

Contributions To Phenomenology 94

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Empathy, Sociality, and Personhood

Essays on Edith Stein's
Phenomenological Investigations

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Edith Stein's Encounter with Edmund Husserl and Her Phenomenology of the Person

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Abstract Stein's early engagement with Husserl in Göttingen and Freiburg, first as his doctoral student and then as his research assistant, was decisive for her philosophical development. Husserl's phenomenology shaped her philosophical thinking. Despite embracing, in the twenties, a Christian metaphysics inspired by Thomas Aquinas, she continued to engage with phenomenology through the nineteen thirties, even writing a short review of Husserl's *Crisis* when it appeared in *Philosophia* in 1937. In this paper I outline Edith Stein's personal engagement with Edmund Husserl and his phenomenology, and outline her phenomenology of empathy and embodiment, including her conception of individual personhood.

1 Introduction: Husserl's Women Students¹

A fascinating and relatively overlooked aspect of Edmund Husserl's fifteen-year period (1901–1916) of teaching at the University of Göttingen – aside from the immense productivity and development of his thinking in those years – was the fact that he attracted, for that period, a significant number of women students, including,

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among others, Hedwig Conrad-Martius (1888–1966),² Gerda Walther (1897–1977),³ and Edith Stein (1891–1942). These women students participated along with other women (many of whom had trained as teachers and were auditing courses in philosophy) in the Göttingen Philosophical Society.⁴

It was actually in 1891, the year of Edith Stein's birth, that women were first permitted by law to attend lectures in German universities and study under a professor. By 1900, German universities had somewhat slowly opened their courses to women.⁵ A decade later (by 1910), most impediments against women had been removed. Of course, the Great War (1914–1918) had an absolutely devastating effect, with almost all young men enrolled in the army, but the universities remained open and the number of female students increased considerably.

Of his female students, Stein played the most significant role in Husserl's life: she was one of Husserl's last Göttingen students, then transferred to be his first PhD graduate at the University of Freiburg, and, finally, she was his first paid assistant from 1916 until her resignation in 1918 (a post where she was subsequently replaced shortly afterwards by Martin Heidegger). Later, she was among Husserl's students who would contribute to Husserl's seventieth-birthday *Festschrift*, published as a supplementary volume to the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* in 1929.⁶

²Hedwig Martius (who married another Göttingen phenomenologist, Theodor Conrad, and took his name) was best known, at that time, for her essays in epistemology and realist ontology, especially her monographs, *Zur Ontologie und Erscheinungslehre der realen Außenwelt. Verbunden mit einer Kritik positivistischer Theorien* (Conrad-Martius 1916) and *Realontologie* (Conrad-Martius 1923). She also wrote a prize-winning essay entitled *Die erkenntnistheoretischen Grundlagen des Positivismus* [*The Epistemological Foundations of Postivism*] (Conrad-Martius 1920) and *Metaphysische Gespräche* [*Metaphysical Conversations*] (Conrad-Martius 1921). She contributed an essay, 'Farben' ['Colours'], to Husserl's seventieth-birthday publication (Conrad-Martius 1929). See Ales Bello et al. 2010; Hart 2008; and also Pfeiffer 2008 (among other papers in this special issue of *Axiomathes* devoted to Edith Stein). Conrad-Martius defended Husserl's *Wesensschau* and opposed his transcendental turn. She also offered a richly layered ontology of entities but in later years she focused on a philosophy of living beings. See Ales Bello and Calcagno 2012.

³Gerda Walther wrote on the phenomenology of religious intuition and mysticism, published as Gerda Walther, *Phänomenologie der Mystik* (1923); substantially revised and expanded (Walther 1955). This book discussed mystical intuition as a *sui generis* kind of intuiting with its own evidence and fulfilment. It was dismissed by Heidegger in his early 1923 lectures. Walther later wrote a fascinating autobiographical reflection, *Zum Anderen Ufer. Vom Marxismus und Atheismus zum Christentum* [*Towards the Other Shore. From Marxism and Atheism to Christianity*] (Walther 1960) in which she discussed her time as a student of Husserl and records some of his old-worldly paternalist and somewhat chauvinist attitude to his women students.

⁴There were several other women members of the Göttingen Philosophical Society including, according to Edith Stein's autobiography (Stein 1986: 255): Grete Ortman, Erika Gothe (both somewhat older than Edith, since they had taught school for a while before coming to university) and Betty Heymann, a Jewish student from Hamburg, who had been a student of Georg Simmel. These women, who were pedagogy students undergoing teacher training and taking further lecture courses in Göttingen, were not completing doctorates. See Lyne 2000: 26. See also Posselt 2012.

⁵See Mazon 2003.

⁶See Stein Stein 2000a: 1–63. Edith Stein wrote several drafts of this essay.

2 Husserl's Transcendental Turn and Edith Stein's Critical Reaction

Edith Stein had arrived in Göttingen in April 1913, auspiciously at the very moment Husserl's *Ideas* would appear which seemed to move phenomenology firmly in the direction of a Kantian transcendental idealism. On 2nd April 1913, Husserl's *Ideas I* was published, shortly before the university Summer Semester of teaching began. *Ideas I* was the First Book of his planned three-volume *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie (Ideas towards a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy)*. This first book was entitled *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie (General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology)*, hereafter '*Ideas I*'.⁷ Equally significant, this volume appeared in Volume One of Husserl's newly founded *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung (Yearbook for Philosophy and Phenomenological Research)*, a yearbook that he jointly edited with his fellow phenomenologists Alexander Pfänder (1870–1941), Adolf Reinach (1883–1917), Moritz Geiger (1880–1937) and Max Scheler (1874–1928). Scheler's *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik (Formalism in Ethics and the Material Ethics of Value)*⁸ appeared in the same Volume One of the *Yearbook*. The phenomenological movement now had its own publication organ and was beginning to attract international attention as witnessed by the arrival of North American students in Göttingen, including the Canadian Winthrop Bell, whom Stein befriended.

In his published works after *Logical Investigations* (1900/1901), i.e. from 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science' (1910/1911),⁹ *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929),¹⁰ *Cartesian Meditations* (first published in French translated by Emmanuel Levinas, Gabrielle Peiffer, and Alexandre Koyré)¹¹ and the *Crisis of European Sciences* (which appeared in 2 parts in the journal *Philosophia* published in Belgrade in 1936),¹² Husserl was developing a powerful critique of the *naturalism* and *objectivism* of his day and defending the need for a rigorous *transcendental* science of subjectivity to replace the failed objective science of subjectivity that modern scientific psychology purported to be.¹³ He also explicitly began to discuss his phenomenology in comparison with the foundational project of Descartes and the transcendental framework of Kant. In *Ideas I*, Husserl proposes a break with the world of natural experience, a suspension of the 'natural attitude' in order to make the breakthrough

⁷ Cfr. Husserl 2014. Hereafter '*Ideas I*' followed by the page number of the English translation and the Husserliana volume and page number. Schuhmann's edition includes comments and corrections added by Husserl in his four different personal copies of the text.

⁸ Cfr. Scheler 1973.

⁹ Cfr. Husserl 2002.

¹⁰ Cfr. Husserl 1969.

¹¹ Cfr. Husserl 1960.

¹² Cfr. Husserl 1970.

¹³ See Moran 2008.

into the domain of transcendental subjectivity. In his later years, Husserl often reflected on his work and offered interpretations of his earlier efforts. Thus, in a very late text written in summer 1937, entitled ‘Towards a Critique of the *Ideas*’, perhaps the last text he wrote before he fell ill, Husserl writes that over his life he had devised various entry ways into transcendental phenomenology. In this text, he characterizes the way into the reduction in *Ideas I* as proceeding “in a single leap” [*in einem Sprunge*] (Husserl 1992: 425) into a new way of seeing and a new form of experience. He also says that *Ideas I* provided a way proceeding from “the natural concept of the world” [*natürlicher Weltbegriff*] (Husserl 1992: 425), which he parses as “the pre- and extra-scientific life-world or the world that, correspondingly, has always been and always will be, in all of our natural practical life-interests, the standing field [*das ständige Feld*] of our interests, our goals, our actions” (Hua XXIX: 425). In this late text, Husserl acknowledges that this natural conception of the world was sketched “only in the roughest lines” [*nür in rohesten Zügen*] in *Ideas I*.

In fact, Husserl’s phenomenology had been undergoing a gradual change of direction, from around 1905, a turn first publicly revealed in lectures given at Göttingen University in 1906–7, posthumously published as *The Idea of Phenomenology* (1907).¹⁴ He began to characterize his phenomenology in explicitly *transcendental* terms and introduced the notions of the *epochē* and ‘reduction’ (often these terms are interchangeable) as a way of leading from the consideration of consciousness in the natural attitude in daily life to the ‘pure’, i.e. non-empirical, consideration of the essence of consciousness removed from all reference to factual reality. However, although this transcendental turn was known to those of his students and to those in his discussion circle, it was not announced in print until the publication of *Ideas I* (1913), where it appears as the *epoché* and the phenomenological reduction (the term ‘idealism’ does not itself appear in *Ideas I*, but was inserted into the index [*Sachregister*] compiled by Gerda Walther for the second printing of *Ideas I* in 1922). The only one of Husserl’s books in print up to that time remained the *Logical Investigations* and it was because of the intentional analyses in that work that Husserl had attracted the Munich students (who had formerly studied with Theodor Lipps), e.g. Moritz Geiger, Theodore Conrad, Adolf Reinach, and others.

Thereafter, Husserl insisted that phenomenology should not be understood as the straightforward essential description of acts of consciousness and their correlated objects, but had to be understood in terms of acts (now termed, in *Ideas I*, ‘noeses’ or, following Descartes, *cogitationes*) and their intentional objects (now termed ‘noemata’ or, following Descartes, *cogitata*) considered in their purity, precisely as uncovered through the phenomenological reduction, namely stripped of everything empirical and every reference to factual existence.¹⁵ Phenomenology was to be a ‘pure’ science of essences, a ‘new eidetics’. It was also to be a transcendental science that requires, as Husserl insists in his Introduction to *Ideas*, “a new way of looking at things” far removed from the natural standpoint (*Ideas I*: 5; Hua III/1: 3).

¹⁴ Cfr. Husserl 1964.

¹⁵ See Moran 2015.

With the unplugging of the natural standpoint, all reference to existential reality is suspended, and, Husserl explains “*the phenomena of transcendental phenomenology will be characterized as unreal*” (*Ideas* I: 5; Hua III/1: 6). To make matters worse, Husserl explicitly invoked the spirit of Descartes’ doubt and also began to characterize phenomenology as a true development of the spirit of modern philosophy. To cap it all, Husserl entertains the thought-experiment of the “nullifying” or “annihilation of the world” [*Vernichtung der Welt*, *Ideas* I §49], the thought that the entire stream of our experiences might suddenly become incoherent, which seemed to make Husserl a subjective idealist. Here Husserl makes all intentional sense and being to be secondary to and dependent on pure consciousness which always has primacy.¹⁶

This turn to transcendental idealism did not sit well with his students and followers, especially those who had come from Munich to study with him precisely because of his supposed realist phenomenology and his revival of ontology.¹⁷ As Stein understood the situation, the *Investigations* had claimed that the laws that determined perception came from the object and not from the determination of the subject, which was a realist position, but now Husserl seemed to be defending the opposite position which seemed to her to be a transcendental idealist stance. Not just Stein but also Reinach and Ingarden, and, indeed, the young Heidegger, were not convinced by Husserl’s new position.¹⁸ Stein also records that Scheler opposed Husserl’s idealism in his lectures in a condescending manner which upset Stein. She wrote: “Scheler was also one who keenly opposed reverting to idealism; and his comments were almost condescending; thereupon some of the young men allowed themselves a note of irony which infuriated me since it smacked of disrespect and ingratitude” (Stein 1986: 259).

Scheler claimed to have invented phenomenology himself and “availed of every opportunity to insist he was not one of Husserl’s disciples” (Stein 1986: 259). However, Stein was aware that Husserl’s idealism was also opposed by her friend Hedwig Conrad-Martius. Stein speaks of the ‘ominous sentence’ in Husserl’s *Ideas* §49: “*Streichen wir das Bewußtsein, so streichen wir die Welt*”, and Ingarden recalls that he frequently intoned this dictum in his Göttingen lectures (Ingarden 1975: 21). In later years, Stein was adamant that phenomenology had no necessary commitment to idealism.

Let us now turn to Stein’s specific contribution to the phenomenology of the person.

¹⁶It is now much more evident that Husserl was developing this transcendental idealism from 1908 onwards. See Husserl 2003 and Bernet 2004.

¹⁷Stein 1986: 250. Conrad-Martius was a defender of a pluralist real ontology. Indeed, her motto was precisely the opposite of Occam’s razor: ‘*entia non sunt diminuenda sine necessitate*’, which is found in her *Metaphysische Gespräche* (Conrad-Martius 1921).

¹⁸See Ingarden 1975 and Heffernan 2016. Stein mentions that Husserl’s followers – beginning with Scheler – were put off by his ‘closeness to Kant’ (*Annäherung an Kant*), as she mentions in her 1930/1931 *Die Weltanschauliche Bedeutung der Phänomenologie*, in Stein 2010a, b: 99.

3 Edith Stein's Phenomenology of the Person

Edith Stein's philosophical approach began and remained distinctively phenomenological, even after she began to address specifically ontological questions from the standpoint of her strong Christian faith. She begins her *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917) with a very brief characterisation of phenomenological method and the reduction, which is primarily drawn from Husserl's *Ideas* (1913). She writes:

The goal of phenomenology is to clarify and thereby to find the ultimate basis of all knowledge. To reach this goal it considers nothing that is any way "doubtful," nothing that can be eliminated. In the first place it does not use any results of science whatsoever¹⁹

All sciences are excluded and experiences are described in order to gain a view of their essence: «each phenomenon forms an exemplary basis for the consideration of essence» (PE 4; 2). It is the task of philosophy to bring "ultimate clarity" [*letzte Klarheit*] (PE 38; 41) through the "constitution of transcendent objects in immanent consciousness". In this sense phenomenology operates, for Stein, under the phenomenological reduction, and hence in the realm of 'pure' or *transcendental* rather than natural consciousness.²⁰ Stein gives the example of someone having an hallucination (seeing a door in a room and wanting to go through it) and later realizing (on being told) that there is no door and that the experience was a hallucination. This allows one to reflect on the earlier experience and describe it *as it presented itself*. The first task, accordingly, is to "comprehend the phenomenon in its pure essence, freed from all accidents of appearance" (PE: 21; 22).²¹ Phenomenology identifies essences by allowing them to come into view through a special kind of inspection, *Wesensschau*, that is independent of the empirical conditions which surround the phenomenon. In fact, Stein's description of the experiences of seeing and of visual illusion echoes Husserl's discussion in *Ideas* I §39, where he speaks of initially meditating on perception as a naive human being. It is possible the perception may be an illusion or hallucination, but, when confirmed, it is an experience of the object as there in bodily presence. The meditating philosopher can consider this "looking» purely from the point of view of consciousness and abstract everything associated «with the lived body and the bodily organs" [*bloß als Bewußtsein betrachtet und abgesehen vom Leibe und den Leibesorganen*] (*Ideas* I § 39: 69, Hua III/1: 81). In *Ideas* §§53 and 54, Husserl continues the meditation and imagines pure *Erlebnisse* freed from everything animate and natural – a consciousness without a lived body [*Leib*] is imaginable (Hua III/1: 119). Husserl writes (presumably in relation to the idea of an egoless stream of experiencing such as Scheler was postulating):

¹⁹Stein 1989: 3, German edition: 1. Hereafter PE followed by the page number of the English translation and the page number of the German edition.

²⁰In this sense, Stein accepted the phenomenological reduction but not the *transcendental* reduction, although her terminological is a little unclear, possibly because she did not want to convey in public a disagreement with Husserl.

²¹“Das Phänomen in seinem reinen Wesen, losgelöst von allen Zufälligkeiten des Erscheinens zu erfassen, ist also die erste Aufgabe”.

A lifeless and, as paradoxical as it sounds, probably even soulless, impersonal consciousness [*ein seelenloses, nicht personales Bewußtsein*] is certainly conceivable, i.e., a stream of experience in which the intentional unities of experience [*Erfahrungseinheiten*] – body, soul, empirical ego-subject [*empirisches Ichsubjekt*] – were not constituted, in which all these experiential concepts and, with them, also that of the experience in the psychological sense (as the experience of a person, an animal ego [*als Erlebnisses einer Person, eines animalischen Ich*]) would have no standing and in any case no validity. (*Ideas* I §54: 101-102; *Huas* III/1: 119)

Stein strongly supports this position of Husserl's. For her, consciousness is always embodied. On the other hand, she is unhappy with the Munich psychologist Theodor Lipps' assumption that consciousness is bound to the body *through natural instinct* (PE: 37; 40). This, for her, is mere assertion without any evident scientific backing.

Stein's approach to her chosen topic of empathy is also purely phenomenological – she is seeking to identify its essential characteristics:

We have set ourselves the task of expounding it [empathy] in its peculiarity before tackling any other question (of whether such experience is valid or how it occurs). And we have conducted this investigation in purest generality [*in reinster Allgemeinheit*]. (PE: 11; 10)

In her account, Stein builds on – and never questions – Husserl's basic distinction between “presentation” [*Gegenwärtigung*] and “representation” [*Vergegenwärtigung*], between straightforward perception [*Wahrnehmung*], where the object is given directly and is experienced as really “there in the flesh” [*leibhaftig da*], and other forms of representation [*Vergegenwärtigung*], sometimes translated as “presentation” or “presentification”, such as memory, expectation, fantasy and empathy, where the object is not presented with the same fleshly givenness but in some respects is presented as “not really there” (a fantasy object for instance floats outside of the usual spatiotemporal framework within which perceptual objects are experienced). Stein writes: “Perception has its object before it in embodied givenness; empathy does not” [*Die Wahrnehmung hat ihr Objekt in leibhafter Gegebenheit vor sich- die Einfühlung nicht*] (PE: 19, 20). She therefore contrasts direct perception with empathy (as a kind of ‘quasi-perception’). Empathy is not a direct perception; it is perception-like. She will say it is a “quasi-perception, a specific kind of experiencing act” [*eine Art erfahrender Akte*].

Stein also accepts and exploits Husserl's distinction (found in *Ideas* I) between experiences that are grasped “originarily” or “primordially” [*originär*] and those which are grasped “non-originarily” or “non-primordially” [*nichtoriginär*]. Originary givenness can be construed as first-personal access to our experiences. For Stein, all our present conscious experiences are given “originarily” and to an ego – this is, indeed, part of her argument against Scheler's conception of sympathy as a kind of inner perception where the ego is not present. For Stein, the stream of experience is experienced in an irriducible, first-person way: “All genuinely present experiences are originary as such – What can be more primordial than the experiencing itself?” [*Originär sind alle eigenen gegenwärtigen Erlebnisse als solche - was könnte originärer sein als das Erleben selbst?*] (PE: 7; 6). Indeed, in her 1922 Habilitation text, *Contributions*, she says that what Husserl meant by “originary”

and “non-originary” is precisely the same as what David Hume meant by “impressions” and “ideas” (according to which impressions are received with greater liveliness and vivacity).²² She gives the example of a direct perception in contrast to a memory or a daydream. In other words, originary experiences are experiences which present themselves with full vivacity and strike us with a stronger impression than mere representations or ideas that are subsequently entertained (my current toothache as opposed to one remembered when one is not in pain).

In *Ideas* I §1 Husserl had already made a distinction between what is experienced in an “originary” [*originär*] manner – namely external transcendent things in immediate perception, experiences of our own states of consciousness. He says at this point that we do *not* have originary experience of others in empathy (*Ideas* I §1, p. 6; Hua III/1: 8). So empathy is already mentioned right at the beginning of Husserl’s *Ideas* I, and there already the parallel is drawn with non-originary experiences such as the object given in memory or expectation.

As Stein clarifies, we can have quite complex combinations of originary and non-originary experience. For instance, we can have *non-primordial* experiences of our own *primordial* experiences, e.g. when we remember being in a state of joy, the remembering is *primordially* experienced but the joy is only *non-primordially* experienced (PE: 8; 7). Of course, my act of remembering is experienced *originarily* but not the remembered joy which is given in some kind of representative non-originary manner. That remembered joy, of course, points back to a subject that is *myself*; in the case of the apprehension of another’s joy, we apprehend the joy as being experienced by *another subject* *primordially*. The joy contains a reference to a subject – but not myself. This is the key feature of empathy – the intentional objects of our experiences are experiences that are referred to other subjects and we do not enter the experience through their subjectivity although we apprehend the experience as being undergone by the other subject *originarily*.

For Stein, empathy, then, is a non-primordial experience “which announces a primordial one” (PE: 14; 14). Strictly speaking, the empathic act of apprehension or experiencing is itself *primordial* as a first-person experience but its “content” is non-primordial (PE: 10; 9). What makes empathy different from expectation, memory or fantasy is that the subject of the empathized experience is not the same as the subject *emphathizing* (PE: 10; 10). When I feel the other’s joy, I do not experience it *primordially* as *my* joy but as a joy experienced *by the other*.

Stein’s second chapter, ‘On the Essence of Acts of Empathy’, discusses current approaches to empathy. On the insistence of Husserl, Edith Stein’s thesis (following the work done for her *Staatsexamen*) was to begin with a thorough investigation of the work of Theodor Lipps, whose work on empathy was then current and topical (Stein 1986: 247). Stein states that she does not want to repeat others’ criticisms of Lipps but simply to give her own (PE: 23; 24) and she claims that Lipps’ description of empathy “agrees with ours in many respects” (PE: 12; 11), but, elsewhere, in her *Life in a Jewish Family*, she concedes that Husserl’s and Lipps’ accounts of empathy had little to do with one another. It is true that Lipps, in agreement with Husserl,

²² Stein Stein 2000b: 99.

treats empathy as akin to memory and fantasy as being a “presentification”. But Lipps tends to interpret empathy as a kind of *imitation* of the other. Lipps describes empathy as “inner participation” in foreign experiences, and he tends to emphasize the moment of *fusion* [*eins-fühlen*] with the other’s experience, with which Stein does not agree. She thinks Lipps confuses the empathizing subject being drawn into the experience with that other person’s experience *being given* primordially to the empathizer (PE: 13; 12). Stein contrasts the situation of my remembering my joy at passing an exam and my empathizing with a friend who joyfully relates to me about having passed an exam. I *empathize* with the other’s first-personal (primordially experienced) joy, and I am – in a completely separate way primordially joyful over the event myself. I can even be joyful over this joy, but neither of these is the same as the empathic experience of the other’s joy. One person’s joy can be founded on the other person’s joy but one is not experiencing the other person’s joy as such (i.e. in a first-person way). For Stein:

Thus empathy is a kind of act of perceiving [*eine Art erfahrender Akte*] sui generis. [...] Empathy [...] is the experience of foreign consciousness in general, irrespective of the kind of the experiencing subject or of the subject whose consciousness is experienced. (PE: 11; 10)

According to Stein, when I experience empathy with another, the empathized experience *is located in* the another subject and not in myself:

The subject of the empathized experience, however, is not the subject empathizing, but another. And this is what is fundamentally new in contrast with memory, expectation, or the fantasy of our own experiences. (PE: 10;10)

Stein makes the clear point that in empathy I am not just grasping the content “sorrow of the other” but I am also directed *to the other subject herself* and grasp the sorrow from the perspective of her subjectivity, although I do not live through it directly as the suffering person does. She writes:

So now to empathy itself. Here, too, we are dealing with an act which is primordial as present experience though non-primordial in content [*der originär ist als gegenwärtiges Erlebnis, aber nicht-originär seinem Gehalt*]. And this content is an experience which, again, can be had in different ways such as in memory, expectation, or in fantasy. When it arises before me all at once [*mit einem Schlage*], it faces me as an object [*als Objekt gegenüber*] (such as the sadness I “read in another’s face”). But when I inquire into its implied tendencies [*den implizierten Tendenzen*] (try to bring another’s mood to clear givenness to myself, the content, having pulled me into it, is no longer really an object. I am now no longer turned to the content but to the object of it, am at the subject of the content in the original subject’s place [*bin bei seinem Subjekt, an dessen Stelle*]. And only after successfully executed clarification, does the content again face me as an object. (PE: 10; 9)

The empathic act is experienced originally by the subject – it is an act of apprehending another psychic act with its content (experiencing a feeling of sadness) but the sadness is attributed to another subject and that other subject is also apprehended as experiencing this content in a certain way.²³

²³For a further discussion of Stein’s account of empathy, see Moran 2004, Jardine 2015, and Vendrell Ferran 2015.

For Stein, again following Husserl, the experience of the other person in empathy is mediated through the apprehension of the other's lived body – although it is simply not a matter of interpreting certain signals the other is expressing, as Lipps had suggested. It is here that Stein takes over and indeed expands and enriches Husserl's conception of the "lived body" [*Leib*], which had received only cursory treatment in *Logical Investigations* and even in *Ideas I*. In *Ideas I* §1 Husserl writes about empathy:

We are conscious of the other and the life of his soul as "itself there," [*als "selbst da"*] and there in a way that is one with his body [*in eins mit seinem Leibe*], but we are not conscious of this as given in an ordinary way [*als originär gegeben*]. (*Ideas I*: 10; Hua III/1: 11)

Much later, Husserl will write more extensively about *Leib* in his published French edition of *Cartesian Meditations* (1931):

[*Leib* is] ... the only one in which I immediately have free rein, and in particular govern in each of its organs —. I perceive with my hands, touching kinesthetically, seeing with my eyes, etc., and can so perceive at any time, while these kinestheses of the organs proceed in the I am doing and are subject to my I can; furthermore, putting these kinestheses into play, I can push, shove, etc., and thereby directly, and then indirectly, act corporeally.²⁴

Stein takes over and develops this conception of the living body as having a kinesthetic character and experienced under the voluntary control or what Husserl terms 'I can' (*Ich kann*). In her case, she found it elaborated in the pile of manuscripts Husserl handed to her, which she eventually edited as *Ideas II*. She agrees with Husserl that the experience of voluntary mastery, governing [*Walten*] is primary: "the willing 'I' is the master of the living body" (PE: 6; 63). The living body, for Stein, moreover, is constituted through sensations (PE: 48; 53). Thus Stein characterizes the living body in Husserlian terms in her *On the Problem of Empathy* as follows:

The living body [*Der Leib*] in contrast with the physical body [*Körper*] is characterized by being the bearer of fields of sensation [*Träger von Empfindungsfeldern*], being located at the zero point of orientation [*Nullpunkt der Orientierung*] of the spatial world, moving voluntarily and being constructed of moving organs, being the field of expression of experiences of its "I" and the instrument of the "I"'s will. (PE: 57, trans. modified; 63)

Earlier in the work Stein had asked: "How is my body (*Leib*) constituted within consciousness?" (PE: 41; 44). She answers that "the living body forms the 'psycho-physical' individual" (PE: 38–54; 41–63). For Stein, the body "is always 'here' while other objects are always 'there'" [*Es ist immer "hier", während alle anderen Objekte immer "dort" sind*] (PE: 42; 45) The body is present with a "steadfast obtrusiveness" [*mit einer unentwegten Aufdringlichkeit*] (PE: 42; 45). Moreover, the body is present in a double way: both a lived body and "an outwardly perceived physical body of the outer world" (PE: 43).

Sensations are, following Husserl, integral components of our conscious experiences, but nevertheless they are not experienced as belonging to the ego itself, rather

²⁴This passage was cited in citation 'vii' which cited Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, *Husserliana I*, 2d ed., ed. S. Strasser (1963), §44, p. 128 (Husserl 1960: 97).

sensations take place, as Stein puts it, at 'a distance' from the ego. They are spatially localized a distance away from the 'I' – the 'zero point of orientation' (PE: 42). She writes: "I not only see my hand and bodily perceive it as sensing, but I also 'see' its fields of sensation constituted for me in bodily sensation" (PE: 44; 48). Stein therefore identifies the lived body with the 'I-experience', following Husserl she speaks of *Ichleib*. She says that the senses have already constituted 'the unity of I and living body for us' [*Jedenfalls hat sich uns bereits mit den Empfindungen die Einheit von Ich und Leib konstituiert*] (PE: 48; 53). The primary experiential unity of the self then is a sensory-kinetic unity of fields. There are, moreover, specific sensations and more general feelings (I can feel sluggish) and here Stein draws heavily on Scheler's account in his *Formalism* book. Stein recognizes that we do not just sense 'sensations' in the narrow sense, but we also sense *feelings* [*Gefühlsempfindungen*]. Feelings can be specifically localised or more generally spread to the body. They have a "body-related" [*Leibgebunden*] character. Moods [*Stimmungen*] are even less bodily felt – they are even more general feelings (PE: 49; 54), for Stein, and feelings that are not specifically localised in the body. Moods do not have *Leibgebundenheit*. She writes:

Moods are "general feelings" of a non-somatic nature, and so we separate them from strictly general feeling as a species of their own. Cheerfulness and melancholy do not fill the living body. It is not cheerful or melancholy as it is vigorous or sluggish, nor could a purely spiritual being be subject to moods. But this does not imply that psychic and bodily general feelings run beside one another undisturbed. Rather one seems to have a reciprocal "influence" on the other. (PE: 49; 54)

Moods are closely intertwined with psychic feelings and can be stimulated by feelings: a tired child, who has been running around happily will suddenly become cranky. Following Scheler, Stein distinguishes four levels of feeling. Spiritual feelings [*geistige Gefühle*] are feelings of an even higher order, such as love. These seem to be experienced without any reference to the body: "feelings can be comprehended in their purity" (PE: 50; 55). A pure spirit can become frightened, she says. This account of spiritual feelings seems to owe more to Scheler than to Husserl, although Husserl's ethical lectures does discuss these spiritual feelings also, but with a less hierarchical approach.²⁵ Where Stein seems to be original is in her discussion that feelings (considered in their purity) come "loaded with an energy that must be unloaded" (PE: 51; 57). This unloading is akin to what Freud speaks about in terms of 'discharge'. One way for feelings to unload energy is to transform into actions, and she recognizes that feelings can be expressed and discharged in fantasy deeds. "Feeling by its nature demands expression" [*das Gefühl verlangt seinem Wesen nach einen Ausdruck*, PE: 53; 59], she writes: "I blush for shame, I irately clench my fist, I angrily furrow my brow" (PE: 51; 56). Stein and Husserl agree that a pure spirit could feel pain and pleasure but abstracted from all bodily expression (i.e. without heart racing, breathlessness, etc.). But I am not able to find in Husserl something equivalent to the discussion of the discharge of energy in feelings.

²⁵ See Vendrell Ferran 2008 and Vendrell Ferran 2015.

Edith Stein developed – especially in her contributions—a conception of “life force” [*Lebenskraft*] that is unique to each individual. Individuals have simply different amounts of life-force.²⁶ Edith Stein borrows the notion of “life” [*Leben*] from Scheler (*life* is already discussed in relation to Scheler in *On the Problem of Empathy*, PE: 68; 77), how it feels to inhabit a living body (tiredness, age, vigor, etc.), but she also adverts to both Dilthey and Bergson. It seems she is moving more in the direction of ‘life-philosophy’ and seeing a unified current of life underlying the experience of the person as both a corporeal and spiritual subject.

Under the title of “psychophysical causality” (PE: 50; 55), Stein reproduces very accurately Husserl’s discussions on psycho-physical conditionality (see *Ideas II* § 18), where he acknowledges the drugs, stimulants, diseases, etc., can affect bodily sensations, feelings, emotions and moods, and that conversely moods such as happiness or sadness can affect the body (see *Ideas II* §18: 80; Hua IV: 74). Stein is certainly the source for the interesting footnote she includes on Darwin on the physical expression of feelings, entitled *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872).²⁷ Stein gives a very close analysis of what she calls “sensual empathy” [*Empfindungseinführung or Einempfindung*] – seeing someone else’s hand resting on the table and having the sense of what that sensation feels like (PE: 58; 65). This empathic experience takes place within a certain range determined by ‘type’. Again, this is quite Husserlian, but Stein claims it has been neglected in the literature.

It is not clear to me that we can divine any clear departure in *On the Problem of Empathy* from Husserl’s position, at best we find a fusion of Schelerian elements with Husserlian. It is, after all, a doctoral dissertation, an *Erstlingsbuch*, and it is not easy to find anywhere in her discussion of the body, where Stein is advocating something not found in Husserl’s then unpublished research manuscripts. Indeed, much of her discussion of the body in the empathy book can also be found in *Ideas II* §41 – on the body as zero-point of orientation, on the body’s integration into the causal nexus, and so on.

The situation is different, however, with regard to her proposed *Habilitation* which she began writing in the period immediately after the publication of her dissertation in 1917. Here she continues her analysis of the nature of the person and the meaning of community. The first part deals with the distinction between causality and motivation, the second with the relation between the individual and the community. Stein herself says she is not able to say what came from Husserl and what came from herself. She writes in her Introduction to the *Contributions*:

²⁶It seems Stein was influenced by Theodor Lipps’ conception in his *Leitfaden der Psychologie* (Lipps 1909) of ‘psychic force’ [*psychische Kraft*] which he distinguishes from the physical concepts of force and energy. See Betchart 2009, Betchart 2010. Hedwig Conrad-Martius also spoke of the *Lebenstriebkraft* of animals. As Betchart points out, the term has connections with vitalism and is included as the entry «*Lebenskraft*», in Eisler’s *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe* (Eisl 1904: 584). It is likely the term also has some resonances of Bergson’s *élan vital* – and Stein’s friend Roman Ingarden wrote his doctoral thesis with Husserl on Bergson. See Stein 2000 b: 22 n.34.

²⁷Cfr. Darwin 1998. Darwin’s book created great controversy at the time. It was followed by William James 1884.

A few words remain to be said to clarify the relation of my investigations to the work of Edmund Husserl. I've been helping Professor Husserl for nearly two years with the preparation of large publications. During this time, all his manuscripts from the last ten years have been at my disposal (among them those that have to do with the topic of psychology and the humanities as well). It goes without saying that important influences on my own work came out of the stimulation that I was receiving in this way and in many conversations. Today I myself no longer am able to keep track of the extent to which this has been the case. It just wasn't possible for me to give references through citation, because the material in question is unpublished and also because very often I was not sure whether I would have to regard something as my own research result or as an internal appropriation of transferred thought motifs (Stein 2000b: 2).

Stein continued to engage with phenomenology into the nineteen thirties, even writing a short review of Husserl's *Crisis* when it appeared in *Philosophia* in 1937.²⁸

4 Stein on the Essence of the Individual Person

After her conversion, Stein's reading of Christian mystical authors allowed her to recognize an individual "core" [*Kern*] of the person that remains unchanged throughout life but which contains potentiality that can be actualized.²⁹ She is drawing on the metaphysics of her friend and fellow Christian author, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, who herself may have been invoking Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and others, on the "spark of the soul", the ground of the soul, the "interior castle", and so on.³⁰ What Husserl spoke of as "ego-life" [*Ichleben*] thereby reveals itself as soul-life, and the soul-life – by its going forth from itself and by its ascending to the brightness of light – simultaneously reveals itself as spiritual life (Stein 2002: 430). Depth of soul is now something Stein analyzes at length. She gives the example of two people hearing of the assassination of the Serbian monarch that gave birth to the First World War. One person hears it, registers it and goes on planning his vacation. "The other is shaken in his innermost being" (Stein 2002: 437) and foresees the outbreak of war etc. In this latter case, the news has struck deep in his inner being: "In this latter kind of thinking the 'entire human being' is engaged, and this engagement expresses itself even in external appearance. [...] He thinks with his heart" (Stein 2002: 437).

Thus she interprets Husserl's pure ego as a kind of level between the depth of the soul and the clarity of transparent consciousness. She writes: "The pure ego is, as it were, only the portal through which the life of a human being passes on its way from the depth of the soul to the lucidity of consciousness" (Stein 2002: 501).

²⁸E. Stein, 'Besprechung von: Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*' (1937), in Stein 2014: 122–125.

²⁹See Stein 2010b: 102ff. See also Borden Sharkey 2010.

³⁰Edith Stein wrote a reflective essay on Teresa of Avila entitled *The Interior Castle*, see Stein 2004.

Stein tends to think of the ego as rooted in a soul and this soul has a character and individuality, or ‘peculiarity’ or ‘particularity’ [*Eigenart*], uniquely its own:

The innermost center of the soul, its most authentic and spiritual part, is not colourless and shapeless, but has a particular form of its own. The soul feels it when it is ‘in its own self’, when it is ‘self-collected’. [...] The innermost center of the soul is the ‘how’ of the essence itself and as such impresses its stamp on every trait of character and every attitude and action of human beings, it is the key that unlocks the mystery of the structural formation of the character of a human being. (Stein 2002: 501–2)

The late Stein does not so much move away from Husserl as to embed his phenomenological account of conscious life in the context of a more metaphysical – and at the same time concrete and existential – conception of the person. Her articulation of the relation between soul, body and spirit is quite complex and evolves in her work, especially incorporating the Thomistic structures of matter and form, potency and act. But she continues to maintain the unity of the human person and the fact that soul is essentially tied to body, as she puts it in lectures given in Münster in 1932/33: “the unity with the body is essential for the soul” (Stein 2015: 133). Stein, following Scheler, distinguishes between the generic or universal essence of a human being (the ‘species’ – what all humans have in common) and the individual essences of individual human beings. Here, following Scotus, she speaks of *haecitas*, and of *Einzelwesen*, or *individuelles Wesen*. There is an essence that makes something into an individual, a particular ‘this’. This idea of individual essence has a history going back to Plotinus but Stein makes it her own and tries to integrate it into her version of Thomism, a version that would now be regarded as unorthodox. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore Stein’s later attempts to embed her phenomenological psychology within a larger framework of Christian metaphysics and anthropology. This is itself a very difficult task as Stein’s reading of Thomas and Christian metaphysics is idiosyncratic (albeit deeply influenced by Erich Przywara, especially his *Analogia entis*, 1932) and, of course, Neo-Thomism in general was in a nascent phase in Stein’s time and had not assumed a settled shape. Stein was an independent reader of the Scholastics and so, for example, she rejects the Aristotelian claim that matter is the principle of individuation and insists instead that form individuates.

In spite of her original efforts as systematic metaphysical speculation during the later twenties and thirties, in my view Edith Stein’s philosophical greatness really resides in her extraordinary grasp of Husserlian phenomenology of embodiment, and her defense of the essential individuality and depth of the human person. It was her initial exposure to Husserl and his phenomenology that opened up and sustained her intellectual journey, a journey tragically cut short in the Holocaust.

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