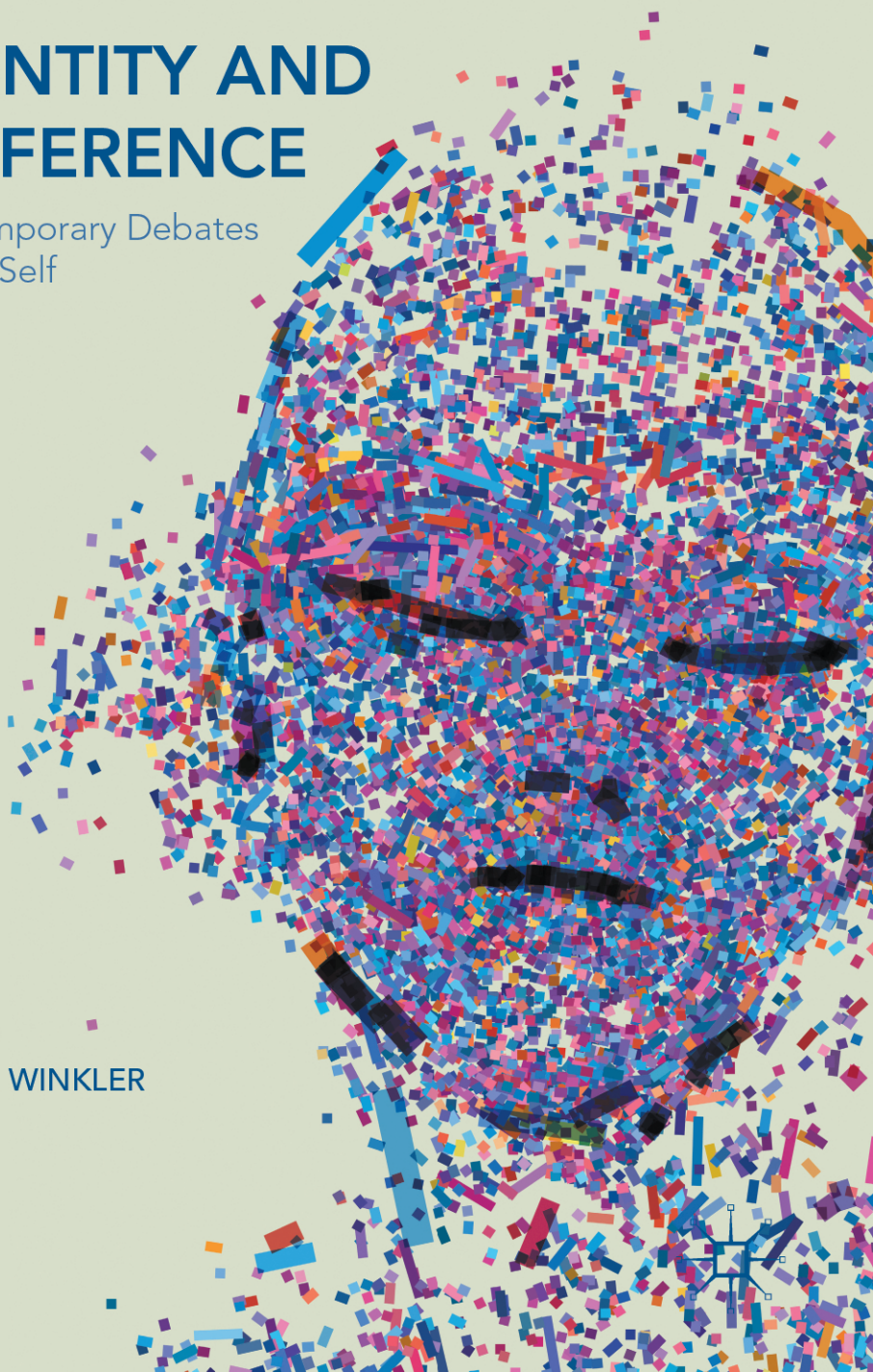


IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

Contemporary Debates
on the Self

Edited by
RAFAEL WINKLER



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Editor

Identity and Difference

Contemporary Debates on the Self

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1

The Personal Self in the Phenomenological Tradition

Dermot Moran

1.1 Introduction: Self and Person in Contemporary Philosophical Discussion

The interrelated concepts of ‘self’ and ‘person’ have long traditions within Western philosophy, and both have re-emerged, after a period of neglect, as central topics in contemporary cognitive sciences and philosophy of mind and action.¹ The concepts of ‘self’ and ‘person’ are intimately related, overlap on several levels and are often used interchangeably. While some philosophers (in the past and at present) seek

¹ Earlier versions of this chapter were given as an invited lecture in Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), Wuhan, People’s Republic of China (12 December 2015); as an Invited Lecture to the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of the Sciences, Moscow (21 November 2014) and as the Plenary Address to the Irish Philosophical Society ‘Futures of Phenomenology’ Annual Conference, University College Galway (7 March 2010).

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to separate them quite sharply,² here I will treat being a self (with some degree of self-awareness) as at least a necessary element of being a person in the full sense. The phenomenological tradition, which is the specific focus of this chapter, tends to treat the person as the full, concrete, embodied and historically and socially embedded subject, engaged in social relations with other subjects, and does not treat the person as a primarily ‘forensic’ conception (as a legal or moral appellation), as in the tradition of John Locke. For this reason, I will speak primarily of the ‘personal self’ in the phenomenological tradition and will not attempt to distinguish between selfhood and personhood (much of the debate about the distinction, which is outside the limits of this chapter, turns on the limits of personhood—when one becomes a person or if one can, while still living, no longer be a person).

Earlier twentieth-century movements, such as behaviourism (e.g. operant conditioning with its denial of free will; Skinner 1974), logical atomism (Russell 1956), logical positivism (Ayer 1952), linguistic behaviourism (Ryle 1949) or, more recently, eliminative materialism (Churchland 2011), or even forms of cognitive science that focus on *sub-personal* systems only (the very term ‘sub-personal’ is indicative of an explanatory gap), have all been reluctant to acknowledge the reality and importance of selves and persons (see Metzinger 2009, ‘the myth of self’). The Churchlands, for instance, with their eliminative materialism, have proclaimed that ‘person’ does not identify a real category in the world and plays no role in final explanation of human behaviour. Similarly, Richard Dawkins has written:

Each of us humans knows that the illusion of a single agent sitting somewhere in the middle of the brain is a powerful one. (Dawkins 1998: 283–284)

Recent analytic philosophy (Williams 1973; Sturma 1997; Wilkes 1988; Baker 2013) has recovered some ground and displays a growing

² Eric Olson, in the entry on ‘Personal Identity’ in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, claims he will speak only of personal identity as self ‘often means something different: some sort of immaterial subject of consciousness, for instance’.

recognition that personhood is crucial for human social, moral and cultural life and that persons must be regarded as intrinsically valuable and worthy of respect and protection of their dignity. Lynne Rudder Baker (2000; 2007; 2013), with her ‘constitution’ view, is perhaps the leading analytic exponent of the reality of persons. She argues that persons come into existence gradually and are constituted in social interaction but these facts do not mean that one cannot draw an ontological distinction between persons and other kinds of material entity. Persons, for her, have ontological distinctness (based in part on their capacity for saying ‘I’). Baker writes:

What distinguishes person from other primary kinds (like planet or human organism) is that persons have first-person perspectives necessarily. (Baker 2007: 68)

She continues:

The first-person perspective is a very peculiar ability that all and only persons have. It is the ability to conceive of oneself as oneself, from the inside, as it were. (Baker 2007: 69)

Discussions of personhood have also recently emerged in the cognitive sciences (Gallagher 2000; Ikäheimo & Laitinen 2007; Farah & Heberlein 2007), with the adoption of the *embodied*, *extended*, *embedded* and *enactive* (‘the four Es’) self in a social world (a conception that has already been in discussion, as we shall see, in phenomenology since the first decades of the twentieth century). Cognitive scientists talk of the ‘extended mind’ (Menary 2010; Clark & Chalmers 1998) or ‘leaky mind’ (Clark 1998), whereby mind must be understood with reference both to body and world (‘embodied and embedded’; Haugeland 1998). Certainly, recent philosophy of mind and cognitive science recognizes the importance of *embodiment* as a necessary condition for conscious subjectivity, expressive emotion and personhood (Clark 1998; Thompson & Varela 2000; Shapiro 2004; Gallagher 2005). More generally, there is an emphasis on links between cognition and its embodied engagement with its environment (including other subjects—social cognition). These ideas of

embodied and situated cognition, now popular in cognitive science, have a longer history in the phenomenological tradition (Thompson and Varela 2000; Gallagher 2005). These analytic re-appropriations of phenomenology's discoveries, however, still neglect the intrinsic subjective and intersubjective points of view and more generally the manner in which human beings weave the narrative history of their lives. Some argue that selfhood is deeper than personhood, that there is a 'core' or 'minimal self' (Zahavi 2005 and 2007; Strawson 2009), a consciousness of oneself as an immediate subject of experience. This minimal self involves little more than a pre-reflective self-awareness and the more fully fledged 'narrative self' or 'extended self' is founded on this minimal self (Damasio 1999).

Having some kind of conscious self that persists through time is often seen as being a necessary condition of personhood. Contemporary analytic philosophy, especially in the work of David Wiggins (2001), has revived a number of Lockean arguments regarding personal identity. This Lockean tradition has been challenged by hermeneutic thinkers such as Charles Taylor (1989), who, following Hans-Georg Gadamer, describes persons as requiring 'answerability' and who can give some kind of narrative shape to their lives.

Another important contemporary approach, alongside the Neo-Lockean persistence notion, reformulates the traditional criterion of rationality by describing human persons as possessing the power for second-order representations or *metarepresentation*, that is, the capacity to *represent* their representations, for example, to consider certain states as *having been* theirs ('I was in pain yesterday'). The latter example involves adopting a complex temporal stance towards one's cognitive states, something perhaps unavailable to creatures lacking language abilities. This view, often understood more generally as the capacity for *metarepresentation* (Sperber 2000), has been the subject of much critical discussion. Most notably, the American philosopher Harry Frankfurt (1988) has proffered the influential claim that human persons are capable not just of wants and desires but also of higher-order or *second-order* desires about their desires (I can desire to curb my desire for cigarettes). Frankfurt claims the capacity to form higher-order desires is adequate to distinguish persons from non-persons (Frankfurt 1988).

In light of these many and quite diverse contemporary approaches, and in order to situate the phenomenological approach to the person and the self, it is necessary to begin with a brief review of self and person in the history of philosophy.

1.2 Self and Person in the History of Western Philosophy

Debates about the existence and nature of the self are as old as philosophy itself, with the denial of the existence of the self, a recurrent theme, for instance, in ancient Indian Buddhist thought (*anatta*, or the ‘no-self’ doctrine; Perrett 2016: 184–87). Similarly, in ancient Greek philosophy, there was a long tradition of discussion over the meaning of the Delphic injunction to ‘know yourself’ (*gnōthi seauton*), which, according to Plato, governed Socrates’ life mission (Annas 1985). Among the Stoics, for instance, self-knowledge took the form of knowing that human beings are part of the material cosmos but are unique in having a rational nature (Gill 2006; Brouwer 2013). It is not always clear, however, that ancient philosophers thought of self-knowledge as knowledge of a *self* (understood as something like a stable Cartesian ego) and there have been lively debates about when the concept of self emerged (Sorabji 2006), with some pointing to St. Augustine’s discussions of inner life (Taylor 1989) and especially his *Confessions*, which is sometimes regarded as the first autobiography. Certainly, the *Confessions* is a meditation that offers *both* self-examination and self-renewal (Taylor 1989; Marion 2012).

The concept of the person, like that of the self, is an ancient concept, although its provenance cannot be straightforwardly traced back to classical Greek philosophy; rather, it has its origins at the turn of the first millennium. The concept of ‘person’ (Latin: *persona* from the Greek *πρόσωπον* meaning ‘face’ ‘visage’ and referring to masks worn by theatre actors) first emerged in the context of Roman Law (distinguishing persons in their own right from slaves who were under the right of another), Alexandrine grammar (number, e.g. first, second, third person) and early Latin Christian theology (defining the three ‘persons’ to be found in the one God; see Kobusch 1997; de Vogel 1963; Carruthers et al. 1985).

Ancient accounts of personhood as found, for instance, in the Stoic Panaitios of Rhodes (as reported in Cicero's *De Officiis* I §§30–32) tend to emphasize the rational character of the human person, free will, the unique individuality of persons and also their historical contingency (Haardt & Plotnikov 2008: 30). The standard definition of the person is to be found in Boethius' *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* (Boethius 1918), where it occurs in a theological (Christological) context: a person is 'an individual substance of a rational nature' (*naturæ rationalis individua substantia*; Koterski 2004). Boethius' concept of the person, with its concepts of *substantiality*, *rationality* and *individuality*, had a huge influence on Thomas Aquinas and the Middle Ages generally.

In European philosophy in the modern period, discussions of the self and its self-identity are usually traced back to Descartes's rediscovery (but see Dupré 1993) of the *cogito ergo sum* (a reworking of St. Augustine's *si fallor sum*). Descartes characterized the 'soul' or 'mind' (*mens*) as an *ego cogito* that is able to achieve self-conscious recognition not only of its own existence but also of its nature or essence. Through a direct non-sensible, rational intuition of ourselves, we are able to deduce many truths, including that the essential nature of the ego is *res cogitans*, thinking substance, that it is essentially thinking, finite, fallible, contains representations, has sensation and memory, and so on. Descartes claims, on the basis of direct, introspective self-evidence, that he can know with certainty that he is a being who cannot know everything, who is finite, and hence fallible, who is essentially independent of extended reality, and so on. This mind is not a body but is connected with a body which can influence it. Descartes concentrated largely on the self's sensory, rational and volitional nature, but he later discussed, in his *Les passions de l'âme* (*Passions of the Soul* 1649, Descartes 1985), the affective and emotional layers of the self ('the passions') as it is influenced by bodily disturbances. Descartes, however, does not discuss the concept of the 'person' as such, which is primarily introduced by Locke.

John Locke, especially in 'Of identity and diversity', Chapter 27 of Book 2 of his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (added to the second edition of that work in 1694 on the recommendation of his friend and fellow philosopher William Molyneux, Locke 1975: 328–348), combines his discussion of the self and self-identity ('the sameness of a

rational Being') with his discussion of the value of the person, which he regards as a legal or 'Forensick Term' (Locke 1975: 346).

Reacting to Locke and Berkeley, David Hume famously denied that there was any encounter with the self in experience. In the section entitled 'Of personal identity' in his *A Treatise on Human Nature* (Hume 1978), he wrote:

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. (Hume 1978: 252)

For Hume, there was no 'impression' of self that 'continued invariably the same, thro' the whole course of our lives' (Hume 1978: 251) that could give rise to a real idea of self as an identical and simple entity that perdured beneath our experiences. For Hume, for instance, when one is asleep, there is clearly no self. Thus he concludes, in this section, that 'the rest of mankind' (excluding metaphysicians who think they can perceive an enduring self) 'are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions'. He goes on to invoke his familiar image of the mind as a theatre where impressions make their appearance and disappear again. There are only perceptions; there is not even a theatre as a place where those perceptions take place (Hume 1978: 253). To be fair, Hume then goes on to distinguish between personal identity as experienced in thought and personal identity as regards our 'passions or the concern we take in ourselves' (Hume 1978: 253). In this section, however, he goes on to dismiss worries about personal identity 'as grammatical rather than as metaphysical difficulties' (Hume 1978: 262). Identity comes at best from the manner ideas cohere with one another and form at least the appearance of a continuous stream.

Alfred Jules Ayer endorsed this Humean conception of the self in Chapter 7, 'The self and the common world', of his *Language, Truth and Logic* (Ayer 1952: 120–133). He writes:

For it is still fashionable to regard the self as a substance. But when one comes to enquire into the nature of this substance, one finds that it is an

altogether unobservable entity. . . . The existence of such an entity is completely unverifiable. (Ayer 1952: 126)

Ayer himself professes able to solve Hume's worries about identity by saying that the identity of the self is simply bodily identity, here to be understood in terms of 'the resemblance and continuity of sense contents'. One remains the same (even with memory loss) if one continues to have sense contents. How these sense contents are to be identified as belonging to the *same* subject experiencing them is of course left unexamined in Ayer's account.

Despite the scepticism of Hume, the European Enlightenment (especially Kant) established a new universal vision of persons as free, *rational* agents. Persons are understood as individuals, as wholes, as free agents, as rational and as worthy of infinite respect. In his *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant claims the origin of duty lies in the 'person' defined as 'nothing else than . . . the freedom and independence from the mechanism of nature regarded as a capacity of a being subject to special laws (pure practical laws given by its own reason), so that the person belonging to the world of sense is subject to his own personality as far as he belongs to the intelligible world' (Kant 1997: 74). For Kant, persons belong to two worlds. They must be treated as ends in themselves because we must respect them as free and rational and not constrained by their embodiment in the world of nature. Kant writes in the *Groundwork*: 'rational beings . . . are called persons because their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves, i.e., as something that may not be used merely as means, hence to that extent limits all arbitrary choice (and is an object of respect)' (Kant 2002a: 46). To be a person is to be a moral agent and to be answerable to standards or norms one has set oneself. For Kant, the person is that subject who is accountable for his or her actions. Contemporary analytic philosophers tend to continue this tradition of seeing 'person' as a moral or legal notion. One is a person insofar as one is a moral agent or deserving of dignity and respect. Galen Strawson, similarly, claims that Locke's concept of person has to be understood more or less as the moral actions we lay claim to (Strawson 2011).

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant 1998), Kant primarily treats the 'I' as a condition of experience that cannot itself be experienced. He writes in

the B-edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the ‘I think must be able to accompany all my representations’ (B131/132, Kant 1998: 246). This I think is a matter not of sensibility but of spontaneity and Kant calls it ‘pure apperception’ or the ‘transcendental unity of self-consciousness’. It is, for Kant, an objective condition of all cognition (B138, Kant 1998: 249–250). Kant distinguishes sharply between the empirical manner in which I appear to myself and this transcendental source of unity of apperception:

... in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor **as** I am in myself, but only **that** I am. This representation is a **thinking** not an **intuiting**. (B157, Kant 1998: 259)

There is, in agreement with Hume, no *experience* of the pure I; the ‘I think’ is rather as Kant says ‘the form of apperception on which every experience depends’ (A354, Kant 1998: 419)

For Kant, contra Hume, the subject, then, is a logical substratum; a ‘(merely logical) unity’ (Kant 1998: A 355–356), and Kant refers to it as a ‘logical ego’ or ‘logical I’ (Kant 1998: A 355, B 428). Thinking does not, for Kant, represent this logical subject as an appearance (Kant 1998: B428). Max Scheler takes issue with Kant concerning his conception of the flow of consciousness and its relation to the person. Against Kant, who thought of an ego as merely ‘interconnection of experience in time’ attached to the idea of a ‘merely logical subject’, Scheler maintains that experiences are always belonging to someone and it is only by abstraction that we can talk of experiences as such (Scheler 1973: 377). In his 1927 lectures, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Heidegger 1982), Heidegger comments on this in an interesting manner:

‘The ego is a logical ego’ does not mean for Kant, as it does for Rickert, an ego that is logically conceived. It means instead that the ego is subject of the *logos*, hence of thinking; the ego is the ego as the ‘I combine’ which lies at the basis of all thinking. (Heidegger 1982: 130)

Kant writes in his 1793/1804 essay *What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?*:

That I am conscious of myself is a thought that already contains a twofold self, the I as subject and the I as object. . . . But a double personality is not

meant by this double I. Only the I that I think and intuit is a person; the I that belongs to the object that is intuited by me is, similarly to other objects outside me, a thing. (Kant 2002: 362)

These potent remarks in fact closely resemble the position that Husserl will adopt, as we shall see later. He too will see the person as having a natural and a transcendental dimension and recognize the crucial capacity of the self to engage in ‘self-splitting’ (*Ichspaltung*) so that it can come to view itself as agent of its own deeds, author of its own judgements and is formed by its own ‘position-takings’. For both Kant and Husserl, the capacity of a human being to have a self-representation is central to being a person. Right at the start of his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798), Kant declares:

The fact that man can have the representation ‘I,’ elevates him infinitely above all the other beings living on earth. By virtue of this he is a *person*; and by virtue of his unity of consciousness through all the changes he may undergo, he is one and the same person, i.e., a being completely different in rank and dignity from *things*. . . . (Kant 2006: 15)

An ego by its capacity to represent itself to itself is thereby a person. It is because an ego can represent itself that it is capable of holding itself up to a norm; it is capable of acting according to laws it applies to itself. Kant writes in his *The Metaphysics of Morals* (*Die Metaphysik der Sitten*):

But man regarded as a *person*—that is, as the subject of morally practical reason—is exalted above any price, for as such (*homo noumenon*) he is not to be valued as a mere means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in himself. (Kant 1996: 189).

Persons in the Kantian tradition are complex entities, both beings in nature causally connected with the natural world, but also beings of freedom and reason, ends in themselves, of infinite value, and deserving of respect. For Kant, the person is both a sensible and a rational being.

Let us now turn to the phenomenological tradition, which will develop many of these Kantian insights in a new register and greatly fleshes out the notions of person and self.

1.3 The Phenomenological Tradition

The phenomenological tradition has much to say about both selfhood and personhood, but, despite this rich tradition, its contribution has been relatively neglected until recently, partly because its accounts are complex and often cast in a deeply technical language. In what follows, I shall base my phenomenological account of personhood primarily on the writings of Edmund Husserl, but also include insights drawn from some of the more neglected figures of the phenomenological movement, especially Max Scheler (1973) and Edith Stein (1989; 2000). I will conclude with a brief discussion of narrative conceptions of the self as found in the tradition of Paul Ricoeur, Charles Taylor, Hans-Georg Gadamer and others (and versions of which can be found also in Daniel C. Dennett's 'multiple-drafts' conception of consciousness; Dennett 1990) in comparison with the phenomenological approach.

Broadly speaking, the phenomenological approach challenges narrowly objectivist, naturalistic, reductionist or eliminative accounts of selfhood and personhood currently predominant in contemporary philosophy and in the cognitive sciences. The phenomenological approach begins from the understanding of concrete human experiences and how subjects grasp themselves as meaningful intentional agents. In contrast, objectivist and naturalistic approaches (an exception is Lynne Rudder Baker's 'constitutionalism'; Baker 2013) tend not to appreciate the subject as a first-person meaning-intender who is living a life that has significance for him/her, interwoven with the lives of others who are co-intending collective and public meanings and establishing an intersubjective community of persons. Persons have at least some minimal sense of their life trajectory in *history*, a sense of the past and, at some level, a capacity also for a meaningful future, which matters to them.

For phenomenology, moreover, the essential embodiment of the self (in contrast to immaterialist conceptions) emphasizes human situatedness (in space and time), limitation and finitude, and restriction of perspective (occupying a particular standpoint). To be a self is to occupy a point of view that is necessarily limited and partial but which is also, necessarily, thereby aware of other possible perspectives and points of

view. According to the phenomenological perspective, the living, embodied being is, at the very least, sentient, feels, enjoys and suffers, and acts in such a way that he or she is constantly *making sense* of his or her life *from a first-person perspective* (Moran 2000). Living a conscious life as a person cannot be thought of as an impersonal process that can be studied in an entirely objective, ‘third person’ manner. Human conscious life involves an ineliminable first-person perspective.

One must begin from the primary datum of the first-person experience of living through a meaningful life which aims at wholeness or integrity, while being temporal, finite, suffering, emotional and so on (see Heidegger 1962). Furthermore, while persons ideally *aim* at rationality, they are not *explicitly* rational. There is a deep affective core to the person; persons are primarily feeling, emotional, acting and suffering beings, who share this felt world with other persons and whose environment supports and reflects this felt condition. The phenomenological tradition maintains that emotions can be framed and coloured by *moods* that are not just pervasive in the whole person but affect and filter the manner in which the person interacts with his or her surrounding world. It is not easy to articulate the phenomenological sense of the self as intentional, purposive and as meaning-constituting or disclosing but one useful description has been supplied by Robert Sokolowski (2008), who characterizes persons as ‘agents of truth’ and of disclosure. The self is a meaning-weaving agent whose comportment in an already meaningful world gives it the sense of being a discloser or manifester of that world.

1.4 The Mature Husserl’s Concept of the Personal Self

One of the problems reading Husserl, Scheler and Stein on the phenomenology of personhood is that they employ a range of familiar terms (soul, the psychic, personhood, the spiritual ego), but in unfamiliar ways. Stein and Husserl, for instance, distinguish between what is ‘psychic’ and what is ‘personal’ in the strict sense. Certain personal attributes (e.g. readiness to make sacrifices), although perceivable in action by others, belong

to the spiritual core of the person and are sharply different from psychic feelings and emotions. For Scheler, all mind is personal and the idea of an impersonal mind is absurd (Scheler 1973: 389).

There is another complication in talking about a phenomenological account of the self, even in Husserl, leaving aside the extra complexity introduced by Heidegger's new terminology of Dasein with its Self-being (*Selbstsein*). Husserl initially rejected the Kantian transcendental conception of the self. In his *Logical Investigations* (Husserl 2001), he more or less took over from the Brentano of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874) a somewhat Humean conception of the self as merely a bundle or 'collection' of lived experiences and even reports that he cannot find anything like the kind of 'pure ego' or 'the ego of pure apperception' found in the Neo-Kantians. All he can find is 'the empirical ego and its empirical relations to its own experiences, or to such external objects as are receiving special attention at the moment, while much remains, whether "without" or "within", which has no such relation to an ego' (Husserl 2001 vol. 1: 92). Husserl rejected Paul Natorp's Neo-Kantian account of the ego as always subject and never object. For Natorp, the ego as such cannot be further described since all forms of description are objectifications of the ego. Husserl ends up claiming that we perceive the ego in our daily experience 'just as we perceive the external thing' (Husserl 2001, vol. 1: 93) but denies something like a pure ego. However, by 1913, Husserl famously reported that he had now found this elusive pure ego. In the 1913 revised second edition of the *Logical Investigations*, he is more appreciative of 'the pure ego' (*das reine Ich*) of the Neo-Kantians (adverting particularly to Natorp), which he had originally dismissed as an unnecessary postulate for the unification of consciousness (see 'The Pure Ego and Awareness' [*Das reine Ich und die Bewusstheit*], Husserl 2001, vol. 1: 91n.). From 1913 onwards, Husserl comes to embrace the Neo-Kantian conception of the transcendental ego which he will characterize as the source of all 'meaning and being' (*Sinn und Sein*) in his *Cartesian Meditations* (Husserl 1967). Husserl is interested in the manner in which human subjects are not just isolated transcendental egos but also intersect with one another to create the cultural and historical lifeworld. Husserl is particularly interested in the manner in which being a self means *having a history*, which is a much richer concept than merely having continued extension over a period of time.

A very rich phenomenological concept of personhood is developed in Husserl's *Ideas II* (Husserl 1989), unpublished during his life, but edited by his then assistant Edith Stein. It is also taken up in Edith Stein's doctoral thesis *On the Problem of Empathy* (Stein 1989) and in her subsequent important and neglected study, *Contributions to the Philosophical Foundation of Psychology and the Human Sciences*, published in Husserl's own *Jahrbuch* in 1922, and recently translated as *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (Stein 2000). Husserl, in particular, in his *Ideas II* (which was heavily edited by his then assistant Edith Stein), recognizes that humans are first and foremost engaged in a 'personalistic attitude' (*die personalistische Einstellung*) towards themselves and others. Husserl writes:

[The personalistic attitude is] the attitude we are always in when we live with one another, talk to one another, shake hands with another in greeting, or are related to another in love and aversion, in disposition and action, in discourse and discussion. (Husserl 1989: 192)

The personalistic attitude is, for Husserl, actually prior to the more familiar 'natural attitude' (*die natürliche Einstellung*).

Phenomenology recognizes that one starts from a certain assumption of normality or optimality, conditions set by the 'lifeworld' (Husserl 1970). It is only by beginning with the optimal or 'normal' situations that we can move to understand situations that depart from the norm (see Merleau-Ponty 1962). Self-aware rational agency, the traditional paradigm, sets a very high standard achievable by some but not all persons, for instance, very young children, persons with dementia and so on. Personhood must also be accorded to selves that reach some *minimal* level of capacity for selfhood and functioning as investing their lives with significance for themselves.

Phenomenology recognizes that persons are in part *constituted through their emotions* and feelings and the manner in which they express themselves by acting meaningfully. The person is primarily a loving heart, as Scheler characterizes it. One's whole experiential world is presented and filtered through emotions and moods (Heidegger 1962). Indeed, human emotions (anxiety, shame, love) have been long explored

in depth by classical phenomenology, often drawing on art and literature, whereas traditional philosophy of mind, partly because of its natural scientific paradigms for explanation, have tended (with a few important exceptions, e.g. Goldie) to overlook the manner moods and emotions are interwoven with our sensory and cognitive lives and are very much part of human rationality. Emotions are not just felt by and expressed in the body (e.g. facial expressions, smiling) but the whole body is *inhabited* emotionally: for example, the whole body can be tense; a way of walking can be nervous and so on. One's emotions also colour one's thoughts and judgements. While the cognitive sciences are again interested in emotions (Prinz 2003; Goldie 2000), suppressed for many years by mechanistic and behaviourist approaches, they often acknowledge their lack of precise descriptive characterizations of emotions, moods and feelings and furthermore are not able to handle the relations between moods and the overall lifeworld. Here the phenomenological tradition provides a rich repository of analyses. Key phenomenological insights that can be utilized effectively in philosophy of mind include emotions are intentional (i.e. object-directed), not private but world-disclosing, often intrinsically intersubjective (gratitude, shame, envy are other-related or other-involving). These insights challenge overly narrow approaches to emotion and help understand certain conditions, for example, autism, which are often externally described as involving deficiencies in emotion ('emotional flatness').

Phenomenology, as we have seen, begins from embodiment. Husserl insists that conscious, subjective life is necessarily embodied. This, for him, was an *a priori*, eidetic truth. Furthermore, although he regularly uses Kantian and Cartesian language of the 'I think', for him, the pure I—the I of transcendental apperception—is not, as he puts it, a 'dead pole of identity', it is a living self, a stream that is constantly 'appearing for itself' (*als Für-sich-selbst-erscheinens*, Husserl 1965: 189). It is simply, in the Hegelian language Husserl also employs, a 'for itself' (*für sich*).

Husserl's approach to the self is very complicated and multilayered. The mature Husserl was undoubtedly influenced by the Kantian (and Neo-Kantian) conceptions of the self as person understood as an autonomous (giving the law to itself), rational agent, but Husserl never suggests that the person is *purely* a rational subject. At the centre of the person, for Husserl,

is a *drive* for reason, but it is a drive sitting upon many other affective and embodied elements, including drives, 'strivings', passively being drawn to things and so on. Beginning from the life in the womb, there is a first-person subjective consciousness that is not yet an ego. It is driven by drives and interested and can properly be described as 'pre-personal' or as a 'pre-ego' (*Vor-Ich*). With regard to the adult, mature human being, he recognizes that the self is free to take positions, to occupy stances, to make decisions that become part of the subject's abiding character. For Husserl, the capacity for 'position-taking' (*Stellungnehmen*) is central to the self. This involves the capacity for uniquely personal acts, what Husserl often calls 'I-Thou acts' (*Ich-Du-Akte*, XXVII 22), following the tradition of Hermann Cohen. Husserl speaks of 'self-willing' and 'self-formation' (*Selbstgestaltung*). It is through the accumulation of position-takings that the self is formed as a personal agent:

As a point of departure we take the essential capacity of human beings for self-consciousness in the precise sense of personal self-reflection (*inspectio sui*) and the capacity grounded therein of reflectively taking positions vis-à-vis oneself and one's life, that is, the capacity for personal acts: of self-knowledge, self-evaluation, and of practical self-determination (self-willing and self-formation). (Husserl 1989a: 23)

Persons evaluate their actions, motives, goals and values. We can alter, take up or modify or negate position-takings, affirm or reject values. We can affirm or reject previous decisions made freely. Husserl emphasizes that not only can we curb or alter a position but we can reflectively renounce a position. We can acknowledge a drive and also take a disapproving stance towards it (even if we do not have the psychic strength to curb the drive). We can, in Husserl's example, have an uncontrollable desire to smoke, but we can experience the desire and disapprove of it, and hence have a negative evaluation of a drive that we thus wish not to be part of our self. Equally, we can encourage habits and acts that can become literally second nature.

From *Ideas* I (1913) onwards, Husserl characterizes the subject as being an 'I-pole' (*Ichpol*) or 'I-centre' (*Ich-Zentrum*), which acts as 'the centre of all affections and actions' (Husserl 1989: 105). The I is a 'centre' from which 'radiations' (*Ausstrahlungen*) or 'rays of regard' stream out or

towards which rays of attention are directed. It is the centre of a 'field of interests' (*Interessensfeld*). It is the 'substrate of habitualities' (Husserl 1967: 67). Husserl speaks of a human person's ability to act freely from the 'I-centre' outwards: thinking, evaluating, acting. They also accumulate convictions as beliefs become sedimented into ways of acting and thinking. Moreover, at the highest level, Husserl always emphasizes how human subjects have a sense of control over their cognitive states. Persons can curb their inclinations and what passively affects them. The subject is an 'acting subject'.

But the person is also passively constituted. Perhaps too much attention is placed in the Lockean and Kantian tradition on the person as the *performer* of (primarily moral) acts, on the person as *agent*; there is a whole other way in which the person is constituted through its passively being formed by accumulated habits, experiences that 'sediment' into convictions and eventually become character traits. In its full concretion, the *self* is made up of its convictions, values, outlook and so on. It has a history, a 'style', a unique way of conducting itself. As Husserl writes in *Cartesian Meditations*: 'The ego constitutes itself *for itself* in, so to speak, the unity of a history' (Husserl 1967: 75). Experiences, like scars on the physical body, generally speaking cannot be struck out, although they can be inhibited, suppressed, forgotten or disvalued in some way. As the Husserl scholar Henning Peucker has written:

The ego as a person is characterized by the variety of its lived experiences and the dynamic processes among them. According to Husserl, personal life includes many affective tendencies and instincts on its lowest level, but also, on a higher level, strivings, wishes, volitions, and body-consciousness. All of this stands in a dynamic process of arising and changing; lived-experiences with their meaningful correlates rise from the background of consciousness into the center of attention and sink back, yet they do not totally disappear, since they are kept as habitual acquisitions (*habituelle Erwerbe*). Thus, the person has an individual history in which previous accomplishments always influence the upcoming lived-experiences. (Peucker, 2008: 319)

Husserl gives an a priori account of personhood. The essential capacity for self-consciousness and what Husserl calls *inspectio sui* (self-awareness)

is important. The person is not just a rational agent but also built up on capacities, dispositions, skills and what Husserl often refers to as *praxis*. Husserl also speaks of a *habitus*.

There is much more to be said about the complexity and variety of Husserl's thinking on the ego, the ego-body, the self and the person. But to clarify the manner in which Husserlian thinking developed I want now to turn briefly to two further phenomenologists—Max Scheler and Edith Stein.

1.5 Max Scheler on the Personal Self as 'Performer of Acts'

Max Scheler's phenomenology of the human person has received considerable treatment from scholars including Karol Wojtyla, later to become Pope John Paul II, who wrote a study on Scheler entitled *The Acting Person* (Wojtyla 1979). From the outset, Scheler characterized his position as 'personalism' and his personalism begins with a critique of Kant's overly formalist approach to personhood, which emphasizes universality and has no way of capturing the unique individuality of persons. In his major work, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* (*Formalism in Ethics and the Material Ethics of Value*; Scheler 1973), Part One of which was published as the second part of the first volume of Husserl's *Yearbook of Phenomenology* in 1913 (Part Two was published in 1916), Scheler discusses the person in great detail. He notes that Kantian formal ethics claims to be able to confer priceless dignity on the person (Scheler 1973: 370). The moral person, on the formalist view, is seen as a source of rational acts and subject to ideal laws. That is, for Kant, only a formal ethics properly addresses the dignity of persons by recognizing their autonomy as rational beings, while all 'material' ethics (the kind Scheler will espouse) in Kant's view enslaves the will to extrinsic determining grounds and does not recognize the pure moral will. For Scheler, on the other hand, only a material ethics can recognize persons as concrete entities and as the 'immediately coexperienced unity of experiencing' (Scheler 1973: 371). Scheler recognized that universal rational motivations are not individualized.

Rational acts are by their nature 'extra individual' (Scheler 1973: 372). Formal ethics then cannot really recognize autonomy. A person is more than a purely rational being with a will. According to Scheler's approach, a being that thinks itself, for example, the Aristotelian god as 'thought-thinking-itself', is not a 'person'. Scheler, then, wants to retain the Kantian idea of the uniqueness and dignity of persons but he believes his framework is much more capable of recognizing persons as such.

Scheler develops Husserl's conception of the person as an intentional agent, as the performer of acts, but his views tended to evolve separately from Husserl's work. The person exists in the performance of intentional acts. For Scheler, moreover, the whole person is contained in each act. Acts have a personal starting point; they originate in a person. A person is an essential and concrete unity of different acts. These acts (not just perceiving, judging, willing, feeling but valuing) go on seamlessly and continuously through an individual life. Furthermore, it is the being of the person that is the foundation for all essentially different acts: 'The person is the concrete and essential unity of the being of acts of different essences which in itself... precedes all act differences' (Scheler 1973: 383).

An act, for Scheler, can never be considered an object and hence a person as such can never be an object. Persons are individuated in and through their acts; this is what accounts for the uniqueness and irreplaceability of persons. At the highest level, persons are oriented to values but it also has a 'self-value' that marks out the person from all other beings. Scheler analyses the feeling of shame, for instance, as an experience of one's own self-worth before the other. All experiences are invested with value and human beings in particular apprehend value. Value apprehension is an intentional act that, however, is carried out through the emotions rather than intellectually. One feels oneself drawn to a particular value.

For Scheler, the person is not the same as the ego. He regards the ego as an object (or can become an object) and hence quite distinct from the person which can never be objectified. A person, for Scheler, is a 'self-sufficient totality' (Scheler 1973: 390). For Scheler, furthermore, the person is not a part of the world (hence he rejects any naturalism of the person) but rather is a *correlate* of the world. There is an individual world corresponding to each person (Scheler: 393). As Heidegger would

recognize in his brief but penetrating remarks in *Being and Time* § 10, Scheler is something of a ‘personalist’ without offering an account of the ontology of personhood. For Heidegger, to say that a person is a ‘performer of acts’ is not well grounded ontologically. But Scheler is masterly in his treatment of the manner in which the person is related to temporality. A person can review his or her life and make decisions about it. Scheler writes:

What we call the person or personal self, that central concretion of our responsible acts ranging over the course of time, can of its nature—*de jure*—contemplate every part of our past life, can lay hold of its sense and worth. (Scheler 1987: 99)

The person is the spiritual core and it has its own basic intentionality of loving or hating. Scheler writes:

In every soul, taken as a whole and at any of its moments, there governs a personal, basic direction of loving and hating: This is its basic moral tenor [*Gesinnung*]. Whatever a personal soul can will or know, the spheres of its cognitions and effects or, in one word, its possible world, is ontically determined by this direction. (Scheler 1987: 136)

It is the whole self that loves or hates, according to Scheler (1987: 147). Scheler spends a lot of time examining the different ways in which persons can look up to other person-types they regard as exemplary, for example, what he calls the hero, the genius and the saint.

1.6 Edith Stein on Personhood and the Constitution of Spiritual Life

We cannot discuss the notion of personhood in phenomenology without adverting to the fascinating and groundbreaking work of Edith Stein. Stein wrote her doctoral thesis, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 1917 (Stein 1989), under the direction of Husserl but was also deeply influenced by Scheler’s account of empathy, as well as by the Munich philosopher and psychologist

Theodor Lipps, among others. In her posthumously published *Life in a Jewish Family*, she explains why she took up the problem of empathy:

In his course on nature and spirit Husserl had said that the objective outer world could only be experienced intersubjectively, i.e. through a plurality of perceiving individuals who relate in a mutual exchange of information. Accordingly an experience of other individuals is a prerequisite. To the experience, an application of the work of Theodor Lipps, Husserl gave the name *Einfühlung*. What it consisted of, however, he nowhere detailed. Here was a lacuna to be filled. (Stein 1986: 269)

According to her autobiography, *Life in a Jewish Family*, she found the task challenging, became depressed and worked herself into a spirit of despair, even wishing she was dead. However, she finally finished the thesis. The second chapter is the main treatment of empathy, but Chapter Three lays down a phenomenological account of the constitution of the psycho-physical individual. Stein records that the first part of her dissertation followed Husserl's advice but her own interest was more evident in the 'constitution of the human person' (Stein 1986: 397), or what she calls in Chapter Four 'the constitution of personality [*Personlichkeit*]' (Stein 1989: 108). Stein speaks of 'the spiritual subject' by which she means the human subject insofar as he or she is an agent attuned to values, as she puts it 'an "I" in whose acts an object world is constituted and which itself creates objects by reason of its will' (Stein 1989: 96). Spiritual acts are not simply separate rays streaming out from an ego but overlap, interpenetrate and build on one another to create the objectively real social and cultural world. The world of spirit, as opposed to nature (which is governed by causal laws), is governed by the lawfulness of motivation, following what Husserl also says in *Ideas II*. As she puts it, directly echoing *Ideas II*, 'motivation is the lawfulness of spiritual life' (Stein 1989: 96). Moreover, spiritual subjects operate within a general context of 'intelligibility and meaningfulness' (Stein 1989: 96). A feeling, for example, may motivate a particular expression and define the range of expressions that can properly issue from it. Stein distinguishes the ego (understood, following Husserl, as a centre for streaming in and radiations outwards) from the person. The person is constituted by personal properties (Stein 2000: 135).

In her 1922 essay on psychology, published in Husserl's *Jahrbuch*, translated as *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (Stein 2000), Stein is primarily interested in the constitution of personhood. For her the person is the highest layer of the human being and the human self is made up of four layers—the physical, the sensory, the psychic and the personal. Here she emphasizes especially the role of *feeling* in the constitution of personality. There are different layers and dimensions to the self and different ways in which the ego is involved or at a distance from these feelings. In theoretical acts such as perception, imagination, thinking and so on, I am usually directly turned towards the object and there is no experience of an 'I' at all—hence, Husserl was right in his analysis offered in the Fifth Logical Investigation. As Stein had already written in *The Problem of Empathy*:

It is possible to conceive of an object only living in theoretical acts having an object world facing it without ever becoming aware of itself and its consciousness, without 'being there' for itself. (Stein 1989: 98)

Following Scheler, she sees feelings of sensation as not closely involving the ego. Sensation, she writes, results in nothing for the experienced I (Stein 1989: 100):

The pressure, warmth, or attraction to light that I sense are nothing in which I experience myself, in no way issue from my 'I'. (Stein 1989: 100)

Pains and pleasures, for instance, take place at a distance from the ego. According to Stein, they are, as she puts it, 'on the surface of my "I"' (Stein 1989: 100). Other feelings and moods are much more deeply involving the self; they are not so much on the surface of the 'I' as actually constitutive of the I. They are 'self-experiencing' in a specific way. They 'inundate', 'penetrate' and 'fill' the I. The self is entirely permeated by emotions but even these can be at different *depth*. As Stein writes:

Anger over the loss of a piece of jewelry comes from a more superficial level or does not penetrate as deeply as losing the same object as the souvenir of a loved one. Furthermore, pain over the loss of this person would be even deeper. (Stein 1989: 101)

Stein acknowledges central and more peripheral levels of the self. Willing, for instance—and this is also true of Husserl—involves the ego in a much more central way than, for instance, ‘theoretical acts’ such as perceiving. Theoretical acts, for Stein generally, such as perceiving, are entirely irrelevant to what she calls ‘personality structure’ (Stein 1989: 107). Theoretical acts form the basis or foundation for acts of feeling (hence for Stein there could not be a purely feeling subject); nevertheless, perception is not integral to the I.

Stein, following Scheler, believes there is a hierarchy of felt values. For Stein:

The feeling of value is the source of all cognitive striving and ‘what is at the bottom’ of all cognitive willing. (Stein 1989: 108)

The apprehension of value (*Wertnehmen*), following Scheler, is itself something valuable as is the experience of the creation of value. I can be happy, and then further happy because of my own happiness. I can enjoy a work of art and then enjoy my enjoyment of it (Stein 1989: 102). Similarly, feelings can lead to other feelings, as complex psychoanalytic literature teaches us. The self is precisely a being that is attuned to value (here Stein is following Scheler). Feelings are correlated to values and values are given to the subject in intentional acts. This attunement to values is of course a clear acknowledgement that the self and person moves in the space of reasons, meanings and values. The self and the person belong within the domain of normativity—but there is more in what Stein, following Husserl and Scheler, calls ‘spirit’ (*Geist*).

According to Stein, every feeling has a certain mood component ‘that causes the feeling to spread throughout the I from the feeling’s place of origin and fill it up’ (Stein 1989: 104). A slight resentment can grow and consume me completely. Emotions can have mood components that colour the emotions. Stein makes comparisons with aspects of light and colour—intensity, illumination and so on, to show the same kinds of descriptive character apply to emotions. There is not only ‘depth’ and expanse (‘width’), and ‘reach’ in relation to emotions and feelings, but there is also

duration. Emotions and feelings develop, evolve and change over time. Stein believes that the length of time a feeling remains in me is subject, she says, to 'rational laws' (Stein 1989: 104) not natural laws. In other words, they are explicable under the overall laws of *motivation*.

Interestingly, Stein acknowledges that every individual person has a 'core' and a quota of 'psychic strength' (*Lebenskraft*). She suggests this tentatively:

Perhaps one could show that every individual has a total measure of psychic strength determining intensity...so the rational duration of a feeling may exceed an individual's 'psychic strength'. (Stein 1989: 105)

Stein has a strong sense of the identity of the individual person, even in different contexts. She writes that one can very well understand the same person in different historical circumstances:

I can think of Caesar in a village instead of in Rome and can think of him transferred into the twentieth century. Certainly his historically settled personality would go through changes but just as surely he would remain Caesar. (Stein 1989: 110)

What is involved here is an exercise in free imaginative variation that brings what is invariant into light. The structure of the person governs what variations are possible. Furthermore, Stein makes the interesting claim that personhood can be 'incomplete'. Thus, for example, someone who has never experienced love or who cannot appreciate art (Stein 1989: 111) is missing something. It is also possible that the personality does not unfold and one becomes a 'stulted' person.

In general, Husserl, Scheler and Stein have a very multilayered and dynamic conception of the self that acknowledges the deep source of the self in nature ('the self sinks its taproot in nature', according to Stein) but also, at the highest level, is oriented to values and belongs to a

community that can be guided by rational motives. The person is seen as an entity that can grow and change over time, take on new characteristics and develop aptitudes, stances towards its drives and recognize new values or revalue old values. The person has a kind of inner core that is different in each individual.

1.7 Phenomenology and the Narrative Conception of the Self

In conclusion, it is worth noticing how the phenomenological account of the personal self intersects with the narrative approach to the self. Of course, numerous versions of the narrative conception of the self have been proposed by contemporary philosophers, including Paul Ricoeur, Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor and Marya Schechtmann. In *After Virtue*, for instance, MacIntyre claims that human life is a narrative unity intersecting with other narratives. The human being, for MacIntyre, is a storytelling anima. He writes: ‘We are never more and sometimes less than co-authors of our own narrative’ (MacIntyre 1981: 213). MacIntyre puts the narrative view succinctly:

I am born with a past, and to try to cut myself from that past in the individualist mode, is to deform my present relationships. The possession of an historical identity and the possession of a social identity coincide. (MacIntyre 1981: 221)

A strongly critical account of the narrative self is found in Galen Strawson (2004), who denies that narration can yield trustworthy insights into the constitution of the person. He asserts that ‘there are deeply non-Narrative people and there are good ways to live that are deeply non-Narrative’ (Strawson 2004: 429). For Strawson, some people simply live lives that are ‘episodic’ and do not connect them into narratives. Strawson begins from his own condition and proclaims:

... yet I have absolutely no sense of my life as a narrative with form, or indeed as a narrative without form. Absolutely none. Nor do I have any great or special interest in my past. Nor do I have a great deal of concern for my future. (Strawson 2004: 433)

Some might object that to present oneself in this manner is already to situate oneself within a narrative, to characterize oneself relative to the non-interest in the past, future and what Strawson calls the 'diachronic'.

It is helpful to think a little more about how phenomenologists understand the narrative dimension of selfhood. For Husserl and Heidegger, to be human is to be temporal and also historical. As Heidegger puts it, one experiences a factual thrownness, one simply finds oneself in this century, speaking this language, having this cultural context and so on. This is not specifically chosen, it is simply 'there'. But within this sense of being in a historical context, there is what Husserl calls 'position-taking'. One can decide to be part of one's tradition or reject it. Even one's rejection of it means one is still in a certain sense bound to it. One finds oneself, as Sartre describes so well, living a kind of life as if one were a character in a plot. Things are unfolding in a particular way. One has a sense of how this might continue and how it might end. The problem with Strawson's rejection of narrativity is that he tends to think of it as something wilful. The danger here is to think of the self simply as the controlling author of narratives more or less in the manner of the omniscient author. The narrative of one's life is not something over which one has complete control (contra Sartre) but rather something that unfolds with the exigencies of each situation. Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans, as John Lennon once said. It is not possible to control all narratives. Spin-doctors try to impose a narrative on the trajectory of an election candidate or a rising film star, but there are always the possibilities of other counter-narratives (I am not the person you want me to be). There is something, furthermore, that has to anchor narratives, a 'dative' of narrative (to adopt Sokolowski's expression), in other words the person to whom the events are happening

(the one that suffers the actions as it were as much as the agent). Phenomenology sees narrativity as part of the experience of historicity and the manner in which the self in its thrownness is projected into the future from its specific orientation to its past.

In conclusion, it is not possible to summarize adequately the richness of the phenomenological approach to self and personhood. Phenomenology has been in the forefront of recognizing the personal self as a concrete, dynamic, intentional meaning-maker who is emotionally, wilfully and rationally engaged with others and with the world. The sense of self runs deep, as Edith Stein put it, it sinks its taproot into nature. But the self is also operating on the level of motivations, values, narratives and self-conceptions which make it an extremely complex entity with its own mode of existing (that Heidegger tried to capture with the term 'Dasein'). In some respects, phenomenology has not been able to completely overcome the two-world approach to the person found in Kant. Phenomenology recognizes a concrete existing acting self, a being-in-the-world but there is also a necessary transcendental dimension. The human self is always a 'for-itself' and a 'for-others' such that it cannot be naturalized in the manner in which contemporary analytic philosophers have naturalized the self.

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