that a theory of moral judgment represents an additional challenge. This is because there are two phenomena standing in the way of people easily agreeing on what is morally proper and improper: Moral judgments are

⁹¹ For a more detailed account of Husserl's ethics and its Kantian heritage see Beyer (2012, in this volume), pp. 93-116 and Føllesdal (2008).

⁹² A sketch of Husserl's idea of what his ethics should look like can be found in the articles he wrote in the early 1920s for the Japanese journal *The Kaizo*. See Hua XXVII, pp. 3-59. In these texts, Husserl stresses reason, self-consciousness, responsibility and ethical conscience as the guiding forces for ethical action. His focus is more on the individual agent and his exercise of self-control and practical reasoning than on the interaction between people or the role of empathy.

judgments about “objects of practical consequence”⁹³; because of this, the different ways in which different people – even if they were ideally “normal” in Husserl’s specific sense of the term – respond to such an object cannot be explained merely in terms of the different positions in space and time from which they perceive this object. Whereas ideally normal people do not differ with respect to their perceptual systems, whereas they all see exactly the same if they look at objects from the same point of view under the same normal perceptual conditions, these people may still differ with respect to their other than merely perceptual bodily conditions and to their personal situations and acquired habits. They have different needs, they are vulnerable in different ways and in different degrees. And even when they are similar in their needs and desires, when they want the same, the object of their desires may not be sharable.⁹⁴

Whereas in the epistemic realm all are equally interested in acquiring the best knowledge possible (knowledge as detailed and differentiated as possible) and willing to admit that some are better equipped to access the relevant data than others, in the moral realm it is quite unclear who should set the standards for what is morally proper, even if all are equally interested in living together in communities peacefully and to each other’s advantage. There is no prospect of naturalizing standards of moral normality analogous to Husserl’s naturalization of standards of epistemic normality. Moral propriety is not merely a matter of optimally functioning human perceptual systems and data processing brains. For this reason, the constitution of something like the moral counterparts to Husserl’s standards of epistemic normality is more difficult; and even if such standards have been constituted, their application has to be handled with great care since, in the moral realm, we cannot ignore differences between the needs and interests different people have, differences for which there is no counterpart on the epistemic side. It is quite the opposite: Other than in epistemic matters, where the best perceivers are those who have access to richer and more differentiated data due to the well

⁹³ This is a formula Lindgren uses, one of the first scholars who paid particular attention to Smith’s distinction between judgments of science and taste on the one hand and moral judgments on the other. See Lindgren (1973), p. 23.

⁹⁴ See above, p. 200.

functioning of their perceptual systems and brains, in moral matters the challenge is to take the special needs and interests different people have into account.

Still, Smith himself uses the epistemic challenge of how to extract true and justified beliefs about visually perceived objects from the data we have in our visual fields when we perceive these objects as a model for describing the challenge of acquiring justified moral beliefs about what kind of behavior is morally proper and what is not from our spontaneous emotional responses to this behavior:

As to the eye of the body, objects appear great or small, not so much according to their real dimensions, as according to the nearness or distance of their situation; so do they likewise to what may be called the natural eye of the mind: and *we remedy the defects of both these organs pretty much in the same manner*. In my present situation, an immense landscape of lawns, and woods, and distant mountains, seems to do no more than cover the little window which I write by, and to be out of all proportion less than the chamber in which I am sitting. I can form a just comparison between those great objects and the little objects around me, in no other way, than by transporting myself, at least in fancy, to a different station, from whence I can survey both at nearly equal distances, and thereby form some judgment for their real proportions. Habit and experience have taught me to do this so easily and so readily, that I am scarce sensible that I do it; and a man must be, in some measure, acquainted with the philosophy of vision, before he can be thoroughly convinced, how little those distant objects would appear to the eye, if the imagination, from a knowledge of their real magnitudes, did not swell and dilate them.

In the same manner, to the selfish and original passions of human nature, the loss or gain of a very small interest of our own, appears to be of vastly more importance, excites a much more passionate joy or sorrow, a much more ardent desire or aversion, than the greatest concern of another with whom we have no particular connection. His interests, as long as they are surveyed from this station, can never be put into the balance with our own, can never restrain us from doing whatever may tend to promote our own, how ruinous soever to him. Before we can make any proper comparison of these opposite interests, we must change our position. We must view them, neither from our own place nor yet from his, neither with our own eyes nor yet with his, but from the place and with the eyes of a third person, who has no particular connection with either, and who judges with impartiality between us. Here, too, habit and experience have taught us to do this so easily and so readily, that we are scarce sensible that we do it; and it requires, in this case too, some degree of reflection, and even of philosophy, to convince us, how little interest

we should take in the greatest concerns of our neighbour, how little we should be affected by whatever relates to him, if the sense of propriety and justice did not correct the otherwise natural inequality of our sentiments. (TMS III.3.3, pp. 135-137, *my italics*)

As I shall argue in the following, Smith's main point concerning the analogy between the strategy that takes us from subjective perceptual data to objective descriptive knowledge and the strategy that takes us from subjective emotional data to the moral counterpart of objective descriptive knowledge, namely justified normative beliefs about what is morally good and what is not is that, in both cases, the challenge is to overcome the distortions and limitations of perspective. Whereas visual perception is perception from a particular point in space and time from which we see only a small part of the world and the things in it in perspectival distortion, our spontaneous emotional responses to the circumstances to which we are exposed and to other people's actions and their consequences in particular are distorted because of the strong influence of the passions arising in our natural self-love.

Given the additional challenges that have to be met in the constitution and application of standards of moral propriety, the focus of comparison between the strategies of justifying descriptive and those of justifying moral judgments has to lie on the intersubjective procedures for reaching an agreement about who counts as a reliable source of evidence for making a moral judgment that can rightly claim to be justified – rather than on the standards of moral propriety themselves. Indeed, the way we have to proceed in order to achieve objective common or scientific judgments as Husserl reconstructs it bears important similarities to its moral counterpart in Smith's moral theory, namely the 'sympathetic process'.⁹⁵ This is an interactive process in the course of which people communicate and correct each others' emotional responses and the evaluative beliefs based on them in order to achieve shared views of what is

⁹⁵ The notion is not Smith's; I am not sure who originally coined it. Carrasco uses the notion of "sympathetic exchange" which comes close; see Carrasco (2004), p. 101. In the same paper, Carrasco already suggests a "phenomenological" reading of Adam Smith's moral theory (see p. 94); but rather than to any phenomenologist philosopher, she relates Adam Smith's moral theory to Aristotelian ethical thought and attributes to him an "ethics of practical reasoning" (p. 94).

morally good and what ought to be done under circumstances of a particular kind.

b. First-order sympathy with a person concerned

For Smith, “sympathy” is an emotional faculty which is constitutive of our moral sensitivity. But it is not a moral sense as it was attributed to human beings by Smith’s academic teacher, Francis Hutcheson.⁹⁶ Nor is it what is, in the social sciences, sometimes called “empathy”, an emotional disposition to care about others and to help them without any expectation of personal reward.⁹⁷ Smith’s notion of “sympathy” covers a range of emotional phenomena that have something in common: Rather than being triggered by an external stimulation of the body directly, sympathetic feelings are responses to partly cognitive and, in particular, imaginative states of mind.⁹⁸ As I shall argue, Smith’s notion of sympathy and the different kinds of sympathy he – even though not terminologically – distinguishes anticipate Husserl’s theory of “empathy” and “sympathy”.

“Sympathy” is, according to Smith, not the only emotional faculty humans naturally have. Humans are also provided with the faculty of self-love. Emotions arising from self-love are self-directed, they concern the individual’s own survival, health and well-being. Sympathetic emotions are first and foremost other-directed, they represent an essential part of what makes us intrinsically social beings. Sympathy makes us take an interest “in the fortune of others” (TMS I.i.1.1, p. 9). It allows us to share not only “the sorrow of others” but also “any passion whatsoever

⁹⁶ For Smith’s rejection of Hutcheson’s assumption of a moral sense see TMS III.4.5, p. 158. See also Kern (2012, in this volume), p. 155-156.

⁹⁷ Psychologists and neuroscientists do not all use the notion of “empathy” in the same way; but much of the research about empathy aims at understanding what makes humans care not only about themselves and their own life and well-being, but also about other people. See Decety and Ickes (2011).

⁹⁸ Carrasco distinguishes between four kinds of sympathy in Smith, two of them “one-way” and two of them “two-way or mutual sympathies”. According to her, sympathy triggered by emotional contagion is one kind. See Carrasco (2011). Smith does indeed use the notion of “sympathy” for this phenomenon as well, but this is not the kind of sympathy that is relevant for understanding human morality. It is this phenomenon that comes closest to some kind of empathy (a notion that Smith does not use himself).

er” another person may have who is concerned by certain circumstances and emotionally responds to them (TMS I.i.1.5, p. 10). This sharing of an emotion is not explicable in terms of emotional contagion, even though Smith does not deny the phenomenon of a “transfusion” of passions, as he calls it.⁹⁹ Nor is sympathy with the emotions of a person concerned a matter of mere curiosity. First and foremost, our sympathy both allows and motivates us to put ourselves imaginatively into the position of another person in order to conceive “what we ourselves should feel in the like situation”; after all, “it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations” (TMS I.i.1.2, p. 9). Smith is aware of the fact that we have no direct access to how other people feel, to the way they emotionally respond to the circumstances in which they are. If we, by relying on our imagination, try to imagine ourselves in the position of another person, exposed to the very same circumstances, if we try to imagine how we would feel if we were in his position, and if we then expect that what we imagine we would feel was indeed the same as what he presently feels, we silently assume that he is similar to us, just as sensitive and vulnerable as we are.

In so far as Smithian sympathy allows and motivates us to imagine how we would feel under certain circumstances as a means for understanding how another person feels who is exposed to these circumstances, this emotional faculty functionally resembles the faculty of *empathy* as Husserl described it. Furthermore, this Smithian *first-order sympathy* has to be distinguished from *second-order sympathy*. And, as I shall argue, Smithian *second-order sympathy* functionally resembles the faculty of *sympathy* as Husserl described it.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ See TMS I.i.1.6, p. 11 and footnote above.

¹⁰⁰ For the distinction between Smithian sympathy understood as a “first-order desire” and Smithian sympathy understood as a “second-order passion” see Carrasco (2011), pp. 16-17. I prefer making the distinction in terms of ‘first-order’ and ‘second-order sympathy’; the former is an emotional state triggered by an act of the imagination, and the latter an emotional response to such an emotional state.

c. The normative constraints of second-order sympathy and the challenge of mutual sympathy

If the emotional response of the other person to certain circumstances is of exactly the same nature as the emotion we imagine we would feel under the same circumstances, and if the expectation of such a unanimity of feelings is confirmed, we do indeed share the feeling of the person who is the object of our attention. And this sharing of the feelings of the other gives rise to a second-order feeling of sympathy, the “pleasure of mutual sympathy” (TMS I.i.2.title, p. 13). Since we can sympathetically imagine any passion whatsoever, whether agreeable or disagreeable, and will, if we do so, emotionally experience the respective passion, our first-order sympathy can take the shape of an agreeable or a disagreeable feeling. Any second-order feeling of sympathy is, however, intrinsically agreeable, since we are naturally disposed to enjoy emotional unanimity with others.¹⁰¹

Generally speaking, Smith’s idea is that our emotions motivate us to make evaluative judgments, judgments about what is good and bad. Whatever we find agreeable we judge as good, and whatever we find disagreeable we judge as bad. Were we to care only about ourselves, had we only emotions arising from self-love, the only evaluative judgments we could make would be judgments of personal taste. Any case of evaluative agreement with others would be nothing but a lucky coincidence, a case of accidentally shared tastes. There could not really be anything like evaluative disagreement, and there certainly would not be any reliable procedure for overcoming it. Both *proper disagreement* with another person on how to evaluate certain circumstances or the emotional and behavioral responses of people to them and *the prospect of overcoming this disagreement in a rational way* depend on there being some kind of evidence accessible to the conflicting parties which speaks in favor of

¹⁰¹ See Smith’s response to Hume at TMS I.iii.1.9.footnote, p. 46. Hume, in a letter to Smith from July 28, 1759, had wondered how sympathy could be both agreeable and disagreeable at the same time, overlooking that Smith – even though not explicitly – distinguishes between first-order and second-order sympathy. Smith added the footnote in the second edition of the TMS. In his contribution to this volume, Iso Kern also refers to this passage (see p. 158), and so do Vivienne Brown (p. 247, footnote 9), and Samuel Fleischacker (p. 300).

one or the other evaluation. If there were no such evidence, the only way to overcome disagreement would be by exercising coercion or power.

What Smith implies with his claim that our sympathy allows us to imagine how we would feel under the circumstances of another person is that we are disposed to consider the other as an equal, similar to ourselves, and therefore as sensitive and vulnerable as we are. Furthermore, due to our faculty of sympathy, we feel the need of emotional and evaluative agreement with others. An experience of second-order sympathy is based on emotional unanimity and indicates agreement on matters of evaluation. Our general interest in being in a state of second-order sympathy indicates our need and general interest in agreeing with others on matters of evaluating behavior, of what is good or bad, not only for ourselves, but for others as well.

For the purpose of analyzing the phenomena of first- and second-order sympathy and their function in communication, Smith makes a distinction between two roles people can have when involved in a sympathetic process. There is on the one hand the person directly concerned by certain circumstances. Smithian examples for persons in this role include among others “a brother upon the rack” (TMS I:i.1.2, p. 9) and the “stranger” who “has just received the news of the death of his father” (TMS I.i.3.4, p. 17). On the other hand, there is the person in the role of a “spectator” who pays attention to the person concerned and imagines how he would feel if he was concerned in the same way, by the same circumstances (TMS I.i.1.4, p. 10). What qualifies a person to take the role of such a spectator is that he witnesses the person concerned and his emotional reaction to the respective circumstances and that he is himself not directly concerned by these circumstances.

Since the spectator assumes that the person concerned is similar to him, he expects to share the feelings of this person and to enjoy a state of second-order sympathy. But it may be the case that he finds his expectation disappointed. Evidence for whether or not the spectator finds his expectation disappointment can come from the facial expression and the body language of the person concerned or from any other verbal or non-verbal communication from his side.¹⁰² In cases of such disappointment,

¹⁰² See TMS I.i.1.6, p. 11.

the spectator will not feel second-order sympathy; rather, he will feel second-order “antipathy” (TMS II.i.5.4 and 5, p. 75), and such antipathy would take the shape of a disagreeable feeling, a feeling of displeasure. Indeed, the spectator makes his second-order sympathy with the person concerned dependent on this person’s feeling those emotions the spectator imagines he would feel under these circumstances:

When the original passions of the person principally concerned are in perfect concord with the sympathetic emotions of the spectator, they necessarily appear to this last just and proper, and suitable to their objects; and, on the contrary, when, upon bringing the case home to himself, he finds that they do not coincide with what he feels, they necessarily appear to him unjust and improper, and unsuitable to the causes which excite them. (TMS I.i.3.1, p. 16)

As Smith makes explicit in this passage, the spectator’s spontaneous response to evaluative disagreement with the person concerned is to judge this person’s emotional response to the respective circumstances as “unjust” and “improper”. Underlying is the spectator’s surprise of not finding the other similar to himself. And his spontaneous response, explicit in his second-order antipathy, reveals a twofold implication: Not only is the other person’s response “unjust” or “improper”; the spectator’s own imagined response is “just” and “proper”.¹⁰³ Put in Husserlian terms, the spectator of a person concerned by certain circumstances who imagines how he would feel under such circumstances implies, when responding with second-order antipathy to the person concerned, that he himself is normal in his (imagined) emotional response whereas the person concerned is not. The distinction between himself as normal and the person concerned as abnormal is, however, not in accordance with his underlying assumption that the person concerned is similar to him – and without this assumption, the whole idea of first-order sympathy would not make sense: We cannot assume to adequately imagine how organisms respond to certain circumstances which are not similar to us.

Now, anybody can find himself or herself in the role of a person concerned or in that of a spectator at almost any time. And, according to Smith, all people are naturally provided both with self-love and with

¹⁰³ See on the normative role of the Smithian spectator also Brown (2012, in this volume), p. 261.

sympathy, including the capacity of imagining emotional responses to certain circumstances (first-order sympathy) and the desire of emotional concordance with others, that is the desire of second-order sympathy. Thus, when a spectator finds himself in emotional discordance with a person concerned and feels second-order antipathy, the lack of emotional concordance represents a problem not only for the spectator who finds his equality assumption not confirmed; it is also a problem for the person concerned who naturally pays attention to his spectator and desires his sympathy. According to Smith, “nothing pleases us more than to observe in other men a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breast; nor are we ever so much shocked as by the appearance of the contrary” (TMS I.i.2.1, p. 13). In sympathetic processes, the desire for second-order sympathy is mutual, the person concerned shares it with his spectator. But the person concerned and his spectator also share the underlying assumption that they are equals, that they are both similar, normal people, and that they have therefore reason to expect emotional concordance and mutual second-order sympathy.

If the spectator and the person concerned find themselves in a state of mutual antipathy and if they do not want to leave things there and just conclude that they are not similar to each other and that the respective other is abnormal, there is the question how they can eventually overcome their emotional discordance, a discordance which gives rise to a disagreement in evaluative judgments. According to Smith, the option of leaving things there is not very attractive since people are naturally social and desire to live in emotional harmony with others, in a state of mutual second-order sympathy. According to Smith, a person concerned and his spectator will consider their emotional discordance and lack of mutual sympathy as a case of disagreement that needs to be overcome.

d. The rational strategy to overcome disagreement and achieve mutual second-order sympathy

Smith is not naïve. He is perfectly aware of the fact that in real social scenarios when a person concerned and his spectator have not achieved a state of mutual sympathy, their efforts for overcoming their disagreement are not merely driven by their respective trust in their being normal,

in deserving the merit of a person committed to justice, and by the desire to achieve a shared understanding of what is the proper emotional response to certain circumstances – a desire to understand what is indeed morally good or bad. Smith knows how common it is that people in such circumstances of disagreement can be “uncertain... concerning their own merit” (TMS III.2.24, p. 126). In such cases, they might not request a normal person’s standing. Persons concerned might also use financial means and bribe the spectators or rely on other kinds of manipulation for getting their approval.¹⁰⁴ Still, according to Smith, there is a rational strategy for the person concerned and his spectator to address their disagreement and to try and overcome it.

In order to overcome their disagreement in a rational way, without exercising unfair means of manipulation or coercion, the person concerned and his spectator switch roles: The person concerned by certain circumstances tries to look at these circumstances from the point of view of his unconcerned spectator. Since the spectator sees the person concerned emotionally responding to these circumstances, the person concerned, by taking the point of view of his spectator, does not only become the spectator of the spectator, he also becomes his own spectator. This means that he acquires the faculty of conscience.¹⁰⁵ What he sees from the spectatorial point of view may well displease him and motivate him to “lower... his passion to that pitch, in which the spectators are capable of going along with him” (TMS I.i.4.7, p. 22). This is because the spectatorial point of view is the point of view of a cool-minded, unconcerned observer whose personal interests are not at stake under the respective circumstances and who, for this reason, is not under the grip of the passions arising in self-love which make an emotional response partial.

What a cool, unconcerned person like a spectator imagines to be a proper (his own) emotional response to certain circumstances may well differ from the response a person directly concerned by these circumstances has, by someone who is in the grip of his passions of self-love.

¹⁰⁴ See TMS III.2.24, p. 126. In this passage, Smith also mentions the strategies of “intrigue” and “cabal”.

¹⁰⁵ See TMS I.i.4.7-10, pp. 21-23. On Smith’s account of moral conscience, see Fricke (forthcoming).

The person concerned, by taking the role and point of view of his own spectator, may become aware of his having been in the grip of his self-love and of having given way to his natural partiality for himself, to the natural disposition to consider himself and his own well-being much more important than that of anybody else:

My companion does not naturally look upon the misfortune that has befallen me, or the injury that has been done me, from the same point of view in which I consider them. They affect me much more nearly. We do not view them from the same station ... (TMS I.i.4.5, p. 20-21)

Still, the person concerned, even after having become his own spectator and after having tried to adapt his emotional response to the circumstances to that pitch he expects an unconcerned spectator can sympathize with and approve of, may well not succeed in gaining his spectator's sympathy and approval. Emotional discordance between them may still prevail. According to Smith, it is then the spectator's turn to make an effort and check whether his original imaginative account of how he would respond to the respective circumstances was proper. Thus, the spectator will "endeavour, as much as he can, to put himself into the situation of the other, and to bring home to himself every little circumstance of distress which can possibly occur to the sufferer". Furthermore, "he must adopt the whole case of his companion with all its minutest incidents ... and strive to render as perfect as possible, that imaginary change of situation upon which his sympathy is founded" (TMS I.i.4.7, p. 21). But the spectator, in order to avoid any impropriety in his imaginative emotional response to the circumstances, should not only pay as much attention as possible to the details of these circumstances by which the other person is concerned. He should also make an effort and try to "become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them" (TMS I.i.1.2, p. 9). Thus, the spectator also has to pay attention to what kind of person the other is, to his specific needs, interests and vulnerabilities which allow to explain – at least to some extent – his particular emotional response to the circumstances.

Smith describes the respective efforts the person concerned and his

spectator make in order to reach a state of emotional concordance and mutual sympathy in terms of “two different sets of virtues”:

The soft, the gentle, the amiable virtues, the virtues of candid condescension and indulgent humanity, are founded upon the one [that is, the spectator’s effort]: the great, the awful and respectable, the virtues of self-denial, or self-government, of that command of the passions which subjects all the movements of nature to what our own dignity and honour, and the propriety of our own conduct require, take their origin from the other [that is, the effort of the person concerned]. (TMS I.i.5.1, p. 23)

What the spectator’s efforts and the efforts of the person concerned for becoming virtuous have in common is the attempt to exercise self-control over their passions based on self-love and to adapt them to the circumstances; for the latter purpose, they have to be well informed, sensitive not only to the facts but also to other people in the specificity of their needs and vulnerabilities. Making these efforts will allow them – at least to some degree – to overcome their natural partiality for themselves and look at themselves and their performance as either persons concerned or as actual spectators from the point of view of an *impartial spectator*.

Smith’s “impartial spectator” (TMS I.i.5.4, p. 24) is the moral counterpart to a normal perceiver as conceived by Husserl. There is, however, one essential difference between the role ascribed to the impartial spectator and that ascribed to the normal perceiver: Whereas the normal perceiver will be considered as the most reliable source of information about the world so that other people who are abnormal perceivers will rely on him for making up their minds about the way the world is, Smith’s impartial spectator does not make any moral judgments about proper responses to certain circumstances which others will then endorse and respect.

The point of view of impartiality is essentially that of a spectator. But the impartial spectator as conceived by Smith does not look at persons concerned and judge their emotional responses to certain circumstances from a third-person, external point of view. Rather, he gets involved with the person concerned in a sympathetic process; both address each other as a ‘you’ and thereby learn to conceive of themselves as I’s,

very much along the lines Husserl later described it.¹⁰⁶ They switch roles in order to try and find a common point of view from which they can look at particular circumstances and achieve agreement about what the proper emotional response to them should be, an agreement in their evaluative judgments. Such a shared point of view is a potentially impartial point of view. Of course, the impartial spectator will have a substantive input in the shaping of the impartial point of view. But he cannot simply impose it – and the corresponding moral judgment – on the person concerned. Rather, his intention must be to encourage the person concerned to actually share it, to lower his passions and agree with the spectator on how to morally judge his spontaneous response to the circumstances.

But it takes more than two people to interact in a sympathetic process for determining a properly impartial point of view. Furthermore, impartiality comes in degrees: The more people have been involved in the respective sympathetic process the more impartial will their common point of view be. Sympathetic processes are processes of social interaction. They typically take place within limited social communities. And the impartial standards of propriety on which different communities agree may differ. Thus, there is room for a pluralism of understandings of moral propriety in Smith's moral theory, just as there is room for pluralism in Husserl's account of normality. But, where members of different communities who have endorsed different standards of moral propriety meet, they will conceive of their moral discordance in terms of a disagreement that needs to be overcome in a rational way. Thus, they will engage in sympathetic processes, aiming at constituting new standards of moral propriety that an impartial spectator and, with him, all of them can share.

e. The concern for praiseworthiness

Underlying this attitude is not only a psychological need to achieve a state of mutual second-order sympathy and social harmony, but also a normative concern for getting matters right in the realm of moral evalua-

¹⁰⁶ See in particular TMS III.1.3, 110 and IV.2.12, 192. This point has been particularly stressed by Carrasco (under review).

tion and judgment. Due to this ambition of proper moral understanding, the members of a community are justified in making claims for universal authority for those standards of moral propriety which they jointly agreed on through sympathetic processes in which they all participated and from which nobody within direct or indirect reach was excluded. Just as Husserlian standards of normality, Smith's impartial standards of moral propriety make claims to universal authority. But since no community of people can ever be sure of having reached an ultimate, ideal level of impartiality, all standards of moral propriety shared at a particular time will be subject to future revision.

The universalistic understanding of moral propriety implies that the impartial spectator, the one who has a normal understanding of moral propriety, is committed to an *optimum*. Smith speaks of this optimum in terms of "praiseworthiness":

Man naturally desires, not only to be loved, but to be lovely; or to be that thing which is the natural and proper object of love. He naturally dreads, not only to be hated, but to be hateful; or to be that thing which is the natural and proper object of hatred. He desires, not only praise, but praiseworthiness; or to be that thing which, though it should be praised by nobody, is, however, the natural and proper object of praise. He dreads, not only blame, but blameworthiness; or to be that thing which, though it should be blamed by nobody, is however, the natural and proper object of blame. (TMS III.2.1, pp. 113-114)

An agreement between certain people on what is the proper emotional and behavioral response to certain circumstances for a person concerned by them is not as such indicative of these people having successfully identified which response is really praiseworthy and which is not. This is because such an agreement can have been achieved in different ways. Only those agreements are indicative of real propriety or praiseworthiness of the emotional and behavioral response of a person concerned by certain circumstances that have been achieved through sympathetic processes where all parties involved made as much as an effort as possible to be virtuous and avoid all kinds of errors. The errors to be avoided are twofold: For the person concerned, errors can arise from a lack of self-control and the false belief of being more important than everybody

else.¹⁰⁷ And for the spectator, errors can arise from distraction, a lack of attention, a lack of information or a lack of sensitivity to the specific conditions of the person concerned. Since, in the course of a sympathetic process, the person concerned and his spectator switch roles, they both have to try and avoid both kinds of errors. The more they succeed avoiding these errors the more virtuous they will be and the more impartial the agreement they achieve will be. And the more impartial their agreement will be, the more justified their judgment of the propriety or impropriety of the emotional and behavioral response of the person concerned will be.

f. Ideal impartiality and the “wise and virtuous”

Impartiality, virtue, and the justification of evaluative judgments, judgments about which emotional responses, volitions and actions are properly moral and which are not, come in degrees.¹⁰⁸ All people are supposed to make an effort and become virtuous, but only few of them will achieve a high degree of virtue, namely the “wise and virtuous”. What stands in the way for many people to achieve a high degree of virtue is their disposition “to admire, and almost worship, the rich and the powerful” (TMS I.iii.1, p. 61) rather than caring exclusively about real praiseworthiness. But what is it, that the “wise and virtuous” have achieved that most people blinded by wealth and power do not achieve? The wise and virtuous direct their attention to “the idea of exact propriety and perfection” (TMS VI.iii.23, p. 247). However, in order to do so, they can only rely on the strategies that drive the sympathetic process as Smith describes it. They can only try to avoid the errors that would hinder them from achieving properly impartial judgments about proper or improper emotional and behavioral responses to given circumstances.

Wise and virtuous people always enjoy a state of mutual sympathy and agree in their judgments of propriety:

Men of virtue only can feel that entire confidence in the conduct and behaviour of one another, which can, at all times, assure them that they can never either offend or be offended by one another. (TMS VI.ii.1.18, p. 225)

¹⁰⁷ See in particular TMS II.ii.2.1, p. 83.

¹⁰⁸ See for example TMS VI.iii.25, p. 247.

Still, their virtue will not be perfect, nor will the impartiality of their judgment be ideal. No human being can ever be immune to error. There may always be details even a wise and virtuous person has overlooked, or a prejudice underlying his judgment of which he is not aware. Smith states this with a certain pathos:

He [the wise and virtuous man] endeavours as well as he can, to assimilate his own character to this archetype of perfection. But he imitates the work of a divine artist, which can never be equalled. He feels the imperfect success of all his best endeavours, and sees, with grief and affliction, in how many different features the mortal copy falls short of the immortal original. He remembers, with concern and humiliation, how often, from want of attention, from want of judgment, from want of temper, he has, both in words and actions, both in conduct and conversation, violated the exact rules of perfect propriety; and has so far departed from that model, according to which he wished to fashion his own character and conduct. (TMS VI.iii. 25, pp. 247-248)

The “wise and virtuous”, more reliable in their performance as impartial spectators than most other people and therefore more likely to understand what real praiseworthiness consists in, are the moral counterparts to Husserl’s normal perceivers committed to optimal perception. Similar to the latter, the wise and virtuous are as close as possible at a given time and level of moral understanding to the ideal standard or impartiality or normality, even though, human as they are, they are not capable of actually reaching that standard.

IV. Conclusion

As I have tried to make explicit in this essay, there are important analogies between Husserl’s account of our joint strategy to extract evidence from perceptual data for justifying descriptive judgments about the way the world is and Smith’s account of our joint strategy to extract evidence from emotional data for justifying moral judgments about emotional and behavioral responses to given circumstances. In both cases, the strategy is to engage in an intersubjective process of communication which aims first at accumulating data from different perspectives, collected by different people, second at detecting unreliable data and the errors made while collecting them, and finally at descriptive or moral judgments for

the truth or propriety of which the collected data provide reliable evidence. The respective processes can both be described as aiming at overcoming the constraints of perspective of our subjective responses, perceptual or emotional, to given circumstances. Husserl's notions of "empathy" and "sympathy" have their counterparts in Smith's notion of "sympathy" which takes the shape of either first-order or second-order sympathy. Part of both strategies is to identify people whose contributions to understanding what is descriptively true or morally proper are more reliable than others: normal perceivers and impartial spectators respectively. However, the differences between Husserl's and Smith's accounts of our strategies for overcoming disagreement in the epistemic and the moral realm should not be overlooked, differences that are explicable in terms of differences between the respective subject matters. I would like to finish this essay by mentioning three of them, those concerning the accounts of normality and impartiality, those concerning the similarity of people, and those concerning the accounts of optimality and praiseworthiness.

Husserl's accounts of a normal perceiver and of normal perceptual conditions are clearly naturalistic. Even though the determination of the conditions for perceptual normality is a result of an interactive process between people, what they finally achieve is a naturalistic distinction between normal and abnormal perceivers and perceptual conditions: Normal human perceivers have optimally functioning perceptual systems (optimal for the human species) and healthy and well-trained brains for processing perceptual data.¹⁰⁹ Normal perceptual conditions for normal human perceivers can be defined in descriptive terms (of distance between perceiver and perceived object, of direct visual access and of lighting conditions). Abnormal people lack optimally functioning perceptual systems. Where these dysfunctions cannot be minimized with the help of, for example, spectacles and hearing aids, they have to accept that there is evidence to which they cannot have any direct perceptual access.

¹⁰⁹ Note that the normative notions of 'optimal function', of 'health' and 'good training' can be translated into descriptive standards of the kind on which medical doctors, including medical experts for the perceptual systems and neurologists, as well as designers of spectacles and hearing aids rely.

As far as the normality of perceptual systems is concerned, not all human beings are similar to each other. Still, all those not severely mentally handicapped and therefore excluded from the subjects of knowledge are equally committed to truth and richness and differentiation of knowledge. The normal perceivers will have to find a way of sharing their evidence with the abnormal perceivers; otherwise, the aim of sharing a view of the world, a view of which judgments are objectively true and which are not, could not be achieved. But even if normal and abnormal perceivers will find a way to share the evidence for true descriptive judgments, the distinction between perceivers as either normal or abnormal will remain.

Smith's account of an impartial spectator in terms of someone being wise and virtuous is not quite as naturalistic as Husserl's account of normality, and it certainly does not imply anybody's disqualification as morally abnormal. The (inevitably approximate) determination of the point of view of impartiality is a result of an interactive process the participants of which respect each other as equals and share a commitment to understanding what is morally proper or praiseworthy and what is not and to acting accordingly. But what they finally achieve is nothing more than a joint recognition of particular cases of praiseworthy behavior, an account of possible sources of errors which can have a negative impact on moral judgment and decision making, and finally an account of strategies how to avoid such errors. Some people score higher than others in their efforts to avoid these errors, and some may do so more often, both in judgment and in action, namely the wise and virtuous. But the many who are not or hardly ever wise and virtuous, who tend to make erroneous moral judgments and fail as moral agents, do so for reasons that are not naturally unavoidable for them. Nobody has a natural disposition to be virtuous, nor has anybody a natural disposition not to be. Nor can anybody claim to be wise and virtuous once and forever. Everybody can and should make an effort to achieve both wisdom and virtue. Only those severely mentally handicapped who do not have any capacity of performing as responsible agents can be considered as morally abnormal. But this abnormality does not deprive them of any moral significance: They still have to be considered as having moral value and moral rights.

In the epistemic realm things are different: It does not make any

sense to expect from a blind person to make an effort and acquire the capacity of seeing. A natural state of his system of vision stands in the way. Nevertheless, a blind person can be a subject of objective knowledge. In the epistemic realm, normal perceivers take the lead in shaping the most accurate view of the world and abnormal perceivers follow them. However, in the moral realm, the wise and virtuous impartial spectators cannot simply take the lead and determine what is morally proper and improper without remaining engaged in sympathetic processes of communication with everybody else. Whereas their main ambition is to become even more wise and virtuous in their judgments and actions, they cannot ignore those whose moral development is not as advanced as their own. It has to be one of their aims to help those who have not yet acquired wisdom and virtue to make an effort and try to approach this goal. Furthermore, the wise and virtuous should be aware of the possibility of there being something they can learn about proper morality even from those who have not achieved a high level of wisdom and virtue.

The second difference between Husserl's and Smith's accounts of the strategies on which we can rely for justifying descriptive and moral judgments and the normative commitments underlying them concerns natural similarities and differences between people who are considered as most reliable sources of evidence. With the exclusion of the severely mentally handicapped, all people are (or at least should be) equal in their commitment to descriptive truth and moral propriety – quite independently of their being generally considered as particularly reliable sources of (epistemic or moral) evidence or not. In the epistemic realm, those considered as normal perceivers, as most reliable sources of perceptual data, are similar to each other as far as their perceptual systems are concerned. According to Husserl, ideally normal people would, when observing the same objects from the same point of view under the same perceptually normal conditions, have the same visual field, they would collect exactly the same visual data.¹¹⁰

This natural similarity of normal perceivers does not have a counterpart in the moral realm. According to Smith, every mentally healthy

¹¹⁰ See above, pp. 202-204.

person is equally expected to make an effort to become wise and virtuous and to play the part of a spectator in sympathetic processes with as much impartiality as possible. Some people achieve a less high degree of wisdom and virtue and spectatorial competence than others, but it is basically their own fault. And even those who are generally recognized as the most impartial spectators, as the most reliable sources of moral evidence, that is the wise and virtuous, are not expected to be similar to each other in naturalistic terms, that is in their performance as persons concerned: They are not expected to emotionally respond to the same circumstances in exactly the same way. That they have achieved a high degree of moral self-command, that they can exercise control over their selfish passions and tend to respond to certain circumstances in the morally proper way does by no means imply that their responses to the same circumstances will be similar. This is because, in their natural condition as human beings, they may be very different from each other: They may have acquired different preferences and tastes and different kultural habits that deserve to be respected, they may be more or less sensitive to physical pain, more or less energetic, more or less psychically robust or vulnerable; some may suffer from physical disabilities and therefore have special needs which have to be taken into account when judging the moral propriety of their behavior. The circumstances to which persons concerned by them respond may be the same; and the persons concerned may be equally wise and virtuous; their responses may be equally morally proper. But this does not mean that their responses will be the same. This is because, in the moral realm, the circumstances do not alone determine what the morally right response to them would be. What the morally right response to particular circumstances is also depends on whose response it is. This does not imply that the moral judgment of the impartial spectator is a judgment *ad hominem* or *ad feminam*. Rather, a properly moral judgment has to take natural differences between people into account. And for these differences, there is no counterpart in the epistemic realm.

Finally, there is a *third* disanalogy between Husserl's and Smith's accounts that is connected to the two mentioned previously. Even though both the standards of normality and those of impartiality are committed to an optimum of accuracy, namely a richness and differentiation of data

on the side of descriptive knowledge and the distinction between mere praise and real praiseworthiness on the side of morality, one should not overlook that the accounts given of these optima are not analogous. The richness and differentiation of perceptual data reveals the richness and differentiation there is to be found in the world. But we cannot give any account of praiseworthiness in any other terms than in those of impartiality, wisdom and virtue, in terms of attitudes of impartial spectators. Smith does not and cannot give any general account of praiseworthiness in naturalistic terms. Whereas epistemic optimality is explicable in terms of an awareness of the richness and differentiation that can be found in the world, moral optimality, namely praiseworthiness, is not explicable in any other terms than in terms of the procedure for understanding what it consists in in particular cases, that is sympathetic processes.

Thus, I find Smith's claim confirmed according to which, in the realm of moral judgment and its justification, there are more problems to be solved than in the realm of descriptive knowledge and its justification. As far as descriptive knowledge is concerned, we can rely on the normal perceivers as the best sources of information about the way the world is. But we cannot delegate our concern for moral propriety to the "wise and virtuous". Rather, we have to constantly make an effort to become wise and virtuous ourselves. This effort has to be twofold: helping to better understand what moral praiseworthiness is by detecting particular cases of it and multiplying cases of praiseworthiness in our emotions, volitions, and actions. Such an effort represents a constant challenge since, in the realm of morality, our personal interests are always at stake and we cannot hope to successfully exercise control over our passions of self-love once and for all. Morality is not merely a matter of theoretical understanding, it is also a matter of practice. And moral understanding shapes moral practice as much as moral practice shapes moral understanding.

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